



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH KEYSTONE BUILDING
400 NORTH STREET
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120

May 14, 2026

The Honorable John Fetterman
United States Senate
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dave McCormick
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Fetterman and McCormick:

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's (PUC) foundational mission as an independent state agency is to balance the needs of consumers and utilities; ensure safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protect the public interest; educate consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; further economic development; and foster new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

With Congress engaging in meaningful legislative discussions about reforming energy permitting processes, the PUC stands ready to provide feedback on legislative proposals that could affect the commonwealth's ability to protect our shared constituents, especially those proposals that may preempt state authority to permit and site high voltage electric transmission projects within our borders.

The PUC plays a vital role in determining whether high-voltage (100 kV and higher) transmission projects are necessary or proper for the service, accommodation, convenience or safety of the public. We provide landowners subject to condemnation applications with due process before decisions are made regarding whether their lands may be condemned by utilities seeking to site utility infrastructure. *See* 15 Pa. C.S. § 1511(c); and 52 Pa. Code § 57.72 *et seq.* Our Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) are generally long-term civil service employees that preside over contested siting application hearings, conduct site views and public input hearings, and give the public an opportunity to be heard before recommended decisions are made. The Commission then considers all of the evidence in the cases in addition to an ALJ's recommendation, and any exceptions filed before a final administrative action is made.

The PUC devotes a significant amount of time and resources to the oversight and regulation of electric transmission service in the commonwealth. Siting of transmission line projects represents one portion of that work. In 2024-2025, the PUC processed five high voltage transmission line applications and 36 letters of notification (LONs) in lieu of full siting applications. LONs are an expedited form of siting applications that are allowed in several situations, such as where the existing transmission line rights-of-way are to be used; where the size, character design, or configuration of the proposed transmission line does not substantially alter the right-of-way; or where the transmission line has a proposed route of two miles or less.

The PUC wishes to preserve cooperative federalism in the energy permitting space. Backstop siting authority already exists in federal law for the limited number of projects that may qualify for and that are located within a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor as designated by the U.S. Department of Energy. ***Legislation that further expands federal siting into State jurisdiction weakens the PUC's ability to oversee these major projects and this is contrary to that spirit of cooperative federalism.***

We appreciate your leadership as you consider various proposals on these critical matters. The PUC agrees that meaningful federal permitting reform is important to address rising demand. However, if “permitting reform” is targeted at preempting state oversight of high-voltage transmission line and other infrastructure siting, then that is counterproductive to both efficiency and to the public interest of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania has been a consistent steward of infrastructure permitting, as evidenced by its status as a net exporter of electricity and natural gas. Companies proposing to invest capital in large-scale infrastructure need regulatory certainty. Over the past decade, Pennsylvania’s state siting and permitting processes have been consistent, reliable, and efficient. Given that Pennsylvania exports approximately 25% of its electric generation throughout the PJM region, we have permitted the needed transmission facilities to support those exports, while balancing the interests of the residents of the commonwealth. As Congress considers transmission reform, we ask that the concept of “beneficiary pays” remains foundational, and that the fundamentals of calculating an accurate cost-benefit ratio are strengthened by amending the Federal Power Act to require that RTOs fully account for **both** the regional costs and the regional benefits of transmission projects.

The PUC appreciates Congress’ interest in these important matters and stands ready to assist in meeting the national goal of ensuring that needed energy projects are built efficiently, while also ensuring that those individuals who live closest to the projects have their interests heard. Please recognize and preserve the important role the PUC plays in permitting and siting.

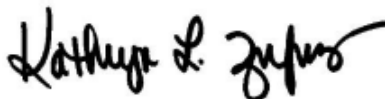
Sincerely,



Stephen M. DeFrank
Chairman



Kimberly M. Barrow
Vice Chair



Kathryn L. Zarfuss
Commissioner