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VICE CHAIRMAN,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3310

August 26, 2015

Mr. Edward S. Finley, Jr., Chairman  
North Carolina Utilities Commission  
4325 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4300

Dear Mr. Finley:

I have been contacted by many of my constituents in Polk County about their concerns regarding the proposed Duke Energy Western Carolinas Modernization route options that would result in the construction of transmission towers through Polk County. I have advised the constituents that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission defers to the individual states with regard to transmission line route decisions. I have also explained that I have no jurisdiction in this matter since it falls under the purview of the State of North Carolina. However, I did want to take this opportunity to share the concerns I have based on my conversations and correspondence with constituents in Polk County.

Polk County's economy and the livelihood of most of its citizens are tied to tourism, equestrian businesses, and rural residential development. Aesthetics are vital to all of these industries and currently give Polk County a strategic advantage. Any significant impairment to aesthetics would be as damaging to my constituents in Polk County as a catastrophic loss of generation facilities would be to Duke Energy. The proposed route through the county appears capable of delivering that level of impairment.

I understand the necessity of the modernization project to meet our regional energy needs. Obviously, people cannot access the electricity they need without the infrastructure to deliver it. However, I believe it is important to weigh unintended regional economic impacts when vetting the options.

Options that minimize the modernization plan's footprint in the county such as burying lines or limiting lines to existing right of ways may result in additional costs and effort for Duke Energy. But, I believe a sound argument can be made that additional challenges are appropriate for the utility to incur to prevent stakeholders from incurring damage from which they might not recover. I sincerely hope these concerns are taken into consideration as this project is reviewed.

-More-

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact David McCrary of my staff. You can reach David by telephone at 828-327-6100, email at [david.mccrary@mail.house.gov](mailto:david.mccrary@mail.house.gov), or by mail at P.O. Box 1830, Hickory, NC 28603.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick T. McHenry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "T" in the middle name.

Patrick McHenry  
Member of Congress

PM/dm