

# Residents oppose Haymarket power-line plan

By [Michelle Basch](#) | [@MBaschWTOP](#) January 13, 2015 7:10 am

An overflow crowd, mostly opposed to Dominion's power-line plan, packed the town hall meeting. (WTOP/Michelle Basch)

HAYMARKET, Va. — With plans in the works to build high-voltage power lines in part of Prince William County, residents and elected leaders are gearing up for a fight.

Delegate Bob Marshall, Sen. Dick Black and Prince William County Board Chairman Corey Stewart were among those at a town hall meeting Monday night at Battlefield High School in Haymarket.

The meeting in the school's auditorium was so full that latecomers had to stand in the back.

Those who attended are worried about Dominion Virginia Power's plans to put up 100-foot-tall power lines to serve a future data center in Haymarket. The operator of the data center has been kept secret, but many are convinced it is Amazon.

Elena Schlossberg, director of an opposition group called the [Coalition to Protect Prince William County](#), says an Amazon job posting is proof enough for her.

"Why are you advertising for jobs if you're not coming here for your Haymarket, Virginia, data center? If you're trying to be secret, you didn't do a very good job," she says.

Dominion is considering several possible routes for the power lines, but Schlossberg says the only acceptable option is to place the lines underground along Interstate 66.

Marshall and Black are introducing legislation that would require similar data centers or businesses in Virginia to be placed only in areas zoned for industrial use. Under their proposals, the owners of data centers outside industrial zones and more than 300 feet from an existing transmission line would have to place a new transmission line underground — and would have to pay for it.

"The expense must be borne by the owner of the data center, not the rate-payers of Dominion," Marshall said to big applause.

“I really do not care about enhancing their profit. I care about enhancing your property value,” Black said.

Stewart says Dominion’s plans to send the power lines through residential areas amount to “no less than corporate vandalism,” so he took action.

“As of Friday afternoon, I signed into law the county’s acceptance of a deed of easement, a conservation easement, from the citizens of Somerset Crossing, thereby prohibiting for all time any power lines going through their neighborhood, or Greenhill (Crossing), or Haymarket,” Stewart added.

Dominion Virginia Power’s Chuck Penn attended the meeting and told WTOP before it started, “Right now, we’re trying to determine exactly what routes are viable. In the weeks to come, we’re going to be able to sit down with the community and go over those routes before we file with the State Corporation Commission.”

The Virginia State Corporation Commission will have the final say on which route will be used.

“We always try to approach it from the standpoint of taking an approach that has the least amount of impact,” Penn added. “The least amount of impact on the residents, the least amount of impact on the environment, the least amount of impact on historical amenities and the like.”