

February 14, 2025

The PJM Board of Managers
Mark Takahashi, Chairman and
Manu Asthana, PJM President and CEO
PJM Interconnection L.L.C.
2750 Monroe Boulevard
Audubon, Pennsylvania 19408

RE: Opposition to Project 262 2024 Window 1 – (#708) 765kV 261-mile transmission line

I am strongly opposed to Project 262 in the recommended 2024 Window 1 Projects and urge the PJM Board of Managers **to reject** PJM 2024 Window 1 Project 262 for the reasons stated below:

I. FERC Order 1000 requires competitive bidding. Project 262 is a "joint" proposal by a cartel of three incumbent transmission owners, First Energy, Transsource and Dominion who did not form a separate entity to bid the solution - this project was therefore not competitive.

The source of the power is **Appalachian Power's John Amos Power plant** in West Virginia. It was commissioned in September of 1971 and **at 54 years old, it has already exceeded the average lifespan for coal fired generation plants.** On top of that, the John Amos plant is losing money, between March of 2023 to February 2024 the John Amos plant lost \$49M¹

The demand for this energy is uncontrolled data center expansion in Loudoun County, Virginia. **New generation in Virginia would be the appropriate least cost solution.** Dominion is the dominant builder of generation in Virginia.

A 765kV build out has been AEP's business plan since the late 1960s, the last time a 765kV transmission line "solution" was trotted out was 2006². Proposal #708 is essentially the same as the PATH 765kV transmission line defeated in 2012 due to historic opposition.

American Electric Power (AEP), is the parent company of Transsource and Appalachian Power is a subsidiary of American Electric Power (AEP), all of these in addition to First Energy and Dominion are incumbent generation and/or transmission owners that 'collaborated' on this proposal, they did not compete for it.

For reference purposes: A cartel is a group of independent market participants who collude with each other as well as agreeing not to compete with each other in order to improve their profits and dominate the market.

II. The bid cost estimate for the Project 262 2024 Window 1 – (#708) 765kV 261-mile transmission line is underbid by 30% to 40%.

Guyed wire and V-Lattice towers require a much larger area. This is the most land use restrictive

¹Public Broadcasting, July 24, 2024: "PSC Witness: Appalachian Power Is Losing Money On Coal Plants"

Available here: <https://wvpublic.org/psc-witness-appalachian-power-is-losing-money-on-coal-plants/>

² Appalachian Power, "AEP and Allegheny to form joint venture company to build 765-kV transmission in PJM; JV would build the first half of the AEP I-765™ Interstate Project transmission superhighway", Available here:

<https://www.appalachianpower.com/company/news/view?releaseID=908>

structure type that could possibly be proposed, structures of this type are not suitable through the mountains and will not be permitted through agricultural areas or residential areas, they are an eyesore through scenic landscapes. In all honesty, these companies should have been ashamed to put forward a proposal based on a guyed wire V-lattice structure through this region. For PJM to recommend it is even more galling.

Guyed wire and V-Lattice towers are on average about 61% of the cost of self supporting towers - changing the structure type will increase the cost significantly.

Additionally, a comparison to the PATH project of 2006 adjusted for inflation results in a cost estimate of \$2.4B .

The bid did not include cost controls or price caps nor did it include inflation. The cartel wrote themselves a blank check at ratepayer expense and will use the "standard" scope change mechanism to rubber stamp themselves the additional funds as needed. The sky is the limit. All with a generous incentive rate to top it off.

III. The in-service date specified for the 2024 Window 1 Projects is 2029. Project 262 (#708) has no chance of meeting a 2029 in-service date.

On pg 28 of the Constructability Analysis, the proposed in-service date of December 2029 is characterized as "aggressive". Six months ago in August of 2024, the PJM Board of Managers approved a scope change to a 500kV transmission line (Alternate MARL Re-Route) and slipped the in-service date for that transmission line from 2029 to 2032.

PJM has asserted that a 500kv line through the same corridor that has a "six month head start" cannot be completed until 2032 but a 765kV transmission line can be built concurrently in that same corridor by 2029 by three transmission owners none of whom has ever built a 765kV transmission line?

