



Randy Veach
President

Feb. 20, 2015

The Honorable Steve Womack
United States Congress
1119 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Womack:

Plains and Eastern Clean Line Energy is in the process of planning a major transmission project that traverses the state of Arkansas. Upon completion, this project would impact hundreds of private land owners in our state. Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation would like to express our concerns about the Clean Line Energy Plains & Eastern Transmission Project and the potential use of eminent domain authority to move forward with this plan. This project could have a drastic impact on property values and severely limit the productivity of encompassed, surrounding and adjacent land.

This project, as proposed, will cut through wide swaths of farmland, forever altering the ability to utilize the land for what is inarguably its best use – production agriculture. Much of the land proposed for the path of the transmission project includes some of the most valuable farmland in Arkansas. It is important to understand how the completion of the project will impact the use and value of this land.

The height of the lines will prevent aerial application of important crop inputs, particularly for rice, which is grown in flooded fields, thus preventing ground application. Fertilizer timing is essential to protecting yields, as is the ability to apply crop protection products when needed. Farmland values will be greatly reduced due to loss of yield potential.

Irrigation practices will be either hindered or altogether prevented, if this project were to move forward. Center-pivot irrigation will be impossible and the infrastructure investment many farmers have made would be rendered worthless. Magnetic fields created by this new direct current line could impact the ability to survey with both GPS and lasers. This is essential to ensure proper levy placement for flood irrigation and precision land leveling. Rights-of-way

could limit access to fields complicating many farming practices. At a time when our state's farmers are working to ensure production meets the demand of an ever-growing world population, this project could take significant portions of fields out of production.

Arkansas Farm Bureau is opposed to the use of eminent domain to complete this project. The initial request for eminent domain was denied at the state level, and we feel this is an issue of state sovereignty. A federal commission's ruling should not supersede a state's will. The use of eminent domain should be rarely applied, as property ownership is a bedrock right of Americans and must be guarded carefully. The Clean Line Energy Plains & Eastern Transmission Project should be required to negotiate in good faith with land owners. However, eminent domain authority, granted at the federal level, will decrease their incentive to fairly compensate land owners.

We are supportive of legislation proposed by Arkansas Senators John Boozman and Tom Cotton, the *Assuring Private Property Rights Over Vast Access to Lands (APPROVAL) Act*. We agree that decisions such as these should not be made without input and approval from the state level. Companion legislation in Congress would be helpful to mitigate the potential impact of this project to Arkansas' farmers and ranchers.

If this project moves forward, Plains and Eastern Clean Line Energy must search for practices to limit its impact on landowners and the future productivity of the land. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Veach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Randy Veach, President

RV/zb