



POJOAQUE
VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Melville L. Morgan
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January 2, 2017

Bureau of Land Management
Verde Transmission Line Project

Re: Comments from Pojoaque Valley School Board of Education

Dear Sirs:

The Pojoaque Valley Schools Board of Education (the Board) is submitting the following comments regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (the Bureau) intent to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate impacts of the proposed Verde Transmission Line through the Pojoaque Valley. The Board is entrusted with the safety and well-being of 1,973 students, over 260 employees and many visitors to its schools.

Our School District has multiple facilities on its Jacona campus that lie within several hundred feet of the proposed Verde Transmission line as detailed by the route overview that illustrates the path of the line as it crosses through Jacona and Jacanita and over New Mexico Highway 502. These facilities are occupied by students and staff that include the Pablo Roybal Elementary School, the Pojoaque Intermediate School, the Pojoaque Valley High School, the Ben Lujan Gym, outdoor sports facilities and the District Central Office. We have a number of concerns regarding the impact to our students, staff, and schools:

- We do not have evidence that our students and employees would not experience adverse health effects from the proposed 345 kV transmission line. At present, we do not have scientific, peer-reviewed documentation that the transmission line will not harm our students' and employees' health or pose a safety risk.
- The size and location of the transmission poles could present a safety hazard to students and staff especially since Pojoaque students use adjacent lands near our schools for athletic activities such as cross-country running.
- The District is concerned about the impacts of the right of way (ROW) easement and how they could impact property values in the community that form the basis for the District's General Obligation bond capability. Any decline in property values decreases the District's bonding capability for voters to approve bonds for critical school infrastructure improvements.

Pojoaque Valley Schools Board of Education

Jon Paul Romero
President

Fernando Quintana
Vice-President

Toby G. Velasquez
Secretary

Sharon Dogruel
Member

Jeffrey D. Atencio
Member


- NM Highway 502 is the primary highway for the high volume of motor vehicle traffic to and from Los Alamos as well as our schools and runs directly in front of the facilities listed above, as well as the Pojoaque Middle School located a few miles east of the Jacona campus. The construction and maintenance of the transmission line will significantly impact traffic during construction and maintenance and increase the risk of traffic-related accidents.
- The District is concerned about the damage of the proposed transmission line to the viewscape from the Jacona campus, which currently benefits from its location in a relatively natural setting in the Jacona hills. This viewscape is valued by students, employees and visitors alike.
- In addition to potential health effects, the District has concerns regarding noise and potential fire hazards. No scientific evidence is available to answer questions regarding these concerns.

The Pojoaque Valley School District Board of Education supports the the precautionary approach to risk management in protecting our students, employees and visitors from harm. In the absence of peer-reviewed scientific consensus that the proposed transmission line presents no risk of harm, the Board submits this statement indicating they do not support the building of the Verde Transmission Line and recommend the Bureau propose the no-build option as the preferred option for the project in the EIS.

We welcome any interaction with and information from the Bureau and our Superintendent, Dr. Melville L. Morgan and Board President, Jon Paul Romero, can be reached at the District Office at (505) 455-2282.

Sincerely,


Jon Paul Romero, Board President


Dr. Melville L. Morgan, Superintendent

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