

Scott Fitzwilliams,  
Forest Supervisor White River National Forest

Re: Holy Cross Energy Avon-to-Gilman 115-kV Transmission Line project

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams,

As a resident of south Minturn, I have grave concerns regarding the proposed transmission line.

The potential risk of fire from the proposed above ground transmission line, a line that doesn't even serve Minturn, is high. We have all watched in horror as communities in California have been decimated by wildfires started by power lines. We are quickly becoming more like California in terms of drought conditions. By burying the entire 9 miles of line the chance of wildfire is mitigated at a cost to Holy Cross. That cost is much less than the potential loss of life and property that a wildfire can cause. It is time for all transmission and power lines but especially new ones be buried.

PG&E just agreed to bury 10,000 miles of existing power lines because of the wildfire danger. They are facing the reality of extreme drought condition that have become the new normal. Holy Cross should be leaders, bury the line and step into the future with their eyes open. The cost of not doing so is a short term gain with a huge long term potential for disaster and loss.

Another potential risk is that the proposed above ground transmission lines are at risk of being downed by an avalanche or rock slide and igniting a fire.

You cannot put a value on the beauty of the Eagle River through Minturn. An unsightly power line diminishes the aesthetic values of Minturn's mountain and river corridor. The quality of life in Minturn should not be compromised when there is a simple solution. Burying the lines is that solution.

Let's face it, the crux of the matter is an economic one. Short term utility profits and lower cost development and utility costs for Holy Cross users must not take precedence over the safety and preservation of the beauty of Minturn. Holy Cross profits are honestly not my problem or that of the Forest Service. Please do everything in your power to require HCE to bury the entire transmission line through the Minturn Valley and beyond.

Linda Osterberg