



Organizational Impact Statement

1. **Name of Organization:** Loudoun Transmission Line Alliance: Lovettsville

2. **Contact Person:** Mary Terpak: MLTerpak@earthlink.net

3. **Mission:** Identify the property owners in the Lovettsville area who will be affected by the proposed “Greenfield Line” of the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Project in order to: 1) describe the impact of the transmission lines over, adjacent to or near their property; 2) to assess and quantify any negative consequences for their economic well-being and personal lifestyle; and 3) engage them in organized opposition to the project.

4. **Constituency:** All residents of the Lovettsville area and particular property owners who live, farm or engage in any business activities on land affected by the transmission line path in the Lovettsville area.

5. **Summarize the key issues related to the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Project as they affect your organization’s mission and constituency:** The Greenfield Line enters the Lovettsville area at the top of Short Hill Mountain near the end of Long Lane and continues for 4.5 miles to Ash George Road, where it crosses into Waterford. Lovettsville and its surrounding neighborhoods are a quintessential rural Virginia community that is known and loved for its beautiful viewscapes, prime agricultural land, and miles of county dirt roads that reinforce the county’s rural image and culture. The proposed route cuts through the heart of western Loudoun’s highly productive agricultural land requiring a right of way (ROW) that will bisect farms as well as numerous rural properties and residential neighborhoods.

Building the line through the rural community of Lovettsville will result in the loss of viable farm land under, around or adjacent to the towers; a reduction of residents’ property values due to visible intrusion of the towers and potential buyer resistance; loss of enjoyment of the natural beauty of the environment by residents, tourists, and customers; and the destruction of wetlands, trees, habitat, and native fauna and flora.

6. Describe specific results/outcomes to your mission and constituency that will arise if the transmission lines are built in Loudoun County Greenspace. Be as specific as possible, including any statistics that are available to you: The impact of the proposed line on the economic health and well being of the Lovettsville community is significant. The line will be built on or adjacent to neighborhoods impacting approximately 82 property owners by decreasing property values and disrupting the quality of life currently enjoyed and highly valued by these residents. In addition, the line will cross through or by dozens of small farms, equestrian facilities and businesses on private property impacting the economic viability of individual landowners and the Town. The line will also cross over Milltown Creek, an important wetland and vital tributary of the protected Catoctin Creek, thus threatening the ecology and biodiversity of the county's primary waterways.

a. Property devaluation: Numerous studies show that the presence of overhead power transmission lines results in a devaluation of property values between 5% and 30%, with a direct relationship of the property's proximity to the Right of Way and viewshed being a major factor. Our research on the impact of the line on property values in Lovettsville has thus far identified 82 properties, that are in or adjacent to proposed ROW. According to the county tax assessments, the total value of these properties is \$71,580,530. Applying a conservative estimate of a 15% devaluation of properties in the ROW and a 5% impact of adjacent properties, results in \$10,737,080 million devaluation in private property in the 4.5 mile of the transmission line in Lovettsville

b. Financial Impact to Agritourism: Loudoun County's tourism industry brings \$2 billion of revenue to the county each year. The lion's share of that revenue is from tourists who come to western Loudoun's wineries, breweries, distilleries, and cideries (\$118 million revenue per year) to escape urban intensity and enjoy "DC's Wine Country" in a relaxing pastoral environment. While those tourists are here, they stay in bed and breakfasts and Air B&Bs in Lovettsville and elsewhere. They dine in local restaurants and visit Loudoun farm markets and one or more of Lovettsville's three wineries and breweries. They flock to Lovettsville for craft festivals, farm tours, Oktoberfest, Christmas Markets, Mayfest, and other local holiday events. The presence of huge towers supporting 500kv power transmission lines will severely impact the aesthetics of their experience and will certainly deter tourist visits.

c. Impact to Farming Operations: The Lovettsville area is zoned for Agricultural use (AR1). This zoning reflects the reality of farming as the prevailing historic occupation and a long-standing conscious effort to preserve the land and foster continued agricultural uses, and is supported by Soils Classification¹ as prime agricultural land. The County government, pursuant to Virginia Code acknowledges "Important Farmlands"² and has established "Agricultural Districts"³ and promotes agricultural land use through tax incentives. A very large farming operation in the pathway of the transmission line is home to the largest hay production and sales business in the county, serving livestock owners here and throughout the county and surrounding jurisdictions. Farming practices in the area have evolved from a smaller number of large family farms to many smaller farmettes

involved in a “farm to table” marketing approach, on-site self-service markets, equestrian facilities, wine grape cultivation, and leasing for hay production. If approved as proposed, the Greenfield Line will severely disrupt these farm practices by imposing ROWs through farms and farmettes, thereby reducing or eliminating farmable areas and discouraging on site sales of farm products.

