

For Immediate Release

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Narrow Path is Narrow-Minded

PSE&G and PPL have announced that they are considering the use of existing 100-foot wide rights-of-way to push through the Susquehanna-Roseland transmission line expansion. The utilities have applied for a permit from the National Park Service to expand the rights-of-way within the Delaware Water Gap and Appalachian Trail. Currently the NPS is conducting an environmental review of the controversial project which is expected to be complete in 2012.

Environmental groups are outraged that PSE&G and PPL are attempting to circumvent the NPS review and fast-track this project. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) exists to assess environmental impacts which are directly related to project safety. The original 200-foot rights-of-way were proposed because the utilities need that distance for safety specifications.

"It is narrow-minded and irresponsible for the utilities to even consider a 100-foot right of way. PSE&G and PP&L are again showing how greedy these utilities are. They know they can't continue to justify the need for the project so they'll just try to start it before the NPS completes its review," **said Christine Guhl, Sierra Club Field Organizer.**

"This proposal is ludicrous because the applicants will still need federal permits to cross the Delaware River and impact wetlands within the park units. The utilities are trying to pressure NPS to speed up the review process because they did not properly plan. I am confident NPS will see through this ploy and continue its thorough environmental review within the set timeframe," **said Kate Millsaps, Campaign Coordinator, New Jersey Highlands Coalition.**

The expansion would consist of replacing the current 80-foot tall towers with ones close to 200-feet. It would also add nine power lines to the existing six. These specifics are the reasons PSE&G and PPL applied for an extension of the right-of-way. If an 80-foot tall tower falls, a 100-foot wide right-of-way is sufficient, but it's not sufficient for when a 200-foot tall tower falls. When the additional power lines sway, the 200-foot wide right of way is necessary to prevent the lines from hitting trees.

The utilities proposed this project to comply with recommendations from the regional transmission operator, PJM. PJM requires a minimum 300-foot right-of-way for a 500 kv line with two circuits. The utilities now assert that PJM's right-of-way requirement is unnecessary and that 100 feet is adequate.

"This change of course by the power companies shows yet again that this project was ill-conceived from the start. The power companies originally asserted that a larger right-of-way was needed for safety reasons. Now, in an apparent attempt to evade a full federal review of their proposed actions, they claim that a smaller right of way will suffice. The environmental community is confident the National

Park Service will conduct a thorough and robust review of the proposed power line expansion, as required by federal law," **said Attorney Kevin Pflug, Easter Environmental Law Clinic.**

The NPS held three public hearings and opened a month-long comment period on preliminary alternatives to the project, which closed yesterday. The overwhelming majority of public comments were in opposition to the expansion. Environmental groups and concerned citizens want to see the NPS do a thorough environmental review, including an evaluation of the need for the project. The utilities are responding to public scrutiny by undermining the NPS and NEPA.

"The general public is smart enough to see right through this 'fast track' charade being pulled by the power companies," **stated Scott Olson, a local resident and activist opposing the project.** ""An unofficial online poll by *The Express-Times* shows that seven out of ten people support proper environmental assessment by the Park Service, with residents showing their disdain for corporate bullies reaping massive profits while desecrating lands being held in the public trust."

"The question is ludicrous. Why would anyone want to fast tract their own communities' destruction? I think the poll shows the public gets it and does not fall for PSEG spin. This power line is not needed. It would bring dirty coal power to NJ/NYC and destroy one of the most pristine areas in the region," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.** "The National Park Service needs to reject this scheme to get around proper environmental reviews and protect our Water Gap and Appalachian Trail from this project."

"The power companies are clearly in desperation mode, and they WANT this line badly. The reality is that we don't NEED it," **said David Slaperud, Stop The Lines Trustee.**

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