

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
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Pierre, SD 57501-5070

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**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Property Owner Concerns About the Proposed PowerON Midwest 765KV Powerline

Our family farming partnership owns ~645 acres in Deuel County, SD that we rent out on an annual basis. Most of the rental income from this land supports our mother who is 97 years old. Recently we contacted representatives of PowerON Midwest (POM) to learn how their proposed 765KV ultra-high voltage powerline might affect our farmland. Our inquiry has raised several concerns that fall into three general areas:

1. Lack of transparency.
2. Disregard of private property rights.
3. Questionable claim of serving the public interest.

1. **Lack of Transparency:**

We as the landowners, nor has our property management company received any notification about a proposed PowerON Midwest (POM) powerline. In fact, our learning about the proposed powerline occurred through serendipity when a chance conversation with our attorney, he mentioned the existence of a proposed powerline and that our farmland might be affected. We did not receive any notification of the proposed PowerON Midwest (hereafter POM) powerline. POM claims they mailed a letter to our property manager; however, they failed to address us as the owner: Askegaard Hope LLLP. We contacted the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission during March 2026, and the utilities commission was not aware of any proposed powerline associated with POM.

By the time we confirmed that our farmland might be affected by the proposed powerline, all POM public hearings had passed. Further, the public hearings could only be attended in person, and no provisions were made to attend remotely. Many of our family partners do not live in South Dakota and not being able to attend these public hearings remotely causes both time and economic hardship on the partners to learn and comment on what is being proposed.

Our last resort was to gather information on the POM website. The POM "contact us" on their website goes to a phone number 877-869-2087 that is out of service. Additionally, the online form to submit questions is not responsive. We submitted 5 email requests that were ignored and received no response. It was only after I mentioned that the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission had no record of filing for the proposed POM powerline that we

finally received a response; the response was POM will have a proposed powerline routing during April.

As a landowner I want to know why I was not informed by mail of the proposed powerline? Once we became aware of the proposed power line all the public hearings were over. Why is the POM "contact us" phone number not operational and why are online requests ignored? Why is POM operating without submitting any applications to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission? All these questions raise concerns about transparency of the process and how POM deals with affected landowners.

2. Disregard of Private Property Rights:

POM claims that they want to minimize the impact on private property. Minimal impact would be to run proposed power lines along property borders. However, POM is proposing installing 12 to 15 towers diagonally across the center of our farmland. The diagonal crosscut across our farmland will disrupt production and surely devalue our property. First, besides the towers being an encumbrance, modern tractors rely upon satellite signals to plant and harvest crops. Farmers efficiency and yields will both be negatively affected because of satellite signal interruptions due to these ultra-high powerlines. Crackling from a 765 KV powerline can be heard over 2,000 feet away and anyone with a heart pacemaker will not be able to walk or work on the property because of the powerful magnetic field generated. The multiple powerline tower obstructions, cancelation of satellite signals, and the adverse effect on anyone with a pacemaker, make the powerline cutting diagonally through the center of our farmland a huge detractor to our farmland value. No doubt, the land rents this land will command with the powerlines will be significantly reduced.

Each of the powerline towers has four stanchions and the area in the middle cannot be farmed. This creates a haven for weeds that POM claims is not their concern. In addition, routine maintenance will require that POM trample our crops with their heavy machinery and there is no provision for compensating the landowner for: loss of crops, soil compaction, and damage to field drain tiling. Again, the landowner has no protection for ongoing damage caused by POM. The burden is on the landowner to continually monitor the damage and then seek compensation from POM without any guidelines. No doubt, the land rents this land will command with the powerlines will be significantly reduced. In short, our farmland's market value will decline precipitously.

POM has ignored all these factors that will reduce the value of our farmland today and forever. If POM is serious about the absolute need to crosscut our farmland with ultra-high powerlines, then they should be willing to acquire the entire devalued parcel outright to complete their project.

3. Questionable Claims of Serving the Public Interest:

The fact that POM has not submitted any applications to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission should raise a red flag. Why is POM working so diligently to lock up powerline land options and keep this a secret from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission? POM claims this proposed powerline is to support the electrical growth needed for southern Minnesota. If supporting the electrical needs of southern Minnesota is true, then why does all the north/south routing of the powerline occur only in South Dakota very close to and parallel with the South Dakota and Minnesota state borders? Why are South Dakota

landowners being asked to shoulder the burden of reduced land values while the supposed major benefactor is Minnesota?

The proposed ultra-high voltage powerline routing only makes sense if there is a large power generation hub at Big Stone City, South Dakota; an area that has the water and land needed to build and support massive data centers. If data centers are the ultimate objective, then POM should be up front and truthful in their communications. As explained above, this is not the case with POM.

Data centers are controversial because they require large amounts of water, land, and powerline infrastructure. Further, most data centers are seeking zoning modifications and tax rebate incentives while offering very limited employment once constructed. Who benefits? Data centers are being constructed by a small select group of private technology companies. How do the needs of a small group of power-hungry private companies outweigh the needs of the many residential/farm landowners in South Dakota? If the benefits to South Dakota landowners are so obvious, then POM should be expounding the "greater good" virtues of their POM project. Reality is POM is skulking around without any guidance or oversight from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission. Ultimately, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission job is to determine the greater good and protect landowner rights. Let that transparency and due diligent process begin with the wisdom and oversight of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission.

Best regards,



Timothy Tracey
General Partner
Askegaard Hope Family Partnership

