



201 Third Street
P.O. Box 24
Henderson, KY 42419-0024
270-827-2561
www.bigrivers.com

March 9, 2020

VIA Hand Delivery

Hon. Kent A. Chandler
Executive Director
Public Service Commission
211 Sower Boulevard, P.O. Box 615
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-0615

RECEIVED

MAR 09 2020

PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

Re: *In the Matter of: Application of Big Rivers Electric Corporation for
a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Construct a
345 kV Transmission Line in Meade County, Kentucky –
Case No. 2019-00417*

Dear Mr. Chandler:

Enclosed for filing on behalf of Big Rivers Electric Corporation ("Big Rivers") are an original and six (6) copies of: (i) Big Rivers' responses to Commission Staff's First Request for Information dated February 24, 2020.

Please confirm the Commission's receipt of these responses by placing the Commission's filestamp on the indicated documents and returning them to Big Rivers in the pre-addressed, postage paid envelop provided.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "TK", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Tyson Kamuf
Corporate Attorney
Big Rivers Electric Corporation
tkamuf@bigriverson.com

ORIGINAL

RECEIVED

MAR 09 2020

PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of:

APPLICATION OF)
 BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION)
 FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC)
 CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY)
 TO CONSTRUCT A 345 KV TRANSMISSION)
 LINE IN MEADE COUNTY, KENTUCKY)

**Case No.
2019-00417**

**Response to Commission Staff's
First Request for Information
dated February 24, 2020**

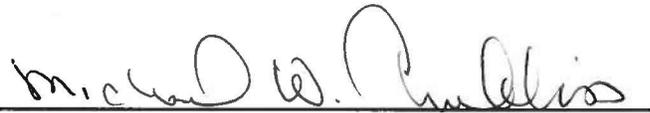
FILED: March 9, 2020

ORIGINAL

BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
APPLICATION OF
BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
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VERIFICATION

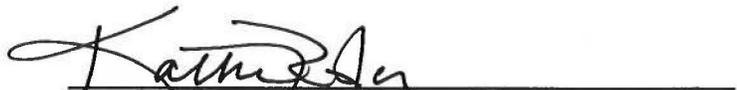
I, Michael W. (Mike) Chambliss, verify, state, and affirm that I prepared or supervised the preparation of the responses to the requests for information filed with this Verification, and those responses are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief formed after a reasonable inquiry



Michael W. (Mike) Chambliss

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY)
COUNTY OF HENDERSON)

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me by Michael W. (Mike) Chambliss
on this the 6th day of March, 2020.



Notary Public, Kentucky State at Large

My Commission Expires

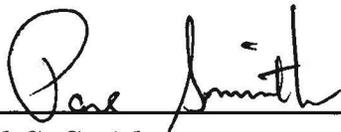
October 31, 2020



BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
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VERIFICATION

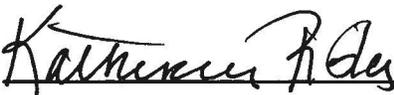
I, Paul G. Smith, verify, state, and affirm that I prepared or supervised the preparation of the responses to the requests for information filed with this Verification, and those responses are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief formed after a reasonable inquiry



Paul G. Smith

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY)
COUNTY OF HENDERSON)

6th SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me by Paul G. Smith on this the
____ day of March, 2020.



Notary Public, Kentucky State at Large
My Commission Expires October 31, 2020



BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
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1 Item 1) *Refer to the application, paragraph 2. Confirm that projects*
2 *F&G are contingent upon the Commission approval of the Certificate on*
3 *Public Convenience and Necessity in Case No. 2019-00370.¹*

4

5 **Response)** Projects F&G are contingent on the Commission approving the
6 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity which was the subject of Case No.
7 2019-00270.² The Commission issued its order granting the certificate for the
8 projects described in Case No. 2019-00270, on January 23, 2020.

9

10

11 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

¹ Case No. 2019-00370, *Electric Joint Application of Louisville Gas and Electric Company, Meade County Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation, and Big Rivers Electric Corporation for (1) Approval of an Agreement Modifying an Existing Territorial Boundary Map and (2) Establishing Meade County Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation as the Retail Electric Supplier for Nucor Corporation's proposed Steel Plate Mill in Buttermilk Falls Industrial Park in Meade County, Kentucky* (filed Oct. 18, 2019).

