

# OPINION

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## VOICE OF THE PEOPLE ►►

### We can do better than Clean Line

#### To the Editor:

With yet another self-serving letter, authored by Terry Royer, in favor of the Rock Island Clean Line's (RICL) proposed 500-mile power line stretching from western Iowa to Morris, Ill., in the Morris Daily Herald's Voice of the People section on April 30, it's important to understand what is at the core of this project, and ultimately its flaws.

The letter, written by the CEO/President of Winergy Drive Systems, which sells gearboxes and other components for wind turbines, is understandably bullish on this project, as was the mayor of Flora, Ill., whose letter to the Morris Herald this winter also gave the project his blessing as it would be profitable for a company in his town that also supplies components to the wind energy industry.

Who else in any numbers has come out in favor of this project that doesn't have a special interest in its construction? Not many. But the list of landowners, farm organizations and politicians who are in opposition to its approval grows daily.

There are two main reasons I became involved in the opposition to the RICL after some study. One, the parties behind this project are a wealthy family from Houston, Texas, and an investment group from N.Y.C. Private parties, seeking to take private property, for private gains.

If the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) allows this project to go through, RICL will take the property it needs through eminent domain: for perpetuity. Webster's definition: Forever.

What if RICL goes bankrupt? Who gets the easement next?

We cannot set a precedent in awarding private parties the power of eminent domain in this state for this project or any others that will surely follow if this project is approved. Individual property rights need to be protected from this type of land grab.

Secondly: There is no public necessity for this power in Illinois. We have an abundant supply of historically low-priced electricity available to us and some of it is wind-generated, which RICL claims will be their only source of generation, but can't guarantee.

This power line, regardless of what RICL's spin doctors have said, will head east from Morris, where the investors can cash into the East Coast markets. The power line stretching across the entire state of Illinois and northern Grundy County will be nothing more than RICL's drop cord to their financial windfall on the East Coast.

It could be suggested that my opposition to this project is also self-serving. Yes, the route of this power line, standing on 200-foot lattice structures, each with a 48x48-square footprint, will cross right down the middle, lengthwise, on the 320 acre farm that I live on and only yards from the window at which I compose this letter.

But I can assure you that if RICL announced tomorrow that it was going to move it off my property on to someone else's, I would continue to be actively involved in opposing it for the same two reasons. I would not be in bad com-

pany.

The Illinois Farm Bureau, Grundy County Farm Bureau, Illinois Department of Agriculture, La Salle County Board, and Rock Island County Board are all either intervening against it through the ICC themselves, or have tabled any decision.

In addition, 11 East Coast governors have written Congress in opposition to any projects such as this one that want to send power to their states, as it will interfere with their own wind and alternative energy projects they have planned or that are under construction.

Finally, I want to thank our own State senator and Morris resident, Sue Rezin, who has written the ICC on two occasions voicing her opposition to the project as well. Senator Rezin sees, as we do, that we can do better in future projects for Illinois and Grundy County than what is being offered in this one.

The Grundy Board, one of the few county boards in the state that has already signed a Development Agreement with RICL, needs to look at this project for what it really is before making a final decision. Hollow.

You are in the drivers seat. Our location has and will attract better projects for the area than this one. It isn't needed and its forever. We can do better!

*Henry Babson  
Morris, Illinois*