



letter to the editor

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this is the letter I just sent to the Tooele Transcript Bulletin - it is a bit long, but I hope they publish it all. Please feel free to forward this to everyone on your list Kaye. Thank you Glenna and Kaye and Aaron for your comments. Aaron has had extensive experience in studying corporate proposals and points out that there are many many unanswered questions He says it is often the case that a proponent of a proposal has not considered all the alternatives nor the underlying assumptions - and that when time is taken to make that analysis, that many of the proposals are simply not the best decision. It appears that this is one of those cases.

Kerry - would you be so kind as to send me your list of issues that you spelled out on your power point slide? I believe that I have added at least a couple of new items in this letter. And I am hoping that Aaron, looking from a completely outside perspective, may be able to add a few more.

the letter:

Dear Editor

We all want the best quality of life we can get here in Tooele. But let us not be too quick to believe that Rocky Mountain Power's proposal to run a power line through our county will improve that quality.

For the moment, let's put aside the question of whether or not a power line is, in fact, necessary for Rocky Mountain Power to properly serve its customers, or whether it is the best of all alternatives. They say they have done many studies, over many years, and they surely know better than us small-town residents what would be best for all of us. They say that their preferred route through Tooele will be the best (they probably believe the least costly) for all of their customers (they probably mean for them as a private corporation owned by the country's richest man). Maybe we can take them at their word.

However, of immediate concern is whether the route Rocky Mountain Power has chosen is the best route for Tooele. I believe that the route preferred by the Concerned Citizens of Tooele is much better for Tooele in every respect to the RMP preferred route. The Concerned Citizens route - which runs along the west edge of Tooele Valley and then East along the freeway corridor just South of the lake - will provide every benefit that Rocky Mountain Power promises to Tooele with much less cost to Tooele.

RMP claims that the CC route will cost them more than their preferred route, but there too, we have to take them at their word - as they have provided none of the details of any cost estimate. It is my belief that they have not considered the costs that their preferred route will impose on Tooele and its citizens. I am one who will face a direct financial loss. My family, and two other

families own a large piece of property that will be bisected and essentially ruined by their construction. I believe that all other homeowners on the South bench will also face a loss. No-one likes to live in the shadow of a monstrous power line. There are many studies that point out dangerous health effects from these extremely high power lines. The industrial nature of a high power transmission line is essentially incompatible with residences. RMP has stated that they do not believe their power lines are incompatible with homes and families. They believe there is only a calculable difference in value. And they believe that the difference only has an economic impact for ten or twelve years. After that, they believe that people just accept what is and don't notice any problem with the way things are. I disagree. Every time I go to mother's house, I see the ugly power lines that are along Skyline Drive. I note that mother buried all the power lines on her property so that she would not have to look at them. I know that no one comparing a possible residential site with high power lines to one without could fail to see the difference. That difference will there much longer than ten or twelve years. And while in ten years, locals may not notice the blight, it will be forever obvious to any visitor and will forever scare many away. RMP has decidedly not considered all the economic cost to property owners on the bench South of Tooele.

Besides the economic loss and the health costs to families living near high power lines, we can add other concerns that impact most of the citizens of Tooele: 1) RMP's proposal crosses Settlement Canyon and the Settlement Canyon reservoir. Power lines there would impair the ability of fire-fighting helicopters to use reservoir water. 2) A downed power line could electrify the reservoir and all the connecting water lines. 3) RMP's proposal crosses some of the most picturesque views in Tooele – both canyons to the South of town as well as the "T" and the benches in between. RMP's ugly rusty towers may be intended to blend in with the landscape – but to me they stand out as symbols of industrial decay. They will certainly stand on the ridge lines and blight the mouths and views of our canyons. 4) Thinking of how their lines and towers will impact our recreational use of this area does not bring happy thoughts[VACII]. 4) RMP's proposal crosses watershed and wells that provide a great deal of Tooele's culinary water supply. When they put in a power line, they routinely cut roads and greenery, and they customarily keep the greenery down with regular chemical spraying. Who can say what those chemicals will do to us when we drink them? And how much will that construction and road-building affect the cleanliness of our water? And the hillside landscape? 5) RMP's environmental impact statement has not considered these impacts, nor the cutting of our rather scarce greenery, the impact on wild animals – the deer and turkeys and others – that live in our foothills, nor the impact on cultural resources. 6) I saw on a tv show on dangerous occupations, that power companies routinely inspect and clean power lines by flying down the lines with helicopters. What would that practice do to us? 7) What is the life expectancy of these rusty towers? Who will pay to replace them or to take them down if large transmission lines become un-economic? We have seen telephone lines become unnecessary – yet we are forced to continue to live with them. I have heard that there are almost-ready-for-the-market micro power cells, powered by natural gas, that will provide electricity for any house with a gas line. Why then should we put in more electric lines if the real second source of power can be gas, or solar cells, or something else? I wonder if the reasonable course of action would be for us as a County to require that RMP post a clean-up bond. After all, we don't want them to be building the next superfund site out of one of the nicest areas of our County.