² Case No. 2019-00270, *Application of Big Rivers Electric Corporation for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Construct a 161 kV Transmission Line, and a 345 kV Transmission Line in Meade County, Kentucky* (filed September 27, 2019).

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1 **Item 2)** *Refer to the application, paragraph 14. State Big Rivers'*
2 *anticipated return on investment and the amount of offsets to future rate*
3 *increases.*

4

5 **Response)** Big Rivers' anticipated return on investment, per Big Rivers' 2019/2020
6 Attachment O filing, is 7.15%. The amount of offsets to future rate increases will
7 vary by year, but will be approximately \$2.5 million during the initial years in service.

8

9

10 **Witness)** Paul G. Smith

11

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1 **Item 3)** *Refer to the application, paragraph 17. Explain whether the*
2 *right-of-way has been acquired yet and whether Big Rivers has encountered*
3 *any public resistance to the project.*

4

5 **Response)** Big Rivers is in the process of acquiring transmission line right-of-way
6 easements under option. As of February 28, 2020, Big Rivers has acquired one option
7 and is negotiating with all other property owners. Big Rivers knows of no public
8 resistance against this project.

9

10

11 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

12

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1 **Item 4)** *Refer to the application, paragraph 18.*

2 *a. What is the monetary impact resulting from the higher transmission*
3 *rates on Big Rivers' system under MISO's Open Access Transmission*
4 *Tariff?*

5 *b. Explain the reasoning for transferring Project F to Louisville Gas*
6 *and Electric Company ("LG&E") upon its completion.*

7 *c. Once the switching station is complete and transferred to LG&E,*
8 *explain the extent to which Big Rivers anticipates drawing energy*
9 *through the station to serve the Nucor load.*

10

11 **Response)**

12 a. The monetary impact is approximately \$6 million per year, of which a
13 portion will be credited to Big Rivers' Member-Owners via its Member Rate
14 Stability Mechanism ("MRSM") rider.³

³ Big Rivers has filed a tariff application with the Commission requesting approval to amend its MRSM rider to include a TIER Credit which would, among other things, return a portion of Big Rivers' Net Adjusted Margins in excess of a 1.30 TIER to Big Rivers Member-Owners. See *In the*

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1 b. Big Rivers transferring ownership of Project F to LG&E upon completion
2 was a condition of the Settlement Agreement approved by the Commission
3 in Case No. 2019-00370.

4 c. The 345 kV interconnection to LG&E will operate as other interconnects
5 Big Rivers has with LG&E. There will be power flows from one utility to
6 another as system conditions dictate.

7

8

9 **Witnesses) Paul G. Smith (*a. only*) and**

10 **Michael W. Chambliss (*b. and c. only*)**

11

Matter of: Application of Big Rivers Electric Corporation for Approval to Modify its MRSB Tariff, Cease Deferring Depreciation Expenses, Establish Regulatory Assets, Amortize Regulatory Assets, and Other Appropriate Relief, Case No. 2020-00064 (Filed February 28, 2020).

Case No. 2019-00417
Response to PSC 1-4
Witnesses: Paul G. Smith (*a. only*) and
Michael W. Chambliss (*b. and c. only*)
Page 2 of 2

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1 **Item 5)** *As 807 KAR 5:120, Section 2(2)a, provides: "The map detail shall*
2 *show the location of the proposed transmission line centerline and right of*
3 *way, and boundaries of each property crossed by the transmission line right*
4 *of way " The proposed route map submitted in paragraph 13 of the*
5 *application does not show those features. Submit new maps with centerlines,*
6 *right-of-way boundaries, and property boundaries. Be sure to label the*
7 *properties with the names of the owners that correspond to the Property*
8 *Owner Listing in the application, Exhibit F.*

9

10 **Response)** Please see the attached maps for the locations of the Proposed 345 kV
11 Transmission Line Route and the Alternate 345 kV Transmission Line Route.

12 Big Rivers also is providing an updated Property Owner Listing, Exhibit F of
13 Big Rivers application filed on January 17, 2020, which reflects the addition of the
14 Hager Bros. property shown on the attached maps. Since Big Rivers already had an
15 option to acquire the substation property and easement, Big Rivers did not send the
16 Hager Brothers a Property Owner Letter.

