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West Virginians Against Transmission Injustice (WATI)

Contact: Anthony “Tony” Campbell, President

Anthony.Campbell.WATI@outlook.com | secretary@wvatli.org

608-633-3336

www.wvatli.org

NextEra Asks State Officials for MARL Approval as Costs Double and Opposition from Elected Officials Intensifies

Fort Ashby, W.Va. - West Virginians Against Transmission Injustice (WATI) responds to NextEra Energy’s long-delayed filing of its application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Link (MARL) electric transmission project with the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC).

Since missing its originally proposed filing date, the scope and cost of NextEra’s project have changed dramatically. The estimated cost of MARL has increased from approximately \$440 million to well over \$880 million, with additional cost escalation possible.

Mounting Opposition from County and State Leaders

Following the announcement of the MARL projects, groups of citizens quickly worked with their local leaders to help oppose the MARL project. The county commissions from Monongalia, Preston, Mineral and Hampshire Counties all united and adopted resolutions opposing these lines. Many of the cities and towns in the impacted counties also publicly opposed this project.

At the recent Joint Committee on Energy and Public Works meeting held in January, Senator Chris Rose (Committee Chairman), Senator Rupie Phillips, Senator Craig Hart, Delegate Henry Dillon, Delegate Evan Hansen, Delegate Rick Hillenbrand and many more pushed back against NextEra’s presentation when they continued their false narrative that this project will benefit our state. The list of elected officials who oppose the MARL project climbs faster every day.

Many of the letters opposing the project can be found on WATI’s website; www.wvatli.org.

Overwhelming Public Opposition

West Virginians have also spoken clearly. To date, the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) has received 3,717 letters of protest opposing the MARL project — and not a single letter of support.

Some of the impacted landowners and ratepayers have come out on videos to show the impact these lines will have on them, their communities and their families. These videos are available at www.wvatli.org.

Impact on Landowners, Tourism, and Rates

WATI warns that MARL would destroy private property, including multi-generational farms, undermine West Virginia's growing tourism economy, and increase electric rates for decades. Members of WATI have met with local and state officials — including staff from Governor Morrissey's office during a recent visit to the Capitol — to outline these long-term impacts.

Cathy Kunkel, Energy Consultant with Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) calculates that state ratepayers from a FirstEnergy subsidiary (Mon Power and Potomac Edison) or from Appalachian Power will pay an estimated \$240 million for the construction of the MARL project.

WATI Vice President and retired electrical engineer, Byran Hockman says that these high-power transmission lines will not tie into the distribution lines that provides power to West Virginians, "Transmission lines, like the MARL line, are high voltage lines designed solely for transmission. Their only job is to move electricity from the source towards the demand. In the case of the MARL line, the demand is for data centers in northern Virginia. Distribution lines are the lower voltage lines that distribute power from substations to the consumer. These are the voltages we recognized. Their only job is to power our homes and businesses. These are the lines that keep the lights on." Hockman adds, "The MARL line falls under the "transmission line" definition. This line is not proposed in the NextEra Energy project to connect to any substations in West Virginia. Without substation connections, there can be no distribution. This essentially provides no benefit to West Virginia consumers and is in no way a "Service to the Public." It will not keep the lights on."

Donna Brooke-Alt, a local agricultural-business owner in Mineral County and WATI Board member shares, "The costs of these transmission lines continue to increase, and this cost will be passed on to my fellow residents. West Virginians receive no benefit from these lines, but we are expected to accept the increase in our bills, the devaluation of our property and the restrictions placed on those whose land will be impacted by their construction." She further states, "As a multi-generational small farmer/landowner, I have worked long hours, working two jobs for decades and raising my kids to not only pay the bills but save this farm - the land and the legacy. I did this because I want to be

able to pass this land on to my kids and my grandkids. As a landowner that currently has five transmission towers carrying 500kV lines across my property, I know firsthand the devastation, damage and restrictions they impose. In addition, the stray voltage is real and can be felt when you walk under the lines or touch metal within short distance. If more lines are constructed on our land, what will I have to pass on to my kids?"

Monongalia County resident, Judith Delagarza shares, "The MARL high voltage transmission line will only hurt West Virginians. It will rob our residents of valuable farmland and pastures, irrevocably change livelihoods and lifestyle, destroy forests and wetlands, scar our beautiful mountains, and decrease tourism dollars after our record-breaking year in 2025. The worst insult is that we, the people, will have to pay for this destruction through higher electric rates. NextEra Energy bid the project at \$440 million and now they are requesting a funding increase to \$844.8 million plus a contingency fund of \$115.4 million for a total that is almost \$1 billion-yes, billion, all to power data centers in northern Virginia. They get the money while we pay the price. Tell the WV Public Service Commission, the governor, and your legislators "NO to MARL."

Sara Evans, a Hampshire County resident already has an existing high voltage transmission line Right of Way (ROW) across her property states, "A high voltage transmission line is already located on our WV family farm. MARL's proposed route removes additional woodland to make a brand-new ROW. Part of this new ROW crosses a different location on our farm, and the remainder runs parallel to the existing line. No matter the location, the new ROW destroys woods that can never return. Our farm is changed forever – changed negatively in its beauty, wildlife habitat, and value. All to benefit Virginia, not West Virginia."

Legal Challenge Ahead

WATI has retained legal counsel and will actively challenge NextEra's application throughout the PSC review process, including during upcoming hearings.

For the WV PSC to approve a project like the MARL, according to WV code 24-2-11a, the project must:

- Economically and reliably meets current and anticipated electric power needs.
- Serves the interests of West Virginia customers and citizens.
- Balances reasonable power needs with reasonable environmental considerations

"This application clearly fails the basic test of public convenience and necessity," Campbell said. "We will continue to stand with landowners, ratepayers, and local governments to protect West Virginia's land and communities."

A Call to Action

WATI encourages all West Virginians to stay informed and engaged. Information on the MARL project, instructions for submitting protest letters to the PSC, and videos from impacted landowners are available at www.wvatli.org.

As the process moves forward, WATI will hold clinics at the county level to continue to inform landowners and ratepayers of their rights. These meetings will also inform those who want to be interveners at the WV PSC on how to register.

About WATI

West Virginians Against Transmission Injustice (WATI) is a grassroots, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting West Virginia's landowners, ratepayers, communities, and natural heritage from unfair and unnecessary transmission projects.