

# Save Our Unique Lands

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SOUL of the Kickapoo  
tel: (608) 625-4028

soulofthekickapoo.org  
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IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER!

MY LINE, YOUR LINE, NO LINE

This spring, when American Transmission Co. (ATC) announced its latest routes for the Badger-Coulee proposal, many residents breathed a sigh of relief upon receiving notice that corridors near them had been made inactive. Vernon County residents, in particular, became complacent upon seeing the blue lines of active corridors neatly drawn above the county. "There are no preliminary routes identified on your property that are under consideration at this phase of the project," the postcards said in bold type. But in small type, it added, "As our studies continue, it is possible that a corridor on or near your property could be reconsidered at a later date."

In addition, the Public Service Commission's (PSC) recent approval of the last rung of the CapX2020 transmission line, and selection of a route from Alma to Holmen, will likely affect southwest Wisconsin. Had the PSC selected a more northern corridor, an interstate route would have been logical. But, from Holmen, it is likely the Badger-Coulee line, if approved, would take a southeasterly route. It was painful to see the PSC ignore the participation of energized citizens who want to be involved in making decisions about Wisconsin's energy future. See page 2 for story on the recently filed petitions for rehearing.

## WE BELIEVE THE FACTS ARE:

**1) Wisconsin doesn't need this line, the others proposed, or those on the drawing board to crisscross the state.** Proposed lines would go to Madison and surround the metro area, making it a hub to move thousands of megawatts of cheap power from the west to higher-priced markets elsewhere. As "multi-value projects" of the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator, Inc. (MISO), ratepayers in the multi-state MISO region would pay for the lines for the next 40 years. All ratepayers, including those whose properties are not on ATC's radar, should be concerned and asking questions about need and alternatives.

**2) Just because your property isn't, or hasn't been, on a proposed corridor doesn't mean it won't be.** During consideration of the Minnesota portion of the CapX2020 line, a route was added near Cannon Falls the day before public hearings were to begin. NoCapX attorney Carol Overland said she made a motion to extend the deadline so she could intervene for those residents, but was ignored. We don't know of any policy assuring that towns or property owners will be notified of proposed route changes before ATC's fall open houses.

## CAN WE WIN?

**It's been done before.** On the East Coast, the application for the Potomac-Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH) was denied after activists raised \$300,000 to pay for electrical engineers, education and public relations. In addition, approximately 200 people spoke out as public interveners.

## WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE?

**Expanding our educational message across the state.**

**Action:** Support the petition and resolution efforts asking the PSC to support impartial studies that will tell ratepayers the benefits of spending the same billions on alternatives rather than high voltage transmission lines. More than 1,400 people from 61 of Wisconsin's 72 counties have signed the petition.

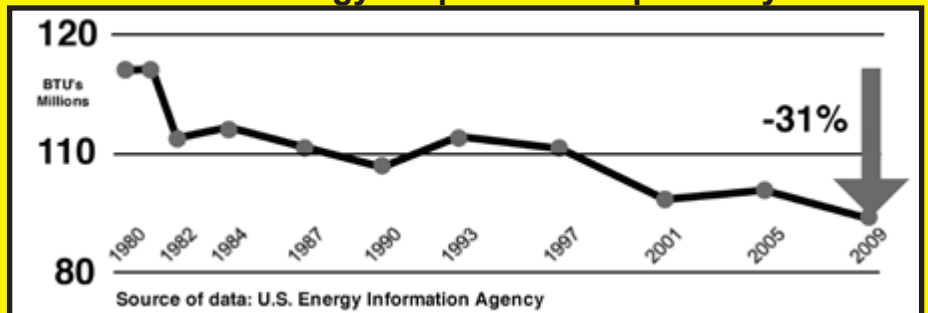
**Send Enclosed Postcard to your Legislator:** It's critical that state legislators understand the transmission line issue and take a stand in support of ratepayers and property owners. The only way they will do that is if they hear from you. See action box on page 3 for details.

**Volunteers:** If SOUL had 15-20 people commit 2-4 hours a day, we'd see a significant increase in effectiveness. We can use your help if you have any amount of time to give. See action box on page 3 for details.

**Money:** Support the cause by attending SOUL fundraising events, becoming a member, making donations, and asking businesses, groups and individuals to support SOUL's objectives.