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1 On May 13, 2019, Robert M. Warren, Big Rivers' Director Engineering, and
2 Hunter J. Rickard, Big Rivers' easement Agent, met with the Hager Brothers at their
3 home farm location. Big Rivers was looking at potential locations for the Redmon
4 Switching Station. The Hager Brothers were notified of the transmission lines which
5 would be exiting the substation on their property. As of July 16, 2019, their property
6 has been under option to purchase by Big Rivers. Once the substation locations were
7 secured, the route was studied and Big Rivers began contacting the other property
8 owners affected.

9

10

11 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

12

Filing
CONTAINS
LARGE OR OVERSIZED
MAP(S)

RECEIVED ON:
(03/09/2020)

Big Rivers Electric Corporation
Case No. 2019-00417
Updated Property Owner Listing
Redmon Road - Otter Creek 345 kV Transmission Line

Property Owner's Last Name	Property Owner's First Name	Property Owner's Address
Redmon Road Switching Station (<u>Updated</u>)		
<i>Hager</i>	<i>Brothers LLC</i>	<i>165 Hager Lane, Ekron, KY 40117</i>
Whelan	Eric M.	635 Whelan Road, Vine Grove, KY 40175
U.S. 60		
Huffines	Jerome L.	280 Sneling Road, Ekron, KY 40117
Cooper	Robert & Michelle	375 Blackburn Road, Rineyville, KY 40162
Masden	Mary	350 Osborne Road, Ekron, KY 40117
WCM ¹	Land, LLC Series 7	P.O. Box 309, Brandenburg, KY 40117
Redmon	Danny & Teresa	8500 Brandenburg Road, Ekron, KY 40117
Hunt	Luwanna J.	2125 Singleton Road, Battletown, KY 40104
County Road 1238		
Curran	Thomas J.	3955 Garrett Road, Ekron, KY 40117
Dowells	Donald	3845 Garrett Road, Ekron, KY 40117

Footnote(s) - 1. - WCM Land company is owned by Chris McGehee at McGehee Insurance Agency INC, 1141 High Street, Brandenburg, KY 40108.

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1 **Item 6)** *Provide a copy of the map included in the letter to property*
2 *owners (Exhibit E) and described in paragraph 21 of the application*

3

4 **Response)** Please see Attachment 1 to this response for the map which was
5 provided with the letter to property owners, and which was also shown in the
6 Newspaper Notice provided as Exhibit G to Big Rivers' application.

