



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

GEARY HIGGINS

P.O. BOX 388
WATERFORD, VIRGINIA 20197

THIRTIETH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
COUNTIES, CITIES AND TOWNS
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

August 27, 2024

SUBJ.: Support of Undergrounding 500kV/230kV Transmission Lines along the Aspen to Golden Route

Dear State Corporation Commissioners:

As a member of the Virginia General Assembly, representing Loudoun County, I strongly support undergrounding of the 500kV/230kV transmission lines along the Aspen-Golden Route wherever feasible.

Placing this critical infrastructure underground is vital for 1) enhancing public safety and protecting the national grid, and 2) preserving our historic, scenic assets and protecting property values for our constituents. Additionally, I would recommend that the cost of constructing these additional lines be appropriately and reasonably spread across the rate base.

- 1. Enhancing Public Safety and Protecting the National Grid.** Advances in underground transmission and other conductor technology can offer advantages for reliability, resilience and should be explored. Undergrounded lines are less susceptible to weather-related disruptions, such as high winds, tornadoes, and heavier snowstorms. The enhanced reliability of undergrounding the lines is crucial for ensuring uninterrupted electricity service to our national grid, the data centers that provide for a robust, information-based economy, the Federal Government, residents, businesses, and essential services, while minimizing adverse impacts to our local economy and community well-being.
- 2. Preserving Scenic Assets and Protecting Property Values.** Loudoun County is known for its rural wineries, scenic landscapes, and historic assets, located nearby to well-designed urban-suburban communities. Dominion's proposed above ground transmission lines will see 190' tall transmission towers erected through the heart of some of Loudoun County's most valuable assets, thereby adversely impacting the visual, environmental, and economic impacts on thousands of our constituents.

The Commission should consider these items and order Dominion to place all or significant portions of the Aspen-Golden Line underground, particularly where the impacts would be greatest.

Additionally, I encourage the Commission to explore alternatives that would allow the existing infrastructure to provide more power over the same route within the existing ROW'. This could include but is not limited to High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) or Advanced Conducting Material (ACM).

In conclusion, I respectfully urge the State Corporation Commission to prioritize the undergrounding of 500kV/230kV transmission lines along the Aspen-Golden Route. As State Delegate I have a responsibility to look beyond the borders of my own jurisdiction and assess how a decision may impact the entire Commonwealth. I believe the decision to underground these lines will not only benefit Loudoun County but will also set a precedent for responsible electrical infrastructure development throughout the Commonwealth and across the nation.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. Should you require any additional information or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Geary M. Higgins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Geary M. Higgins
Member, House of Delegates
Thirtieth District of Virginia