

Bell County East - Big Hill 765 kV Transmission Line

10/6/2025

This information is provided to Burnet County property owners to streamline access to information that you may want to review related to the new Bell County East-Big Hill 765 kV transmission line proposed to route through Burnet County. By reviewing this information, you acknowledge that this is not legal advice and should not replace your own research or consultation with your attorney. The Burnet County Commissioners Court is still considering action it may take.

House Bill 5066 (passed during the 2023 Legislative session) required the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) to order the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) to study the energy requirements of the ERCOT Region, and, specifically the Permian Basin. The Bill required an analysis of not only the necessary energy, but also the transmission and distribution lines necessary to serve customers in the ERCOT Region. This Bill was unanimously passed in both the House and the Senate.

Link to Bill: <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=HB5066>

The Public Utility Regulatory Act, PURA, was amended as follows:

Sec. 39.166. RELIABILITY PLAN FOR REGIONS WITH RAPID ELECTRICAL LOAD GROWTH. (Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., ch. ____ (HB 5066), § 3.)

(a) The commission shall direct the independent organization certified under Section 39.151 for the ERCOT power region to:

(1) identify each region in which transmission capacity is insufficient to meet the region's existing and forecasted electrical load, as reasonably determined by the certificated transmission service provider; and

(2) develop a reliability plan to serve existing and forecasted electrical load in the identified region.

(b) The commission shall develop a plan to implement each reliability plan adopted under Subsection (a) to ensure timely development and approval of necessary transmission service improvements.

(Added by Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., ch. (HB 5066), § 3.)

The “commission” is the PUCT, and the “independent organization” is ERCOT. The PUCT ordered ERCOT to perform studies to determine the best way to provide the necessary power through the year 2038. The PUCT opened Project Number 55718 to consider various methods of providing the necessary power to the Permian Basin. ERCOT considered the power requirements

for the ERCOT Region as well as potential generation to be moved from anywhere in the ERCOT Region to the Permian Basin.

Links to PUCT Orders

https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/55718_7_1353081.PDF - PUCT order requiring ERCOT to develop reliability plan for the Permian Basin (December 14, 2023)

https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/55718_109_1492424.PDF - PUCT order determining that the 765kV solution is the appropriate solution (April 24, 2025)

Oncor and LCRA were selected to build the Bell County East - Big Hill 765 kV Transmission Line (**Bell County to Big Hill Line**) because they each owned end points of the line. Oncor and LCRA held public meetings in June 2025 showing where they **may** place the transmission lines. Oncor will build the part of the transmission line that going through Burnet County. *Although the map shows the potential placement of the lines along three different corridors, the lines can be moved anywhere in the study area.*

Links to Oncor's website to view the information on the Bell County to Big Hill line:

<https://www.oncor.com/content/oncorwww/us/en/home/about-us/transmission-systems/current-transmission-line-projects.html>.

Use the drop-down arrow to find the Bell County East to Big Hill Line to see information on the project, as well as maps of the area.

The study area map link:

<https://www.oncor.com/content/dam/oncorwww/documents/about-us/transmission-system/current-trasmission-line-projects/bell-county-east---big-hill-765-/Bell%20County%20East%20-%20Big%20Hill%20Notice%20Map.pdf>

The larger study area maps (they take a while to load on your computer) show the detail of the study area in Burnet Count. Specifically, these are maps 3-1-B and 3-1-C.

<https://www.oncor.com/content/dam/oncorwww/documents/about-us/transmission-system/current-trasmission-line-projects/bell-county-east---big-hill-765-/Bell%20County%20East-Big%20Hill%20Constraints%20Map%20Watermark%206.18.25.pdf>

Link to information provided to the public by Oncor and LCRA at the public meetings in June:

<https://www.oncor.com/content/dam/oncorwww/documents/about-us/transmission-system/current-transmission-line-projects/bell-county-east---big-hill-765-/Bell%20County%20East%20-%20Big%20Hill%20-%20Public%20Meeting%20Material.pdf>

Oncor recently opened up a project at the PUCT to allow interested parties to file comments now relating to the future proceeding. You may file your comments and concerns with the PUCT in **Project number 58559**.

<https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/search/filings/?ControlNumber=58559&UtilityType=A&ItemMatch=Equal&DocumentType=ALL>

You may also sign up to receive notifications of anything filed in that proceeding by registering on the PUCT Portal.

<https://portal.puc.texas.gov/portal/>

Timing:

Oncor and LCRA expect that in late November or early December they will file their application to build the Bell County East to Big Hill transmission line with the PUCT. All landowners receiving notice of the application will be allowed to intervene in the proceeding. If you do not receive notice, and you are aware that one of the proposed routes crosses your property or you have a habitable structure within 500 feet of the centerline of a proposed route, contact Oncor and LCRA immediately.

The process is very fast because under the law, the PUCT must decide within 180 days of filing the application or the applicant may file a proceeding to force the PUCT to decide.


Once the Application is filed, affected parties have 30 days to intervene.

