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Intervenor protest as regards Oncor Ramhorn Hill switch to Dunham Switch project

Eric Howe

500 Boss Range Road, Justin, TX, 76247

E: Erichowe@me.com

Tel: 469-486-4870

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A. Executive summary

I wish to register my protest as a directly affected person and family pertaining to the Ramhorn Hill switch to Dunham Switch project which under the proposed J4 routing would cross property that I own. I register my protest on several justifications.

In the spirit of being pragmatic I also offer suggestions on the best alternative for the needs of Oncor and the prosperity of the region.

Route J4 and it's immediate connections is the poorest route choice for Oncor as it is likely the most costly to install, crosses the area of highest population density of any of the choices, is the most negatively impactful on the environment and natural ecosystems, and most impactful on the future growth and prosperity of the whole of Justin and surrounding areas.

Far better and cheaper, and less environmentally impactful alternatives exist to the south of Justin that can use existing easements and access points from route 156 and the railroad.

B. Introduction and background

Multiple routes and combinations of routes have been proposed in the briefing document of PUC Docket 55067 received in June 2023 and it is perceived that Oncor will likely wish to select the most cost effective and least impactful routing.

Prior to outlining the justification of my protest below, it will be understood by the reader why it is completely unacceptable to live within close proximity to high voltage cabling and I will not go into this in detail. Suffice to say there are huge health risks of electromagnetic radiation, the long term extent of which have not been fully determined; there are huge negative environmental effects by virtue of the creation and maintenance of such cabling and pylons and easements pertaining to such; there is associated noise (crackling) and electrostatic noise effects on an ongoing basis associated with high voltage cabling; and finally an immeasurable psychological impact of living within range of such developments aside from the negative visual impacts.

C. My protest. (In association with that of my family and that of my adjacent neighbors)

I recently (early 2023) acquired a very desirable 4.5 acre lot at 500 Boss Range Road in Justin. Under route J4 I will be directly and extremely negatively impacted by virtue of a pylon being on my property and then high voltage cables crossing my land for an estimated 500 ft. By doing so, an enormous easement would be required which would condemn my land. No notice was given of this planned routing during the purchase of this land – why was this knowledge unavailable (it would have had a major impact on my decision to buy the land)?

Furthermore the above 500ft length of cable required to cross my land crosses almost mostly ancient native woodland. I perceive to have a meaningful easement and access to the cabling much of this forest would need cut down and destroyed having enormously negative consequences on the fauna and flora of the forest and also the spring fed creek (Trail Creek) that runs through the forest and my property.

As stated this forest contains some of the largest and oldest trees in Denton county.

Not only would easement access by Oncor be logistically challenging by virtue of this dense woodland, but also there is significant elevation change meaning that the pylons would need to be built to excessive heights to clear the trees so as to render Route J4 unviable.

500 Boss Range Road is one of 4 prime lots that recently were permissioned by the city. These are all transected by Trail Creek and share the privilege of having this extensive ancient woodland within their boundaries. The value of these lots has grown exponentially in the past year. In Denton county and especially Justin / Flower Mound / Argyle, it is not uncommon to see \$400k to \$750k per acre even without desirable features of natural woodland and spring fed clear water creeks running through them. This puts the value of my lot and those of my neighbors conservatively at around \$1.5m, especially when one considers their location within Justin city limits, several hundred yards from the new town square and the elementary school and serviced by city water and sewer (currently being installed).

Oncor's condemnation of these lots and resultant decimation of their value will render route J4 at the highest level of costliness to Oncor in addition to being the most environmentally damaging and logistically difficult to maintain.

Furthermore, rendering of the luxury homes that will be built on Boss Range Road to effective wasteland will have a negative consequence on the whole of Justin as it develops and grows as a premier locale in the westward expansion of the metroplex.

Using route J4 will also have much wider negative repercussions than the elimination of any value in my property and that of my immediate neighbors. For example, route J4 will condemn dozens of homes eastward of Boss Range Road, the brand new development of Reatta Ridge south of Trail Creek and also the long existing homes north of Trail Creek. Furthermore, the existing elementary school on Boss Range Road will be within harmful range (the effects of electromagnetic radiation on children (and adults) still have yet to be fully determined) as will the new town square eastward to route 156 which is currently in early stages of construction. Finally, the new and large housing estates north of Trail Creek on the west side of Boss Range Road towards route 407 will also be enormously economically negatively impacted as potential residents will seek to avoid living near high voltage cables at all costs.

Lastly, we purchased this land as a place to build our retirement home. It is roughly 500 feet from our daughters home and irreplaceable. I'm an Air Force veteran and a brain tumor survivor that of which means I cannot risk living nearby or even worse under power lines as the consequences of doing so may well have adverse effects on my tumor which remains intact. Additionally, since purchasing the land we have spent significant money preparing the land for the build as well as purchasing multiple commercial grade tools and machinery to do so. The repercussions of Route J4 being approved are multiple and the consequences of such approval will be met with significant resistance and subsequent legal action. Respectfully, there are more economical and less environmentally destructive options available. Please give those options serious consideration.

D. Summary of protest

In summary, route J4 is one of, if not THE poorest choice for Oncor to make in the opinion of the writer. It is

1. extremely negatively impactful on the area of greatest population density of all of the routes by virtue of it crossing the heart of Justin and a part of Justin with the highest real estate value
2. likely the most costly option for Oncor to install by virtue of having to install pylons and cabling through multiple areas of high residential density, along a natural, spring fed creek (protected waterway) and across an ancient woodland (on my property and that of my neighbor)
3. the most impactful on the natural ecosystem that exists in the aforementioned creek and woodland. Once this is destroyed it is unlikely to ever be restored.
4. the most economically impactful by virtue of condemning the greatest number of existing and planned homes in Reatta Ridge, Boss Range, Timberbrook and other developments.

E. Better alternatives to route J4 for Oncor

There are far better and cheaper alternatives for Oncor to choose in order to ensure its needs are met.

Most obvious if these is routing that bypasses areas of relatively high existing and planned residential density and routing that uses existing service or other needed easements for example along the path of existing highways or railroads.

A relatively low impact routing includes some of the following which bypass high residential density and use access already available up route 156 and along the railroad. In short the following are likely more cost-effective and least environmentally and economically damaging, while preserving the prosperity of Justin.

Any of the G or H routes to I6 to J1 to J21 to J22 to L1