

3707 Aurelia Drive  
Allison Park, PA 15101

July 27, 2017

Rosemary Chiavetta Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility  
Commission  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

RE: Simler Creig Batcheler v Duquesne Light  
Company Docket No. C-2017-2611487

Dear Sirs:

I have just received the response from Tucker Arensberg Attorneys representing Duquesne Light Company in the above referenced matter. I realize that I was to respond in ten days of receipt of their letter but in that I was out of town I am requesting an extension of time to respond. As I have indicated in my formal complaint it is Duquesne Light's intention to increase the width of the established right of way running across my properties by an estimated 40 feet on either side of the existing right of way. I have been told that there will be a significant number of trees removed from my properties without just compensation and without consideration of the impact to the environment. If this project is allowed to proceed property values will be greatly reduced on any property so affected and the environment will be substantially impacted.

When questioned why Duquesne Light made the decision after 90 years to change their current program of pruning and tree removal (vegetation management) I was not given a satisfactory answer.

I do not dispute the existing easement I only question the expansion of the existing right of way In a 2005 letter of notification to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission referencing an increase in the voltage of the current transmission lines it was stated that the increase in voltage would not substantially alter the right-of way. I have relied on that document as a guide to future vegetation management.

Quoting from that document (Docket No. A-110180), paragraph 16 "The proposed increase in voltage of the lines will not substantially alter the right-of-way. The lines have existed and operated in their present location since the early 1930s and in their present configuration since 1970. The size, character, design, or configuration of the Lines will not change to increase the voltage of the lines. The existing right-of-way agreements are written for a "transmission system for the conveyance and distribution of electrical current" The route of the transmission line will remain unchanged. The existing rights-of-way widths of 40 foot, 30 foot or centerline will remain unchanged".

Again, I question what has changed from 2005 to today. I understand that power line right of ways need to be maintained so that transmission of electricity can be done safely. If safe transmission of electricity has been accomplished using current vegetation management for the past 90 years on this right of way, what has changed that increases the risk to that same line?

I also question whether any consideration has been given to the environmental impact of the removal of a large number of trees and other vegetation along the right of way. The stream closest to our properties is an unnamed Tributary to Pine Creek. This stream has a drainage area of 0.08 square miles. Our properties and much of Aurelia Drive and the powerline are located within this stream's drainage area. Any activity, especially vegetation removal, would absolutely result in an increase of flow to that stream. I do understand that it would take an engineering analysis to determine if that increase is beyond the capacity of that stream receiving water. In addition to an increase in water volume, changes in the landscape could result in an increase to sediment pollution to that stream. Our question is, has Duquesne Light Company had an engineering study completed by an outside firm to determine the runoff impact?

It is my understanding that all streams have some level of protection by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). Our research indicates that the stream by our homes is designated under Chapter 93 of the Pennsylvania code as a Trout Stock Fishery. We assume that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC) does not regulate the stream by our homes, but it does regulate Pine Creek as a Stocked Trout Water, meaning both the PADEP and the PAFBC have protections to Pine Creek.

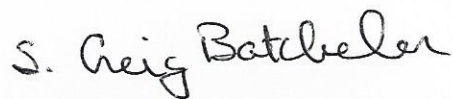
We understand that the PADEP also protects a 50-ft buffer (referred to as the 50-ft assumed regulated floodway) on each side of the stream banks. A permit from the PADEP would be required for tree clearing (or any other activity) within this regulated floodway. Has such a permit been issued?

Finally, I question whether any consideration has been given to a review of the indigenous fauna in the proposed vegetation removal zone. Is it possible that a threatened species might make the trees along the right of way their home. For example is it possible that the trees that are proposed to be cleared might be suitable habitat to an endangered bat species. We understand that these species are heavily protected by both the state and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We are sure that the state and the US Fish and Wildlife Service would be interested to know if the loss of bat habitat is being proposed.

It would seem that the issues addressed in this letter should be reviewed by the PUC prior to Duquesne Light Company receiving permission to proceed with their proposed change in their approached to vegetation management.

I understand the safety concerns and realize that there are trees that need to be removed and I am more than willing to work with Duquesne Light Company to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



S. Creig Batcheler