



FRANKLIN COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU INC.

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October 5, 2017

Transource
P.O. Box 573
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0573

RE: Pennsylvania Portion Transource Independence Energy Connection Project

Dear Transource Representatives,

By mission, the Franklin County Visitors Bureau promotes, advertises, and educates the public on the natural, historic, recreational, cultural, and hospitality value of Franklin County. The natural, agricultural, and recreational components of Franklin County tourism play a major role in the \$326.7 million in traveler spending annually. The Pennsylvania portion of the Transource Independence Energy Connection Project concerns the Franklin County Visitors Bureau because it will have long-term effects on view shed and agriculture, which will negatively impact tourism and our local economy.

Franklin County is known for its peaches and apples at roadside stands, farmers' markets, and orchards as well as ice cream from creameries and dairies. The county is second in Pennsylvania production of all three of these ag products—apples, peaches, and milk. Franklin County's total cash revenue, across all agricultural products, is \$414 million, ranking fourth among 67 counties in PA.

Pairing tourism and agriculture yields a variety of visitor experiences. Agriculture festivals with pumpkin-picking, hayrides, apple-desserts, and corn mazes are the backbone of Franklin County's fall tourism market. Beginning the last week of September and running through the first weekend of November, each weekend features multiple festivals, mazes, and pumpkin patches. Along with the family fun, the county supports locally sourced wines and ciders. In the Commonwealth, tourism and agriculture are consistently top-ranking industries. Together, the industries bring over \$740 million to Franklin County.

Franklin County is prime hiking country and includes land in four state parks and two state forests. In fact, the two oldest parks in Pennsylvania—Mont Alto and Caledonia—are part of the county. Both the Appalachian Trail and the Tuscarora Trail cross the county. The open space of Franklin County is an unrenovable asset, vital to the stability of the tourism industry. Central to the natural and recreational tourism is Franklin County's view shed. It is beautiful vistas of state forestland, farmland, and four-seasons of recreation.

Preserving the view shed and the desirability of recreational and natural space enjoyment are essential elements of the Franklin County tourism industry. The 2015 PA tourism study, completed by Longwood Associates corroborates visitors' attraction to scenic outdoor spaces and freshly grown foods. The study ranks scenic drives as #2 and farmers markets/farmstands as #3 in a percentage ranking of "Things Seen and Experienced in PA." Visiting a state or national park ranked #5. These three categories comprised 39% of a total 100% of visitor identified things to do.

The Pennsylvania portion of the Transource Independence Energy Connection Project impacts view shed and agriculture. The Franklin County view shed is at the center of the scenic Cumberland Valley. The proposed chain of metal, high-voltage power line towers is distinctly uninviting and counter to what attracts visitors to the beauty of the county. In addition, the impacts of power lines on dairy production could negatively impact Franklin County's considerable milk production and impact agricultural tourism.

The specific cost in a present-day action for Transource to develop the electric transmission line project is identified as a \$320 million investment, per the June 2017 Fact Sheet of the Transource Independence Energy Connection Project. Siting the Transource Independence Energy Connection Project through virgin view shed and agricultural production land will have a long-term and far-reaching negative impact on the entire tourism industry of Franklin County for perpetuity.

Sincerely,



Janet Pollard
Executive Director

cc: Pennsylvania Utility Commission
County of Franklin and County Municipalities
Franklin County State Representatives and Senators
Franklin County Area Development Corporation
Hagerstown-Washington County Visitors Bureau
South Mountain Partnership
Franklin County Chambers of Commerce