September 29th was a scary day for Minturn Residents. We all watched intently on the Two Elk Fire, praying that the winds would not push it north, uncontrollably towards town. Our community is the most vulnerable community in Eagle County when it comes to fire risk. We sit in a steep valley, surrounded by forest, with one way in and one way out.

Most days the risk is forgotten by the sheer beauty of our view corridors. Anyone who has hiked Two Elk must marvel at the size of the Minturn bluffs. If you are lucky you will witness a rolling rock with its loud echoing boom or a Golden Eagle fledging.

Holy Cross Energy (HCE) has proposed an above ground high transmission line straight down the road to the trailhead of Two Elk. Minturn residents, alongside our community leaders, have been vocal in our support of county-wide utility redundancy, but opposed to the lines being above ground. We have asked for the lines to be buried through town limits, as to not impact our southern and northern neighborhoods. Our request has been told as too expensive for HCE, Minturn must pay for the burial even though we are not HCE customers and are not direct beneficiaries.

I personally spoke at the County Commissioners meeting on July 24, 2018 and left the meeting positive, that the Commissioners would consider the issue of utility redundancy as a county issue and looking at funding county wide, rather than one that Minturn must take the brunt of. Since then, radio silence. The project is moving forward and will begin with the Forest Service in January.

I ask all of our neighbors, to consider the HCE proposal. Any above lines through Minturn’s southern and northern neighborhoods should be met with fierce opposition county wide. Any above lines increases the fire risk to Minturn residents, complicates future firefighting and mitigation efforts and destroys our precious view corridors. All impacted municipalities should participate in funding the burial of the line, as the benefit is county wide.

Lastly, I leave with an invitation, come hike Two Elk once it re-opens. In two years, if we don’t come together as a county, it may be a much different experience if HCE has its way.

Kindly,

Amanda Mire