The last 765kV transmission line built between West Virginia and Virginia was the 90 mile Wyoming - Jackson Ferry 765kV transmission line.³ The permitting process for that transmission line began in 1991, the final approval and Environmental Impact Statement from the Forest Service was in 2002 and the line was not energized until June of 2006. Fifteen (15) years for a transmission line that is 1/3 the length of the proposed line.

The three transmission owners with no experience building a 765kV transmission line will build a 261 mile transmission line in 5 years, 10 years faster than the 90 mile Wyoming-Jackson Ferry 765kV line which took 15 years .⁴

The reality is Project 262 Proposal #708 is not likely to be completed before 2040

To simply say a 2029 In-Service date is a fantasy would be an understatement, this is delusional.

Project 262 Proposal #708 will not meet the 2029 in-service date which was specified as part of the 2024 Window 1 solution requirements and should not be approved.

³ South Western Electric Power Company, "AEP Dedicates Wyoming-Jacksons Ferry Line; Project Nears completion 16 years after Announced", Available here: <https://www.swepco.com/company/news/view?releaseID=837>

⁴ Ibid

IV. **None of the incumbent utilities that submitted the joint proposal have ANY experience building a 765kV transmission line.**

The risk assessment statement on pg 24 states:

"FirstEnergy, including its participation in the joint venture, has significant experience with the proposed equipment and the capabilities to construct Proposal 708 as submitted. *The proposing entity experience and capability risk is considered low.*"

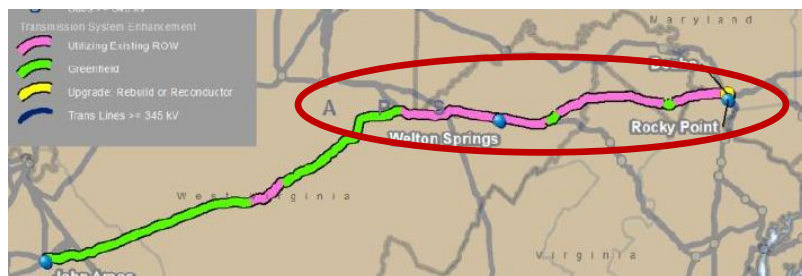
Neither FirstEnergy, Dominion nor Transource have ever built a 765kv transmission line. The ONLY utility with any experience building a 765kV line is AEP (American Electric Power), the parent company of Transource.

There is no way that PJM is not aware that these companies have NO 765kV experience. Multiple PJM TEAC participants asked questions on this topic and it was confirmed - **these companies have ZERO experience building a 765kV transmission line. That makes for a VERY HIGH risk.**

It is baffling why the proposing entity experience and capability risk was not updated to reflect the lack of experience after the conversation at the PJM TEAC in January.

V. **The land acquisition and land use impacts of this proposal are intentionally manipulated to trivialize the socio- economic and environmental cost to the communities it will traverse.**

The redacted proposal for Proposal 708 of Project 262 explicitly states it requires a new 200' easement for its entire 261-mile length. The Constructability Analysis fails to mention a new 200' easement is required for the entire 261 mile length of the transmission line. The Constructability Analysis and map should show a "green" line for the entire length of the transmission line. The "pink" segment implying utilization of the existing ROW is a gross misrepresentation of the land acquisition and property impact.



The discrepancy between the redacted proposal, the content of the Constructability Analysis and the map provided in the PJM TEAC charts was brought up and discussed at the PJM TEAC. It was confirmed that the redacted Proposal 708 of Project 262 was correct - this transmission line requires a new 200' easement for its entire 261 mile length.

A 765kV transmission line cannot share a ROW with either a 500kV transmission line or a 500kV transmission line with a 138kV under built.

Once again, in spite of the discussion and feedback, PJM chose to continue to misrepresent the acquisition and property impact to landowners along the route.

Alternate MARL Re-Route, which was approved by this Board in August of 2024, would be constructed concurrently in this same corridor.

For communities in Jefferson County, West Virginia and western Loudoun County, Virginia, Project 262 Proposal #708 would be a THIRD HVAC transmission line through their communities and across their farms and property: the existing 500kV, a new 500kV that has not been constructed with a 138kV under built plus a 765kV guyed V-lattice structure beside it!

