



Vote on proposed massive N.J. power line postponed

By Lawrence Ragonese/The Star-Ledger

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Jerry McCrea/The Star-Ledger A view of PSE&G's Susquehanna-Roseland transmission line in Montville.

A proposal by PSE&G would more than triple the line's current size and capacity. A pending decision by the state Board of Public Utilities on a massive North Jersey power line project may be postponed to allow consideration of possible new evidence on the need or demand for the additional power, officials said today.

The BPU was poised to decide the fate of the 45-mile, \$750 million high-voltage Susquehanna-Roseland power line proposed by PSE&G next Friday. However, it was asked by participants in the case to consider a recent decision by a related power provider in the mid-Atlantic region to withdraw a similar power line project application.

PATH Allegheny Virginia Transmission Corp. has asked for permission from a Virginia regulatory agency to withdraw its proposal to build a 276-mile, \$1.8 billion high-voltage transmission line from West Virginia, through Virginia and to Maryland, due to a weak economy and growing energy conservation movement.

New Jersey environmentalists hailed that decision, saying the Susquehanna-Roseland project also is unnecessary. But PSE&G spokeswoman Karen Johnson said there is no intention of backing away from the New Jersey project.

"We continue to believe the data provided on the record will show this line is needed for (power) reliability reasons," said Johnson, adding PSE&G has asked any BPU decision on this matter be expedited.

PROPOSED POWER LINE

Although the exact route of the Branchburg-Roseland-Hudson line is yet to be determined, it would start in Branchburg, extend to Roseland and continue to Jersey City. The total length is expected to be 50 to 70 miles and the line is expected to cost about \$1.1 billion.



Source: PSE&G

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BPU Commissioner Joseph Fiordaliso has asked all participants in the Susquehanna-Roseland matter to submit comments to him by next Friday so he can decide whether the Virginia-area power case information should be added to the public record, according to BPU spokesman Tim O'Donovan.

The entire BPU board of commissioners would have the final say about including the additional information. If the panel approves, it is unknown how long that could delay the final decision, said O'Donovan.

"This is good news. Clearly, the BPU will have to pay attention to what's going on in other states," said Julia Somers, executive director of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition.

The proposed Susquehanna-Roseland power line would allow for new, higher towers to carry more voltage along an existing tower route through Warren, Sussex, Morris and Essex counties.

PSE&G contends the transmission line is needed to maintain reliability of the regional electricity grid. But opponents say it would harm the state's environment to help provide power in other regions and profits for the company.

Previous coverage

- N.J. ratepayer agency questions necessity of proposed PSE&G power line
- Opponents to PSE&G power line through Northwest Jersey produce online video
- Gov. Jon Corzine declines to block PSE&G power line project through Northwest Jersey
- N.J. Highlands Council approves PSE&G's proposed power line project

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