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## **PATH proponent echoing Allegheny line**

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H. Russell Frisby Jr., stating that he was with a law firm whose client is the PATH Education and Awareness Team, wrote a May 31 commentary on the PATH project. A Google search found no such entity, and his statements mirror those of Allegheny officials.

Sugarloaf Conservancy has corrected these erroneous statements made by Allegheny officials on numerous occasions.

Frisby tries to frighten the public with claims that the lights will go out if PATH is not constructed. Energy usage has declined dramatically due to economic conditions and conservation efforts. There are no projections by authorities showing the economy will soar in the near future and force the need for PATH.

Further, a letter from 10 East Coast governors to congressional leaders stated that "a ratepayer-funded revenue guarantee for land-based wind and other generation resources in the Great Plains would have significant, negative consequences for our region; it would hinder our efforts to meet regional renewable energy goals with regional resources and would establish financial conditions in our electricity markets that would impede development of the vast wind resources onshore and just off our shores for decades to come."

This is precisely the negative consequence that will result if the PATH project is constructed, as Allegheny would receive a guaranteed 14.3 percent profit from FERC. It is the ratepayers who will finance this project and the end result will be high prices being paid for low-cost, coal-generated electricity.

Frisby states that a 765kV line uses only a 200-foot right of way. High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) could accomplish the same purpose with only 20 feet and can be buried underground instead of on towers up to 200 feet tall. He states that HVDC is not an option and all significant lengths are underwater. One land-based example is the MurrayLink project in Australia that is 85 miles of underground cable.

He also stated that for AC cable there is one outage per 100 miles of cable per year. The Cross Sound and Murray Link HVDC projects were constructed in 2002 and there has been only one fault in that time, attributed to external damage. AC cables cannot match this reliability.

Stations to convert DC to AC would not have to use 55 acres as planned for the PATH substation in Kemptown. Utilizing newer HVDC modular technology, the station would be smaller and could be designed to look like a farmhouse.

Frisby is correct that the HVDC substations do consume more power than AC substations. However, due to the substantially increased efficiency in the transmission of the electricity; a project using HVDC is far more efficient overall. A 765kV AC cable generates so much heat (energy loss) that it would be impossible to bury this line. On the other hand since DC loses so little power it can be buried.

He states that no line has been built underground for the length of the entire PATH project and if only a portion of the line was underground it would cost 10-20 times AC. This would be true if the entire line used AC technology except for a short length of HVDC underground. However, if the entire project used HVDC and only a portion was underground, the costs could be equal to using 765kV AC cable.

The reason is simple: Every circuit of AC cable requires three lines whereas DC cable requires only two lines; the DC towers would also be smaller. Also, for the underground portion in populated areas, expensive land would not have to be purchased, as existing rights of way could be used.

Most importantly, due to its efficiency substantially more power would reach the end user and would not be wasted by heat loss from the cables. One does not have to take our word; we suggest readers go to [www.abb.com](http://www.abb.com) -- a leader in the power industry -- or visit our websites: [www.sugarloafconservancy.org](http://www.sugarloafconservancy.org) and [www.nomoretowers.org](http://www.nomoretowers.org).

Doug Kaplan is president of the Sugarloaf Conservancy.

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