

Dear Sir or Madam:

We appreciate everything Duke Energy does for the county's electric system and we know, in your hearts and minds, you only want the best for all Henderson County citizens.

What the folks in Hendersonville, Flat Rock, Zirconia, Segment 20 and Western Carolina want from Duke and the NC Utility Commission is to include in its planning all the impacts and costs associated with the WC Transmission Line Project construction, including loss of land values, loss of tourism dollars, ecological impacts, view shed impairments and cultural considerations and provide the best solution for WNC's electric system by using a process that is transparent, to all affected and interested parties, and by using the most innovative , BEST IN CLASS, methods available.

This should include evaluating whether a state-of-the-art line similar to the New England Clean Power Link would be an appropriate solution for running a line through scenic portions of WNC (see Department of Public Service announces agreement with TDI-New England on 1,000 megawatt power line <http://www.vermontbiz.com/.../department-public-service-annou...>).

NC legislature took the time to promulgate legislation to protect our high mountain ridges "Subpart D §200A-252" therefore Duke Energy should take the time to strongly consider Segment 20 Protected Ridge Buffers in the route selection process, not just as weighting criteria, but as a class of conservation lands. Segment 20 largely runs through these protected ridges and along the Eastern Continental Divide. We do not feel using these ridges for a power line corridor is the best use of these lands for the citizens of WESTERN CAROLINA and our visitors from around the world.

Tourism and Culture and Henderson County's viability to attract world wide visitors will be significantly and negatively affected by the proposed WC Transmission Line Project for the reasons list below:

Segment 20 Considerations:

Many other routes cross the continental divide only once at a relatively low elevation. Segment 20 is routed along the Eastern Continental Divide therefore continually crosses land at high elevations that are identified as NC PROTECTED MOUNTAIN RIDGES AND DEFINED BUFFERS.

The route runs along Pinnacle Mountain Road which pre-dates the founding of Henderson County and the Village of Flat Rock and is historically significant. Families still farm land their ancestors settled on Pinnacle before the American Revolution and whose folkways are recorded in Historic Henderson County: Tales from Along the Ridges and other books written by Louise Bailey. Also see nationally best-selling books by Robert Morgan describing this community and his poetry anthology, Zirconia Poems.

The majority of residents along Segment 20 maintain ties to agriculture and specialize in Apple Orchards and Christmas Trees. These two crops cannot be grown under Duke Easements. In addition herbicides applied to easement land will impact bees that farmers depend upon for pollination of orchards and other crops. Spraying herbicides on this high ridge land may cause contamination on both sides of the continental divide and impacting trout streams, Lake Summit, a lakes used by numerous summer camps and farmland below the ridge. Zirconia residents depend on well water which may also be contaminated by high usage of herbicides on the highest land in the township.

Sky Top Orchard is a premier Henderson County Tourist Attraction that hosts thousands of students on field trips each year and is an annual pick-your-own apples tradition for families from many states. Segment 20 would cross the orchard in areas where children now roam freely- causing safety hazards and a drastic reduction in tourism.

Pinnacle Mountain Rd and Sky Top Orchard are major attractions due to the breathtaking views of several states including South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia as well as panoramic views of the French Broad

River and Green River valleys of North Carolina. This is a favored scenic route for cycling clubs from several states as well as cross-country runners and motorists. Its scenic views have resulted in its inclusion in many premier cycling and cross country races.

Segment 20 land is valued at a high rate due to the marketability of its view sheds. Running the transmission line along Pinnacle Mountain Ridge would negatively impact the entire area resulting in significant devaluation of property values and a negative impact on Henderson County tax collections.

Just as Segment 20 residents can view much of Henderson County, residents in the valleys enjoy views of Pinnacle Mountain Ridge. Erecting a high voltage line along the continental divide would negatively impact the views in Flat Rock, Hendersonville, Kanuga, Lake Summit and other areas that depend on tourism as a significant portion of the Henderson County economy.

See the concerns about the impact on view sheds and agriculture expressed to Duke Power by the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority including the following (see the letter attached in its entirety at the end of this document):

Henderson County TDA hired a consultant to conduct a tourism research study several years ago and it revealed that visitors' No. 1 reason for coming to Hendersonville is to enjoy the unspoiled scenic mountain views and outdoor recreational activities in the area's mountains, forests, creeks and rivers. Camps are also make a huge positive impact on the economy.

