

March 21, 2022

Ms. Rosemary Chiavetta, Esquire  
Secretary  
PA Public Utility Commission  
P.O. Box 3265  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Re: Docket No. C-2021-3028278  
Rebecca Walizer v. Mid-Atlantic Interstate Transmission, LLC, et al.  
Reply to Answer and New Matter of MAIT to Amended Complaint

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

In response to the Answer and New Matter received from by Margaret A. Morris, Esq. on March 7, 2022, I am submitting the following replies:

1. As stated
2. Agree MAIT is the responding utility. Please know, I had requested a FirstEnergy/Met Ed representative contact me directly to discuss my concerns from the onset of this concern and I received no response offering a discussion.
  - a. I received confirmation from, Mr. Ray Lilliston, Sr. Right of Way agent for Appalachian Field Service (directly working on this project), confirming he forwarded my messages to First Energy (not MAIT) on 7/22/2021, 8/8/2021 and 8/17 for their review. My messages included a request to speak directly to a company representative regarding my concerns. I never received a direct, personal response from ANY MAIT, FirstEnergy or Met Ed representative. Despite informing them of my intent to file a formal PUC complaint (through Mr. Lilliston), no direct, personal communication was offered. I submitted my PUC formal complaint 8/26/2021 requesting FirstEnergy/Metropolitan Edison as respondents due to correspondence received:

A letter was mailed out to specific neighbors dated 7/29/2021 stating, "Metropolitan Edison, a FirstEnergy company is planning upgrades to the transmission line adjacent to your property...". Our entire neighborhood received a letter on FirstEnergy letterhead dated 9/1/2021 stating, "First Energy is rebuilding an existing 69 kilo-volt transmission line..."

3. PP&L does service electric service to our home at 60 Bittersweet Drive, Hershey, Pennsylvania. My home is located in the residential subdivision known as The Meadows of Hershey. This subdivision makes up The Meadows of Hershey Homeowners Association.

- a. We are serviced by PP&L; thus, the bill we pay every month includes our portion of the shared cost for the recent undergrounding of the PP&L transmission lines. They have undergrounded several lines within our township. I have no complaints about the corresponding rate hike. I believe in supporting all efforts that benefit the health and welfare of people and that maintain property values. I am grateful PP&L realized the undergrounding was for the betterment of the residents they serve.
  - b. Our society is more educated today than 30 years ago. We are more aware of the options that lie before us. Undergrounding is one of them. Undergrounding has grown as evidenced by the overwhelming number of factual articles found on the web. Undergrounding techniques have advanced and many of the largest power companies, such as Florida Power and Light and Pacific Gas and Electric Company, are undergrounding now. There is evidence that although costs are initially much higher for undergrounding, the decrease in maintenance costs in the future help regain the difference.
4. I acknowledge that MAIT, LLC, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Transmission, LLC is replacing the overhead facilities of concern. MAIT is required to “furnish and maintain adequate, efficient, *safe*, and reasonable service and facilities...”.

Excerpts taken from credible sources (which can be seen at the end of this Reply) indicate electromagnetic fields are not conclusively injurious, nor are they conclusively non-injurious. The article indicates there exist gaps in knowledge and that further research needs to be done. Also, there have already been 2 incidents of transmission line fires involving this transmission line. This is significant as either of those incidents could have caused death by electrocution or death by fire.

**I believe since the replacement must be done as per the power companies, then they should err on the side of caution to ensure the safety and well-being of my family and the residents within our neighborhood.** Undergrounding would be the safest option and would be in the BEST INTEREST of the people who live in our development.

I acknowledge Met-Ed owns the easement for the Transmission Line. I acknowledge the existence of a FirstEnergy Service agreement under which “MAIT is entitled to receive administrative, management, and other services from FirstEnergy Service Company.” All three of these companies are intertwined and involved with this transmission project. I believe all three should be listed as respondents.

