

SCOTT GARRETT
5TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

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Congress of the United States
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The Honorable Jeanne M. Fox
President
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
Two Gateway Center (8th Floor)
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Ms. Fox:

Last Thursday, I sent the enclosed letter to the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regarding the execution of vegetation management plans in North Jersey. That same evening, my staff attended a meeting in Upper Saddle River where residents expressed concerns about the scheduled removal of trees near high-voltage power lines.

I am grateful that Mr. Ken Warren, one of your representatives, attended that meeting as well. As he will tell you, a major concern of the local residents is that the tree removal is based on height and not on actual interference with power lines, which seems arbitrary to them. Many residents are concerned about the negative environmental effect of tree removal, as well as the risk of increased flooding due to erosion.

I encourage the NJBPU to further explain your regulations, their purpose, and the reasoning behind them. For instance, the federal vegetation mandate appears to apply to lines carrying 200,000 kilovolts or more, yet the New Jersey regulations are being enforced at only 69,000 kilovolts. Furthermore, as you work to clarify the regulations, I encourage you to enact measures to ensure better communication with residents and greater consideration of their legitimate concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Legislative Assistant, Rachel Houston, at (202) 225-4465.

Sincerely,



Scott Garret
Member of Congress

Enclosure

SG:rh