Enormous transmission line towers scattered throughout the countryside are not attractive to tourists and detract from their experience. We are especially concerned about our county's scenic overlooks such as Jump Off Rock and the top of Bearwallow Mountain. Transmission towers will ruin the scenic vistas seen from these important tourist areas.

Therefore Segment 20 concerns are representative of concerns that impact all of Henderson County. WNC is growing because new residents and tourists place a high emphasis on natural beauty, awe-inspiring vistas, local orchards and farms and clean mountain streams. WNC will not in any way approach the forecasted electricity demands if tourism is reduced, county tax values decrease and residents leave or not replaced by new residents in the future.

Communities in the most scenic parts of New England faced similar issues and found a successful solution, known as the New England Clean Power Link, that protects critical view sheds, pristine mountain streams, local orchards and farms yet allows routing of high voltage transmission through the Green Mountain scenic areas.

If the WC Transmission Line Project is justified and approved by the NC Utilities Commission and the SC Public Services Commission, we must look at using existing Right-of-Ways and modern High Voltage Line techniques such as vaulted or underground installation, including High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) similar to the TDI-New England Project.

These modern technology would be justified if ALL COSTS to local communities are taken into consideration. If the good people of New England value the Green Mountains of Vermont enough to utilize this underground system, HVDC, it should be considered for the good citizens of Western Carolinas and the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains and Foothills!

Here are some details on the New England Clean Power Link:

Department of Public Service announces agreement with TDI-New England on 1,000 megawatt powerline (<http://www.vermontbiz.com/.../department-public-service-annou...>).

“The proposed project would travel much of the length of Vermont underneath Lake Champlain. It would then cross much of Vermont, where it would be buried underground along existing road rights of way. Recognizing that there were impacts in Vermont, but limited value for our state, the project as initially proposed included some funding for broader public benefits. The recent settlement significantly expanded

and strengthened the overall environmental benefits. An additional \$121 million over the life of the project is added to support Vermont renewable energy and much-needed Lake Champlain cleanup.”

“The New England Clean Power Link is a proposed 154-mile underwater and underground transmission line that will deliver 1,000 MW of clean, lower-cost hydroelectricity to the Vermont and New England market. The line is being developed with private-sector financing by TDI New England and will originate at the U.S.-Canadian border and travel approximately 97 miles underwater down Lake Champlain to Benson, Vermont, and then be buried along town and state road and railroad rights-of-way or on land owned by TDI New England for approximately 57 miles to a new converter station to be built in Ludlow, Vermont. The project is expected to be in service in 2019, at a cost of approximately \$1.2 billion.

“The New England Clean Power Link is a proposed high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line from the Canadian border at Alburgh, Vermont to Ludlow, Vermont along underwater and underground routes. The transmission line will be comprised of two approximately 5” diameter cables — one positively charged and the other negatively charged. The cables will be solid-state dielectric and contain no fluids or gases. The nominal operating voltage of the line will be approximately 300 to 320 kV, and the system will be capable of delivering 1,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

The proposed underwater portion of the transmission line, approximately 98 miles in length, will be buried to a target depth of 3-4 feet in the bed of Lake Champlain except at water depths of greater than 150 feet where the cables will be placed on the bottom and self-burial of the cables in sediment will occur. In areas where there are obstacles to burial (e.g. existing infrastructure, bedrock), protective coverings will be installed.

The overland portion of the transmission line, approximately 56 miles in length, will be buried approximately four feet underground within existing public (state and town) road or railroad rights-of-way (ROWs). Very short sections of the route at the Lake Champlain entry and exit points, as well as at the converter site in Ludlow, will be located on private land that is controlled by TDI-NE.

In Ludlow, the HVDC line will terminate at a converter station that will change the electrical power from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC). An underground AC transmission line will then run approximately 0.3 miles along town roads to the existing VELCO 345 kV Coolidge Substation in Cavendish, Vermont where the electricity will be carried on the New England electric grid.”