The transmission line of interest was constructed amidst fields and meadowland at least 30 years before the development was built (1991). This development, my neighborhood, has grown into a vibrant, active, social and caring neighborhood. The Project will replace the existing nine wood poles averaging 53 feet with seven new towering wood poles averaging 59 feet; seven existing overhead wires will be replaced with four overhead wires and they will be strung over 0.37 miles of beautiful open, unimpeded land. The acres of green space shadowed by the towering and dreadful power lines should be able to be enjoyed without fear of negative health effects. The importance of green space has grown over the years and has proved to play an important role in the improvement of mental and physical health for all age groups. I believe my health (mental and physical) and health and safety of my neighbors need to be considered. I disagree that I am not directly impacted by the decision to rebuild the overhead

transmission line for the reasons as so noted throughout this document and within the documents previously submitted.

Please note: Derry Township is considering utilizing one of the areas within our neighborhood affected by these towering lines and poles for a green space project. These poles and lines are certain to negatively affect the total enjoyment of that thoughtful project. Something to be considered here: shared cost. I wish this thought would be entertained by FirstEnergy/Met Ed/MAIT. I believe this is the BEST time to go underground with these lines as far as cost is concerned. The expense for the intended above ground line replacement can be applied to undergrounding. Also, the expense for servicing above ground lines due to severe weather events will also help offset the added cost for undergrounding. In the end, I believe it should be whatever is in the BEST INTEREST of the people that matter and not the bottom line of the company(ies).

I do oppose the Project; however, this opposition is NOT based on “vague and conclusory allegations”. I have supplied specific concerns and feel I have provided factual basis for my beliefs. It is true other communities have had their lines undergrounded within our Derry Township for reasons including those I have noted.

\*Please see the article at the end of this reply referencing one of the underground projects within my township.

Derry Township has an ordinance now requiring undergrounding of electric lines. This does NOT pertain to our case, however. I do believe all of the residents within our neighborhood, our association, should have been notified of the project details. This is not just due to the aesthetic impact the overhead lines have and would continue to have, it is for all of the reasons noted within this Reply and past submitted documents. Our entire neighborhood is impacted by this transmission line.

I agree that MAIT has the right to manage its own affairs to the fullest extent consistent with the public interest. Our interest in this Project has not been thoughtfully considered. I believe it IS in my best interest and in the best interest of our neighborhood to underground these lines.

In response to my allegations regarding health and safety being “vague and conclusory and without merit”, I disagree.

\*\*Please see excerpts and web sites provided in support of my health and safety concerns at the end of this reply

I have additional articles that I can provide when needed to support my case. To state that my concerns regarding the health and safety of these overhead lines is “disingenuous” is accusatory and offensive. I speak my beliefs with no intention to lay claims of falsehoods. I am 30 years older than I

was at the time we purchased this home. I am more informed now of the safety, health and property value concerns with overhead lines and the importance of green space to support good health and well-being. At the time of purchase, I was amidst trying to successfully raise a family of 4 children, working and providing support to my husband who was working so very hard to start his business and provide for our family. Today, I have more time keep up to date on new information about many things in life: one of which is what is best for my family and my community regarding overhead versus underground lines. I choose underground lines.

I stand by my belief that the Project does impact the aesthetics of my development and the value of the property where these poles exist. This line has always affected the aesthetic appeal and now that I am aware of an option to underground, I believe this line should be underground. The new line will only further negatively affect the appeal of our neighborhood as these new poles will be even taller and more daunting. These poles and lines affected the desirability and values of homes 25 or 30 years ago and that issue still exists today. I am aware comps are used to assess the value of a home. I believe if my neighbor's property value is decreased due to these poles and transmission lines crossing their property, my property value can be affected as well.

In regards to having a direct, immediate and substantial interest in the subject matter of this proceeding: I do believe I am directly affected and have a substantial interest in the subject matter of this proceeding for the preceding reasons listed within this document and in documents that have already been submitted for this case.

