

# News

## Alternative Site Is Under Study for BGE Substation

by Nancy Jones

**B**GE officials say they need more time to assess the viability of an alternative site for a proposed regional substation that neighbors are opposing. Originally expected to report in early spring, BGE officials now say their studies may not be completed until July at the earliest.

Take some more time, say community leaders who are battling plans to put the substation on the Camp Holiday property in Butler which is surrounded by permanently preserved rural properties. In fact, drop the whole idea entirely.

Well, not quite but what's a couple extra months if it means the regional substation can be relocated on land outside the Piney Run Rural Legacy area, a haven for agriculturally and environmentally-preserved properties.

After talks in December, BGE officials had promised to meet early this spring with community leaders to present more details about the design and construction of the new facility planned for the 90-acre parcel off Kemp Road north of Glyndon and west of Butler.

Only 30-to-40 acres will be needed for the substation with the remainder of the land to remain intact, say BGE officials.

However, working through issues and concerns -- including a possible alternative location -- is taking more time than originally thought, say BGE officials, who now say they'll be back but not until sometime in July.

"We basically would like to delay the meeting," said Rob Gould, a vice president with BGE. "We need a little more time to try and work through some of the issues."

### Study for viability

Though the BGE officials have stated they would be willing to place

the unused portion in preservation or agricultural use, neighbors are still opposed to such a heavy industrial use in the middle of rural Baltimore County. And locals also are concerned about any upgrade of Kemp Road, a small rural road with mature canopy, to handle construction equipment to-and-from the site.

Teresa Moore, executive director of the Valleys Planning Council, said her group opposes construction of the substation on the currently proposed site

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--Teresa Moore

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because it is surrounded by permanently preserved property that is meant for agriculture or rural uses.

Instead, her members have notified BGE officials about a possible alternative site that is being discussed and studied for viability.

Moore declined to say exactly where the alternative site is located but she did say it was composed of several properties to meet BGE's needs. And the alternative site would not have the same detrimental affect upon environmentally-sensitive or agriculturally-preserved land.

"Everyone is still opposed to [the substation] going into the Piney Run Rural Legacy area," said Moore. "People feel that it's really a conflict to put this in an area targeted for agricultural preservation. They feel something this intense and industrial doesn't belong in that area."

#### Foisting the problem

All parties involved in discussions say they want to ensure they are not foisting the problem from one community to another with the alternative site. That, along with design considerations, have delayed reporting back to local leaders, say BGE officials.

BGE's Gould said his staffers would likely know by the July meeting of the Hanover Road Association whether or not the alternative site would work or not. No date has been set for that meeting.

"We've been extremely aggressive in meeting our commitment to look at the viability of the alternative site," said Gould.

In the mean time, BGE is moving ahead with designs for both the Camp Holiday property and the alternative site, he added.

"We're double tracking both," he said, warning that the clock is ticking. "We still have to work towards a 2015 date."

BGE could face potential violations if the company does not meet the region's energy needs by 2015. The project is a requirement of PJM, a transmission organization that dictates the reliability needs in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

#### More time

BGE has yet to file any design, grading or construction plans with Baltimore County planning or zoning officials and said they would not do so until they

meet with community leaders this summer. Still, for the substation to be open and operating by 2015, BGE would need to start construction by 2013, according to Gould.

But VPC's Moore said she is hoping they have more time and that PJM could delay the project based on demand projections that could be lowered because of a slumping economy.

"We don't feel the urgency," she said. "PJM is reevaluating the need for the facilities. The recession has thrown off the demand."

Other transmission projects such as the Potomac/Appalachian Transmission Highline (PATH) and Mid-Atlantic Power Pathway (MAPP) also were put on hold by PJM due to new forecasts and planning figures.

PJM spokesperson Paula DuPont-Kidd said the company reviews projects every year and will look at the Emory Grove project as part of this annual process.

"If there is any change for any other lines..., they would be reviewed in the Fall," said DuPont-Kidd. "Right now, they are still gathering data and doing the analysis."

Gould said BGE is aware of the continuous studies by PJM. He added that while the date a particular project must be in service might change, it does not change the actual need and BGE must move forward to obtain all necessary approvals.

#### Communication good

Leaders for the Hanover Road Association said they would support finding an alternative location and in placing limits on the size and scope of the project.

"We're working with the folks from Baltimore Gas and Electric and trying to resolve this in a way that protects the people of our community and the property owners in the area of where the substation is proposed," Glenn Elseroad, president of the Hanover Road Association, said in an earlier interview.

He added that the lines of communication between the three parties have been good and that the association understands BGE has an obligation to provide reliable, dependable electric service.

"We're working together to try to resolve the concern in a manner that will hopefully meet the needs of both interests," he added.

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*--Rob Gould*