Lovettsville has a thriving equestrian presence in the form of boarding, training, and instruction businesses and private horse farms. Approximately 22 horse farms and activities are threatened by being directly in the path of the line, and equestrians in general cherish the ability to ride undisturbed in our fields and on our tranquil dirt roads, several of which will be crossed by the towers and lines. In many instances, equestrian uses are on parcels of 10-20 acres which would be drastically curtailed by the presence of towers and lines, and in most cases the operators use every inch of their land for pasture and riding. These horse farms and activities contribute substantially to the prosperity of western Loudoun. Not insignificantly, equestrians are very anxious about the health implications for themselves, their horses and their customers of the transmission lines.

Research of the county tax records show that sections of the 4.5-mile transmission line in Lovettsville will be built on or adjacent to approximately 28 properties in land use. The line will have many direct impacts on the local agribusiness's operations. For example, installation of transmission towers may require land clearance, potentially disrupting farming operations, such as field crops, greenhouses, or livestock grazing areas. The construction activities could cause damage to existing farm infrastructure, such as irrigation systems, buildings, or equipment and will restrict access to certain areas of the farm, disrupting farming activities such as planting, harvesting, or transportation. The transmission lines will generate electromagnetic fields, potentially interfering with electronic equipment used in farming operations, such as irrigation controllers, refrigeration systems, or processing machinery. Ongoing presence of transmission towers could lead to crop or livestock losses due to damage or reduced productivity leading to revenue losses for individual businesses and the farming section in the area.

d. Impact to Historic Lovettsville:

Settled primarily by German immigrants in the early 18th century, Lovettsville was known then, as now, as the German Settlement. Lovettsville was established as a Town in 1836. During the Civil War Lovettsville was an important stop for Union troops crossing the Potomac River and served as a crossing point for the Underground Railroad.

The proposed 500Kv transmission corridor crosses Short Hill Mountain, which marks the western boundary of the Lovettsville geographic area. At the foot of the mountain lie productive farms, old farmhouses and buildings, old churches and other sites of historic interest.

Mount Sinai African Methodist Episcopal Church was located at the intersection of Britain and Mountain Roads at the foot of Short Hill Mountain. The church is gone but the

accompanying cemetery is still there, with the earliest graves dating to 1877. Many other churches in the area served local neighborhood congregations which reached them in the early days by horse and buggy from surrounding farms and which are still vibrant places of worship.

George's Mill Farm is a significant historic property within the sight lines of the proposed transmission corridor. Since 1750, the property has been in the hands of the George family and their descendants and hosts a thriving agricultural business focusing on goats, cheese and agritourism.

The integrity of these sites, along with many others up and down the proposed path are threatened by this project and its collateral consequences. The history and agricultural and tourism businesses in Lovettsville are a huge contributing factor to the economy of western Loudoun. Once these properties are compromised or destroyed, there will be no way to recoup the financial losses or repair the damage done.

7. List any research sources that support your projections of the impact on your mission and constituency:

References for Property Devaluation Estimates: Note: Studies show a wide range of devaluation impacts based upon the types of real estate considered:

1. Urban areas with power transmission lines tend to show little or no devaluation in property values
2. Rural areas with power transmission lines show from 5 to 36% devaluation in property values
3. High end properties with power transmission lines show a greater devaluation in property values
4. Property devaluation is less with increasing distance from the ROW and viewshead

References For Impact to Farming Operations:

¹ Soils Classification : Website "loudoun.gov" County Soil Types

² Important Farmlands : Commonwealth of Virginia State Corporation Commission Division of Public Utility Regulation "Guidelines for Transmission Line Applications Filed Under Title 56 of the Code of Virginia, Section III, paragraph F. 1 and 2."

