

Brown County Commissioners Court 2-9-2026

Thank you for the opportunity to encourage you to oppose the ONCOR power line through Brown County. My name is Dennis McBeth and I live in Runnels County on a small place near Crews that has been in my family for more than one hundred years. I have a lifetime of livestock experience and worked in the oilfield for many years. For the past 12 years I've been writing the column "Oil About Ranching" for Livestock Weekly published in San Angelo. The intent of the column is to help bridge the gap of understanding between agriculture and the oilfield operations. I am an independent writer and not an employee of Livestock Weekly and do not represent them but greatly appreciate the format which they provide. So, I am not a journalist but an admittedly biased highly opinionated columnist. There is a difference. Much of what I write about is from experience and a lot of that is BAD experience. This 765kV powerline has all the earmarkings of another bad experience and has already generated more comments and discussion than any subject in 12 years and NOT one has been in favor of the project.

I am an advocate for Private Property Rights. Infringement and loss for any of our rights affects us all because it either sets or adds to precedence. I was over forty years old before I learned that the two primary factors for a successful economy are private property rights and the rule of law.

I also learned:

Legislators make laws

Bureaucrats interpret the laws and write procedures and guidelines

More bureaucrats "ONLY FOLLOW ORDERS"!

Eminent Domain runs over us

Contractors make the profit

Taxpayers pay the bills

One thing that I painfully learned as a drilling supervisor was that when I had the feeling that something was wrong, there was almost always something WRONG. When I went to the ONCOR presentation in

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(Exhibit #3)

Sweetwater a few months ago it had been ten years since I had been on a drilling rig but I got that old feeling of "SOMETHING IS WRONG". The first thing that is WRONG is that the proposed power line DOES NOT follow an existing utility corridor BUT will CREATE a new utility corridor.

To condense several months of research into a sound byte, it appears that our legislators decided to "DO SOMETHING". For some reason, the phrase "let's do SOMETHING, even if it's wrong" seems to echo in my ears. It is my understanding that The legislators told ERCOT to DO SOMETHING ERCOT called ONCOR and asked what could be done ONCOR said build more powerlines. The biggest we've seen in our area. How much will that cost?

33 Billion. That's a B with 9 zeros.

Who will pay for it?

All of the electric customers in Texas. About \$1,400 for every Texan between the ages of 18 & 65.

They will never see it coming. Just a little bit added to everybody's bill for as long as it takes.

For months we've been told that the Grid must be updated for AI DATA Centers. Last week I read that the one NW of Abilene, one in Shackelford County and one near Amarillo will construct natural gas powered generators to make their facilities self sufficient and then add Small Modular Nuclear Reactors in a couple of years when they become available. Does that indicate a possible scenario where the AI data centers may have the capacity to produce excess electricity in two years? Possibly reaching that point in less time than it will take to construct the massive powerline. Has anyone considered that advancing technology and Artificial Intelligence might result in the massive transmission line being obsolete by the time it is completed? AI may solve the problem before the line is built.

I contend that the powerline proposal is NOT a good idea aesthetically, economically or environmentally. \$33 BILLION dollars for infrastructure and not ONE watt of electricity added. Can you believe that they are actually trying to sell something like that to us? If they think we'll buy that,

they probably need a self driving car. Well, I don't think they are trying to sell it to us, I think they are trying to cram it down our throats. I keep thinking that \$33 Billion must be a misprint. It's difficult to comprehend.

The green energy coalition seems to overlook the amount of coal and diesel that will be consumed for the mining, milling and construction of the project. With the advances in large battery storage technology there are numerous advantages for using batteries to store energy produced during low demand periods within our current distribution system.

About thirty years ago, I was told that birds will not light on a high voltage powerline. Since then, I have been watching and have never seen a bird on a high voltage power line. I purchased a \$20 non-contact voltage tester and walked under the 345kV transmission line about a mile west of my house. It set off the tester and that line is slightly more than half of the proposed line. The detrimental impact on wildlife, livestock and humans is difficult if not impossible to quantify but we do know that clearing a continuous 200 feet wide strip wide with or without the presence of some kind of an electrical field will affect the habitat. A massive powerline will not affect only the property that it is on but it will devalue nearby property. Those across the road won't be compensated for loss of property value.

If the project goes through and eminent domain is used we should all insist that all damage and easement payments are public record and that payments are annual rental with five year adjustments and not just a single payment. Just tell them that we want to be treated the same as University Lands of Texas on their 2.1M acres. Consider what an easement payment thirty years ago in regard to the impact on land value. Land values in my community have multiplied by six to ten times in thirty years. A single payment made today will not make up for the perpetual economic impairment created by an easement.

I contend that the massive powerline is not well thought out. We are told that AI is going to solve all kinds of problems. Try doing an AI search with ONCOR delete and ERCOT delete and see if massive powerlines or more

power plants in more locations is the recommended solution. What if AI solves the energy problem and renders the 765kV powerlines obsolete by the time the lines are completed -but the rate payers will still pay for it.

If you need to provide water for cattle over a ten mile area, would you recommend putting 50,000 barrel storage facilities at each end or having 10,000 bbl storage each mile. We are told that the proposed massive powerline will not have drops between Glen Rose and Forsan. Basically a reservoir on each end. Mega batteries within the grid to store excess energy during times of low demand and excess capacity will make the grid more efficient and sustainable.

We landowners are being told to lawyer up to fight the power line. But we need some bean counters before we need lawyers. \$33B! That premise of lawyering up means don't put it on my land but put it on a distant neighbor's land. Pitting neighbor against neighbor is a dirty tactic and it appears that they are attempting to wear us down by presenting three possible routes and having us fight among ourselves. The Legislature is not in session so citizens desperately need the help of local politicians. County Commissioners are our first and possibly our only line of defense. Without your help to oppose the powerline, citizens will be forced to spend a lot of money on lawyers. Without help from our elected officials we may be fighting a losing battle. We are being told from various sources, "The powerline is going to happen and there is nothing that we can do about it". I've spent considerable time and done extensive research and I believe that the study that precipitated this project was more than two years ago and is not up to date with current technology. Considering the aesthetics, environment, economics, livestock, wildlife, private property rights and that it probably won't provide one single plug in for your county, and remember the possibility of unknown health risks, please say NO to the powerline and link Brown County with Comanche, Coleman and Runnels in opposition to the 756kV powerline. dennis.mcbeth@gmail.com 325-338-0018