

Filing Receipt

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Item Number - 34

To the Public Utility Commission of Texas:

As a land-owner, full-time resident, and owner/operator of multiple businesses in Hueco Mountain Estates, I am writing to formally log my protest regarding the proposed routes for El Paso Electric's Pine to McCloud 345 kV Transmission Line. I strongly protest the construction of a transmission line along Link 1R through our valley. While I have numerous reasons to oppose this transmission line, I will only focus on one of them. I could discuss the historical significance of the region, with Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site located only two to three miles from the proposed route. The fact that people have called this location home for around 10,000 years, and still do. Or I could talk about the many species of animals that live here, migrate through here, and depend on the natural resources here for survival. Maybe I could espouse the beautiful scenery, the mostly undeveloped land, the grand views, the quiet solitude. Perhaps I could argue that there appears to be zero local benefit to this new transmission line which will actually draw power away from our neighborhood's substation—a system where I have already had to file past complaints because our voltage sag violated federal regulatory thresholds.

However, we all know that none of these human, historical, or environmental elements are things that El Paso Electric is concerned about, because if they were, then Link 1R would have never been proposed in the first place. And as for the poor power distribution in our neighborhood, you would not have proposed this entire project at all.

The topic I would like to focus on is unexploded ordinance (UXO), because let's be honest, it would not look good if El Paso Electric had a construction worker explode while building a transmission line for a Meta data center.

According to the official Department of the Army Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) records, Fort Bliss historically used this region for intensive military training from 1939 through the 1970s. The Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) heavily monitors this region due to the documented presence of Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) and Munitions Constituents (MC) in the soil.

The Army's formal site designations out here include FTBLS-002-R-01 (Former Maneuver Area A), FTBLS-002-R-03, FTBLS-002-R-04, and FTBLS-002-R-05. Link 1R is ***the only*** proposed route that recklessly cuts through the 72,520-acre high-risk zone of FTBLS-002-R-01 and possibly through the high-hazard subsurface zone of FTBLS-002-R-03.

Per the U.S. Army's Feasibility Study, ***subsurface removal and surface clearance of explosives*** are mandated requirements for these exact sectors due to the persistent threat of high explosives. The heavy civil engineering required for 345 kV tangent steel monopoles—specifically deep foundation drilling, heavy transport vibrations, and grading—poses an immediate, catastrophic risk of triggering an accidental detonation. Furthermore, as established by the Department of Defense, shifting desert soils and erosion continually unearth deeply buried ordnance. A route that El Paso Electric claims is "clear" during

a surface assessment can easily become a volatile minefield by the time construction equipment arrives.

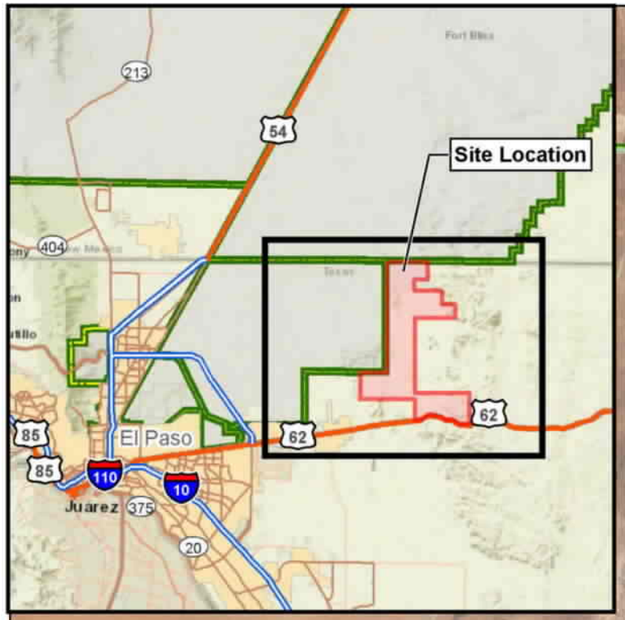
To safely construct ***and maintain*** this transmission line along Link 1R, El Paso Electric will be forced to execute massive, multi-million-dollar remediation and continuous UXO technician escorts. As a regulated utility, these extreme cost overruns will inevitably be pushed directly onto local ratepayers through future rate cases rather than absorbed by the corporation.

A review of El Paso Electric's current project disclosure portal shows **zero** indication that this explosive hazard, or its subsequent financial burden on ratepayers, has even been factored into their routing criteria. Forcing a high-voltage transmission line through a documented federal munitions range when viable, non-hazardous land alternative links exist is the definition of regulatory irresponsibility.

I urge the Commission to reject Link 1R in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Stephen Marek
Hueco Mountain Estates Resident
[redacted]



U.S. Army
Fort Bliss
Home of America's Tank Division
El Paso County, Texas

Figure 3
MRS Site Location Map

Fort Bliss, Texas

Legend

- MRS Boundary
- Fort Bliss Installation Boundary

FTBLS-002-R-04
FTBLS-002-R-03
FTBLS-002-R-05
FTBLS-002-R-01
Hueco Tanks State Park
Homestead Meadows North
NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
El Paso
Hueco Tanks
62

NOTES
1. Coordinate System: NAD83 UTM 13 North, Meters
2. MRS = Munitions Response Site

N
W E
S

0 0.8 1.6 3.2 Miles



ECC GIS Server
E:\Projects\FtBliss\MapDocuments\WP\
Fig3_MRS_Locs.mxd
June 2024
DWN BY: JYK CHKD BY: KE