³ Zoning Ordinance **Agricultural Districts** "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the County of Loudoun to conserve, protect and to encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural and forestal products. It is also the policy of the County of Loudoun to conserve and protect agricultural and forestal lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide essential open spaces

Other References

James A. Chalmers, PH.D. “Transmission Line Impacts on Rural Property Value” *Right of Way*, May 2013

Delaney C. J. and D. Timmons “High Voltage Power Lines: Do They Affect Residential Property Value?” *Journal of Real Estate Research*, 1992

Hamilton S. W and Schawn G. M. “Do High Voltage Power Lines Affect Property Values?” *Land Economics*, 1995

Des Rosiers F. “Power Lines, Visual Encumbrance and House Values: A Microspatial Approach To Impact Measurement” *Journal of Real Estate Research*, 2002

8. Share individual case studies of people, places, or things that will be affected by this project (no more than three):

a. Breezy Meadow Lane

Breezy Meadow, once a 100-plus-acre dairy farm owned and operated by generations of the Love family, was subdivided into seven (7) 15-11-acre lots in the early 1990s to create the small hamlet now known as Breezy Meadow. Today, the meadow includes two private roadways, Breezy Meadow Lane and Night Archer Lane, connecting seven private homes. Four (4) of these properties support profitable agribusinesses.

These businesses include Cannabreeze, a hemp farm and the county's only CBD processing facility and event venue; Hobby Horse Vineyard, a commercial vineyard providing estate-grown grapes to local Loudoun County vineyards; a horse farm with a boarding operation; and a farmette that raises goats and chickens. Each of these properties, in addition to the others in the meadow, maintains hay fields. In addition to a thriving agriculture economy, the meadow offers a private, tranquil, and neighborly lifestyle. The spectacular early sunrises and afternoon sunsets make the meadow's view scape one of the best in the county.

The NextEra Greenfield line proposes to build a 500kV transmission line in the middle of Breezy Meadow, bisecting Cannabreeze Hemp Farm and its facilities, a horse pasture with barn facilities, several hay pastures, and private gardens. It will also destroy the view scape and devalue the businesses and homes on the adjacent properties. The transmission line will significantly impact the economics and forever alter the lifestyle in the meadow.

The economic impact to this part of western Loudoun County will be devastating, and Cannabreeze Hemp Farm & Company is a case in point. Cannabreeze opened a full-scale multi-million-dollar hemp processing and manufacturing operation in 2020. Like many other Lovettsville agribusinesses, it operates several economic enterprises to make the business profitable. Cannabreeze is a farm that produces 3,000 lbs. of dried hemp flower

per year and is Northern Virginia's only CBD processing facility which services local hemp growers throughout the state. Cannabreeze also has an on-site dispensary that services customers in the tri-state area with over 70+ products, as well as an event venue that attracts thousands of tourists each year. Furthermore, Cannabreeze employs a dozen workers, many of whom are young individuals with a passion for agriculture, which is difficult to instill in the younger generation today.

The wide variation of enterprises under one umbrella represents the entrepreneurial spirit of the county residents, while it also illustrates how much time and effort it takes to build a small agribusiness that can support a family and make the local Western Loudoun economy work. Installing transmission towers on Breezy Meadow would destroy this innovative and growing business. Hemp is an annual crop vulnerable to depleted soil, weeds, fungus, and mold that are commonplace in Virginia's damp climate. The crop is planted yearly in different fields to allow the land to lay idle and rejuvenate. Furthermore, the rows in the fields must be set far apart to allow the air to circulate and minimize the moisture and mildew. Staff tills the rows constantly to keep the weeds from choking the crop. The construction of the towers would bisect the hemp farm, making it impossible to continue the specialized farming practices required to cultivate this delicate crop.

In addition, the tower's electromagnetic fields could interfere with electronic equipment in the processing facility. The impact beyond Cannabreeze would be devastating because it would slow or shut down the processing capacity for all the hemp farmers in the region. Finally, the presence of large transmission towers would negatively affect the scenic beauty of the surrounding landscape, ruin the aesthetics of Cannabreeze Farm and its event venue, and limit the number of tourists the farm currently brings to the county.

The disruption caused by construction activities and the ongoing presence of transmission towers will also be significant to the other agribusinesses and homes on the meadow. In the case of Hobby Horse Vineyard, the construction of the towers could lead to crop losses due to damage to vines or reduced productivity. The livestock operations on the meadow could see a reduction in their pastures and hay fields, diminishing their ability to feed their animals on their land. There are considerable concerns and anxiety that high-voltage transmission infrastructure poses safety risks to horses and riders. Electromagnetic fields and potential accidents related to installing and maintaining the towers could endanger individuals and animals.