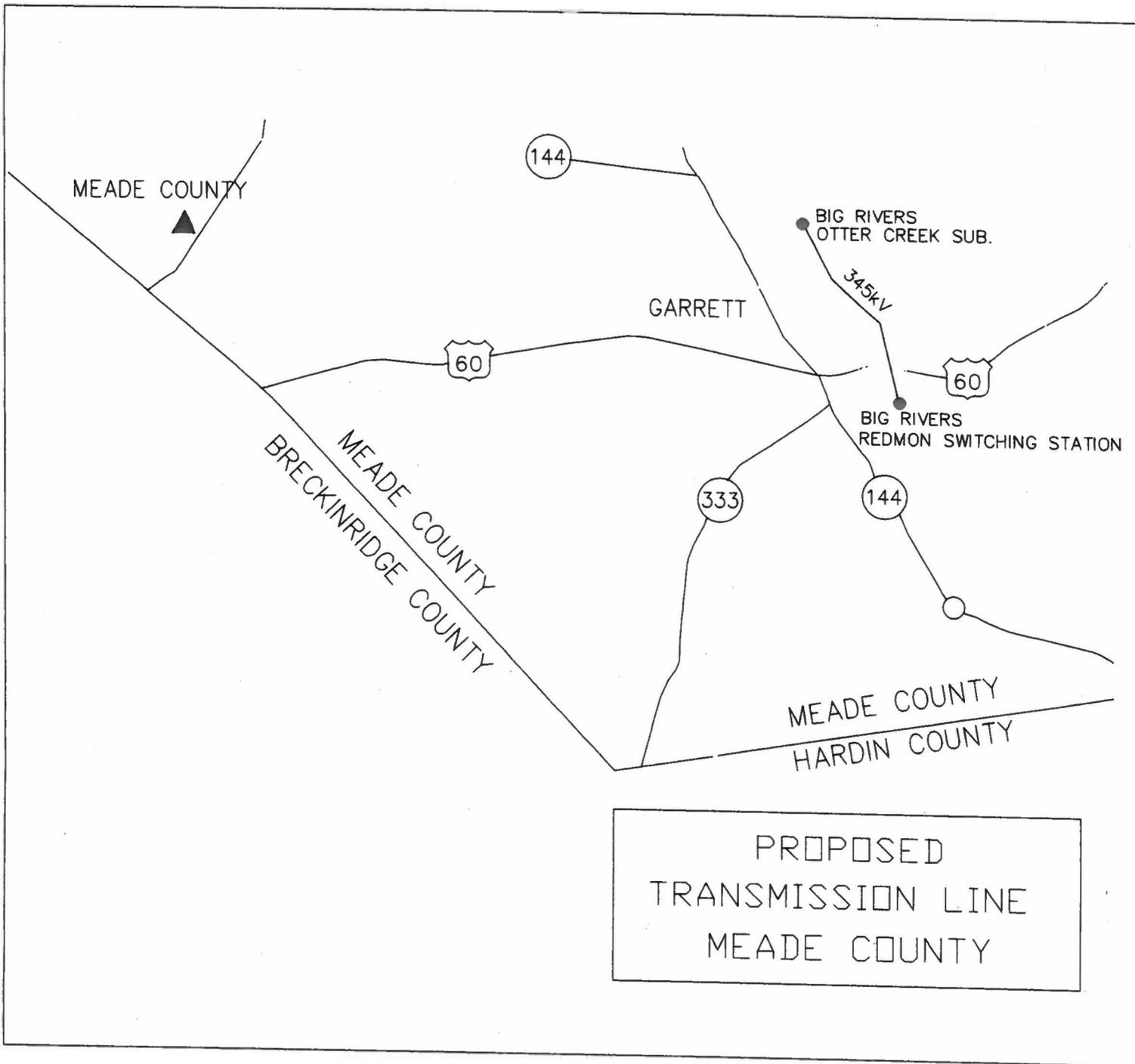
7 Additionally, in Hunter R. Rickard's follow up contacts with the property
8 owners, Mr. Rickard provided the property owners with a blow up of the map showing
9 the proposed line in relation to their property. An example of these maps is
10 Attachment 2 to this response.

11

12

13 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

14



PROPOSED
TRANSMISSION LINE
MEADE COUNTY



Eric Whelan
150-00-00-002

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1 **Item 7)** *State whether any of the first class letters described in*
2 *paragraph 21 of the application were returned to Big Rivers. If so, please*
3 *describe how the property owner was notified.*

4

5 **Response)** Only one of the Property Owner Letters was returned to Big Rivers.

6 Big Rivers' first attempt to contact that property owner, WCM Land, LLC,⁴
7 was made by phone on October 22, 2019. Mr. McGehee's secretary, Rhonda Heath,
8 took the call. On October 25, 2019, Big Rivers sent an email to landreality@bbtel.com
9 with an offer letter and a map of the proposed transmission line crossing of McGehee
10 property. On December 10, 2019, Hunter R. Rickard, Big Rivers' Easement Agent,
11 sent the notification letter and an offer via Certified U.S. Mail, signature required, to
12 Mr. McGehee's office at 1141 High Street, Brandenburg, KY 40108. The United
13 States Postal Service ("USPS") sent its first notice to this address on December 12,
14 2019. A second USPS notice was sent on December 21, 2019. In early January 2020,

⁴ WCM Land, LLC, is owned by Chris McGehee.

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1 the December 21 letter was returned to Big Rivers with the envelope marked
2 'REFUSED.'

3

4

5 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

6

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1 **Item 8)** *Identify the property owners that Hunter Rickard, Real Estate*

2 *Agent at Big Rivers, has contacted.*

3

4 **Response)** Big Rivers' Easement Agent, Hunter R. Rickard, has made contact with

5 all property owners along the proposed transmission line route. The updated

6 Property Owner Listing provided as updated Exhibit F to Big Rivers' Application, and

7 provided as an attachment to Big Rivers response to Item 5 of these information

8 request, identifies the property owners Mr. Rickard has contacted.

