

Vernon Township Board of Supervisors

Grant County, South Dakota

September 29, 2026

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st floor
500 E. Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

PowerOn Midwest
5115 Excelsior Blvd #113
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Grant County Commission
210 E. 5th Avenue
Milbank, SD 57252

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**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

To the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SDPUC), PowerOn Midwest Project Leadership, and Grant County Commission,

The Vernon Township Board of Supervisors, acting on behalf of our residents, officially issues this letter of formal opposition to the routing and construction of the proposed 765kV transmission lines within 2000 feet of residential properties and/or concentrated animal feeding operations in Vernon Township. On September 29th, 2026, the Board passed RESOLUTION NO. 2026-001 opposing this project as the 765kV transmission lines and the massive supporting infrastructure will severely degrade our area in numerous ways:

- **Township Roads, Maintenance, cost:** The Township is concerned that construction and long-term maintenance access for a 765kV transmission line will require these township roads to be upgraded and maintained to a higher standard, resulting in new and unfunded recurring cost to the township for gravel, snow removal, and road maintenances. Concerns that our population will decrease, which will decrease our funding to maintain our township.
- **Agriculture & Livestock:** Our community consists of vital, productive agricultural land. The placement of towers will fragment working farms, disrupt modern heavy-equipment navigation, compact soils, and impede drainage systems. The large structures and ultra-high voltage transmission lines create giant physical obstacles to manure dragline operators and aerial applicators, where electromagnetic fields can cause GPS and flow-control system malfunctions, which compromises application accuracy. Furthermore, the electromagnetic fields and stray voltage associated with extra-high-voltage lines are known to pose dangerous health and behavioral risks to livestock. Falling ice from the ultra-high voltage suspended power lines and tower structures can inflict deep bruising, fractures, or fatal trauma on livestock directly underneath. Additional concerns include the dangers to humans and livestock from step and touch voltage caused by ground potential gradient in the event of conductor, hardware, or tower structure failure.
- **Water Flow & Drainage:** The construction of massive tower foundations and access roads across the township threatens to alter natural water flow, cause severe soil erosion, and disrupt established agricultural drainage and tiling systems.
- **Interference with Radio and GPS Communication:** The intense electromagnetic fields (EMF) generated by a 765kV transmission line are documented to cause electromagnetic interference. This will disrupt critical farm equipment that relies on radio frequencies, including two-way radios used by farm crews, emergency services, and modern precision agriculture systems that depend on clear GPS signals for planting, chemical application, nutrient application, and harvesting.
- **Streams, Wetlands, Wildlife, Birds, Pollinator Habitat, Scenic Viewsheds, and Recreation:** Installing a 765-kV transmission line permanently alters the local landscape.

Massive towers and 250-foot rights-of-way cause habitat fragmentation, waterway sedimentation, reduced viewshed quality, and impose potential EMF-related limitations on recreational use. Additionally, intense Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) and wide rights-of-way can alter habitat and navigational cues of wildlife, negatively impacting wildlife including, but not limited to, Ring-necked Pheasant, Monarch Butterfly, Creek Chub, Bald Eagle, Wild turkey, and Whitetail Deer, within the area. An industrial transmission corridor will also cause massive view disruption, blight the landscape, and ruin the recreational experience for residents and visitors.

- **Homes, Churches, Daycares, Parks, and Places of Businesses:** Proximity to these lines during construction and ongoing maintenance activities negatively impacts our property owner's rights to privacy, creates potential safety hazards, and places an undue burden on community institutions such as our local churches, parks, daycares, and small businesses.
- **Noise & Vibration:** Ultra-high-voltage lines are known to generate consistent, disruptive audible noise (such as buzzing and humming) and corona discharge, particularly in damp weather, which will destroy the rural benefits and quiet atmosphere that our residents currently enjoy.
- **Property Values:** The sheer scale and number of structures (5 towers per mile) will fundamentally alter the rural character of our township. The visual and audio disruption, as well as the potential for health risks, will lead to a substantial and permanent decline in property values for homes, working farms, and places of business.

Given these irreversible and severe negative impacts, the Vernon Township Board urges PowerOn Midwest to prioritize alternative routes to minimize the negative impacts stated above.

The attached resolution of our community's concerns will be fully documented and addressed in the public record.

Sincerely,

The Board of Supervisors Vernon Township, Grant County, South Dakota

Tim Wollschlaeger Chairman

Matt Besch Supervisor

Doreen N Boes Supervisor

Vernon Township
15640 482nd Avenue
Milbank SD 57252

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