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## Neighbors don't want substation in anyone's back yard

### Kempton location would be eastern end of 275-mile power line

by Christian Brown | Staff Writer

Bob McLearen is uneasy with the prospect that a large-scale substation might be visible from his house.

McLearen's home on Marianne Drive in Mount Airy is very near the site of the proposed "Kempton Substation," an essential part of the Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline, or PATH, a 275-mile power line that will connect a substation in southeastern West Virginia to the new substation.

So are about 1,300 homes.

"It makes no sense," McLearen said.

McLearen is one of the residents of this community that is taking his case to the Maryland Public Service Commission, opposing PATH's application in the state.

But he said legalese can't tell the human side of the story.

He says that many of the homes in his community are quite valuable, and he fears that when he sells his home, he won't get nearly what he paid for it.

But McLearen said nice homes or not, no one deserves to have such a massive substation built so close to their home.

Other residents of the community, who are involved with the Citizens Against the Kempton Substation, or CAKES, said they have similar reasons to fear the substation.

Dick Ishler, a real estate agent, said he found out about the location of the proposed substation through state assessment records, and learned that the former Browning farm had been sold to Allegheny Power for \$6.8 million.

Ishler said that based on this location, "virtually every house" in the community will be able to see the substation. He said that the balloon test conducted by Allegheny Power on Aug. 7, which was intended to show how the height of the substation could be hidden with plantings and earthworks, did little to settle his fears.

Another concern members of the group have is the possibility that electro-magnetic fields generated by the substation and power lines might harm their health. They point to various studies which suggest that these fields are linked to childhood leukemia and Alzheimer's disease.

The PATH Education and Awareness Team Web site identifies these claims as false, and says that EMF near the transmission lines would be similar to what is generated by a household appliance.

Russell Frisby, PEAT's spokesman in Maryland, said this information came from data collected by the builders of PATH and "industry sources."

But CAKES member Ginny MacColl is not convinced. If residents discovered health problems in the future, all the guarantees from PATH's builders would be meaningless, she said. "I don't want us to look

back 10 years from now as say 'I was against this, but I couldn't stop it,'" McColl said.

John Armand, another member of CAKES, said Allegheny should choose another location elsewhere in Frederick County, away from densely populated areas. Armand cited uszip.com, a resource for information about various ZIP codes, the population density of Mount Airy is 309 people per square mile. He said he would prefer that the substation, which Allegheny estimates will be 2,400 feet by 760 feet, not be located "in anyone's back yard."