9

10

11 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss

12

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1 **Item 9) *Refer to the application, Appendix C, Routing Study, pages 48, 49,***
2 ***54, and 55 for the merits of the proposed route selection in which Route B has***
3 ***better scores using the EPRI model but Route A was selected as the proposed***
4 ***route using the Expert Judgment Model.***

5 ***a. State whether the Expert Judgment Model is part of the EPRI Model.***

6 ***b. Identify the Big Rivers employees and their positions who designed***
7 ***the Categories and Weights on page 56 for the Expert Judgment***
8 ***Model.***

9 ***c. State whether the Expert Judgment Model has been used in any***
10 ***electric transmission line Certificate of Public Convenience and***
11 ***Necessity cases in Kentucky.***

12 ***d. Identify the transmission line experts on the project team that***
13 ***determined Route A was the better choice using the Expert***
14 ***Judgment Model.***

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- 1 ***e. On page 49, it appears that Route B is less expensive by \$311,302.***
2 ***Explain why Route B was not selected as the preferred route when***
3 ***Cost was weighed the most at 40 percent in the Expert Model.***
- 4 ***f. Considering the Community Criteria on the Expert Judgment***
5 ***Model, it appears that Route A was given the best score since the***
6 ***route goes on the outside of a property near the proposed Redmon***
7 ***Road substation, and it would not affect a possible new apartment***
8 ***complex. Fully explain how the number of residences (four on Route***
9 ***A and two on Route B) and the agricultural building (one on Route***
10 ***A) were evaluated by the experts.***
- 11 ***g. According to Expert Judgment, Route A is preferred to Route B's***
12 ***proximity to sensitive bat habitat. Provide the distance from the***
13 ***cave, which may have sensitive bats, to Route A and to Route B.***
14 ***State also whether these sensitive bats have been observed in the***
15 ***area or in the cave.***

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- 1 ***h. Proximity to sensitive bat habitat appears to affect the risk of***
2 ***schedule delay and also natural environment consideration in the***
3 ***Expert Judgment Model. By using proximity to bats in both***
4 ***categories, the risk of schedule delay, and natural environment***
5 ***considerations, state whether the bat factor is double counted and,***
6 ***thus, results in Route A being the preferred route.***
- 7 ***i. On the new maps requested in Item 5 above, please indicate the four***
8 ***residences and one agricultural building that are within 300 feet of***
9 ***the centerline for Route A. For Route B, please indicate the location***
10 ***of the proposed new apartment complex. On both the proposed and***
11 ***alternative route maps, indicate which property near the proposed***
12 ***Redmon Road Substation received consideration in the Expert***
13 ***Judgment Model.***
- 14 ***j. Identify the owner of the property of the proposed new apartment***
15 ***complex. How far along are the plans for this apartment complex?***
16 ***Who is the contractor for the apartment complex? How many units***

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1 *will it have? Have plans been submitted to planning and zoning, or*
2 *to water, sewer, or electric utilities?*

3 *k. Identify the property owners of the four residences and one*
4 *agricultural building that are within 300 feet of the centerline for*
5 *Route A. State whether these property owners were notified by letter*
6 *of the proposed transmission line.*

7 *l. Explain the statement on page 55 that "Route A has a slightly better*
8 *score than Route B in terms of reliability due to the fact that Route*
9 *A has less angles" when the raw data on page 48 indicates that each*
10 *route has six angles with Route B having fewer sharp angles.*

11

12

13 **Response)**

14 a. The Expert Judgment Model is part of the EPRI Model. Please see the
15 Routing Study page 6 paragraph 1 for an explanation of these methods.

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- 1 b. Robert M. Warren, P.E., Director Engineering, and Hunter R. Rickard,
2 Easement Agent, are the Big Rivers employees who designed the Categories
3 and Weights for the Expert Judgment Model on page 56 of the route study.
- 4 c. Yes, the Expert Judgment Model was used in Case No. 2019-00270. Please
5 see pages 6 and 55 of Big Rivers' attachment to its response, dated
6 November 14, 2019, to Item 14 of Commission Staff's First Request for
7 Information in Case No. 2019-00270. On January 23, 2020, the
8 Commission issued its order approving the certificate for the projects
9 described in that case.
- 10 d. Robert M. Warren, Director Engineering, was the transmission line expert
11 on the project team that determined Route A was the better choice using
12 the Expert Judgment Model.
- 13 e. Big Rivers prefers to avoid environmentally sensitive areas when routing
14 transmission lines. Route B was more wooded and was closer to Richie
15 Cave. Due to the possibility of delays that can be associated with tree

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1 clearing and bats, and due to the criticality of the construction schedule,
2 Big Rivers chose Route A to avoid trees and possible bats.