**ATC will announce proposed corridors for Badger-Coulee this fall and file application with PSC early next year. The public information phase ends in December. At that point, many of us may need to intervene – so let's do everything we can to lay powerful groundwork for all of Wisconsin RIGHT NOW!**

Household energy drops over the past 20 years



## CAPX2020 APPROVAL CHALLENGED BY MORE THAN A DOZEN PARTIES

**NoCapX and Citizens Energy Task Force (CETF)**, which helped petitioners understand the legal statutes and process to file the petition, called the PSC decision “fatally flawed.”

**More than a dozen parties exercised their legal right to challenge the approval of CapX2020 by serving petitions for a rehearing on CapX2020 applicants and the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC).** Petitioners cited violations of law, new information and PSC bias, which they believe provide sufficiently strong grounds to reverse or modify PSC’s order.

### PSC DECISION “fatally flawed”

NoCapX/CETF contends a reviewing court would have no basis to affirm the commission’s decision because the PSC made only 19 “findings of fact” with no citations or facts to back up the findings. This, NoCapX/CETF argues, leaves no way to determine which facts from the thousands of pages of documents support the PSC order, or if the decision is supported by the record.

Petitioners pointed to issues in defining project need, cost and reliability, while claiming the project cost is understated and not justified for local benefit. The written decision also lacked cost-benefit analysis and environmental impact statements on viable alternatives.

According to petitioners, these errors and omissions left the PSC without sound basis for their decision. By not comparing non-transmission alternatives, the proceedings are thought incomplete and in conflict with multiple state and federal laws.

Concerns about segmentation were also raised. Petitioners contend the segment approved on May 30 is but a small section of the CapX line for which Wisconsin rate payers will pay. It is an even smaller segment of the total project when the La Crosse-Madison segment, Badger Coulee, is included. This piecemeal approval process understates project cost to Wisconsin ratepayers and results in an incomplete environmental impact review.

### PSC’s bias questioned

Petitioners were also concerned about PSC bias, directly asking who the PSC was listening to and who the line really benefits. While some accept that special interest groups have strong influence in our political systems, the role of the PSC legally requires a lack of bias and, where needed, the discovery and presentation of facts.

The PSC has 30 days, until July 19, to decide if it will accept the validity of challenges to its own decision making process. Perhaps, as you read this, the decision will have already been made.

Visit [soulofthekickapoo.org](http://soulofthekickapoo.org) for updates.

If the commission decides to not rehear the application, CapX will likely be challenged in the courts. A petition for judicial review would need to be filed within 30 days from deciding to not rehear or 30 days after a decision is made through a rehearing.

### What now?

What now? Ask your political leaders for a moratorium until the issue is reheard at the PSC, the courts or a legislative hearing. Write letters to the editor so people know the PSC has another decision to make. It is in the public’s interest to know if petitions for rehearing will get put aside or if the PSC will heed the public cries and rehear the application.

*Deb Severson, member, Concerned Citizens of Monroe County*



# SOUL IN ACTION

**SOUL needs your involvement this summer because outreach is of the utmost importance now. Talk with family, neighbors, and friends about the transmission line and the actions that will make a difference. Please consider the following opportunities and contact SOUL with your involvement intentions.**

- Hang the enclosed poster in your community
- Sign the online petition, which can be found at [soulofthekickapoo.org](http://soulofthekickapoo.org), and forward the link to your friends
- Sign, stamp, and mail the enclosed postcards to your township and state legislator
- Circulate the enclosed petition and mail the petition to SOUL
- Fill out the membership form and make a donation

## Echo Valley Hope's Annual Widening the Circle Benefit Concert



**Aug. 3-4.** Tickets are \$15/2 days or \$10/1 day.

**The entire ticket price will benefit SOUL.** Listen to presentations and visit booths by LEG, a local cooperative making local power, SOUL, and others working toward a sustainable world. Enjoy the alternative country sounds of The Getaway Drivers, singer/songwriter Jeanne Kuhns, bluegrass with Fayme Rochelle & The Waxwings, and more. Enjoy the good music, good food and good company while you support SOUL. Bring your friends too!

Visit [echovalleyhope.org/events](http://echovalleyhope.org/events) for more information and updates.