You may seek discovery once your intervention is approved.

After intervention and before the hearing, there will be a period of discovery among the parties.

The hearing will be held about three months after filing the Application, followed written argument (briefing), the proposed order from the administrative law judges to the Commission, additional written argument and then consideration by the PUCT Commissioners for a final order.

If you have property that could be affected by the Bell County East to Big Hill Line, and you are aware of problems with crossing your property, you may contact Oncor now at: transmissionprojects@oncor.com or LCRA at BCBH@lcra.org.



The following concerns are examples, and not all-inclusive:

Habitable structures not identified in the study area map

Private airstrips

Traveling irrigation

Gas Pipelines

Railroads

Historical and Archeological Sites

Indian Middens

Arrowheads

Ancient pieces of pottery or utensils

Sites designated as historical

Endangered Species – you can use the internet to search central Texas endangered species.

Examples:

Various animals (ocelot, black bear, northern long-eared bat)

Reptiles (types of salamanders)


Birds (Attwater's prairie chicken, Texas Whooping Crane)

Invertebrates (certain beetles, spiders, etc.)

Plants (Tobusch fishhook cactus, Texas Wild Rice, etc.)

Certain fish and turtles.

If you know that any of the above are located on your property or in the study area map, email Oncor and LCRA to inform them before they finalize their proposed routes.



When Oncor and LCRA file their application, it will include multiple, proposed routes for the line. They will also include an environmental impacts study.

You do not need a lawyer to participate in the PUCT process, although some landowners are already hiring them.

The Commissioners Court has invited Mike Hoke from the PUCT to address the Commissioners Court and Public on **October 21, 2025 at 10:00 am at the Burnet County Community Center, located at 401 E. Jackson Street, Burnet, TX 78611**. Mr. Hoke will try to answer questions you may have. Because the project is still in early stages, many questions cannot yet be answered. More will be known when the application is filed.

Oncor and LCRA are currently reviewing property in the study area to determine what proposed routes will be included in the application. The current study area and potential routes are preliminary and may be moved ANYWHERE in the study area. Now is the time for you to contact Oncor/LCRA with your objections/concerns about a route through your property.

Governing Laws and Rules

The transmission providers must file an application with the PUCT to file certain transmission lines, such as the one in this case. The Commission must find that the line is necessary and the lines in the application meet the criteria of the Law and PUCT Rules.

PUCT Governing Laws and Rules

You may use the PUCT website to access to the Laws and Rules that will govern the proceeding.

<https://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/rulesnlaws/>

The Public Utility Regulatory Act, **PURA**, governs the PUCT:

(<https://ftp.puc.texas.gov/public/puct-info/agency/rulesnlaws/statutes/pura19.pdf>).

The PUCT has both Procedural and Substantive Rules

Procedural Rules:

<https://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/rulesnlaws/procrules/>

Electric Substantive Rules:

<https://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/rulesnlaws/subrules/electric/>

Specifically, the application must include routing options under the PUCT Substantive Rules, 16 Tex. Admin. Code §25.101(b)(3)(B) (TAC):

Routing: An application for a new transmission line must address the criteria in PURA §37.056(c) and considering those criteria, engineering constraints, and costs, the line must be routed to the extent reasonable to moderate the impact on the affected community and landowners unless grid reliability and security dictate otherwise. The following factors must be considered in the selection of the utility's alternative routes unless a route is agreed to by the utility, the landowners whose property is crossed by the proposed line, and owners of land that contains a habitable structure within 300 feet of the centerline of a transmission project of 230 kV or less, or within 500 feet of the centerline of a transmission project greater than 230 kV, and otherwise conforms to the criteria in PURA §37.056(c):

- (i) whether the routes parallel or utilize existing compatible rights-of-way for electric facilities, including the use of vacant positions on existing multiple-circuit transmission lines;
- (ii) whether the routes parallel or utilize other existing compatible rights-of-way, including roads, highways, railroads, or telephone utility rights-of-way;
- (iii) whether the routes parallel property lines or other natural or cultural features; and
- (iv) whether the routes conform with the policy of prudent avoidance.

What can you do?

Contact your Federal and State representatives, including the Governor's office.

Governor: Governor Greg Abbott

<https://gov.texas.gov/contact>

US Senators: US Senator John Cornyn

<https://www.cornyn.senate.gov/contact-john-cornyn/>

US Senator Ted Cruz

<https://www.cruz.senate.gov/contact>

US Congressman:

John Carter

<https://carter.house.gov/faq/>



State Senate: Senator Pete Flores

<https://senate.texas.gov/member.php?d=24>

State House of Representatives:

Representative Ellen Troxclair

<https://house.texas.gov/members/4385>

If you email the PUCT commissioners, they will file it in Project 58559. Because they are decision-makers in the proceeding, they cannot communicate with potential parties.

What else can you do?

File comments with the PUCT in Project 58559 (links above)

Intervene in the proceeding (Docket not yet opened)

Join local groups interested in intervening in the proceeding