

FrederickNewsPost.com**Substation push-back**

Originally published October 07, 2010

By ed

Many residents in the vicinity of a planned power substation off Bartholows Road are distressed, and we understand their concern.

The Kemptown Substation is a critical component of PATH, the 276-mile, \$2.1 billion project that will bring 765-kilovolt power lines from West Virginia through parts of Virginia and Maryland, and terminate at the Kemptown Substation.

The substation slated for this large parcel of land between Bartholows and Lynn Burke roads is enormous. At 42 acres, it will be among the largest high-voltage substations in the world.

There are more than 1,350 houses and 4,550 residents within one mile of the proposed facility. These potential neighbors to the substation have expressed a number of concerns that we believe are legitimate: its effect on nearby property values, the appearance of the site, its environmental impact, and health and safety issues.

According to the group Citizens Against the Kemptown Substation, the site will be "graded level and filled with transformers, reactors and 130-foot to 200-foot towers."

CAKES also expresses concerns about the possible health dangers of electromagnetic fields (EMF). While it is a subject of debate, some studies have implicated EMF in a variety of health problems, including cancer, ALS and miscarriages.

In a recent public meeting of the Frederick County Board of Zoning Appeals, Thomas W. Owens, director of the county Division of Fire and Rescue Services, spoke about the potential problems should a fire break out at the substation. They included smoke that would require evacuating nearby neighborhoods, and the lack of adequate capability here and in neighboring counties to address a large blaze with fire-suppressing foam.

In this age of terrorism awareness, there is also the fear that this large, crucial substation -- classified as a "soft target" -- could be the subject of an attack that, if successful, could wreak havoc on the surrounding area.

The fate of this proposed substation has yet to be decided. One major unresolved issue is who has final approval on the substation. Frederick County is arguing that it does, but Allegheny Power argues that the decision rests in the hands of the Maryland Public Service Commission, and the utility has the option of taking its case to Circuit Court if its request for a special exception to the zoning code is denied.

There is a lot of entrenched, vocal opposition to both the PATH high-voltage line and the Kemptown Substation, and we understand why. When the health, safety and property values of people may be affected by a project such as this, they generally don't take it lying down. This transmission line will cut a wide swath through miles of Frederick County countryside, and the substation will be a behemoth in the midst of more than a thousand homes.

Put yourself in the place of those who will be affected.

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