

YOUR LETTERS

Be heard in opposition to tower proposal

I'm opposed to Dominion Power's plan to install 10 enormous power line towers across the Rappahannock River near the Norris bridge.

Dominion says that placing the lines on towers instead of burying them under the river is a matter of reliability. It claims that if an above-ground line went down it could be repaired quickly, but if an underground cable failed, repairs could take "months."

This seems like a dubious argument, designed to scare local residents and convince them that Dominion really has their best interests at heart. It seems far more likely that Dominion's primary interest is its own bottom line.

Above-ground lines go down because they are exposed to the elements. Lines on towers are

susceptible to damage from high winds, lightning strikes, corrosion, and accidents. Buried lines are impervious to any such damage and are likely to be far more reliable.

Dominion also claims that burying the lines would be too expensive, but this claim should not simply be accepted at face value. Compared to what? What value do we assign to preserving the natural beauty of our area and not making it resemble an industrial site?

It's clear that the lines could be buried under the river, as they have been elsewhere—Dominion just doesn't want to do it. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to safeguard our beautiful river vistas if at all possible.

People concerned about this proposal should make their voices heard. To see what you can do, visit notowers.org.

**Randall Eliason,
White Stone**

We may be forced out

We have been advised that Dominion Power is planning on erecting power lines on new towers above the beautiful Norris Bridge rather than under it. Visit notowers.org and take action now.

The Norris Bridge is the unique and wonderful gateway to the Rappahannock. Who has the decision here? The elected politicians of Virginia or Dominion Power?

We love "the Rivah," raise oysters, catch crabs, swim and love the land and the community. A local contractor built a wonderful home for us overlooking the bridge in 2006. Local businesses are home to us. The Northern Neck is so special.

Relocating to Delaware is suddenly and sadly a very real option if the Norris Bridge is commandeered and the view is ruined by Dominion Power.

**Dave Coakley,
White Stone**

Preserve the view

Dominion Power's proposed series of 1950s-style industrial towers parallel to the Norris Bridge to carry new transmission lines would look just fine—along a remote stretch of the New Jersey Turnpike. But they have no place on the beautiful Rappahannock River.

The Rappahannock is one of Virginia's most valuable natural treasures. It belongs to all Virginians—not to Dominion Power. We have an opportunity now to improve the vistas from the bridge by removing the old wooden towers at either end and running the cable under water.

What Dominion has proposed instead would create a visual blight—a line of towers supporting sagging power lines—running the entire length of the bridge. This would mar the view from one end to the other. That's right—what Dominion has proposed would look worse than what is there now.

Shame on you, Dominion.

The Norris Bridge is the gateway from the south to the Northern Neck. In a significant way, the drive across that bridge sets the tone for a visitor to our area.

No one comes here to study the aesthetic beauty of industrial transmission lines. They come here to enjoy the incomparable beauty of Virginia's rivers and tidal lands at their finest. For many, the best viewing opportunities they will have will be those they enjoy when crossing the bridge.

Let's preserve those views, not obscure them. And let's pass them on to the next generation, in better condition than we found them.

Yes, it may cost more to run the cables underwater. But that is what you did at the York River bridge and at the Piankatank—and those vistas now are fabulous.

Come on Dominion, listen to The People. Put the cables under water.

**Jean and Garland Hagen,
Kilmarnock**

Legislators voted for 10 tall towers

Earlier this year, both our representatives voted in support of SB 1030, which directed VMRC to give Dominion Power right of way across the public Baylor oyster grounds on the Rappahannock.

Then by Senate letter of June 2, 2015, they were joined by Middlesex Del. Keith Hodges, endorsing replacement of the current transmission line, which is partially fastened to the Norris Bridge.

That is fine—according to Dominion, this line has been in service since 1962, and is a secondary line, turned off for most of the year while the bridge was being painted.

I attended the VMRC hearing on July 28. What our representatives approved is the construction of 10, much taller towers to replace the existing wooden towers and bridge attachments. Driving to the hearing, I noticed that the existing towers blend into the tree line on both shores when you come and go, and do not obstruct our scenic views to the East at the middle of the span.

So why vote for cables suspended from new towers? Cheaper says Dominion. VMRC rubber stamped the application as did the U.S. Army Corps. The Department of Conservation and Recreation was all but silent on the matter, concerned only about disturbing the peregrine falcon nests on the bridge. The U.S. Army Corp was concerned only with migrating fish from winter to spring.

No one was at all concerned about despoiling our scenic Rappahannock vistas. The price on our vistas could more than compensate for the increased marginal costs, say for a submerged cable alternative.

This is where you come back in Del. Ransone, Del. Hodges and Sen. McDougle: Your letter did not specify the method of achieving the power upgrade. Tell Dominion No Towers, please.

**George R Bott,
Lancaster**

YOUR LETTERS

Bury the line

It is interesting that Dominion Power could get almost through the permitting process without anyone being aware of the scope of their plans. They stated that they were merely replacing and upgrading an existing power line across the Rappahannock River. A good thing in itself.

However, that is quite disingenuous as the new line will be disconnected from its current location, attached to the bridge, and moved 100 yards downstream to sit by itself on towers placed on piling, much taller and massive than the current line.

It will be an intrusion upon the current unobstructed view, greeting both visitors and residents alike as they enter either Middlesex County or the Northern Neck, not to mention the view of those who live on either side of the river for miles.

This gives new meaning to lack of transparency and cannot be accidental.

We owe a great deal to Emily Davis who found the 1x2" notice in the Rappahannock Record and filed an objection leading to the recent hearing. We now have an opportunity to voice our objections.

We ask that this line be buried.

Virginia Power says potential repairs to a buried line would leave us without power for months. Yet in their words, this line is deemed a "reliability issue," only needed in the event other power sources to the Northern Neck fail. It goes off-line any time the Virginia Department of Transportation works on the bridge, sometimes for long periods of time with no apparent problems.

This bridge is an iconic structure to those of us who live here and is a big part of creating the atmosphere this entire region is working to project to visitors and potential residents. Do the right thing and bury this line.

**Gail L. Tiesenga,
White Stone**