

YOUR LETTERS

Get on with the project

The controversy concerning Dominion Power replacing transmission lines across the Rappahannock is interesting. I am neither for nor against the tower solution per se.

If upgrade is necessary, a public utility should provide a solution at the lowest cost and least disruption of service and the environment. After considering a number of alternatives, Dominion concluded the tower solution the least costly, least disruptive solution.

In a letter to the Lancaster board of supervisors chairman dated August 21, 2015, a Dominion executive stated the cost of alternatives would be 4 to 5 times greater or a premium of \$90 to \$120 million. These costs would be passed on to all Virginia rate payers.

In addition, there would be far greater disruption of the environment in the underground or submersion options.

It is wrong to expect the citizens of Virginia to bear these additional costs so that a handful politically well-connected persons with dubious motives have their way and force Dominion to return to the drawing boards for their preferred alternative, not to mention the delays that would be caused by having to re-engineer and get new permits.

The claim that the "southern Gateway to the Northern Neck" would be ruined by the towers is a sham. What about the towers that are already there? The claim that "our beautiful Norris Bridge would be despoiled" is also a sham.

That beautiful Norris Bridge is covered in pock marked rust scabs throughout the superstructure. Where is the clamor to have the bridge superstructure painted?

It would be best for the majority of the people of Kilmarnock and the rest of Lancaster County, if we drop this controversy and let Dominion get on with the upgrade without further disruption.

**Mike Sutherland,
Kilmarnock**

Spend the extra money and bury the power lines

The proposed new power line structures across our Rappahannock River adjacent to the Norris Bridge bring to my mind several unflattering words—appalling, outrageous, unsightly, atrocious, thoughtless and inconsiderate solutions.

Such an approach to our "Land of Pleasant Living" will be a glaring sign of the way that mankind can cause deterioration of the natural beauty of this earth.

The very fact that Dominion Power would place lines under the York and Piankatank rivers speaks clearly to the inconsiderate nature of the company's plan for these high-rise structures over the Rappahannock.

I am a proud native of this area whose ancestors chose to settle here in "God's Country." Happily the area still attracts settlers who seek refuge from the busy ugly world outside and choose this peaceful haven of pastoral beauty.

Dominion Power, don't think for a moment that the beautiful approach over the scenic river bridge does not affect the influx of such new settlers who contribute heavily to the economy of the area. This place has never been an industrial manufacturing mecca. Now, please ask me (and the rest of us) why these planned high-rise structures wouldn't signal such a condition, for that is surely what the scene will portray.

So, Dominion Power, be thoughtful and do the right thing. Spend a bit more money and change your ugly defective plan.

**Nancy Hubbard Clark,
Kilmarnock**

Overheard lines may cause aviation risk

Aside from the very disturbing visual impact on our beautiful Rappahannock River, the proposed Dominion Power transmission lines will pose a very real hazard to navigation for aircraft operating into Hummel Field.

I based a plane there for 14 years and know that when landing on Runway 19, the most frequently used runway because of prevailing winds, you fly the downwind leg just to the right (east side) of the bridge and turn base over the bridge itself before you reach the center span structure. This is right where the new towers are to be located and represents an increased risk to the safety of flying into Hummel Field.

I understand the power line towers will be even taller than the highest point of the bridge and this is definitely a problem for planes descending and already well into the landing pattern. I hope the FAA is aware of the proposed power lines and anticipate they will have something to say about them.

At the very least, I expect they will require flashing lights on the top of each tower and the addition of large balls on the power lines themselves to increase visibility of the lines and towers to pilots. The addition of these lights and balls will increase the visual pollution posed by the transmission line and do not appear on the artist sketches of the proposal.

An underwater line would solve both the visual and aviation safety problems.

**Peter Ginocchio,
White Stone**

Power company **YOUR LETTERS** needs to listen to those they serve

I live in Loudoun County, but own property in the Northern Neck. I share the outrage over the plans to destroy the Norris Bridge crossing the Rappahannock River by erecting 10 transmission towers to carry power lines across the river. No one doubts the need to replace aging wires, but the plan to put up 100-foot poles is misguided.

Dominion Power also desecrated our farmland in the shadow of the Blue Ridge by putting up gargantuan power towers with no regard to the land, the view, or the history of the land.

These guys are bullies and do nothing to work with landowners; they just march in like storm troopers and whine about having to produce power for the future needs of the residents. They discount reports that we are actually using less power than ever before, thanks to more energy-efficient appliances, switching from incandescent bulbs to CFLs or LEDs.

