

RES Specialty Pyrotechnics

MAGIC IN THE AIR



November 4, 2009

To: Joint Committee: Joint Meeting of the Energy Finance & Policy Division and Civil Justice Committee

Re: Informational hearing on HF1182 (Bly) Public service corporation exemptions repealed.

My name is Steve Coman. I am a landowner located in Derrynane Township in LeSueur County, just west of New Prague. My wife and I built our home on this property 11 years ago. I am a small business owner and my business is also located on this property.

My company, RES Specialty Pyrotechnics is a manufacturer of theatrical pyrotechnics. These "Close Proximity" fireworks are used in Music Concerts, Theme Parks and Special events Worldwide. Tours by Paul McCartney and Kiss, MN Vikings and Gopher football, a theme park with "Very big Mouse Ears" as well as the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th this year utilized product produced by RES Specialty Pyrotechnics.

Products from China and the US regulatory environment have virtually eliminated pyrotechnics manufacturing in the States. We however have managed to find a niche market and run a profitable business that employs people in Minnesota.

In addition to our manufacturing, we also provide firework displays for many communities in Minnesota for both Independence Day and Community Celebrations.

Finding a suitable location for a business such as ours is no easy task. When looking to find an appropriate location for my business it took me almost a year to find an acceptable location. Regulations require us to be in a rural, open location with large separation distances between us and my neighbors.

During these past 11 years I have enjoyed an excellent relationship with my neighbors, as well as LeSueur County, Fire, Police and Regulatory officials.

The CAPX 2020 proposed powerline has 2 routes, preferred and alternate. Both of these routes however cross in one small area. My property is located in this common route.

The powerline is proposed to run lengthwise along the East border of my property line.

It is important to note that my property is a long narrow rectangle in shape, only about 650ft wide. (See attached route map for detail).

My home is approximately 125' inside the property line. My barn is only 50' from the property line. The proposed line would take a minimum of 75' of my property putting my barn in their right of way and 345Kv power lines directly over my home. According to my attorney it is common for utility to increase the right of way to double the amount for the construction phase of the project. This would essentially put them in my home. From a homeowner and property owner perspective the effects of this would be devastating making my home "unsellable" not to mention potentially "unlivable" due to safety concerns of these lines directly over our home.

From a business perspective, the situation is equally disturbing. At minimum, I would need to remove one of my explosives magazines as it would be in the right of way and directly under the power lines. Because of distance and separation requirements there are no suitable areas to relocate this magazine on my property.

Electricity, especially static and stray voltage is of particular concern in our business. Our buildings floors and tabletops are specially constructed and coated to help keep these hazards to an acceptable safe level. Conductive footwear is needed as well as other Personal Protective Gear.

The product we manufacture is designed to be fired electronically and requires protective measures to be taken. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that explosives and high voltage power lines are not compatible. It is interesting to note however that NASA recommends power lines be located no closer to explosives than the length of the lines between support towers. This would be approximately 1000 feet for the power line in question.

How can I possibly guarantee that my employee's safety will not be compromised by these power lines in close proximity to my business? Quite simply, I can't.

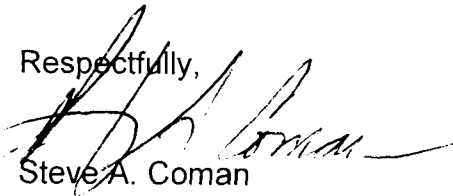
Other regulatory concerns and the burden that would be created along with what I have mentioned above would likely end my business. The loss of employment, loss of income and the enormous cost of trying to relocate and start over would likely be impossible.

The current exception to the eminent domain laws afforded to Great River Energy and the CAPX2020 project makes no sense for the people of Minnesota.

This law, to my understanding was designed to protect landowners from past abuses inflicted by MnDOT and Cities on private landowners. Why should a Public Service Utility not be held to the same standard? Without this protection my employees, family, fellow neighbors and I stand to loose everything with no legal recourse.

I therefore urge you to repeal the public services utilities exemption to the eminent domain law.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve A. Coman", written over the typed name.

Steve A. Coman