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Texas Farm Bureau Written Testimony
Senate Business & Commerce Committee Interim Charge Hearing:
Managing the Impacts of 765-kV Transmission Lines on Private Property Rights
July 29, 2026

On behalf of Texas Farm Bureau and our members across Texas, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the impact of proposed 765-kV transmission line projects on private property rights, agricultural operations, and rural communities.

Texas Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of maintaining a reliable and resilient electric grid to support the state's continued economic growth and population expansion. However, the scale and permanence of 765-kV transmission infrastructure require careful scrutiny to ensure that landowner rights are adequately protected and that projects are truly necessary before private property is burdened through the transmission siting process.

Demonstrating Need Before Approval

The Legislature should ensure that the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) maintains a rigorous standard when evaluating Certificates of Convenience and Necessity (CCNs) for new transmission projects. Transmission lines of this magnitude impose lasting impacts on landowners and communities, and approval should occur only when there is clear evidence that a project is necessary, cost-effective, and represents the least intrusive option available to address identified grid needs.

Many landowners have expressed concerns that current proposals rely heavily on long-term planning assumptions regarding reliability, anticipated load growth, and future generation development. While planning studies performed by ERCOT serve an important purpose, they should not replace the PUC's independent responsibility to determine whether a specific transmission project is reasonable, prudent, and necessary under Texas law.

Greater Evaluation of Alternatives

Before approving new extra-high-voltage transmission corridors, policymakers should ensure that all reasonable alternatives have been fully evaluated and transparently considered.

Potential alternatives may include:

- Upgrades to existing transmission infrastructure;
- Reconductoring or capacity enhancements on existing facilities;
- Advanced grid technologies and operational improvements;
- Targeted substation enhancements;
- Phased transmission development as demand materializes;
- Demand response programs;
- Energy storage resources; and
- Localized generation solutions.

A thorough evaluation of these alternatives can help reduce unnecessary impacts on private landowners while ensuring that Texas continues to meet its reliability needs efficiently.

Impacts on Private Property and Agriculture

The committee's review of transmission planning should carefully consider the unique burdens imposed on agricultural producers and rural landowners.

A 765-kV transmission line requires substantial right-of-way acreage and can permanently affect the use and productivity of agricultural land. Such projects may interfere with farming and ranching operations, irrigation systems, aerial application activities, pasture management, and future improvements to the property.

In addition to operational challenges, landowners frequently express concerns regarding:

- Loss of productive agricultural acreage;
- Fragmentation of farms and ranches;
- Constraints on future land use;
- Visual impacts on rural landscapes;
- Potential reductions in property values; and
- Long-term effects on community development.

Because these impacts are permanent and often unavoidable once a route is selected, affected landowners should receive meaningful opportunities to participate throughout the planning and siting process.

Opportunities for Legislative Improvement

Texas Farm Bureau encourages the Legislature to consider improvements that strengthen transparency and landowner protections during transmission planning and permitting, including:

1. Requiring a more comprehensive demonstration of need before routing decisions are finalized.
2. Strengthening requirements for evaluating alternatives to new transmission corridors.
3. Providing earlier notice and meaningful engagement opportunities for affected landowners.
4. Ensuring sufficient time for landowners and communities to review and respond to proposed routes.
5. Requiring greater consideration of impacts on long-term agricultural productivity, property values, environmental resources, and future land use.
6. Promoting routing decisions that minimize impacts on existing homes, businesses, farms, ranches, and rural communities.

Conclusion

As Texas continues to invest in electric infrastructure necessary to support statewide growth, policymakers must ensure that the benefits of new transmission projects are balanced against the significant and permanent impacts imposed on private property owners.

Texas Farm Bureau respectfully urges the Legislature to review whether current transmission planning, permitting, and siting processes adequately protect landowners and to consider reforms that improve transparency, accountability, and consideration of less intrusive alternatives before new 765-kV transmission corridors are approved.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting both Texas' electric reliability and the private property rights of Texas landowners.