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PUC DOCKET NO. 38290

APPLICATION OF SHARYLAND
UTILITIES, L.P. TO AMEND ITS
CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE
AND NECESSITY FOR THE
HEREFORD TO WHITE DEER
345-KV CREZ TRANSMISSION LINE
(FORMERLY PANHANDLE AB TO
PANHANDLE BA) IN ARMSTRONG,
CARSON, DEAF SMITH, OLDHAM,
POTTER AND RANDALL COUNTIES

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BEFORE THE STATE OFFICE

OF

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

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DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

MARY CORRIGAN

ON BEHALF OF

PROTECT NORTH PALO DURO CANYON

AND THE ELKINS RANCH

AUGUST 26, 2010

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
MARY CORRIGAN**

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Brochures of The Elkins Ranch

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APPLICATION OF SHARYLAND UTILITIES, L.P. TO AMEND ITS CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR THE HEREFORD TO WHITE DEER 345-KV CREZ TRANSMISSION LINE (FORMERLY PANHANDLE AB TO PANHANDLE BA) IN ARMSTRONG, CARSON, DEAF SMITH, OLDHAM, POTTER AND RANDALL COUNTIES	§ § § § § § § § § §	BEFORE THE STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
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**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
MARY CORRIGAN**

I. INTRODUCTION

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Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

A. My name is Mary Corrigan. My address is 11301 E. State Highway 217, Canyon, Texas 79015.

Q. HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFIED IN A COMMISSION PROCEEDING?

A. No.

Q. ON WHOSE BEHALF ARE YOU TESTIFYING?

A. I am testifying on behalf of myself, The Elkins Ranch, and Protect North Palo Duro Canyon (“PNPDC”).

Q. ARE YOU A DIRECTLY AFFECTED LANDOWNER?

A. I own and live on The Elkins Ranch and operate a business where we provide “Cowboy Morning” in the Palo Duro Canyon, which is a chuck wagon breakfast and

1 Jeep Tours in the Palo Duro Canyon. Our brochures are included as Attachment A.
2 You can also learn more about The Elkins Ranch at www.TheElkinsRanch.com. Our
3 ranch is located 25 miles south of Amarillo, just north of the Palo Duro Canyon State
4 Park.

5 **II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY**

6 **Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

7 A. The purpose of my testimony is to describe the negative impacts that the proposed
8 routes will have on my business, The Elkins Ranch, and the North Palo Duro Canyon.

9 **III. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY AND**
10 **OPPOSED ROUTES**

11 **Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PROPERTY.**

12 A. My property, The Elkins Ranch, borders the Palo Duro Canyon State Park to the
13 north and the Currie Ranch to the south. The Elkins Ranch is a third generation,
14 working cattle ranch beautifully located in one of the nation's most spectacular scenic
15 attractions, the Palo Duro Canyon. The Elkins Ranch opened to the public on July 9,
16 1998.

17 The Elkins Ranch is full of many beautiful wildflowers as well as some of the
18 best viewing areas in the entire Panhandle region. During the blooming season, there
19 is an abundance of wildflowers throughout the prairie and canyon land.

20 **Q. HOW IS YOUR PROPERTY USED?**

21 A. We operate a tourist and entertainment business, offering jeep tours in the North Palo
22 Duro Canyon, as well as cowboy breakfasts. The Elkins Ranch also works in
23 conjunction with the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Film Commission, allowing

1 films to be produced on the property. About five different programs have been
2 filmed on the ranch recently.

3 **Q. PLEASE IDENTIFY THE PROPOSED ROUTES AND THE SPECIFIC**
4 **LINKS ON THOSE ROUTES THAT WOULD AFFECT YOUR PROPERTY.**

5 A. Routes T, U, V, and AA, all of which cross the Palo Duro Canyon would devastate
6 the business at The Elkins Ranch. I, as well as the other members of PNPDC, am
7 opposed to any routes which will cross the Palo Duro Canyon.

8 **Q. ARE THERE ANY MODIFICATIONS THAT COULD BE MADE TO THE**
9 **PROPOSED ROUTE THAT WOULD ALLEVIATE YOUR CONCERNS?**

10 A. No. Any route crossing the Palo Duro Canyon will be a blight on the canyon and
11 devastate the views on which our business relies.

12 **IV. REASONS FOR OPPOSITION TO ROUTES**

13 **A. COMMUNITY VALUES**

14 **Q. WHERE DO THE PROPOSED ROUTES CROSS THE CANYON IN**
15 **RELATION TO YOUR PROPERTY?**

16 A. The lines proposed by Sharyland would cross the Palo Duro Canyon just north of our
17 property, where we conduct our jeep tours.

18 **Q. IN YOUR OPINION, WOULD PLACING THIS TRANSMISSION LINE**
19 **ACROSS THE NORTH PALO DURO CANYON OFFEND COMMUNITY**
20 **VALUES?**

1 A. Yes. People from all over the world have toured the Palo Duro Canyon with us. It is
2 likely that the impact of this commercial infrastructure will result in a substantial
3 decrease in tourists' desire to visit The Elkins Ranch to take in the natural wonder of
4 the North Palo Duro Canyon.

5 **B. AESTHETIC VALUES**

6 **Q. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE AESTHETIC IMPACTS THAT THIS**
7 **LINE WOULD HAVE ON THE NORTH PALO DURO CANYON?**

8 A. Views from The Elkins Ranch to the north would include huge anchoring structures
9 on the rim and lines with balls dangling across the canyon, which would destroy the
10 natural beauty of the canyon.