No one believes the poppycock Dominion puts out about the cost to bury the cables. Sure, maybe initially it is more expensive, but in the long run, it will be cheaper than sending out power crews to repair cables after a storm blows through at the overtime rates they must be getting.

The time has to come to stop these people in their tracks and maybe the Norris Bridge may be the time and place to take a stand. If you are ever in Loudoun County, look at Route 7, which follows the historic W&OD rail line, now a very popular bike trail. Look at the towers Dominion put there; it

follows Route 7 all the way to the Blue Ridge.

Dominion Power has to start listening to the residents they purport to serve, not their puppeteers who fund their misguided plans.

**George A. Santulli,
Lovettsville**

Irvington mayor, council oppose power line plan

The Rappahannock River is beautiful sight. Dominion Virginia Power is proposing to replace the currently attached power lines to the bridge with 10 industrial-looking steel towers to transmit the power lines across the river. The steel towers will be placed 100 feet east of the Norris Bridge. They will rise 180 feet skyward to impede the view of the beautiful Rappahannock River and eastward, the Chesapeake Bay.

For visitors to the Northern Neck, the river is welcoming and inviting to the peace and tranquility that can be found here. For residents, it is a symbol of being home again.

The residents and visitors can look through the proposed industrial-looking steel towers with its power lines, but would it not be better to enjoy the unimpeded view of the beautiful Rappahannock River?

On behalf of the Irvington Town Council members, I join with those who are requesting that the Virginia Dominion Power lines be placed underwater and leave the view of the Rappahannock River unobstructed.

**Ralph D. Ransone, mayor,
Kathleen F. Pollard, vice-
mayor; Gene H. Edmonds;
Jerome S. Latell, Michael E.
Merrill, R. Wayne Nunnally,
Frances E. Westbrook, council
members, Irvington**

Inaction is inexcusable

Please, would a member of the Kilmarnock town council, or of the Northumberland board of supervisors give me any cogent reason to table endorsing a resolution opposing Dominion Power's obscene steel towers.

You need more information?

What could you possibly learn that would make you not want to oppose it?

Your inaction and stalling is pathetic.

**Alana Courtney,
Urbanna and Kilmarnock**

Is there another way?

The Norris bridge/Dominion Power issue may have a third option.

VDOT and Dominion have cooperated for a long time in carrying some of the lines on the bridge. Could that cooperation be strengthened by more fully integrating the new lines under or into the bridge?

There are of course some complex engineering and aesthetic, economic and political, and practical safety challenges.

But, VDOT could benefit from "renting" the bridge to Dominion, and Dominion may save some costs for the piers and towers currently proposed.

Perhaps, another benefit would be to show others how we in the Northern Neck can overcome the twin challenges of meeting our growing power and access infrastructure needs through innovation and cooperation.

**Dave Alberts,
Kilmarnock**

Focus on a new bridge

Many letters about the planned towers and transmission lines alongside the Norris Bridge are talking about how the beauty of the bridge will be spoiled.

Please, give that to me again? What is beautiful about this rusting, terrifyingly narrow span we are required to cross? Does the intermittent/constant so-called "maintenance" add any charm?

Do we dare to look at the scenery while driving over? Or are most of us scared out of our wits by huge trucks and speeding cars? Does anyone even consider driving the speed limit?

Too many Sheriff's Reports state that reckless drivers are reported, however, there are no police available to catch them. What? Going too fast?

I have a theory that this bridge, while absolutely necessary to Lancaster County, is actually deterring new business. People don't want to cross

the bridge to shop or work. Since I'm already comfortably and selfishly here, it suits me just fine if traffic doesn't get any worse.

Thousands of vehicles cross every day and have only one thing in mind—getting through White Stone as fast as possible. Please, if I'm sick enough so that Bon Secours RGH sends me to Richmond, or somewhere—get a helicopter! Or just let me die in peace.

This bridge, indeed once beautiful, means much nostalgia, especially for the folks who got across by ferry. What it means to me is that it has been dangerous, decrepit and ugly for too long and needs to be replaced. We are told that it's too expensive to lay cable under water, oh, please.

How about putting the new electric lines underneath a new span? Dominion Virginia Power can do it. VDOT can do it. But they have to want to.

All our cries about scenery have no traction.

**Miriam MacCarthy,
White Stone**