

## Vickie Pedersen, land owner – CEC presentation

My name is Vickie Pedersen. I am a land owner and farm partner with my husband south east of Elm Creek. Our farmland is prime agricultural land in the Red River Valley, with the majority of our production in row crops and special crops. My husband has used good farming practices which have been environmentally friendly all 44 years of his farming career. This transmission line goes against such practices. BiPole III is scheduled to pass through the centre of our home section as well as an adjacent section affecting 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles on both sides of the transmission line. This affects us and our farm operation in many ways. Two of my concerns are health and safety issues, and the devaluation of land values and the compensation.

My health and safety concerns.

Regardless where these towers are placed in a field, they create an obstacle course for the farmer. Farm implements range from 30' to 90' wide, being operated by the land owner, the hired help, custom operators, or

aerial applicator, some not so as experienced as others. There is much higher risk of hitting a tower in the field than if it were placed on a road allowance, doing damage to tower and machinery, as well as personal injury to the operator. Also the height of combines, augers, tractors, and high boy sprayers also decreases the distance between the actual power line and the farm operator making them that much closer to the electromagnetic field (EMF). This distance further decreases when the summer heat causes the lines to sag. With the engineering of farm equipment that “bigger is better”, Hydro has no guarantee that the height of farm machinery or the invention of a new piece will not exceed their considered “safe zone”.

With a 30' implement, to either go under the line or turn around near a high voltage 500KV HVDC tower, a farmer would come in close vicinity of the EMF 175 times on one side of the line per mile; 350 times on both sides. During the crop year, a minimum of 7 operations take place, fertilizing, harrowing, seeding, spraying, row crop cultivating, combining, cultivating. Multiply this by 350 = 2450 times in one crop year alone a human is exposed to

EMF and risks hitting a tower. In addition, our approaches are at the half mile lines. We would be driving directly underneath the line moving machinery to and from the field as well as the many trips back and forth to the yard with grain trucks.

Besides being harmful, 1 mile of nicely established shelter belts which we planted with PFRA to stop wind erosion would be destroyed and a half mile drain necessary to carry excess water east to other 11A drain would be ruined.

The north edge of our farm yard is only 180m from the ½ mile proposed route and the road north separating the two sections is the main route travelled to several of our fields. Even though there are no known effects of the DC line on health issues today, but that could very well change in the future. Regardless whether it is AC or DC, electric current passing through a line is dangerous. Between the risk of hitting a tower and the influence of EMF, it must surely have some adverse effects on one's health over decades of farming, whether it is us, our son, or grandsons. In general, people are fearful of hydro lines and avoid them for a reason. The stress of just thinking

about this line on our land has been overwhelming; the stress of having to contend with farming around it will be enormous.

My concern on land devaluation and compensation.

On a distance of 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, the seven, possibly eight BiPole III towers according to Nielson and associates would reduce productive area by 86.1 sq meters per tower, lower yields by 10%, and the additional costs of weed control and the inconvenience of working up and around the towers by 18%. This would be an annual additional cost to the land owner. The one time compensation offered by Hydro is totally inadequate, as no compensation is included for these extra losses and expenditures for the consecutive years to follow.

Considering that the revenue from our crop on that land this year grossed \$750 per acre, that is a substantial loss for us, especially when we as Manitobans know that the Hydro produced is for the benefit of Americans. Hydro pays annual compensation to the Aboriginal people – we should be entitled to the same.

In the past 8 years, the land prices per acre in our area have tripled, and continue to rise. Taking prime

agricultural land out of production is a waste, especially when we grow the higher priced crops of soybeans, corn, sunflowers, and canola. My husband and I are close to the retirement stage of our lives where either renting out our land or selling it is an option. Having the transmission line through the centre of our land would be a deterrent and unappealing to potential renters and buyers, thus not being able to attain its full value.

Considering that the demand for this transmission line is no longer a priority as it was previously, we the land owners would be financially impacted not only by yearly yield losses, additional costs of working around the towers, and weed control;, but also by the huge increases in hydro rates to pay for the exorbitant cost to build the line.

As land owners, it should be our decision whether Hydro is allowed to construct the line on our land. And should we allow it, we should at least have the opportunity to negotiate the prices and terms; not being told, “This is the price – take it or leave it.” Hydro’s attempt for us to sign an agreement for this project before it was 100% approved was very offensive.

Regardless of how much Hydro offers, my husband and I do not want these towers on our land.

In the Nielson report, Quote: “The final preferred route attempts to minimize the disruption of people and natural environment within the context of technical and cost implications.” End of quote. I recommend that Hydro does a realistic comparison to re-evaluate the unoccupied bush land on the east side route versus the privately owned productive land of individual land owners on the west side route. Hydro’s so called preferred route affects many individuals and land owners and their families and future generations in my area alone. Does Hydro consider that minimizing the disruption of people? Other routes have been suggested that would least disrupt and inconvenience the many acres of prime agriculture land instead of the proposed so called “preferred route”. It is obvious that the “cost implications” have never been a concern to Hydro, as the estimate costs over the past two years have only risen dramatically, when a reverse decision to change the route to the shorter and more economical route has never been an option.

In conclusion, as a land owner and concerned citizen, I am very unhappy with Hydro's and the provincial governments attitude and approach to this whole project of BiPole III, and the blind eye and deaf ear they have given to me, my husband, and all the other concerned citizens.