

CHRIS GIBSON

20th District, New York

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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513 Broadway
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(518) 306-5450

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136 Glen Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 743-0964

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2 Hudson Street, PO Box 775
Kinderhook, NY 12066
(518) 610-8133

DELHI
111 Main Street
Delhi, NY 13753
(607) 746-9537

June 17, 2012

Hon. Garry A. Brown, Chairman
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 3
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Re: Case 12-T-0248: Application of New York State Electric & Gas Corporation for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Construction of the "Columbia County Transmission Project," Approximately 11.1 Miles of 115 Kilovolt Transmission Lines and related facilities in the Towns of Chatham, Ghent and Stockport, in Columbia County.

Dear Chairman Brown:

I have the distinct privilege of representing New York's 20th Congressional District, which includes the Towns of Chatham, Ghent and Stockport, all of which will be impacted by the above-referenced transmission line project being advanced by the New York State Electric & Gas Corporation ("NYSEG"). As I understand it, NYSEG is currently before the New York Public Service Commission ("Commission"), seeking a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need ("Certificate") authorizing the project.

The NYSEG project, which consists of (+/-) 11 miles of above-ground transmission lines and related facilities, threatens serious disruption to communities in my District. Specifically, I am concerned about the loss of active agricultural lands in one of our state's more rural areas, the project's potential impacts on important historic and archeological resources, and its visual impacts on our parks, recreation areas, open space and scenic byways, all of which contribute to the unique community and neighborhood character of Columbia County in general, and my District in particular, which the residents have cultivated and protected for decades.

Procedurally, I am deeply concerned with NYSEG's apparent disregard of the input of and concerns expressed by local elected officials in my District. These individuals have worked hard over the years, often for little or no pay, to protect the important values and resources described

above to the greater good of New York State. Their voices need to be heard in this proceeding and their views need to be fully taken into account by your agency. In other words, there is far more at stake here than the mere cost of a transmission line.

In writing to you today, I am not insensitive to New York's energy needs. Indeed, I am an active and enthusiastic supporter of sound energy planning, particularly in the area of renewable energy. As I understand it, Article VII of the New York Public Service Law authorizes the PSC to scrutinize closely the need for the NYSEG project, as well as the reasonable alternatives to it, including energy efficiency, demand side management and other load-side measures which, either individually or collectively, could eliminate the need for new overhead transmission lines altogether. Sound energy planning principles should compel a rigorous analysis in that regard.

It is my sincere hope that you and your colleagues on the Commission will ensure a thorough, fair and balanced review of the NYSEG project -- one which places the agricultural, environmental and social concerns set forth above on at least an equal footing with cost concerns or administrative convenience. The law requires it, and our residents deserve nothing less.

Should you have any questions concerning this correspondence, or if my office can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned, or my Staff, at any time.

My thanks in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Chris Gibson
Congressman, 20th Congressional District

cc: Hon. Patricia A. Acampora
Hon. Robert E. Curry, Jr.
Hon. Maureen F. Harris, Esq.
Hon. James L. LaRocca
Hon. Jaclyn A. Brillling, Secretary to the Commission