

FrederickNewsPost.com

Utility company willing to delay PATH decision in W.Va.

Originally published November 06, 2009

By [Ed Waters Jr.](#)

The utility companies planning the The Potomac Appalachian Transmission Highline project said they are willing to postpone a decision to move on the project in West Virginia, pending an extension of a current procedural schedule in the state.

Last week, the staff of the West Virginia Public Service Commission recommended dismissing the application by Allegheny Energy and American Electric Power for PATH. That was based on a rejection of the PATH application by Maryland's Public Service Commission and a recommendation by Virginia's PSC staff for a dismissal. The staffs thought that since the plan was not approved in Maryland, there was no reason to pursue review in their respective states.

PATH is a nearly 300-mile, \$1.8 billion project that would bring transmission lines from West Virginia through Virginia and Maryland, ending at a proposed substation near Mount Airy.

The postponement would push the deadline in West Virginia, now set at June 22 to Jan. 25, 2011, pending a change in the state's procedure for testimony and evidentiary hearings.

Todd Meyers, manager of external communications at Allegheny Energy, said Thursday that updated testimony on the need for PATH to meet growing power needs in the region would be presented by June 29, 2010, to the West Virginia PSC.

"We don't take any decision to delay this proceeding lightly," he said. "PATH remains urgently needed and PJM continues to direct Allegheny and AEP to construct the project." PJM is a regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in all or parts of 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Meyers said the utility companies plan to file a similar request with the Virginia PSC to delay a decision on the project.

"As it stands now, a re-filing in Maryland would likely propose a procedural schedule that includes evidentiary hearings at least six months beyond those currently scheduled in Virginia and West Virginia," Meyers said.

The delay decisions would put all three states in a similar timeframe for review by the respective PSCs, he said, and still allow the project, if approved, to meet the target date of 2014 to be in place.

Meyers said a decision to re-file in Maryland "will be announced in the near future." The Maryland PSC, voted 3 to 1 in September to reject the utility company's application. The decision was based on the filing made through PATH Allegheny, rather than Potomac Edison, the accepted power generating company name in Maryland. The Maryland PSC did not reject the PATH project itself.

Utility company officials said PATH is needed to meet anticipated energy needs by 2014. But opposing groups said forecasts from the U.S. Department of Energy shows less need for the power in the same timeframe.

Allegheny Power established PEAT (PATH Education and Awareness Team) headed by former Maryland PSC chairman Russell Frisby to promote the project to community groups. Two grass-roots groups in Maryland, Sugarloaf Conservancy and Citizens Against the Kemptown Electric Substation, were formed to oppose the project based on a lack of need, environmental and economic effects and safety and health issues.

Please send comments to [webmaster](#) or contact us at 301-662-1177.

Copyright 1997-09 Randall Family, LLC. All rights reserved. Do not duplicate or redistribute in any form. The Frederick News-Post [Privacy Policy](#). Use of this site indicates your agreement to our [Terms of Service](#).