



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 29, 2017

Ms. Laurie Spears
Transource®
Senior Siting Specialist
8500 Smith Mill Road
New Albany, OH 43054

Dear Ms. Spears:

RE: The Independent Energy Connection project and potential impacts to farmland.

It has come to my attention that Transource ® is developing the Independence Energy Connection (IEC) project, to include a new overhead electric transmission project. I understand that the project will be built in two segments, East and West, and will include land primarily in Franklin and York counties in Pennsylvania, land that is some of the richest and most productive agricultural land in the world. This is of concern to me as agriculture is a leading economic endeavor in Pennsylvania. The agriculture industry contributes over \$75 billion to our economy statewide. Products grown and processed here provide food for our nation, support jobs and a diverse economy.

In addition, Pennsylvania leads the nation in farmland preservation through the purchase of permanent agricultural conservation easements—and both York and Franklin counties have two of the most robust programs in the state with more than 58,807 acres preserved. In fact, over \$107 million in public funds have been invested in preserving farmland in these two counties alone.

Farm owners have given up the right to use their properties for other uses in support of maintaining a thriving agricultural industry in this region. Many are now questioning how the Independent Energy Connection project will impact their farming operations and why there are no additional protections or considerations for preserved farms. Since farmland is open and cleared it is often viewed as path of least resistance by comparison to other impacted resources. However, it cannot be overstated that farmland is valuable to both the farm owners whose livelihood depends on it and to the taxpayers who have made significant investments in preserving it.

In summary, as Transource® prepares to file with the Public Utility Commission later this year, I urge you to be mindful of agriculture and particularly preserved farms in planning and siting of this project. Please feel free to contact Doug Wolfgang, Director of Farmland Preservation, at (717) 783-3167 if there are questions or you would like further discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell C. Redding".

Russell C. Redding
Secretary