## "LEG" - Local Energy Generation community group forms

By Bob Goonin

In mid-May a new community group focusing on Local Energy Generation (LEG) projects held its first meeting in La Farge. Two projects were prioritized: community solar gardens and small scale biodigester.

### community solar gardens generate electricity

A community solar garden is a solar electric array with multiple subscribers connected to the utility grid. The subscribers may purchase a portion of the power produced by the array (e.g. from one panel) and receive a credit on their electric bill.

Solar gardens enable community members, who might not have the financial means or own a home with sufficient solar access to independently do so, to take part in the generation of renewable energy.

### small scale biodigester

Small scale biodigesters take advantage of recent advances in technology to enable small farms to use their excess manure to produce energy. There is a local supplier of this technology that will be contacted to learn more and to explore options.

### education & financing

Supporting these two projects will be efforts to educate the community about energy conservation as a critical first step toward a sustainable energy future and creation of a financial/business model for funding these initiatives.

If you are interested in helping with either of the projects or the supporting efforts, please email [driftlessenergy20@gmail.com](mailto:driftlessenergy20@gmail.com) and indicate your area of interest.

## NEWS FLASH

### ATC stalls area town boards' questions on route reactivation

ATC's letter to the town chairs reads, "The answers to your questions should be available in late September or early October of 2012. We will host a final round of open houses in fall 2012 to present two or more final proposed routes to the public before submitting an application to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in early 2013."

Re-activation, changes or additions to potential corridors in the study area east and south of La Crosse became likely with the PSC's announcement in May of a CapX2020 substation location in Holmen. Fourteen parties filed requests to the PSC last week asking for a re-hearing of that decision.

*(excerpt from a press release issued by Town of Stark Energy Planning & Information Committee)*

## Resolution support isn't difficult...

*I contacted SOUL with my concerns about ATC's Badger-Coulee line. SOUL sent me and my town clerk resolution materials. My town clerk informed me that the next town meeting was on June 12. Then I called a number of neighbors to gain support. I wish I would have given my neighbors a reminder call the night before the meeting because the turnout was low.*

*In town meetings there is a time for public comments, which I was going to use to raise the topic of Badger-Coulee and the resolution. I was worried how the proposed resolution would be received. I found the topic was already on the agenda because other concerned citizens had contacted board members. We discussed the project, the resolution, and the length of the public information phase. I had my doubts about how things would turn out, but after about 15 minutes of discussion the Lemonweir town board passed the resolution unanimously.*

*Although the setting of a town meeting is unfamiliar to most people, it's really just a matter of having a discussion. I think most towns/municipalities welcome citizen involvement. John Dunn, Lemonweir town resident*

SOUL of the Kickapoo  
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**SOUL** is a grassroots organization dedicated to the preservation of our land, homes and environment. Join SOUL of the Kickapoo and help defend our democratic right to question the need for the proposed Badger Coulee transmission project and explore other options such as low voltage transmission.

Meetings are open to all members and held on alternate Tuesdays at Organic Valley headquarters in La Farge. Consult soulofthekickapoo.org for any last minute changes. We welcome your comments, suggestions and involvement.

### **PLEASE DONATE TODAY!**

We need your help to reach as many citizens concerned about our lands, homes and environment. Printing maps, newsletters and pamphlets costs money. Table space at events to distribute information costs money and time. Soon there will be attorney and engineer fees to present to the PSC. Please donate time and/or money to SOUL of the Kickapoo so that we can continue our outreach efforts and keep sending newsletters. We are a 501c3 organization so your donation is tax deductible.

*All membership/donation forms received from this newsletter issue will be entered into a drawing for an electricity usage monitor. Winners from the March issue were Warren & Sharon Terry of Baraboo.*

To advertise in the SOUL newsletter, call 625-2216.

**Mail to: SOUL of the Kickapoo, Box 146, La Farge, WI 54639 Tel. 608 625-4028**

#### MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM

NAME/S \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Village/township \_\_\_\_\_ TEL \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Level:** Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to SOUL of the Kickapoo.

I would like a receipt for tax purposes. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No I would like to donate \_\_\_\_\_ hrs of volunteer time.

Make check payable to: SOUL of the Kickapoo, La Farge, WI 54639

*Please consider donating. We need \$ to keep sending this newsletter.*