Some of the points so noted: The influx of safety concerns of these poles has become more apparent over the years as new information unfolds within professional and social media. I have been more informed of the dangers of these lines as the years pass. Studies have concluded that more studies need to be done to determine the safety of this exposure. Thus, the safety of these overhead lines is unclear. This is MY neighborhood, where I live, where I should be able to walk in peace of mind and comfort knowing wherever I walk, my health and the health of my family and neighbors will not be compromised by these overhead lines. Also, these poles and lines tower and shadow over our beautiful open land which has not been fully enjoyed over the last 30 years as it could have been and as it should be. Derry Township is looking to create an aesthetically pleasing green space in a storm water basin within our development. The above ground transmission lines that are located there would detract from the pleasures of using this green space. This green space would promote better health and well-being for myself and for my community. Lastly, this above ground transmission line, I believe, negatively affects the value of my home. As stated before, transmission lines affect property values adversely. If my neighbor's home value is negatively affected due to these above ground transmission lines running through their property, my home value could be negatively affected, as well.

To suggest this is a “frivolous, harassing lawsuit whose costs are ultimately borne, at least in part, by utility ratepayers” is disturbing. This is saying the concerns I have (and those of my neighbors) are foolish and senseless.

I would not be typing this Reply if this endeavor was frivolous. I have NO TIME for frivolous concerns. I am amidst trying to support an 88-year-old mother-in-law with progressive Alzheimer’s disease. Also, I am assisting my 89-year-old, dementia laden mother who insists on living independently and refuses outside help despite her debilitating spinal stenosis. Both of those wonderful women take a large part of my time and energy as they should. At the same time, I am trying to be supportive of a husband who has been battling cancer for 5 years and 4 children, their spouses and ten grandchildren who also actually enjoy spending time with me. I love spending time with them, as well. I am trying to enjoy a “normal” life at the age of 65 and yet, I still take countless hours trying to get a large power company conglomerate to understand what it means to me (and to my neighbors) to get these transmission lines underground.

As for “harassing”, this process could have been less tedious, time consuming and “harassing” (if you will) if my request to speak directly to a representative was honored months ago. It would have been far better for a representative to have contacted all of us in the neighborhood who reached out for a conversation at that time. I have been reaching out to be heard from the onset. It fell on deaf ears and, thus, this case is now in the laps of the PUC and the legal “team” of Reger, Rizzo and Darnall. This is not “harassing”. This is only a case of persistence in wanting to be heard, believing in the right to be heard and deserving to be heard. I believe with all I have stated in this document and the previously submitted documents, I have standing to file this complaint.

I believe I should be given the opportunity to make my case in front of a judge or judges. Those of us who have filed the formal complaint would like to be heard and, if possible, in one hearing.

5. No response required.

6.

7a. As stated

7b. As stated

7c. Please note: my repeated requests for a FirstEnergy/Met Ed representative to contact me to discuss these concerns were received and never honored. Please know 20 emails from individual households were also forwarded to FirstEnergy that indicated opposition to the above ground transmission line replacement. I received emails from 37 out of 39 homeowners within my neighborhood who wanted underground lines.

8. As stated

9. As stated

10. As stated.

### **NEW MATTER**

11. I agree MAIT has the right to manage its own affairs to the fullest extent consistent with the **public interest** and in so far as they do not act contrary to any law or regulation administered by the Commission. I will add, it is in the best interest of my family and in the best interest of my neighborhood to underground these lines as we live here. We are the “public” who live in the shadows of these lines.

12. The Project to replace this line is most definitely in the public interest. To replace this line underground is in the **BEST INTEREST** of those affected by the presence of this line.

