

Docket #09-035-54

UTAH PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

**Utah Public Service Commission
ATTN: Julie Orchard**

2009 OCT 12 P 1:20

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RECEIVED

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Also Sent to:

**Bureau of Land Management
ATTN: Mike Nelson
Fax : (801) 977-4397**

Docket #09-035-54

Dear Ms. Orchard,

I am a Realtor, resident of Tooele City, and a member of a citizen's committee to oppose the RMP routes that are proposed to run through Tooele Valley. I am especially concerned with those power lines proposed to run through Tooele City limits and on the south east benches. These routes would have the greatest negative impact on the greatest number of people and the environment.

Rocky Mountain Power's proposal includes a "preferred route" that skirts the south end of the Tooele Valley, across Settlement Canyon, the south bench, and then across Middle Canyon and continues along the eastern bench of the Oquirrh Mountains. There is a local citizen group that has formed that is opposing all routes that go through Tooele City. The reason this group was formed is that there are numerous other options in Tooele County for the placement of these power lines that will not threaten the safety, welfare, and property values of citizens in the county as directly as RMP's preferred route. These alternate routes are not being considered as a priority and need to be.

In studying the Environmental Impact Study we found that it was flawed in several areas. It was grossly skewed to make RMP's preferred route look more attractive than some of the other proposed routes. Several subdivisions that existed at the time of the study were left off of the EIS. The EIS also claimed that the City held no specific general plans for the area. This is not the case. Tooele City's general plan shows exactly what is to be built here in the future. More residential homes. The City even adopted a "Sensitive Overlay" area along the bench to prevent growth up the bench like has taken over in Bountiful. Tooele City also has been purchasing land along the bench to preserve open space for citizens to enjoy.

The preferred route goes right over several natural springs that serve as a water source for Tooele City's culinary water system. It crosses next to the most expensive real estate that can be found in Tooele County. Why is it the most expensive real estate? Because it is located in the most beautiful area in the valley. One can look all around the valley to find the most beautiful part of the hillside and it is undoubtedly the southeast corner benches. The proposed power lines would grossly scar the hillsides and impede hiking up to the "T," which has historically been undertaken by the local high school students for decades.

Power lines, especially during construction, increase the risk of fire. Tooele County is served by volunteer fire departments that would have to respond quickly to fires as the fires would almost immediately threaten homes along the preferred southeast bench line. The preferred route bisects a reservoir in Settlement Canyon that is often used for fire suppression throughout the area. The water was most recently used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to fight the "Pole Fire" that was burning at the beginning of August. The BLM used a helicopter to dip into the reservoir and the water was taken to the site of the fire. Running 345kv power lines directly across a water source that is used for fire suppression is completely irresponsible. The lines would impede a helicopter trying to get water out of the reservoir and risk life, limb, and property. If the line ever was downed into the reservoir, it would be lethal to anyone using the reservoir.

Rocky Mountain Power began using water from the Settlement Canyon Reservoir immediately after the BLM ceased its fire suppression operations for the Pole Fire. They asked Settlement Canyon Irrigation officials if they could use the water and were told no by the water master because the shareholders were already on restrictions and there wasn't ample water to supply their need. RMP proceeded to use a helicopter to take the water from the reservoir to drill their holes for soil sampling. The difference was the BLM had permission and

paid for the water. RMP had no permission and stole the water. RMP began taking the water on Thursday, August 20, and some citizens went up the canyon to see what was going on. On Friday, August 21, 2009, they were told to stop immediately by the water master. On Saturday morning, they again began taking more water from the reservoir and were again confronted by the Tooele City Mayor, a Tooele City Councilman, and the Settlement Canyon Irrigation Water Master, and told to stop. This was not just a taking, this was stealing from the Settlement Canyon Irrigation shareholders, and at least one formal complaint has been filed with the Tooele City Police Department. This illustrates the arrogance of RMP and how they have been "working with" the citizen groups and governments in Tooele. I was appalled that they would take the water without permission and surprised at them taking the crime so lightly. It appears that their way of business is to do whatever suits their needs first and then, after being caught, asking for forgiveness. This was also demonstrated by their EIS which ignores pertinent facts about their preferred route so they could get approval.

This area already is crisscrossed by several low voltage power lines. As a Realtor I have seen time and again people not purchase a property because a power line runs by it, or over it, etc. Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veteran's Administration (VA) requirements do not allow for loans to be made on homes that are in close proximity to power lines. This will also adversely affect the local real estate as it hinders the type of financing people can get for properties and will decrease the number of people who can potentially purchase a property.

These are very large high voltage lines that have never been seen in Tooele County. The lines will definitely adversely affect property values wherever they are placed in the area. Decreasing property values of the most expensive real estate in an area is not the brightest of ideas especially when governmental entities are finding themselves with budget deficits at every level. Is RMP going to be held responsible for making up the difference as to what would have been collected had the lines not diminished the Tooele property values?

We, as a citizen's group and local government leaders, have presented other less expensive routes to RMP and they have been uncooperative with our city and county elected officials determination that their preferred routes would devastate Tooele now and in the future. RMP isn't respecting our land or our community.

The routes presented to RMP by our committee, our City Mayor, City Council and County Commissioners are less expensive to the public and are far better choices for our valley and would benefit everyone in the future. Electricity is important and we, as citizens in Tooele Valley, are willing to do our part to connect with the West Wide Energy Plan; we do however object to the manner in which RMP is choosing our "best" prime real estate in their selected routes. We would appreciate it if the Public Utility Commission would grant Tooele a public hearing to review all of the information before granting RMP the certificates of public necessity. We would also encourage the Bureau of Land Management to not allow RMP to build the power lines along their preferred route across the south east benches of Tooele, but to opt for the route proposed and agreed to by the citizen groups and elected officials. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Andrea Cahoon

1289 Brandy Lane, Tooele, UT 84074

435-850-8167

cc: Bureau of Land Management, Mike Nelson