Transource, Dominion and First Energy would be simultaneously siting and building a 500kv line with an in-service date of 2032 and the proposed 765kv of Project 262 with an in-service date of 2029 in the same corridor through Jefferson County, WVA and Loudoun County, Virginia.

VI. **A Constructability and Financial Analysis of the project was not performed**

PJM failed. **There is nothing in the analysis that would indicate a desktop review was conducted as required**. PJM did not bother to do any analysis on land-use impacts, not even to identify the number of residences or lots impacted. The process for the analysis listed on PJM RTEP 2024 Window 1 Constructability Analysis Pg.16 states:

" (a) **Conduct a desktop review** to identify significant barriers that might add additional risk to the project, and determine whether the proposed project area (a study area that is defined for each project) can support the economical construction of the electric transmission and/or substation facilities.

The following target information will be referenced by as required and as allowable by available public data sources:

- National Wetland Inventory mapping from United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which will include counts and acreages of:
 - Total Non-Tidal Wetlands
 - Wetlands of Special State Concern
 - Subaqueous Lands
 - Total Wetlands
 - Non-Tidal (Non-Forested) Wetlands
 - Non-Tidal (Forested) Wetlands
- Mapping of specially designated Wetlands, streams or rivers, which will include:
 - Non-Tidal Waterbodies (Count/Acres)
 - 100-Year Flood Plain (Acres)
 - Watershed Boundaries (Count)
 - Outstanding and Exceptional Waters (Count)
 - Wild and Scenic Rivers (Count)
 - United States Geologic Survey Blue Line Streams (Count)
- United States Department of Agriculture(USDA)/The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Land Cover mapping, which will include acreages of:
 - Sub-Aquatic Vegetation
 - Forested Uplands
 - Unforested Uplands
 - Agricultural Lands
- Land-Use mapping, which will include:
 - **Residences within 100 feet (Count)**
 - **Residences within 250 feet (Count)**
 - **Land Zoned Conservation (Acres)**
 - **Rural Legacy (Acres)**
 - **Program Open Space (Acres)**
 - **Private Conservation Easements (Acres & Count)**

- **Public Land (Acres & Count)**
 - **Parcels Crossed (Count)**
 - **Green Infrastructure/Green Acres program (Acres)**
 - **National Estuarine Research Reserve Project Areas (Acres & Count)**
 - **Natural Heritage Areas (Acres & Count)**
 - **Environmental Trust Easements (Acres & Count)**
 - **Forest Legacy Easements (Acres & Count)**
 - **Tidelands**
- Public Lands mapping review, which will include the types, counts and acreages of the following:
 - State/National Forests
 - Natural Areas
 - Preserves
 - Game Lands
 - Recreation Areas
 - Cultural Resources mapping review, including the count of previously identified resources, which will include the types, counts, and acreages of the following:
 - Listed and Eligible Historic Structures
 - Listed and Eligible Historic Districts
 - Listed and Eligible Archeological Sites
 - Aquatic Resource mapping, including the count of Submerged Historic Resources (if applicable)
 - Online distribution data of rare, threatened and endangered species within a 0.5- mile radius of the study area

Project 262 will take at least 6,352 acres of land from rural property owners across 14 West Virginia counties, 3 Virginia counties and 1 Maryland county. It would impact 32 conservation easements.

Project 262 crosses the Monongahela National Forest, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and it will run parallel down the view shed of the Potomac River. Project 262 will destroy the scenic and historic value of these assets. ALL of these parks and scenic areas are also impacted by the 500kv line that was approved in August of 2024. This will significantly decrease the enjoyment of the visitors to these sites.

Project 262 Proposal #708 is three times larger than the 90 mile Wyoming - Jackson Ferry 765kV transmission line and impacts considerably more federal and state parks, conservation areas, homes, lots and conservation easements.⁵ The scoping document for the EIS for the similarly situated PATH transmission line was 900 pages, that project was canceled before the EIS was completed. In the case of Project 262 Proposal #708, there would be multiple EISs for all of these national parks simultaneously, due to the 500kV which is concurrently scheduled.

