

April 9, 2007

The Ohio Power Siting Board
180 E. Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear OPSB;

This letter is in OBJECTION to FirstEnergy/American Transmission Systems, Inc.'s (FE/ATSI) proposal to place 138kV power transmission lines in the Montville, Ohio community. The project known as "The Geauga County -138kV Transmission Line Supply Project Case 07-0171-EL-BTX."

Although I have been a registered voter since the age of 18, and have exercised my right to vote in every election held since, I have been denied my right to vote on this issue. It appears that FE/ASTI has sole discretion in deeming what is in my "best interest" and the "best interest" of my community, Montville. I refuse to believe that the State of Ohio, in extending these eminent domain powers to FE/ASTI, has done so with disregard to the impact of potential abuse of these powers by FE/ASTI.

The Issue of Financial Impact

Most recently, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled in *Norwood v. Horney* (110 Ohio St 3d, 2006-Ohio-3799) "...the fact that an appropriation of property will provide an economic benefit to the community does not satisfy the public-use requirement..." and "Courts shall apply heightened scrutiny when reviewing statutes that regulate the use of eminent domain powers."

FE/ASTI issued its statement to homeowners that the placement of 138kV transmission lines was necessary for "expanding and new businesses and new homes in Geauga and Ashtabula counties..." Clearly, FE/ASTI stands to gain financially in expansion of its customer base. The expanding areas of Southern Geauga County and central Ashtabula County will gain in tax revenue. But the homeowners in Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg will shoulder the expense in the form of decreased property share, decreased property value, increased perceived health threat and a reduction in new home building.

In an economy fraught with foreclosures, decreasing home values and negative equity mortgages, the residents of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg are being expected to watch their property values depleted by FE/ASTI, who boasted record earnings in 2006 with total revenues of \$11.5 billion. Meanwhile, Montville and Thompson residents are fighting to keep a financially strapped Ledgemont school system afloat, with funding derived through property taxes and a voter approved short-term income tax. The reduction in property value prompted by installation of the 138 kV lines will have a snowballing effect on our education system and, in turn, the marketability of homes.

FE/ASTI admits that the proposed and alternate routes are the closest, and therefore, *least expensive* routes for their project. In the long-term, however, who stands to gain from accessibility to new power? Not the residents of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg. It will be FE/ASTI, with hopes of reporting record earnings in the billions in future years. But as homeowners affected by these transmission lines, we could no longer rely on our homes to provide financial stability and security for our future. The use of "across the board" property valuations by FE/ASTI rather than "across the fence" land based valuations further degrades the potential of our homes as "nest eggs".

FE/ASTI should be enjoined from using the proposed and alternate routes and should be encouraged to evaluate the use of non-residential lands, further east of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg. This would certainly allow FE/ASTI to attain their goal at a reasonable, albeit, slightly increased cost. But it would be nowhere near the cost that the residents of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg would have to endure if the transmission lines are situated in their front yards.

The Issue of Environmental/Ecological Impact

Our Montville property was purchased in 1991. Despite the 75+ mile round trip commute to work, our priority was the pristine rural setting: trees, wildlife, clean water and seclusion. We found this to be the case with our existing neighbors and those who arrived later. The placement of the 138 kV transmission lines will diminish or completely obliterate those rural characteristics that we hold vital in our daily lives.

On our own property, we hired an arborist to identify desirable tree species. We worked to assure the growth based upon not only in the type of tree and its aesthetic value but its impact on the wildlife and soil. We strategically planted other native species in areas that were conducive to their growth to further enhance the ecosystem, to provide seclusion and to assist in road-noise deadening. Many of our neighbors have also gone to this extent. We pride ourselves in our Montville community as being labeled the "most naturally landscaped" area in Northeast Ohio.

