

Transmission Lines in Texas: A Looming Threat to Our Health, Environment, and Way of Life

Texas is seeing unprecedented growth in energy demand, especially in the Permian Basin and surrounding areas. In response, major utilities like Oncor, LCRA, and AEP Texas are proposing massive infrastructure projects to build 765-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines spanning hundreds of miles—such as the Bell County East to Big Hill line and the Howard-Solstice line. While these lines are promoted for reliability and grid modernization, the full costs to Texas landowners, farmers, ranchers, animals, and the environment have yet to be confronted.

What's at Stake?

These high-voltage lines are more than just infrastructure; they represent a threat to human and animal health, local economies, natural habitats, and traditional rural lifestyles.

Severe Health Risks to Humans and Animals

Humans

Near these lines, residents face heightened risks of cancer (including childhood leukemia), Alzheimer's, dementia, reproductive issues, birth defects, and male sexual dysfunction caused by the electromagnetic fields (EMFs) emitted. These are not speculative risks but those supported by growing scientific evidence. Long-term exposure near large transmission lines is particularly dangerous.

Animals

Livestock suffer reduced productivity, respiratory ailments, miscarriages, birth defects, and immune system disruptions, putting ranchers' livelihoods in jeopardy. Honeybee colonies exposed beneath transmission lines show impaired health and survival rates, which threatens critical pollination. Wildlife behavior and migration patterns also suffer disruptions, further endangering biodiversity.

Environmental Consequences and Land Disruption

The physical footprint of these massive lines fragments landscapes, destroys sensitive habitats, and disrupts water and soil conditions through construction and ongoing maintenance.

- Property values plummet near transmission corridors.
 - Towering structures mar the scenic and cultural heritage of Texas rural lands.
 - Forced easements and eminent domain threaten landowner rights, raising fears of losing generations of family-owned property with inadequate compensation.
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Economic and Cultural Impact on Texas Farming and Ranching

For farmers and ranchers, these lines mean reduced land utility, lowered yields, and growing health challenges for animals that underpin their operations. The damage is not just financial but cultural—threatening a way of life built on stewardship of the land and community resilience.

Urgent Call for Transparency, Accountability, and Alternative Solutions

Communities demand:

- Full disclosure of health and environmental risks.
- Genuine public input in routing decisions to avoid ecologically and agriculturally sensitive areas.
- Fair treatment of landowners with protections against forced land seizure.
- Investment in safer, less disruptive alternatives such as underground lines or optimized use of existing corridors.

Conclusion: Protecting Texas' Future

The promise of better energy infrastructure must not come at the cost of Texans' health, livelihoods, and heritage. The expansion of 765 kV transmission lines carries irreversible risks that call for careful scrutiny, strong advocacy, and urgent action.

The Edwards Plateau and broader Texas communities deserve an energy future that balances progress with preservation—ensuring the land, people, and traditions we cherish can thrive for generations.

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