February 18, 2023

Dear Senator Pelton,

As you know, Xcel Energy is trying to put a large segment of their 610 mile, $2 **billion**, high voltage transmission lines – their Power Pathway – through the heart of Elbert County. The plan is then to *“slather the Eastern Plains with wind and solar” (Public Utilities Commissioner John Gavan).* We need YOU to protect this land we love from becoming the “Field of Dreams” for wind and solar – to use the words of Alice Jackson, CEO of Xcel’s Colorado subsidiary.

In your Press Release from 1-18-23, you expressed your dismay that Colorado’s agricultural sector was not even mentioned in Governor Polis’ State of the State address. Yet, we, the residents of Elbert and other rural counties in Colorado, are greatly impacted by the needs and decisions of those in larger, metropolitan communities. Filling our county with high voltage power lines, wind turbines, and solar facilities indicates that our communities are not a priority, our way of life does not matter, and the only thing perceived as being of value is our resource of open space and land to benefit the metro communities’ demand for more energy.

I oppose Xcel’s Power Pathway through Elbert County because these high voltage transmission lines will:

* Negatively impact our community (health concerns, views, landowner rights)
* Negatively impact the abundant wildlife in the area (change migration patterns, affect nesting)
* Decrease property values up to 45% ([Valuation study](https://puc.sd.gov/commission/dockets/electric/2013/EL13-028/guidelines.pdf), [WSJ](https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-electrifying-factor-affecting-your-propertys-value-1534343506))
* Increase the threat of wildfire in an area with tall grass and many trees
* Not benefit Elbert County (power is for the greater Denver Metro area)
* Bring wind and solar facilities to the area, which are even more impactful to the environment and community

I propose that having Xcel use and/or expand in existing rights of way by using the existing line along Quincy (east/west) and then down through the Rush Creek area (north/south), or by using the easement along I70 and down through Rush Creek. This would greatly reduce the impact to residents of the county, facilitate the needs of the larger metropolitan communities, and respect our 1041 regulations. While there may be a cost increase to this alternative, it is but a small percentage of the overall project, and will be amortized across the years of depreciation to the consumer who is benefiting from the project, as opposed to the great cost that would be incurred by rural residents who receive no benefit if the current proposed routes are used.

As our newly elected State Senator for Elbert County, please represent our voice by doing all you can to oppose Xcel Energy’s destruction of our county.

Sincerely,