

Community Forum

Bury the lines, build the bridge

May 19, 2016

Rappahannock Record

Kilmarnock, VA

From a distance the Norris Bridge shows a classic and beautiful shape, but up close its superstructure needs paint and the roadway needs replacement. Folks stopped on the bridge can feel it sway in the wind and tremble when heavy trucks pass by. Safety requires constant attention and repair.

We all know the truth: We need a new bridge.

Understandably, some are asking: Why engage in a campaign to block Dominion's transmission towers across the river when advocating for a new bridge is even more important? Why not wait for a new bridge, then run the wires under (or alongside) the bridge?

The answer is that Dominion wants to build those towers now, and the state wants to wait another decade or two to start a new bridge. We are told that modern bridges are expected to last at least 75 years and are rarely

replaced before then. The Norris Bridge is almost 60 years old, yet VDOT has suggested it might last another 40 years.

Local efforts are under way to lobby for its replacement, but even the most optimistic projection would not give us a new bridge for more than 10 years.

Dominion has made it clear they will not wait to upgrade the lines across the Rappahannock. If they are allowed to do so with towers, those masses of concrete and steel will remain a perpetual scar across the river even when the new bridge is built. Imagine that—new bridge, ugly towers. Better to have a new bridge and unobstructed views of Virginia's most beautiful river crossing.

We must continue to fight for the scenic value of our river and the economic health of our region. The power lines must be buried.

**Mickey Kendrick,
White Stone**