

Public Utility Commission of Texas

William B Travis Building

1701 N. Congress Avenue

Austin, TX 78701

Re: Opposition to the Howard–Solstice 765-kV Transmission Line and Request for Additional Time to Consider Routing Alternatives

Dear Chairman Gleeson and Commissioners,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed routing of the Howard-Solstice 765-kilovolt transmission line through areas of the Texas Hill Country and West Texas. I strongly oppose any transmission routes that cut through pristine river basins, intact ranchlands, and sensitive groundwater resources that define this region.

The Hill Country and Southwest Texas contain some of the most ecologically significant and economically valuable landscapes in our state. These areas support working, multi-generational ranches; tourism and recreation economies; wildlife corridors; and critical water resources. The permanent fragmentation caused by large-scale transmission infrastructure would result in irreversible harm to landowners, rural communities, and natural systems.

If the Howard–Solstice line must be built along the currently proposed corridors, it should follow the Least Harmful Route, which is the only path to protect river basins, landowners, and taxpayers by following existing highway infrastructure and minimizing new land fragmentation. No transmission line is impact-free, but this approach minimizes damage.

We're grateful that CPS Energy and AEP Texas considered this input and included Alternative Route 9 that protects river basins and generally follows the Least Harmful Route. This route is very similar to Alternative Route 4, identified by the applicants as the best route to address regulatory requirements. The two routes share a majority of their alignment, with virtually identical cost and distance — within about a 1% difference.

The eastern halves of the two routes are almost identical. On the western half, Route 9 better follows existing highway infrastructure northbound along U.S. Highway 277 and then moves west at a point further north, providing stronger protection for the Devils River and the Lower Pecos region. Within the current constraints of the application, Alternative Route 9 represents a more aligned version of the Least Harmful Route — maintaining the applicants' core framework while better protecting river basins, landowners, and taxpayers.

I'd like to ensure that any final alignment adheres as closely as possible to the Least Harmful Route — the Coalition's guiding framework to avoid sensitive river basins and groundwater features, and help protect working ranches, rural communities, and long-term economic vitality.

If the Commission ultimately determines that this project must move forward along its proposed links, I strongly urge you to require that it follow the "Least Harmful Route". While no route is impact free, the Least Harmful Route represents a good-faith, mitigation-focused approach that reduces land fragmentation, limits ecological harm, lowers regulatory and litigation risk, and better protects landowners and taxpayers by following established highway and infrastructure corridors.

Texas can meet its energy reliability needs without sacrificing its most iconic landscapes and water resources. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the State of Texas.

Sincerely,

