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Agents Seek OK To Survey W.Va. Power Line Route

DAVIS, W.Va. (AP) — Although the state Public Service Commission's decision on a new multistate power line is months away, rights of way agents are asking property owners for permission to start surveying the line's route.

"We need to learn as much as possible about the property itself," said Allegheny Energy spokesman Todd Meyers. "The property owner isn't giving us permission to do anything except survey."

Allegheny Energy and partner American Electric Power are proposing to build the 765-kilovolt Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline, or PATH, from AEP's John Amos plant in Putnam County, across parts of northern Virginia, and end at a substation near Kemptown, Md.

At least five county commissions and hundreds of residents living along the proposed route have raised objections to its construction. The PSC has allowed 250 individuals, organizations and others to officially intervene in the utilities' application.

Utility officials have said the line is needed by 2014 to meet increased power demand along the East Coast.

Tucker County property owner Donna Printz said residents shouldn't feel rushed to sign an agreement.

"They tell you this is coming through and to sign the right of way survey form, but it isn't a problem if you wait," she said.

Meyers said agents will be asking landowners to sign an agreement that gives the utilities permission to enter the property and conduct preliminary engineering work that includes surveying, core drilling, cultural and environmental assessments.

Bob Summerfield and his wife, Clara Watring, own property along the proposed route. The two are waiting for an agent to approach them.

"I'm going to talk to him. I won't be rude," Summerfield said. "But I'm not giving anyone the right to come on my property and do core drilling. It's not going to happen."

The PSC has given itself until next June 21 to decide whether to approve the line. Evidentiary hearings are expected to start in February.

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