

Alvin Wiens

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My name is Alvin Wiens. I am farming together with my son on a third generation farm. My parents bought this farm in 1956. We have farmed this land continually and hope to for generations to come. I have huge concerns with the proposed Bipole 3 crossing our land.

- 1) In the 60s a transmission line was built crossing this land diagonally, making farming the land difficult. The proposed Bipole 3 line will cross the older diagonal line in a south to north direction. Having fields cut up in this way makes aerial spraying impossible. Ground spraying is also very difficult since by dodging all the poles and steel towers you double or even triple the chemical rate as you try to maneuver around the poles and towers. Even so it will be impossible to control the weeds around the poles and towers. This will lead to the spread of noxious weeds. It seems ironic that the same government that claims to be environmentally friendly would route a hydro line through some of Manitoba's best farmland, thereby hindering food production.
- 2) Another concern is that the land to be used for Bipole 3 will become greatly devalued. Our environment will be changed forever. Nobody wants to live near, or in our case practically under, a huge transmission line. When we want to enjoy a beautiful Manitoba sunset, all we will see is unsightly transmission lines. More importantly, it will be incredibly difficult and dangerous to produce food on this land.
- 3) Safety is perhaps our biggest concern. We have been told that there are no "known" health concerns living near the lines or working under the lines. However, according to research done by Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans, the health concerns are huge. They have conclusively linked the exposure of these lines to a variety of cancers, leukemia, tumor growths, skin growths, abnormal cell activity, sleep and daily rhythm disturbances, mental and behavioural problems, immune system deficiencies, nervous system disorders, fetal development problems, miscarriages, birth defects, and blood and circulatory problems. A US study in 1993 (Poole et al) found that people who lived either on a property abutting the power line right-of-way or who could see the towers from their yard or house had a risk of depression 2.8 times the expected. The risk of non-migraine headaches was up 1.5 times the expected. I do not want my children and grandchildren working under these lines year after year knowing that the health risks are huge. We also know that this government will long be gone years from now and will therefore not take any responsibility when the health issues surface.
- 4) Another safety issue is working around the poles and towers. The equipment is huge. Farmers must work when the weather is favourable. This means working long hours, sometimes well into the night. This does increase the risk for accidents as farmers will be faced with the challenge of maneuvering around the poles late into the night. First our property gets taken away, we are forced to work around the unsightly, monstrous towers and then we will be held responsible should an accident occur.
- 5) The cost in dollars of Bipole 3 is phenomenal to every Manitoba. However, the cost in human life and the increased use of our health care needs to be taken

seriously. Not only will electricity become unaffordable, our health care system will become unsustainable. Bipole 3 will affect every Manitoban.

- 6) We did write a letter to the government when we first realized that Bipole 3 was to cross our land. The answer we received (and this is our interpretation) was that "we have a majority government so we can do what we want." I consider this bullying from the very top. Bullying is now receiving a lot of attention. It is everywhere, everyday, on TV, in the newspapers, and on the radio. It is very difficult to listen to all the attention given to bullying when you are the one being bullied. We feel all the emotions – anger, unfairness, hopelessness, and despair. Does this government really care about bullying?

It is beyond comprehension why our government would choose to build Bipole 3 in densely populated, agriculturally productive communities leaving forever a bigger environmental footprint than necessary due to the longer length, stray power lines, and passing through tornado and storm prone parts of Manitoba.