11 **C. HISTORICAL VALUES**

12 **Q. DOES YOUR PROPERTY HAVE ANY HISTORICAL VALUE?**

13 A. Yes. The Elkins Ranch has a substantial amount of history associated with it.

14 **Q. IF SO, PLEASE EXPLAIN THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR**
15 **PROPERTY.**

16 A. The Elkins Ranch gives tours of various areas of great historical significance, all of
17 which celebrate the rich history of the American West. For example, we visit the area
18 where the last great Comanche War Chief battled the U.S. Army in an epic struggle
19 for a way of life. Also, we tour the land where legendary Colonel Charles Goodnight
20 hung cattle rustlers. Additionally, we travel down the path traveled by the famous
21 Spanish explorer Francisco De Coronado on his quest to find the fabled Seven Cities

1 of Gold. When searching for the Seven Cities of Gold, Coronado and his men
2 probably camped for a night in Palo Duro Canyon.

3 **D. RECREATIONAL AREAS, PARKS AND HIGHWAYS**

4 **Q. IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ATTACHED TO**
5 **SHARYLAND'S APPLICATION, PBS&J DID NOT IDENTIFY THE NORTH**
6 **PALO DURO CANYON AS A RECREATIONAL AREA. DO YOU AGREE**
7 **WITH THIS ASSESSMENT?**

8 A. Absolutely not. The northern portion of the Palo Duro Canyon is certainly a
9 recreational area. Our business is completely devoted to recreational activities such
10 as jeep tours, live concerts, and cowboy breakfasts on the canyon rim. All of these
11 activities rely solely on the recreational nature of the North Palo Duro Canyon.

12 **Q. HOW WOULD THE PROPOSED LINES AFFECT RECREATIONAL**
13 **ACTIVITIES ON YOUR PROPERTY?**

14 A. All aspects of recreation currently enjoyed in the canyon would be negatively
15 affected. People come to The Elkins Ranch to witness the scenic beauty of the area
16 and learn about the canyon.

17 Our business will be severely and detrimentally affected by construction of
18 the lines over the Palo Duro Canyon. At The Elkins Ranch, we operate our business
19 providing tours through the northern portion of the Palo Duro Canyon. Our jeep tours
20 highlight the beautiful plant life in the canyon that magnificently contrasts with the
21 rugged canyon walls. First, we offer the "Black Hawk Tour" that takes visitors 400
22 feet below the rim of the canyon and around the outer perimeter of Black Hawk

1 Mesa. The tour stops to view the water at Legend Falls, and then pauses to capture
2 the fantastic north/south views of the canyon from Yellow Bear Bluff. We also offer
3 a "Hidden Spring Tour" through rangeland in the canyon where we inform visitors
4 about early cattle ranching and the daily lives of cowboys. Finally, we also offer a
5 "Spirit of Palo Duro Tour" which takes visitors from the rim of the canyon down to
6 the floor to experience the incredible beauty that inspired Georgia O'Keefe's world
7 famous landscapes.

8 Additionally, we offer "Cowboy Morning" in Palo Duro Canyon which is a
9 chuck wagon breakfast set amid the splendor and pageantry of Palo Duro Canyon.
10 Tourists listen as guides recall Palo Duro's rich history, while traveling in our
11 customized vehicles we call the "motorized herd," which can be seen in the attached
12 brochures. Most guests find this to be one of the best parts of the tour since they are
13 able to enjoy the spectacular views of the canyon while riding along the canyon in
14 these amusing vehicles. When tourists arrive at cow camp, we serve an all-you-can-
15 eat chuck wagon breakfast with all the trimmings. After breakfast, guests are treated
16 to a performance by traditional cowboy entertainers reciting poetry and humorous
17 cowboy stories. We offer a morning packed with unforgettable Western adventure,
18 unsurpassed scenery, and real country hospitality.

19 Also, we offer a Chuck Wagon Supper and Old West Show several nights a
20 week. This event offers tourists the opportunity to spend a magical evening under the
21 stars at a real, working Texas cattle ranch with colorful old time characters who are
22 part of the Old West Show. We serve the tourists vittles that are down-home
23 delicious, made from original Elkins family recipes, which we prepare from scratch

1 and bake in our authentic Dutch ovens or cook over Texas mesquite in a smoke-filled
2 outdoor pit. We serve all of the typical food the cowboys of the old west enjoyed.

3 The Palo Duro Canyon is very important, not only to me, but also to everyone
4 who works at The Elkins Ranch because we rely on it to make a living to provide for
5 our families. If power lines are strung across the canyon, the magnificent views on
6 which our business relies will be destroyed. Tourists will no longer come to enjoy the
7 scenery and we will be greatly harmed economically.

8 **E. UNDERESTIMATED COSTS OF OPPOSED ROUTES**

9 **Q. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT SHARYLAND HAS ACCURATELY ESTIMATED**
10 **THE DAMAGES TO NEIGHBORING LANDOWNERS SUCH AS**
11 **YOURSELF?**

12 A. No. Our business depends on the scenic views of the canyon. If this infrastructure is
13 placed across the canyon, it would have a significant impact on the profitability of our
14 business because tourists will not come to see the canyon if it is no longer in its
15 natural state. Simply put, these lines would completely ruin The Elkins Ranch.

16 **V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

17 **Q. PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR POSITION REGARDING THE ROUTING OF**
18 **THE PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINE.**

19 A. I am opposed to any proposed links that cross the North Palo Duro Canyon for the
20 many reasons discussed above. The construction of the lines along these routes will
21 be devastating to the unique and scenic beauty of the North Palo Duro Canyon and
22 the business we conduct at The Elkins Ranch.

1 Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

2 A. Yes.