

Spire Pipeline Update

Last year the federal Court of Appeals in DC reversed the permit granted for the Spire STL pipeline by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Spire thought it could get away with saddling us ratepayers with an unnecessary piece of infrastructure for which the only interested party was itself in the form of Spire Missouri (formerly Laclede Gas).

If you're a Spire customer, you may recall a couple of emails Spire sent that scared the bejesus out of some people with a false warning that we could freeze this winter in the event of a repeat of last February's winter storm. It was fearmongering; Spire has temporary permission to keep operating the pipeline.

But Spire still must face the music back at FERC: is it entitled to a permanent certificate after being chastised by the Court of Appeals? FERC Staff started the process of doing a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by soliciting "scoping comments" to define the environmental issues that need to be addressed.

On January 13, the Missouri Chapter filed scoping comments that made the following points. (1) The Court of Appeals has already conclusively found that there was no need for the pipeline (because Spire admitted it in the first place). (2) Spire should not be granted a certificate and the pipeline should be left idle where it is (digging it up could be an option but would probably be more environmentally damaging). (3) FERC should take this opportunity to make good on its recent promises to seriously consider the effects its decisions have on the climate. (4) And finally, FERC should consider the effects on low-income and minority communities near the Spanish Lake area of north St. Louis County where the pipeline ends.

We won't be left in the cold; if FERC doesn't approve this pipeline a different one will be found.