



DIDI BARRETT
Assemblymember 106th District

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March 19, 2014

Cheryl A. Lefleur, Acting Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Commissioner Lefleur,

I have the great privilege of representing the 106th Assembly District in the New York State Legislature, a district known for its rolling farmland, bucolic viewsheds and rich cultural, historic and natural resources. Despite all this, ratepayers in my Hudson Valley district are under considerable financial and emotional distress as a result of a "perfect storm" of energy issues.

In the last months, the Governor has proposed an Energy Highway Initiative meant to alleviate a bottleneck in transmitting energy from producers upstate to the large population areas downstate. This initiative, which could result in monster power lines and eminent domain, has the potential to devastate the local economy, which is based significantly on tourism and agriculture. Even now, the lengthy public process, while open and responsive to date, has residents near right-of-ways in a state of limbo, seeing a drop in their property values and forcing them to put building projects or sales on hold. In many cases, these same families have been dealing with power line expansion generation after generation.

On top of this, my constituents have been hit by the one-two punch of increased bills from Central Hudson after this long, hard winter and a new home heating oil tax implemented in Dutchess County to address a significant budget gap. People are overwhelmed and cannot face any further energy costs right now.

I respectfully urge FERC to postpone indefinitely any potential capacity zone expansion in New York State until such a time where current bottlenecks have been addressed and a zone expansion can be more accurately assessed. The state and all our local communities are working seriously on the energy congestion issue in the region. We have community meetings where 200-300 concerned citizens show up in a region that is very rural in parts. It is simply too much for us to ask Hudson Valley families to face yet another significant increase in their energy costs this May.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Didi Barrett
Member of Assembly, 106th District

CC: U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Congressman Sean Maloney
Congressman Chris Gibson
Audrey Zibelman, Chair, PSC
James Laurito, President, Central Hudson