13. In regards to my standing (which has already been addressed): I disagree that I lack standing to file a complaint. The influx of safety concerns of these poles has become more apparent over the years as new information unfolds within professional and social media. Studies have concluded that more studies need to be done to determine the safety of electromagnetic exposure from overhead transmission lines. Thus, this exposure has not been proven to be safe. I have been more informed of the dangers of these lines as the years pass: fires (within my own neighborhood) and electrocutions. This is MY neighborhood, where I live, where I should be able to walk in peace of mind and comfort knowing wherever I walk my health and the health of my family and neighbors will not be compromised by these overhead lines. These poles and lines tower and shadow over our beautiful open land which has not been fully enjoyed over the last 30 years, as it could have been and, as it should be. The affected land should be our green space as noted to be beneficial for mental and physical well-being. Secondary to the health and safety concern is the negative effect these lines impose on the value of my home. Transmission lines affect property values adversely. If my neighbor’s home value is negatively affected due to these above ground transmission lines crossing their property, mine property value could be affected, as well. I believe I am directly impacted and therefore, I believe I have standing to file this complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Walizer

Cc: The Hon. Mark A. Hoyer, PA Public Utility Commission

The Hon. John Coogan, PA Public Utility Commission

Tori Giesler, Esquire, FirstEnergy Service Company

Margaret A. Morris, Esquire

## \*Article from local virtual channel

WHTM-TV, virtual channel 27, is an ABC-affiliated television station licensed to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, United States

<https://www.abc27.com/news/local/large-utility-poles-move-underground-decision-made-in-favor-of-derry-township-residents/>

# Large utility poles move underground, decision made in favor of Derry Township residents

by: [Taylor Tosheff](#)

Posted: Feb 4, 2021 / 05:12 PM EST

Updated: Feb 4, 2021 / 07:01 PM EST

HERSHEY, Pa. (WHTM) — Two years ago, abc27 News spoke to two Derry Township residents who weren't happy with the installation of PPL Electric powerlines along their street. After raising concerns, their voices have been heard.

"The only thing we could do was focus on the issues of safety really and appeal to that," said Steve King, Forest Avenue homeowner.

"It's definitely a lot safer and better for everyone now that they're underground," said Tom Fowlston, Forest Avenue homeowner. "Besides being an eyesore, people are concerned about their children under high tension lines."

The large power lines were originally installed to replace aging lines, but residents were shocked to see just how big they were. The lines will now be underground and out of sight. Work to remove the poles began this week.

"Everybody on the street is very happy to see the progress made and that the poles are coming down," King said.

In a letter to residents, PPL says the work to take down the power lines and poles along Forest Avenue should be completed in one to two weeks.

## **\*\*Documents regarding the SAFETY of the electromagnetic fields produced by above ground transmission**

<https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8101.00.pdf>

As noted in this American Cancer Society article, the “US **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)** described the scientific evidence suggesting that ELF exposure poses a health risk as “weak,” but noted that it cannot be recognized as entirely safe, and considered it to be a “possible” human carcinogen.

2015 [http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr\\_o\\_041.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_041.pdf)

As noted in this document written by The Scientific Community on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks, “The new epidemiological studies are consistent with earlier findings of an increased risk of childhood leukemia with estimated daily average exposures above 0.3 to 0.4  $\mu$ T. As stated in the previous Opinions, no mechanisms have been identified and no support is existing from experimental studies that could explain these findings, which, together with shortcomings of the epidemiological studies prevent a causal interpretation.”

2016 <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/radiation-electromagnetic-fields>

As noted in this document presented by The World Health Organization, “**The International EMF Project:** In response to growing public health concerns over possible health effects from exposure to an ever-increasing number and diversity of electromagnetic field sources, in 1996 the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a large, multidisciplinary research effort. The International EMF Project brings together current knowledge and available resources of key international and national agencies and scientific institutions.”

### **“Conclusions from scientific research**

In the area of biological effects and medical applications of non-ionizing radiation approximately 25,000 articles have been published over the past 30 years. Despite the feeling of some people that more research needs to be done, scientific knowledge in this area is now more extensive than for most chemicals. Based on a recent in-depth review of the scientific literature, the WHO concluded that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields. However, some gaps in knowledge about biological effects exist and need further research.”