

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUSINESS MEETING
ACTION ITEM**

SUBJECT: Resolution Opposing the Proposed Western Loudoun Route for New 500kV Electrical Transmission Lines

ELECTION DISTRICT(S): Catoctin and Leesburg

STAFF CONTACT(S): Leo P. Rogers, County Attorney

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is to seek guidance from the Board of Supervisors (Board) on the NextEra Energy Inc.'s (NextEra) proposed 500kV transmission lines running from a new substation near the West Virginia border through western Loudoun County to the Aspen substation located in Loudoun County near Cochran Mill Road (Western Loudoun Route). See Attachment 1 for a general map and Loudoun specific map.

RECOMMENDATION(S): Staff recommends the Board adopt the Resolution expressing the County's opposition to the proposed Western Loudoun Route and encouraging electrical utility providers to cooperate in using existing power line corridors in Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland to co-locate the 500kV electrical transmission lines (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND: On December 11, 2023, the Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee of Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection, LLC (PJM) approved NextEra's Proposal 853 which would run new 500kV electrical transmission lines from West Virginia through western Loudoun County. PJM is a regional transmission organization operating under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that coordinates the movement of electricity in all or parts of thirteen states and the District of Columbia. NextEra's proposed Western Loudoun Route would run through mountainous, rural, historic, environmentally sensitive, and productive agricultural areas, through the Village of Waterford and near the Town of Hamilton and the Village of Paeonian Springs to the Aspen substation outside the Town of Leesburg. The proposed Western Loudoun Route will negatively impact natural, environmental and heritage resources, local businesses in the agricultural, equine, hospitality, and tourism sectors, National Historic Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places, agricultural and forestal districts, open space and conservation easements, and residents living in the area.

ISSUES: The proposed Western Loudoun Route approved by PJM is only a preliminary routing plan. It is part of the regional transmission expansion plan to provide up to 7,500mW of power to Northern Virginia by 2027. NextEra refers to the project as the "MidAtlantic Resiliency Link." PJM acknowledges that there is significant public opposition to NextEra's proposed route. An

alternative to the Western Loudoun Route could be using existing electrical transmission right-of-way to redirect the route from the Woodside substation to the Doubs substation (south of Frederick, Maryland) and then south across the Potomac to the Aspen substation. The alternative route would use the existing Pepco right-of-way in Maryland and existing Dominion Energy right-of-way in Loudoun County.

This item seeks direction on whether the Board should adopt the proposed Resolution opposing the proposed Western Loudoun Route for the 500kV electrical transmission lines and support an alternative route which uses existing electrical transmission right-of-way.

FISCAL IMPACT: There are no fiscal impacts associated with adopting the Resolution. In the event there is no change to the proposed Western Loudoun Route, then Loudoun County may need to participate in proceedings to oppose approval of the Western Loudoun Route. The County will likely incur significant expenses retaining outside counsel and experts.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Board may approve the Resolution opposing the Western Loudoun Route for the proposed 500kV electrical transmission lines and encouraging the use of existing electrical transmission right-of-way (Attachment 2).
2. The Board may take no action.

DRAFT MOTIONS:

