

SB 1517: Myths and Facts

- Do not be confused by claims that the Line Siting Committee process takes years. In fact, the Line Siting Committee has just 180 days to complete their work. If they don't, the applicant automatically gets a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility (CEC: state permit to build).
- Most of the time required to site a new energy generation or transmission project is spent in the federal process, not the state one. So SB 1517 saves very little, if any, real time.
- SB 1517 (formerly SB 1547) was originally conceived of by the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project to exempt itself from review by the Arizona Line Siting Committee and compel the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) to issue a CEC based on the federal government's site recommendation.
- Having to approve a route "consistent" with the federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) ties the ACC's hands. Instead of recommending a new site it thinks better for the project, the ACC could merely add conditions relating to recreational access, the environment, or wildlife. This one issue should be enough to kill SB 1517
- Currently, the Line Siting Committee has 180 days to approve an application. SB 1517 would reduce that to as little as 90 days. This is not enough time for the Line Siting Committee to gather sworn testimonies and briefs, cross-examine witnesses, and make an informed decision. It is also not enough time for the citizens of Arizona to have their voices heard.
- The federal environmental review process involves no sworn testimony, no cross-examination and no briefs. Furthermore, there is no open public record of the dozens of meetings involving the federal government and its support contractors. If SB 1517 passes, vital testimony from local people, local groups, and local governments could go unheard.
- In contrast, the Line Siting Committee makes its record open to the public (at the ACC e-file website). The difference in openness between the Line Siting Committee and federal siting processes is dramatic, like night and day.
- SB 1517 will increase the Arizona Corporation Commission's workload, including mandating ACC staff participation in reviews for which they lack the necessary expertise and capabilities.
- The federal siting process is more general than the state's. The Line Siting Committee addresses detailed siting of the lines to minimize impact upon agriculture, real estate development, rural communities, and municipalities. The Line Siting Committee is the body created by state law to do this job, and it has served us well. Let's keep it that way.
- SB 1517 would add new confusion and new costs to what is now an efficient state process. The bill simply cannot be amended enough to compensate for the many problems it causes. It should be killed.

For more information contact: cwg@cascabelworkinggroup.org