

Page-Sperryville Transmission Line Upgrade

What You Should Know



Regional utility provider FirstEnergy is proposing to rebuild the roughly 14-mile-long, 138-kilovolt (kV) transmission line stretching from Luray in Page County to Sperryville in Rappahannock County. Known as the Page-Sperryville Transmission Line Project, it has a target completion date of 2028.

This line, along with its associated equipment, poles, transformers, etc., is at the end of its service life and should be replaced to keep the lights on in both Page and Rappahannock counties and for the overall health, safety and viability of local businesses.

The good news is that the voltage of the new line will not be increased, and the upgrade will not expand the right-of-way in Rappahannock or require an expansion of the Sperryville substation.

However, we have some serious concerns about other aspects of the project, especially in light of the few details available and **FirstEnergy's lack of transparency and reluctance to engage with the community.** Among those concerns are: visual impacts of much taller poles, local impacts of the construction work, and potential future transmission expansion through Rappahannock.



Existing transmission line in Sperryville. Photo by Hugh Kenny, PEC.

The Concerns

1. Viewshed

The rural viewshed of the Rappahannock and Sperryville represents **millions of dollars of private and public investment** in easements, historic districts and Shenandoah National Park.

FirstEnergy intends to **increase the height of many of the transmission line poles** and the width of the right-of-ways (ROW) in Page County. However, because it has not provided details about how it is engineering this line, we have no idea if FirstEnergy is choosing design options that minimize the visual impacts, beyond making the poles brown. Without this information, the community can't be sure that FirstEnergy is respecting the substantial investment made by the people of Rappahannock to keep this area beautiful instead of putting its bottom line first.

We also don't have details about how much additional forest within the Park's ROW will be cleared or an estimate of how much it would cost to **underground the line** to protect certain viewsheds, as FirstEnergy has not provided this information.

2. Construction

FirstEnergy intends to stagger construction in Shenandoah National Park to avoid peak tourist seasons — which we support. However, Sperryville relies on those same tourists for much of its revenue and **construction could be ongoing in the town.** Possible use of a generator during line construction could also contribute local ambient **noise and air pollution.**

3. Uncertainty Around Expansion

FirstEnergy has stated this rebuild is not to serve data centers. However, they will not promise that the line will not be expanded in the future. By increasing pole height and widening parts of the ROW, this upgrade could **set the stage for future expansion** of the line through Rappahannock's farms and orchards to serve the new data centers to the east.

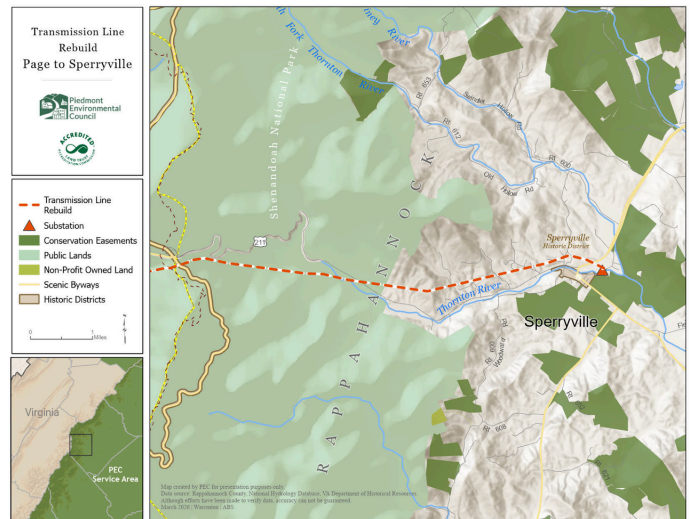
Ultimately, the project will need to be approved by the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC), which will require a hearing. However, it benefits FirstEnergy to work with residents **proactively and openly** to address these issues before going to the SCC. We hope that by hearing from the community, FirstEnergy will better account for impacts to local resources. Rappahannock residents deserve to know that local resources are being accounted for and this project is not a stepping stone to further transmission growth.



Skyline Drive, Shenandoah National Park.
Credit: Emma Will.

Make Your Voice Heard!

1. Email FirstEnergy at transmissionprojects@firstenergycorp.com to submit comments and ask for better information and a public meeting.
2. Ask your supervisor to request a State Corporation Commission hearing for the Page-Sperryville rebuild in Rappahannock.
3. Don't miss an update – **sign up to receive our emails** at pecva.org/signup!



Map showing the proposed transmission line rebuild along the existing line between Luray and Sperryville in red. Source: PEC.

Ask FirstEnergy to:

- **Increase transparency** with Rappahannock residents
- **Prioritize Rappahannock and Shenandoah National Park** by choosing design options that lessen visual impacts
- **Agree to a public meeting** with a moderated Q&A
- **Promise in writing** that it will not expand transmission in Rappahannock
- **Provide detailed renderings** of and specifications for the proposed poles
- **Obtain an estimate for undergrounding the line** at Route 211 in Sperryville

Contact me with questions:

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