

Sugarloaf Conservancy

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Wind Power: Atlantic Wind Connection

On October 12, 2010 Google, along with Good Energies and Trans-Elect, announced they would construct the Atlantic Wind Connection, a 350-mile long network of underwater cables from Virginia up to Northern New Jersey. It will eliminate the need for offshore wind developers to build transmission lines of their own. This project will enable wind farms to bring clean renewable power to the east coast states, eliminating any need in the future to bring additional power from the west, such as the PATH project.

Current Status of PATH's Applications

Maryland: **State:** On November 24, 2010 the MD Office of Peoples Counsel along with seven other state agencies sent a letter to PJM's Board of Managers requesting they direct their Planning Department to undertake a study that will independently evaluate the costs of PATH and analyze the Mt. Storm-Doubs line project to determine if PATH is necessary. On December 21, 2010, PATH filed a Motion to Extend the Procedural Schedule.

County: This past fall the Planning Commission unanimously passed motions finding the proposed substation and transmission line inconsistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan. On November 18th after hearing from both Allegheny and citizens, the Zoning Board of Appeals denied PATH's request for a Special Exception for the proposed substation. PATH subsequently filed a Request for Reconsideration, which was denied on December 20th. PATH has claimed this is a matter for the Maryland PSC to decide.

Virginia: PATH withdrew support for its own application and the Commissioners accepted their Motion to Withdraw on January 27, 2010. PATH filed a new application on September 20, 2010. The previous Commission's Order required PATH to address a number of issues before they would accept a new application including PJM's final Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (February 2011 completion date). The State Corporation Commission (SCC) staff moved that the proceedings be held in abeyance, as the current filing did not fulfill this requirement. On October 20th the Commissioners accepted PATH's application, although many felt all requirements had not been satisfied. On December 21st PATH filed a Motion to Hold Proceedings in Abeyance. Hearing Examiner Ordered a Hearing on January 6, 2011.

West Virginia: On December 10, 2010 the WVA staff of the PSC filed a Motion requesting that the Commission dismiss this PATH's application as insufficient, or in the alternative, require the Applicants to request a tolling and asserted that certain developments pertaining to the status of the Mt. Storm-Doubs 500kV line, as well as other developments, make the current application incomplete. On December 20, 2010 PATH filed a Motion to Toll Proceedings.

Need for PATH and New Options

There continues to be a question about whether PATH is necessary. As can be seen on the enclosed graphs, PJM's forecasts are overly optimistic when compared to the US Energy Information Administration numbers; especially since 2008. Even if their projections were valid, alternative and less expensive solutions would be more prudent. Dominion Virginia Power's Alternative 1 (approved by PJM) to rebuild the Mt. Storm-Doubs line will cost about 1/3 that of PATH. DVP proposals have the advantage of phasing in over time various aspects of their projects, costing ratepayers substantially less each year and giving ample time for wind power to flourish.

After the State Corporation Commission (SCC) in Virginia received all written testimony, SCC experts concluded, "adequate transmission reliability/needs justification has not been established." If demand response and energy efficiency resources that cleared the May 2009 PJM (regional authority) auction are included as required by PJM own rules, a "critical need" will not occur until **2021!**