We have also devoted much time to creating a bird sanctuary. Complete with desirable tree species, wildflowers, pond and nesting areas. None of this would have been possible without the supporting environmental surroundings necessary to attract various birds and waterfowl. A documented concern is that the waterfowl, in their descent, get caught in the power lines. Waterfowl judge descent based upon the treetop height (which would be lower than the proposed power line height). Currently, the geese, ducks and herons typically enter and exit our pond by a flight path over our house toward the road.

The Montville area is replete with other wildlife. All of which would be impacted by deforestation, soil disturbance, surface water disturbance, noise, and destruction caused by equipment. The route proposed by FE/ASTI crosses small streams, wetlands, forests and grasslands. This same area has recently been chosen by the ODNR as a site to reintroduce the Snowshoe Hare, which thrives in forestland.

Among the trees that are being threatened by this project are:

- Green Ash
- Shagbark Hickory
- Tulip Tree
- Swamp Oak
- Red Oak
- Pin Oak
- White Pine
- White Spruce
- Locust
- Ironwood
- And More

Among the wildflowers that are being threatened by this project are:

- Painted Trillium
- Snow Trillium
- Yellow Trout Lilly
- Jack-in-the-pulpit
- Wild strawberries
- Fleabane
- Buttercups
- Ground Ivy
- Dew Drop Clover

Wild Daisies
Thistle
Queen Anne's Lace
And More

Among the Birds and Waterfowl being threatened by this project are:

Osprey
Great Blue Heron
Bald Eagle
Pileated Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Barn Owl
Grosbeak
Goldfinch
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
Canada Goose
Nuthatch
Chickadee
Indigo Bunting
Tufted Titmouse
Mallard Duck
Wood Duck
Ruffed Grouse
Red Winged Blackbird
Bluebird
Oriole
Blue Jay
Cardinal
And More

Other wildlife being threatened by this project are:

Snowshoe Hare
River Otter
Beaver
Muskrat
Groundhog
Skunk
White Tailed Deer
Coyote
Gray Fox
Red Fox
Gray squirrel
Red Squirrel
Opposum
Brown Bat
Five Lined Skink
Four Toed Salamander
And More

Other applications submitted by FE/ASTI to OPSB have contained the boilerplate comment of "no substantial environmental impact." I submit that is not the truth in this case and respectfully request that full due diligence be required.

The Issue of Potential and Perceived Health Risks

Aside from the ecology and environmental impact on wildlife, is the concern for the health and well being of Montville families. Despite the inconsistent evidence regarding the carcinogenicity of Electro-Magnetic Fields, the potential and perceived threat is very real.

The US Department of Energy made EMF distance to residents a necessary part of the due diligence in an application to construct a 138kV line in Texas near the Mexican border (FE Docket PP-226). "Operation of the transmission line will produce electric and magnetic fields. However, there are no known residents within the area potentially impacted by these fields and, therefore, they would produce no significant impacts on human health and safety." The distance of the area potentially impacted according to the application is 0.5 MILES. The proposed 138 kV transmission line is within a hundred feet of MANY residents of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg.

It is morally unethical for FE/ASTI to expect the people and families of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg to become unwilling participants in a study on the long-term effects of exposure to heightened levels of EMF in an effort to reduce construction costs.

In closing, I sincerely hope that the OPSB will take these comments and those submitted by my neighbors in OPPOSITION to The Geauga County -138kV Transmission Line Supply Project Case 07-0171-EL-BTX and determine that the construction and operation of this proposal has disproportionately high and adverse effects on the residents of Montville, Thompson and Huntsburg.

Sincerely,

Judee Geizer, MT (ASCP)
8500 Clay Street
Montville, Ohio 44064

Cc: American Transmission Systems, Inc.
FirstEnergy Corp.
Sen. Sherrod Brown
Sen. George Voinovich
Rep. Steven LaTourette
Sen. Tim Grendell
Rep. Matthew Dolan
Gauga County Commissioners
Montville Township Trustees
The News-Herald
The Geauga County Maple Leaf