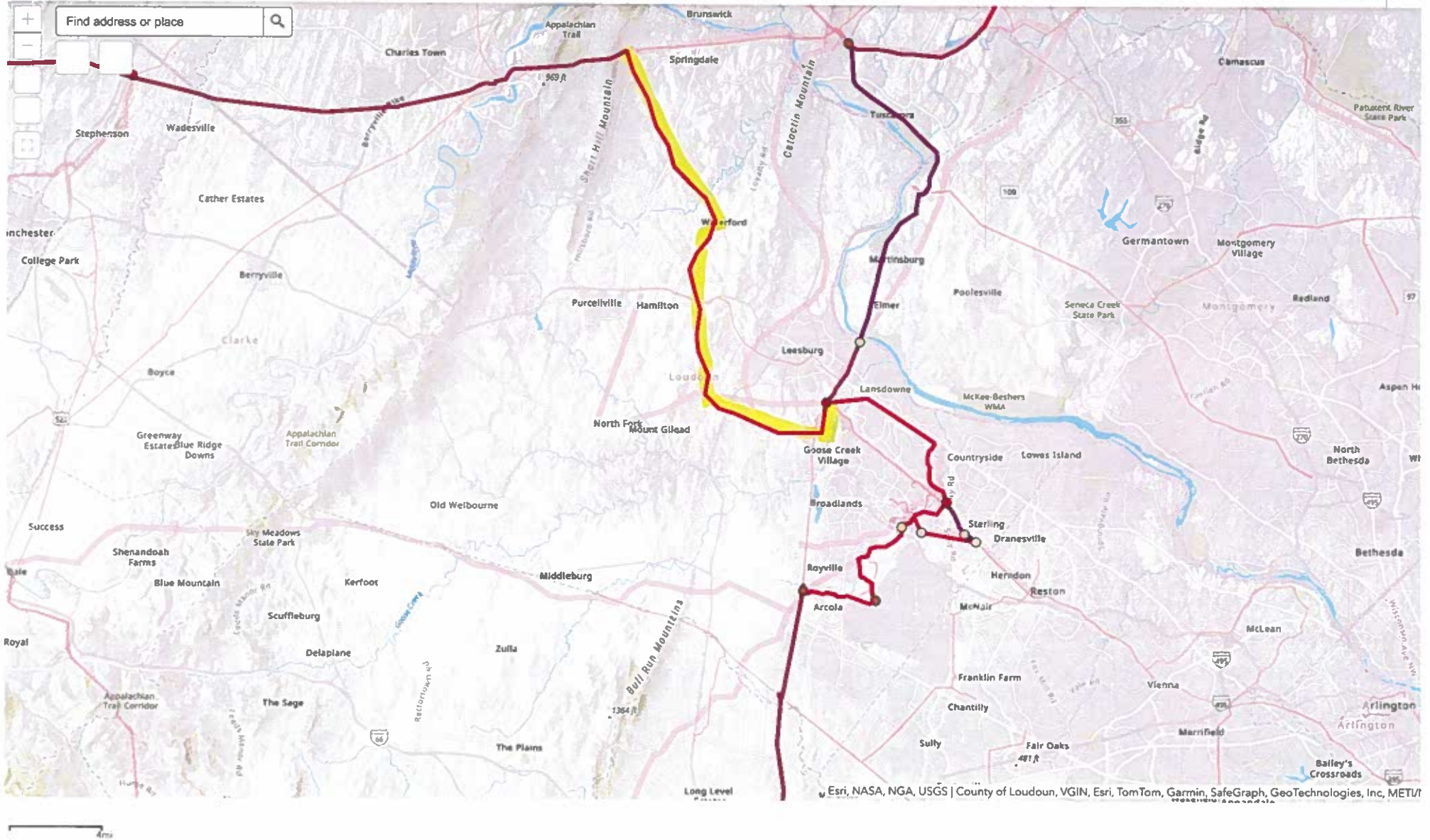
1. I move that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Resolution opposing the Western Loudoun Route for the proposed 500kV electrical transmission lines and encouraging the use of existing electrical transmission right-of-way provided as Attachment 2 to the April 16, 2024, Board of Supervisors Business Meeting Action Item.

OR

2. I move an alternate motion.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Vicinity Map
2. Resolution Opposing NextEra Energy's Proposed New High Voltage Transmission Route Through Western Loudoun County and Encouraging the use of Existing Electrical Transmission Right-Of-Way



Major Proposals Selected in 2022 Window 3



**RESOLUTION OPPOSING NEXTERA ENERGY’S PROPOSED NEW
HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION ROUTE THROUGH WESTERN
LOUDOUN COUNTY AND ENCOURAGING THE USE OF EXISTING
ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION RIGHT-OF-WAY**

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2023, the Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee of PJM gave preliminary approval to NextEra Energy’s Proposal 853 to run new high voltage transmission lines from a new substation on the West Virginia-Virginia border, the “Woodside” substation, to the Aspen substation located in Loudoun County near Cochran Mill Road (Western Loudoun Route); and

WHEREAS, the Western Loudoun Route runs in a southerly and easterly direction from West Virginia through mountainous, rural, historic, and productive agricultural areas, through the Village of Waterford and near the Town of Hamilton and Village of Paeonian Springs to the Aspen substation outside of the Town of Leesburg; and

WHEREAS, the Western Loudoun Route will negatively impact natural, environmental and heritage resources, local businesses in the agricultural, equine, hospitality, and tourism sectors, National Historic Landmark and National Register Historic Districts and sites, agricultural and forestal districts, open space and conservation easements, and residents; and

WHEREAS, citizens, businesses, and environmental, historic, and preservation groups have expressed their opposition to the Western Loudoun Route and expressed their concerns about the impact it would have on businesses, tourism, and the quality of life in Loudoun County; and

WHEREAS, existing power lines rights-of-way exist that could accommodate the new high voltage transmission lines and bring the electrical power to the Aspen substation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors declares its opposition to the Western Loudoun Route proposed by NextEra Energy and encourages NextEra Energy to work with the electric utility providers in Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland to collocate the new transmission lines in exiting electrical transmission corridors.

Phyllis J. Randall
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Tim Hemstreet
Clerk to the Board

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Loudoun County, Virginia, this 16th day of April 2024.