
Your Views

Understanding PATH Alternatives

Letter to the Editor:

We would like to clarify some of the information reported in the *Frederick News Post* on October 23, titled "Sugarloaf Conservancy Wants Independent Study of PATH Project."

The goal of our meeting was to help inform our community of the availability of modern technology that, to our knowledge, is not being considered by Allegheny Energy (AE) or American Electric Power (AEP), the two companies who have created the joint-venture referred to as PATH, LLC. Two of the technologies discussed during the informational meeting sponsored by Sugarloaf Conservancy that have merit for the PATH project are: (1) Aluminum Conductor Composite Core/Trapezoidal Wire (ACCC/TW) cables and (2) High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables.

According to Allegheny Energy, PATH is planning to use the antiquated Aluminum Conductor Steel Reinforced (ACSR) cables that were originally designed in 1898. These cables are for High-Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC). None of the speakers suggested that it is a good idea to bury High-Voltage Alternating Current cables. ...

Our position is High-Voltage Direct Current cable can be easily buried and should be considered as an alternative.

Furthermore, this type of line could be buried along railroad tracks, roads or existing power line right-of-ways, thus eliminating or minimizing the need to take personal property by eminent domain. The actual cost of burying this type of cable could only be determined af-

ter studying the route to be taken. ... HVDC would generate more profit every year for Allegheny Energy. ... Members of Allegheny's staff admitted to our group that they did not even consider HVDC technology. They have always used HVAC and have never considered any alternatives. ...

Allegheny's spokesman also stated that the technology for burying the cable "doesn't exist for this line. It gets cooled by the air. It would be too hot underground." Again this is true for an HVAC cable, but it is incorrect for HVDC cable.

Allegheny's spokesperson implied that Sugarloaf Conservancy was proposing to bury a cable that was ridiculously expensive and was not technologically possible. Perhaps this was because they did not realize we were proposing HVDC cable, not HVAC cable.

Misleading statements of this type are among the reasons that the Sugarloaf Conservancy is insisting that Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power commission an independent study to determine the feasibility of these newer technologies for the PATH project. We are not against supplying additional electricity to our community, state, and neighboring states, but rather we know that there are better ways to help keep the lights on. ...

Citizens of Frederick County must stand together to demand that Allegheny investigate new technologies that will make the encroachments on the citizens and their quality of life as unobtrusive as possible.

— Doug Kaplan

President Sugarloaf Conservancy

— Kim N. Gregory

Vice President Sugarloaf Conservancy