In terms of land use, the risk analysis fails to mention that the exact same communities in Jefferson County, West Virginia and Loudoun County Virginia are already being impacted by a 500kv transmission line, known as Alternate MARL Re-route, approved by the PJM Board in August of 2024. Project 262 will have a devastating effect on property owners all along the route. Homes that are not demolished outright will be seriously devalued and thousands of acres of property will be made worthless! In Loudoun alone, 365 acres would be impacted by Project 262 - Proposal 708.

⁵ CRSWire, "AEP receives final approval for Wyoming-Jacksons Ferry 765kV project" Available here: https://www.csrwire.com/press_releases/26498-aep-receives-final-approval-for-wyoming-jacksons-ferry-765-kv-project

The constructability analysis contains no substantive information beyond the redacted proposal, and in fact leaves out key content that was in the redacted proposal. There was no basis upon which to compare this project to the other projects.

The constructability analysis is bereft of the content necessary to make a comparison between projects and is clearly slanted to:

- **trivialize the property, environmental and socio-economic impacts to the communities to be traversed,**
- **obfuscate the risks and**
- **promote the preferred project of incumbent transmission owners and PJM. That would be AEP's project I-765 which they have been pushing for over a decade at this point⁶**

By far the most ridiculous piece of propaganda in this farcical analysis is the constructability summary on page 23 which reads in part: "The proposal is a long set of lines crossing multiple states and has its fair share of **tricky areas** as any project this **ambitious** would."

Let me quantify "tricky" and "ambitious" for you:

- a proposal by a cartel of three incumbent transmission owners who wrote themselves a **blank check** to build a 765kV transmission line although they have no experience building a 765kV transmission line
- using guyed wire V-lattice structures - the most destructive and land use restrictive structure that could possibly be used
- requiring a **261 mile 200' greenfield easement - a total of at least 6,352 acres of land to be acquired in new easements across three states**
- across **14 counties in West Virginia** whose landowners DO NOT gain any benefits from this project
- through **3 Counties in Virginia**
- across **32 conservation easements**
- permitting through 6 national and state parks (Environmental Impact Statements for multiple expansions of those easements for the Alternate MARL Route 500kV plus this 765kV running concurrently)
- along the ridge line of scenic mountains and the view shed and the Potomac River, **an eye sore for miles**
- across the Potomac River and into Frederick County, Maryland
- **to be built concurrently as a 500kV transmission line with a 138kV under build that has an in-service date of 2032, but the 765kV is to be completed three years earlier in 2029**
- **three transmission owners with no experience building a 261-mile 765kV transmission line scheduled to build the line in 5 years which would be 10 years faster than the 90 mile Wyoming-Jackson Ferry 765kV line which was built by the only company with experience building 765kV transmission lines**

⁶ *Ibid*

- the SECOND HVAC transmission line to be proposed inside of 6 months across two of these counties, which combined results in a 550' - 600' ROW with THREE HVAC transmission lines if both were approved. AND similarly simultaneously affecting multiple state and national parks. Note: A 5 acre property is 511' x 511' - the resulting ROW would be MORE THAN 5 acres wide
- along the same corridor as the PATH transmission line which was denied in 2012 due to historical landowner opposition which resulted in 10 years of litigation over accounting practices .

Let me summarize, Project 262 Proposal #708 :

- was proposed by a cartel with no experience in building 765kV transmission lines
- is underbid by 30% - 40%
- has a required in-service date of 2029 which it has NO chance of meeting
- to satisfy the energy use wants of net-zero data centers funded by venture capital that have not been built yet with coal fueled generation that the same companies are supporting legislation to close
- connects an existing 54 year old coal plant that is losing money, has increasing maintenance costs and is well past its prime

This is not an "ambitious" project it is a massive gift. The only motivation for this project is pure unadulterated greed.

Even with the bogus constructability analysis, Project 262 was rated the most risky project for its In-Service Date of 2029 due to both schedule and constructability risks.

Project 262 is NOT the only solution for transmission nor is transmission the only solution for the data center expansion / projected energy load in Loudoun County, Virginia. . New generation in Virginia would be the appropriate least cost solution.

I urge the PJM Board of Managers to reject PJM 2024 Window 1 Project 262 . Do NOT approve Project 262.