The big question is what else are we not considering? Once we give RMP the go-ahead, their towers will not just affect ourselves, they will impact our children and our children's children. Isn't it appropriate that we take as much time as RMP says they have taken to consider how this big decision will impact us? How many times has a big corporation made the 'best' decision for the little people. We've heard of Bhopal and Love Canal and how many more. If we don't take the time to do a real economic impact study of the impact of this RMP proposal on our County, how can we call ourselves responsible for what we have been given?

One small example should raise questions in our mind of how well RMP has done their studies. RMP claims that the CC route is more dangerous because a) the ground there might liquefy in case of an earthquake, b) their lines might conflict with use of the Erda airport, and c) high winds might endanger their lines. But they do not seem to have considered the fact that their preferred route a) crosses more earthquake faults and is on steeper ground, b) blocks firefighting helicopter access to the reservoir in Settlement Canyon, and c) crosses extremely high [VAC2] -wind areas along the bench and at canyon mouths.

We should also consider, if we indeed need a new power line, how the CC route will be better for Tooele than the RMP preferred route. First the CC route was chosen to allow a line to run through Tooele Valley and on to Salt Lake Valley with the least possible impact to existing residences. Every attempt was made to keep the CC route as far away as possible from all homes. Second, the CC route tried to maximize the benefit to Tooele. **We need to understand that no power from this new transmission line will be directly available to anyone in Tooele.** [VAC3] [VAC4] The only possible availability of new power will be from a new substation – if and when RMP builds one. (And RMP's current proposal, as spelled out in their application for a County conditional use permit, does not include the building of any substation – they will only be putting up their poles and running their lines through. Their immediate proposal is to give us all of the 'benefits' of looking at and living near their power lines but no second-source of power.) We then ought to ask where the most likely location for new industrial power-users is in Tooele Valley – the new industry that can bring new jobs – as well as possible pollution and traffic and noise. Is it most likely that these industries will be built near our existing homes? Or is it more likely that they will be built near the freeway at the North end of the valley? If North, as I think it is, then where should the new substation be? At the South end of Tooele Valley, where RMP wants to put it? Or up North where the CC plan puts it? I believe that the CC plan will provide more useable power for Tooele Valley in the long run than the RMP plan. Third is somewhat of a repeat of the first issue – the incompatibility of the power line with residential development. A community that has power and rail, air and road access, AND very nice residential areas is more attractive to new businesses than a community that lacks the nice residential areas. (I once lived in Midland Texas. It is only a few miles from Odessa Texas. And I often wondered why there needed to be two oil towns in such close proximity. The reason? Midland had the nice residential areas....) If we can't keep our nice residential areas, we will be chasing away a lot of future business income, and tax revenue, and generally the people with capital, who are the most likely people to create future business opportunities and jobs.... (How can you put a ten year value on that?) Fourth is the possibility of a large generator of a truly second or third source of power. If that source is nuclear or solar or wind, a very likely

location for that source is our own West desert or somewhere in Nevada. If or when that source is built, how will the new high power transmission lines get to the population and industry? A Northern sub station location is a much better tie-in location and makes second source redundancy for us much more likely than if the substation is located at the South end of Tooele Valley (And if the substation is down South, there will then likely be TWO and not one high power transmission lines running down the West edge of Tooele valley).

We can look at what we don't have here in Tooele Valley. We don't have a lot of water and we don't have a second source of power. But let us not lose sight of what we do have. And let us be sure that our efforts to improve our quality of life do not give up what we do have in the rush to seize on one or two supposed improvements. We could live with a RMP power line, and it might improve our quality of life in the long run. But their current proposal almost certainly will not. We need to take the time and spend a little money to determine if this is truly something that will benefit us. We know that in the short run there is NO benefit to us. Why doesn't Salt Lake Valley – the prime beneficiary of this powerline – bear all of the costs? Why does RMP think it makes sense to run their line 40 miles West of Mona, the starting point, up through our valley and then to loop back East to end up at a point that is directly North of where they started? Perhaps they think they can put the forever future blight and costs of this power line onto our nice little valley and we won't realize, until it is too late, what they have done to us.

I realize that I don't know everything and that there may be issues that I have not considered. But I am a concerned citizen, who has attended many meetings, and has researched some of the issues of high power lines. I do know that I want high transmission power lines as far away from me as possible. I hope that your readers will benefit from some of my observations, and that we as a County will take the time to really study the costs and possible benefits of this huge decision.

Let us not let a big foreign corporation decide our future and the future of our children and our children's children. Let us carefully consider ALL the options and weigh the costs and the possible benefits and make the decision that is best for Tooele – both now and for our children's future.

Sincerely,

Pete Grimm



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