The agribusinesses and homes on Breezy Meadow represent multi-millions of dollars of private family investments and express the residents' personal values for living close to the land and raising a family in a rural community. The presence of transmission towers will lower the property value of the homes in the meadow, impacting the residents' long-term financial well-being, particularly if it affects its attractiveness to investors or buyers. The loss of Breezy Meadow to the Greenfield Line will impact the economy and forever alter the quality of life in Lovettsville.

b. Loudoun Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

In 2021, after 47 years in operation serving people with special needs in Loudoun County and being a tenant at several locations around Loudoun County, Loudoun Therapeutic Riding finally purchased a permanent home at 14490 Berlin Turnpike, Lovettsville, VA. This property is located at the corner of Ash George Road, the point where the proposed Green Line leaves Lovettsville and enters into Waterford.

Loudoun Therapeutic Riding is a non-profit organization which embraces the power of the horse and equine-assisted services to promote well-being and community inclusion for people with physical, cognitive and mental health challenges. Founded in 1974 it was the original pilot program for therapeutic riding in Virginia.

The 25-acre property is a haven for adults, children with special needs and also provides a respite for their parents and caregivers who enjoy the property while their student participates in equine-assisted services. Students and volunteers travel from Ashburn or urban areas surrounding Leesburg to escape the development of a bustling area and seek peace and tranquility that is paramount at Loudoun Therapeutic Riding. For example, teens from North Spring Behavioral Health Center come weekly to experience the healing power of horses at this quiet farm. In addition, a dozen veterans suffering from PTSD, TBIs, and depression, among other challenges, seek refuge each week through the Equine Services for Heroes program. Veterans have described the tranquil, peaceful environment that helps them unwind and reconnect with themselves, horses, and others. Seniors from local assisted living facilities, Waltonwood and Heritage Hall, visit during the mild weather to touch the horses and share memories. The serene environment is truly therapeutic for these and other guests suffering through the different challenges of life. The threat of enormous buzzing towers will create stress and anxiety that the riding community actively works to diminish in the participates coming here from all over Loudoun County. As Therapeutic Riding enters its 50th year, it is actively planning its' future in one central location. The towers will undermine the tranquil environment the therapeutic community has worked so hard to create.

c. Two Sister Bees

Bees are a responsible for approximately 80% of insect pollination. Two Sister Bees on Householder Road in Lovettsville raises some of those bees. This apiary has been raising honeybees for approximately 8 years for both honey production and bee colony reproduction. The proposed route of the transmission line runs right through the property where the hives are located. Raising bees is not easy, it takes a lot of work to keep them thriving. Weather, skunks, possums, bears, wasp, hornets, lantern flies, and parasitic mites all put stress on the bee hive and are major contributors to the collapse of the bee hive colonies in our surrounding area and throughout the nation. Fighting Mother Nature is hard before we add any man made "influences" like pesticides, herbicides, solar power, deforestation and now for beekeepers, massive Transmission power lines. Several articles on beekeeping state that acute exposure to extremely low frequency Electro-magnetic

fields (ELF EMFs) “by transmission power lines” were found to impair the “Cognitive and Motor” abilities of the honey bee, i.e., their ability to forage towards food sources and feeding. Studies have led to a precautionary federal recommendation in the USA to **not** keep bee hives under powerlines. Furthermore, research shows that crops close to the power lines remain unpollinated, which reduces the food production for the bees and if herbicides are used to control the ground cover under the power lines, the herbicides are now found to be very harmful to both humans and bees. Two Sister Bees has 20 hives and other apiary farms in Lovettsville have as much as 30 to 60 hives per farm. Each hive consists of 40,000 to 100,000 bees. Since honeybees can forage up to a range of 2 to 5 miles, the transmission lines will be within that Lovettsville radius for all of the apiaries. We live in an ecosystem where what affects the apiaries will then affect the pollination of local orchards, vegetable farms and farmers who raise crops of corn and wheat. NextEra needs to rethink their positioning and installation of transmissions towers in our rural area, as causing a decline in pollinator species will significantly compromise agricultural production.



Historic Mt Olivet United Methodist Church on Mountain Rd, founded 1880. It's in the path of the transmission line from Short Hill.



George's Mill



The Green Line towers will be built right through the middle of these hemp fields



Cannabreeze's Production and Event Facilities



Cannabreeze's young and energetic staff



Sunrise over Breezy Meadow horse farm. The Green Line Transmission line will be built right where the horses stand in this picture.



Sunset over Hobby Horse Vineyard, Breezy Meadow



View of Loudoun Therapeutic Riding ring and stable in the direction of Ash George Road.



View of Ash George Road from Loudoun Therapeutic Riding



Two Sister Bees



Two Sister Bees' Hives