



Filing Receipt

Filed Date - 2025-11-06 04:49:46 PM

Control Number - 58559

Item Number - 10



TEXAS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

Submitted via email

November 5, 2025

Public Utility Commission of Texas
William B. Travis Building
1701 N. Congress Avenue, Suite 7-110
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Need for Comprehensive Review and Responsible Planning of 765-kV Transmission Line Development

Dear Chairman Gleeson and Commissioners,

Thank you for your service to our state on the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission). We write to express our collective concern about the current approach to planning and routing 765-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines across the State of Texas. While we recognize the importance of expanding and modernizing our electric grid to meet future reliability and economic growth needs, the unprecedented scale and environmental footprint of 765-kV infrastructure demand a more deliberate, transparent, and locally informed process than is presently being followed.

These projects represent one of the most wide-ranging transmission expansion efforts in Texas history, with corridors requiring extensive rights-of-way and clearing through rural, agricultural, and ecologically sensitive areas. Such development carries significant implications for land stewardship, flood management, property valuation, and wildlife habitat, as well as for county tax bases, tourism, and the long-term sustainability of local communities. Without statewide coordination, the cumulative impacts of multiple 765-kV lines could permanently alter the character and stability of large regions of rural Texas.

For example, the Bell County East to Big Hill 765-kV Transmission Project, proposed by the Lower Colorado River Authority and Oncor, illustrates many of these challenges. All three of the currently proposed routes would cross the San Saba River basin—one of the most pristine watersheds in Central Texas—requiring extensive vegetation removal, increasing flood and sedimentation risks, and threatening federally listed mussel species that depend on this habitat. The July 4, 2025, rainfall event, in which the San Saba area received 30% more precipitation than Kerr County, underscores the hydrological fragility of this region.

Similar conditions exist in other counties where new 765-kV lines are proposed, underscoring the need for a consistent policy framework that protects both private property and environmental integrity.

It is also of concern that landowners were not meaningfully engaged in the development of these routes prior to the opening of the formal comment period. Early outreach consisted primarily of limited questionnaires distributed at public open houses—most of which occurred before the July 4 flooding event that materially changed local conditions.

Importantly, the legislature has already directed the Commission to evaluate each new transmission line for impacts to community values, recreational and park areas, historical and aesthetic values, and environmental integrity [Tex. Util. Code § 37.056(c)(4)(A)–(D)]. As we have described here, these new 765-kV lines will undoubtedly affect these factors across the state.

Moreover, an amendment was added to Senate Bill 2 in the Second Called Special Session, which would have ensured that local Emergency Management Coordinators have standing to provide input to the Commission when transmission lines are proposed in 100-year floodplains or near key river corridors. The amendment recognized their professional expertise in disaster response, giving them a formal voice in decisions that affect public safety and infrastructure resilience. Unfortunately, SB 2 did not pass, but this policy still has substantial merit.

We therefore respectfully urge the Commission to carefully consider the clear impacts that these 765-kV lines will have on those statutory factors and to:

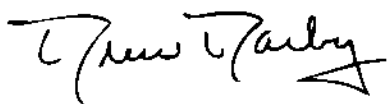
1. Coordinate with state natural resource and emergency management agencies to assess cumulative environmental and flood impacts before finalizing siting decisions.
2. Require utility companies to prioritize existing transportation and transmission corridors, such as U.S. and state highway rights-of-way, to minimize new disturbance. See 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 25.101(b)(3)(B).
3. Ensure complete and early participation by local officials, including County Emergency Coordinators, in all routing proceedings.
4. Develop a unified public engagement process that guarantees meaningful consultation with landowners before route publication.
5. Keep our offices regularly updated on the status of all proposed 765-kV lines.

Texas has long set a national standard for balancing energy leadership with respect for land, water, and private property rights. Respect for private property rights, the legislature's express statutory requirements, and local input must remain central to the siting of any state-approved utility corridor. No project of this magnitude should proceed without direct consultation and consent from the affected communities.

As stewards of that legacy, we urge the Commission to exercise its full authority to ensure that 765-kV expansion proceeds responsibly, transparently, and in coordination with the communities most affected.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,



Representative Drew Darby
House District 72
Chair, House Committee on Energy Resources



Representative Ken King
House District 88
Chair, House Committee on State Affairs



Representative Charlie Geren
House District 99
Chair, House Administration Committee



Representative Brad Buckley
House District 54
Chair, House Committee on Public Education



Representative Stan Lambert
House District 71
Chair, House Committee on Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services