3 f. The routing study project team considered the stated intentions of the
4 Hager family to construct an apartment building on the south side of U.S.
5 Highway 60. While lacking concrete evidence of this plan, nevertheless, the
6 team considered this apartment building when studying possible routes of
7 the line by attempting to avoid the Hager property alongside U.S. 60.

8 When evaluated from a Built perspective, Route B was the better
9 route as it was further away from most existing houses and existing
10 agricultural buildings.

11 g. Route A passes approximately 1800 ft. from the cave. Route B passes less
12 than 150 ft. from the cave. Page 20 of the Routing Study notes that, based
13 on habitat criteria descriptions from the United States [Fish] and Wildlife
14 [Service] ("USFWS"), the authors of the study considered habitat within
15 this area to include, among other species, the Northern Long-Eared Bat,
16 Gray Bat, and Indiana Bat.

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1 The USFWS has listed the Northern Long-Eared bat as a threatened
2 species since April 2, 2015, the Gray Bat as an endangered species since
3 April 28, 1975, and the Indiana Bat as an endangered species since March
4 11, 1967.⁵

5 Big Rivers does not know if bats have been seen in the area or in the
6 cave, and is unaware of any bat population studies conducted in this area.

7 h. The Big Rivers routing study project team evaluates the impacts that
8 threatened and endangered species can have on any transmission line
9 project. Bats are a naturally occurring species throughout Kentucky and
10 location of a project near their habitat can delay a project, and potentially
11 create costly mitigation efforts. Given the critical timeline for this project,
12 Big Rivers elected to avoid Richie Cave altogether.

13 Big Rivers would not claim that the bat factor was double-counted
14 resulting in Route A being the preferred route. However, Big Rivers does

⁵ https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/lists/e_th_pr.html

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- 1 believe the potential presence of federally-listed endangered or threatened
2 species further supports the selection of Route A as the preferred route.
- 3 i. Please see the maps provided in Big Rivers' response to Item 5.
- 4 j. The proposed new apartment complex property owners are Hager Brothers
5 Farms. This possible development was only verbally conveyed to Big Rivers
6 without written or illustrated evidence. Big Rivers does not know of plans,
7 identified contractors, nor number of units. Big Rivers does not know of
8 any plans submitted to planning and zoning, or water, sewer or electric
9 utilities. The property owner only informed Big Rivers of the proposed
10 location and requested avoidance of the general area. This general area
11 along the south side of U.S. 60 is marked on the Alternate 345 kV
12 Transmission Line Route map provided in Big Rivers' response to Item 5.
- 13 k. Property owners located 300 feet from centerline are (i) Thomas J. Curran
14 (1 dwelling), (ii) Robert & Michelle Cooper (2 dwellings, 1 barn), and (iii)
15 Charles Pike (1 abandoned dwelling). Big Rivers only contacted the

BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
APPLICATION OF
BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC CORPORATION
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY
TO CONSTRUCT A 345 KV TRANSMISSION
LINE IN MEADE COUNTY, KENTUCKY
CASE NO. 2019-00417

Response to Commission Staff's
First Request for Information
dated February 24, 2020

March 9, 2020

1 property owners over whose property the right-of-way is proposed to cross
2 – Thomas J. Curran and Robert & Michelle Cooper.

3 1. Big Rivers agrees that there was an error in the conclusion of which route
4 scored better for Reliability. Both routes contain the same amount of
5 angles, six (6) total angles, with Route A having three (3) being 0-45 degree
6 angles and three (3) being 45-90 degree angles. Route B contains four (4)
7 0-45 degree angles and two (2) 45-90 degree angles. Therefore, Route B
8 should have been scored slightly better for Reliability than Route A since
9 its angles were slightly less.

10 However, after changing the expert judgment scores to reflect Route
11 B scoring slightly better in the Reliability criteria, Route A still scores
12 better than Route B, by a 0.25-point margin. Therefore, the outcome of the
13 study remains the same after correcting the Reliability scoring error.

14

15

16 **Witness)** Michael W. Chambliss