

FILE

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BEFORE THE  
OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

PUCO

In the Matter of: )  
The Application of American Transmission )  
Systems, Incorporated and The Cleveland )  
Electric Illuminating Company for a )  
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility )  
and Public Need for the Geauga County )  
138 kV Transmission Line Supply Project )

Case No. 07-0171-EL-BTX

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INITIAL DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

RANDOLPH H. BENNETT

ON BEHALF OF

CITIZENS ADVOCATING RESPONSIBLE ENERGY

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1 Q. Please state your name and address.

2 A. Randolph Harvey Bennett. My address is 11680 Clay Street, Huntsburg,  
3 Ohio, 44046.

4 Q. How long have you lived at this address?

5 A. 21 years.

6 Q. Do you own any other property in Geauga County?

7 A. Yes. I own a parcel of property to the south of my residence on Clay  
8 Street, as well as a single family rental property in Chardon, and the  
9 building where I operate my business in Chardon.

10 Q. Have you resided in Geauga County your whole life?

11 A. I have lived in Geauga County since I was 5 years old.

12 Q. How will your property on Clay Street be affected by construction of the  
13 proposed transmission line along Clay Street?

14 A. If constructed, the proposed line will have a negative aesthetic impact on  
15 the area. My wife and I moved from Chardon in 1987 because we liked  
16 the rural setting in Huntsburg. We wanted property with a barn, pond, and  
17 trees to raise horses for our children so they could get involved in 4H. The  
18 proposed transmission line will require clear-cutting a right-of-way of 62  
19 feet from the road centerline including those trees outside the right-of-way  
20 capable of interfering. The removal of trees and vegetation, and the  
21 placement of transmission lines and poles, will adversely affect the beauty  
22 and aesthetics of all property on both sides of the street in three  
23 townships.

24 Q. Are there trees and vegetation on your property that would have to be  
25 removed if the electrical transmission line is constructed along Clay  
26 Street?

27 A. Yes. I have trees along the road edge of both of my properties that will fall  
28 within the right-of-way, thus requiring their removal. Some are pines that  
29 are replanted live Christmas trees. Another is a white oak that was  
30 brought from a former residence in Chardon as a seedling. The trees  
31 along the road edge are mostly maple, oak and poplar. Removal of these  
32 trees will leave the east side of my horse pasture open to the road with no  
33 barrier other than a wire fence.

34 Q. Are there utility poles on Clay Street now?

35 A. Yes. These poles are on the opposite side of the street from my land.

36 Q. What other impacts would occur if the electrical transmission line were  
37 constructed along the Clay Street Route?

38 A. Removal of the trees and vegetation would not only ruin the beauty and  
39 aesthetics of the surrounding properties, but it would also have an adverse  
40 environmental impact. I have been planting trees for additional shade and  
41 wind breaks. Any decrease of vegetation will increase erosion and  
42 drainage problems.

43 Q. What other impacts would occur if the electrical transmission line were  
44 constructed along the Clay Street Route?

45 A. I believe there would be a decrease in the property values. Having a  
46 barren, clear-cut right-of-way within feet of the front of houses lessens the

47 beauty of the properties and will lessen the curb-appeal to prospective  
48 buyers. Add to this the growing public perception that power lines are  
49 dangerous because of electromagnetic fields. Recent national news  
50 regarding the use of cell phones is just one example. These factors will  
51 most likely result in a reduction in property values and a lengthening of the  
52 amount of time it takes to sell a piece of property along the transmission  
53 line route.

54 Q. What other impacts would occur if the electrical transmission line were  
55 constructed along the Clay Street Route?

56 A. There is also a safety issue that is created by constructing the  
57 transmission along Clay Street. Because Clay Street is a narrow country  
58 road, the poles are usually set only 30 feet from the road centerline. This  
59 is particularly dangerous and there is the possibility for an errant vehicle to  
60 collide with a utility pole and disrupt the lines. Most utility corridors are  
61 built away from vehicle traffic to minimize this risk. The construction of  
62 transmission lines in a residential area also increases the risk of tingle  
63 voltage shocks and step voltage to animals and humans. Testimony at the  
64 Thompson Public Hearing from heating contractor Richard Rucinski spoke  
65 of shocks received from his truck. In addition, FirstEnergy's website  
66 states: "Parking within or adjacent to the right-of-way may induce an  
67 electric charge on the vehicle. Induced charges may also be imposed on  
68 objects such as fences, signs, or any other conductive object". Any  
69 residents with school age children who wait for buses will have them

70 standing at the end of their driveways under 138,000 volt lines. In the  
71 winter there is the chance for pole contamination with road salt spray  
72 causing a pole fire. News Channel 5 reported just such an incident on  
73 January 26, 2000 as did the Hudson City Manager's Report on May 18,  
74 2007. To place this transmission line in close proximity to Geauga County  
75 residents working or playing in their yards does not make good sense.

76 Q. What other impacts would occur if the electrical transmission line were  
77 constructed along the Clay Street Route?

78 A. The current application under review lists that there are six homes that will  
79 have to be relocated or destroyed because they fall within the path of the  
80 transmission line right-of-way. This will significantly disrupt those families'  
81 lives. I have personally spoken to and helped measure houses on Clay  
82 Street that are less than five feet beyond the 30 foot right-of-way. With  
83 wires 49 feet from the ground next to a two-story home 30-35 feet away,  
84 the distance closes to 45-50 feet.

85 Q. Do you consider Clay Street an existing civil corridor suitable for  
86 construction of a 138 kV electrical transmission line?

87 A. No. Clay Street is a rural, narrow country road with residences close to  
88 the road, and for these reasons, it is not suitable for construction of a 138  
89 kV electrical transmission line.

90 Q. If the line were constructed along the route identified in the application as  
91 the Preferred Route, would your concerns be eliminated?

- 92 A. No. The intrusion of a new electric utility corridor in Geauga County is  
93 going to have an impact on all of the properties in the county. Geauga  
94 County is a rural county with a small-town atmosphere. People move to  
95 Geauga County for the peace and quiet, and to distance themselves from  
96 urban developments and construction. Part of this rural character and  
97 country environment will be lost if a new utility corridor is constructed.
- 98 Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?
- 99 A. Not at this time.

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and accurate copy of the foregoing Citizens Advocating Responsible Energy's Initial Direct Testimony of Randall H. Bennett was served this 8<sup>th</sup> day of September 2008, via regular U.S. Mail upon the following:

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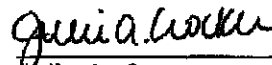
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