In addition I have attached below and as a PDF File (Asheville Plant Data) a graph put together with data from the US Energy Information Agency for the Steam Turbine Unit in Skyland, NC (Asheville Plant).

The data show the existing Coal Plant (385 MW Capacity) is only running at 40-45% capacity, and the Proposed Gas Plant (650MW) would only be running at 20-25% base on the Monthly Data for the last 12 months.

And that Coal Plant Steam Unit's Utilization has been declining for over 10 years.

The data suggest three (3) items of interest:

1. Based on Duke's Demand Data for February 2015 of over 1000 MW (data presented at many meeting) for the Western Carolina Power System, Transmission Line infrastructure, and the Peaking Units must have the ability to import lots of power into the region and be very robust since and Duke-Energy only ran Steam Unit at less than 200 MW capacity and met the Demand Peak On for the Polar Vortex In February 2015.
2. The Proposed 650MW Gas Plant would only add to the Robustness of the System if it was designed as a multi-unit power plant system (Duke could shut down at least half the facility at a time for maintenance).
3. The Foothills 230 kV Transmission is not needed base on one (1) US Energy Information Agency data, and two (2) the current robustness of the electric system, and a logical conclusion that the Proposed

650MW Gas Plant System should be designed to be a multi-unit power plant system eliminating the need for the new transmission line.

In closing currently I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR THE FOOTHILLS TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT but if the NC Utility Commission find the need, the project must be justified by including, loss of land values, loss of tourism dollars, ecological impacts, view shed impairments and cultural considerations and provide the best solution for WNC's electric system by using a process that is transparent, to all affected and interested parties, and by using the most innovative , BEST IN CLASS, methods available.

Please feel free to contact me, if you have any question or require input on your process.  
Sincerely Yours,

Gordon M Smith  
262 Fortescue Road  
Zirconia NC 28790

Cell Phone [828-243-0025](tel:828-243-0025)

EMAIL  
[gordon@gordonmcnealsmith.com](mailto:gordon@gordonmcnealsmith.com)

Public Page Western Carolinas New Duke Transmission Line  
<https://www.facebook.com/WCCitizenPageNewTransmissionLine>

Addendum:

**Note: HENDERSON COUNTY'S TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WITH A STRONG OPPOSITION TO DUKE ENERGY'S PROPOSED NEW 40 MILE LONG HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE THROUGH THE WESTERN CAROLINAS. THE AUTHORITY'S BOARD SENT LETTER OF OPPOSITION STATING THEIR OPPOSITION:**

The letter states:

Tourism is extremely important to Henderson County. Our most recent data indicates that:

- Over 2100 jobs are attributed to the tourism industry in our county.
- \$20.9 million in state and local tax receipts are due to tourism in our county.
- Tourism taxes create \$191.16 in property tax savings on average for each county resident.
- Our Visitor Center Guest Book contains signatures by visitors to our beautiful county from at least 45 states and 22 countries since January 2015.
- Henderson County is 70th in size of all 100 counties in North Carolina, but we are 15th in the amount of money expended by tourists while in our county.

Henderson County TDA hired a consultant to conduct a tourism research study several years ago and it revealed that visitors' No. 1 reason for coming to Hendersonville is to enjoy the unspoiled scenic mountain views and outdoor recreational activities in the area's mountains, forests, creeks and rivers. Camps are also make a huge positive impact on the economy.

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Tourists travel all parts of our county. In addition to Interstate 26, Highway 64 on the east side of I-26 transports tourists arriving from the Eastern part of the state, via Interstate 40 and Highway 9, through scenic apple orchards and mountain views. Highway 64 on the west side of I-26 transports visitors to our charming downtown Hendersonville, and through to DuPont State Recreational Forest or Pisgah National Forest.

We promote scenic driving tours through local orchards in various parts of the county that grow the most apples in North Carolina. Our county' vineyards/breweries attract tourists to their rural locations to enjoy both their products and their beautiful scenic surroundings.

Because of the great damage unsightly transmission line towers would do to our county's scenic beauty, we believe that Duke Energy should re-evaluate the need for these lines, and if they are needed should avoid damage to the local economy by burying them under ground.

--David Nicholson, HCTDA Chairman