

# The Bandera PROPHEET

September 5, 2025

Utility companies identify Bandera County as potential pathway for energy transmission lines

By Jessica Nohealapa'ahi  
The Bandera Prophet

During a special called meeting, Bandera County commissioners heard details from CPS Energy and AEP Texas regarding the Howard-Solstice 765-kV Single-circuit Transmission Line Project and its proposed routes. The utility companies plan to construct 370 miles of new transmission infrastructure connecting the CPS Energy Howard Road Station in Bexar County/San Antonio to the AEP Texas Solstice Station in Pecos County/Ft. Stockton. The continuous lines will connect the stations to provide more power to the Permian Basin, a major oil and gas production area, according to administrative attorney Kirk Rasmussen. Multiple potential routes are being evaluated, some of which slice through the hills of Bandera County.

This project is the biggest of its kind in Texas. Currently, the largest transmission lines in the state are 345-kV, though 765-kV transmission lines exist in other U.S. areas, Rasmussen said. Steel lattice towers of varying heights depending on topography, each capable of producing up to 55 decibels, will have rights-of-way extending 200 feet - approximately one acre wide. CPS Energy will own and operate the eastern portion.

Rasmussen said CPS Energy and AEP Texas are expected to file an application with the Public Utility Commission (PUC) in February 2026, seeking to construct and operate the project. The application will propose many potential routes identified from data collected and feedback received during and after public participation meetings. He

said CPS Energy does not have a preference, but is required to determine a route that best meets the criteria.

“When we file our application and we identify a route, it may not be an indication of what the commission will ultimately approve,” Rasmussen said, adding the PUC can and often does choose different routes than the utilities identify.

The PUC is expected to consider the project application in September or October of 2026; construction is anticipated to begin in 2028; and the project should be in service by the end of 2030.

Bandera County Judge Richard Evans asked several questions, including whether CPS Energy, owned by the City of San Antonio, has authority outside of Bexar County; would towers interfere with flight patterns; what oak wilt precautions would be taken while clearing land; what the environmental impact would be for endangered species; and whether Native American burial grounds and archaeological sites have been considered.

Rasmussen said the Texas Historical Commission requires agencies to be sensitive about historical sites, as well as preserve the confidentiality of landowners who may not want their properties publicly known. He said CPS Energy, which has statewide eminent domain, has a conservation plan in effect, and would work with U.S. Fish & Wildlife to understand the impact on habitats.

“We definitely understand in Bandera County that there are a lot of conservation easements,” Rasmussen said. “We are trying to understand what, if any options may be available.”

During the public forum, CPS Energy Director Matthew Jones recorded comments and agreed to provide responses in writing, which Evans said would be published on the county website once received.

“The PUC is appointed by the governor,” Evans said. “They need to hear from everybody. They may be inundated, we need to overinundate them. Let them know we do not need it, we do not want it. Talk to your senator. Talk to your state rep. Talk to your governor. This is detrimental to us.”

County Attorney Janna Lindig asked if CPS Energy had ever completed this scale of construction over terrain like Bandera County's. Jones said CPS had not, but AEP Texas has in other states.

"These lines are not necessary," George Hamilton said, adding micro nuclear generators could be built to provide power where needed in the Permian Basin. "Why would you not plant one of those, instead of screwing up our land that we get nothing for...it allows CPS to extend its fingerprints all over the Hill Country."

Jones said the project is initially estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 billion, but would likely be more. He said no federal dollars are allocated, and funding is provided by all energy users in the ERCOT system.

"These lines are paid for by everybody," Jones said.

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Infrastructure projects of this scale are regulated by multiple state and federal agencies. Residents may also share feedback with elected officials who represent Bandera County.

**Governor's Office:** <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact-us/opinion>

**U.S. Senator John Cornyn:** <https://www.cornyn.senate.gov/share-opinion>

**U.S. Senator Ted Cruz:** <https://www.cruz.senate.gov/contact/write-ted>

**State Senator Pete Flores:** <https://www.senate.texas.gov/memberform.php?>

**U.S. Representative Chip Roy:** <https://roy.house.gov/contact>

**State Representative Andrew Murr:** <https://www.house.texas.gov/members/4775/email>