

## Public hearing on replacing aging power lines across Rappahannock is Tuesday

by Larry Chowning

**NEWPORT NEWS**—The Virginia Marine Resources Commission in Newport News will hold a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 28, on an application for a permit from Dominion Power to install new 15 KV transmission line pilings across the Rappahannock River, 100 feet east of the Robert O. Norris Jr. Memorial Bridge between Topping and White Stone.

The proposal calls for relocating two miles of power lines across the Rappahannock on the new pilings. Dominion Power wants to replace and remove the existing seven wood structures currently in the water, and remove the 14 attachments on the bridge.

The lines will be upgraded and placed on 11 new 120-to-190-foot-high steel structures with concrete foundations in the water. Project supervisor Wes Keck recently told the Middlesex board of supervisors Dominion Power wants to replace the aging infrastructure on the bridge that has been in place since 1962 and has reached its "end-of-life."

Keck noted the new line will increase reliability and operation efficiencies by upgrading and relocating the line. The rebuild also will upgrade the line to meet

current standards, and the new clearances will reduce vulnerabilities of an aging line, lessening the risk of outages.

"This transmission line provides critical electric power to the lower end of the Northern Neck peninsula, which includes 19,000 customers of Dominion Power and electric co-op customers," said Keck.

Emily Davies of Urbanna has submitted a formal objection to VMRC and has been asked to testify at the public hearing on Tuesday. "My letter of objection is that this project will pose significant negative aesthetic impact on our beautiful Rappahannock River. It's going to be 11 H-shaped metal towers, 190-foot tall, across the river.

"Also, I'm going to show them the little one inch by two inch legal notices in the Southside Sentinel and the Rappahannock Record," she said. "That's the only way I knew about it. I think the transparency process needs some work.

"The power lines are under the water across the York River because the bridge has a draw," said Davies. "They say it's too expensive [to go underground across the Rappahannock] but it can be done. I just disagree with their findings. I feel they should put the lines under the water."