



EMBARGOED until June 14, 2007

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NATIONAL TRUST NAMES HISTORIC PLACES IN TRANSMISSION LINE CORRIDORS ONE OF AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES

160-Foot-Tall Transmission Lines Threaten Historic Villages, Battlefields, National Parks, National Heritage Areas and Cherished Community Landmarks in Seven States

Washington, DC (June 14, 2007) –Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named Historic Places in Transmission Line Corridors to its *2007 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*.

Across the United States, there are still places of great character, where historic family farms stand next to hallowed Civil War battlegrounds, where 18th-century white clapboard churches decorate scenic byways, where neighbors have fought to preserve their heritage and quality of life. Today, eight states in the Mid-Atlantic region are waging battles to protect everything that's irreplaceable about their communities as proposals for massive 160-foot-tall, 75-foot-wide transmission lines threaten to destroy historic landscapes and usurp private property rights. In many places, metal towers will rise 15 stories high in areas that have no such industrial structures – where the only buildings visible are historic barns and farmhouses nestled in rolling hills and open agricultural fields. In other places, the towers will blight scenic rivers, mountain vistas, and historic towns that local residents have worked hard to protect.

The threat is currently most urgent in two areas: a proposed 240-mile route through southern Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia; and a proposed 200-mile route through central New York, including a 73-mile section along the scenic Delaware River. Because a provision of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 gives the Department of Energy broad authority to “streamline” approval for new power lines, the potential threat extends far beyond the two proposed lines and is truly incalculable. Ambiguously written, the provision enables federal condemnation of private land for new transmission lines and allows the Department of Energy to bypass federal environmental laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, as well as states’ authority – even if the affected state decides a transmission project is not necessary. Proposed lines could cut through private land, publicly-held open space, neighborhoods, historic sites and districts and magnificent viewsheds.

“In trying to solve the problem of energy congestion, Congress gave the Department of Energy extraordinary authority to override state processes and avoid environmental review to locate transmission lines,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “In the two places where power companies have revealed their plans, we know that what they’re contemplating would be devastating for the countryside and for historic and cultural resources. The areas involved are among the most historic landscapes in America and a unique part of the heritage of all Americans. It’s impossible to assess the potential damage of this extremely ill-conceived legislation.”

History: Congress passed a provision of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 directing the U.S. Department of Energy to create a process for designating large geographic areas as “National Interest Energy Transmission Corridors” (NIETC). The designation, while ambiguously defined, is intended to reduce congestion by facilitating construction of new transmission infrastructure. The proposed NIETC corridors would cover broad areas of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. These new and untested provisions of the Energy Policy Act promote “fast-track” citing approval that could bypass state-level processes for locating transmission infrastructure, override federal environmental laws, and enable federal condemnation of private land for new high voltage transmission lines.

Threat: Construction of the new high voltage transmission lines within the proposed NIETCs risks direct, indirect and cumulative harm to historic, cultural and archaeological resources. For example, the National Park Service has

identified at least 55 National Parks and 14 heritage areas within the proposed Mid-Atlantic NIETC corridor, which also encompasses African-American historic sites, numerous scenic rivers and byways, and the nation's greatest concentration of Civil War battlefields. Unfortunately, this fast-track approval process is likely to preclude meaningful federal protection for historic resources as mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Policy Act. It will also undermine the work of generations of local residents and elected officials to protect the corridors' historic character and natural beauty for all Americans.

Dominion/Allegheny High Voltage Transmission Line Corridor: According to the Piedmont Environmental Council, a proposed 500-kilovolt transmission line, with 160-foot towers and a 200-foot right of way, could scar the landscape for 240 miles from southern Pennsylvania, through West Virginia, and ending in Loudoun County, Virginia. In response to public opposition to the original proposed route, the power company has outlined a new route along existing rights of way; however, the original route has been submitted as an "alternative." In both cases, for the seven Virginia counties involved, the power company's proposed routes would adversely impact 21,725 acres of Civil War Battlefields, 37 designated historic sites, 69,190 acres of designated historic districts, 12.9 miles of the Appalachian Trail, 70 miles of birding and wildlife trails, 208 miles of designated scenic byways, 62 miles of designated scenic rivers, 100,200 acres of land privately protected through conservation easements, and 9,744 acres of publicly owned open space. For more information, visit Piedmont Environmental Council (for Virginia) at www.pecva.org, the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (for Pennsylvania) at <http://conserveland.org>, and the Capon Valley Coalition (for West Virginia) at www.caponvalleycoalition.com.

New York Regional Interconnect High Voltage Transmission Line Corridor: According to the New York Regional Interconnect application, a 190-mile, 400-kilovolt transmission line, with 120-foot towers and 200-foot right of way, is proposed for New York. According to the power company's limited initial research, the proposed high voltage transmission line would potentially adversely impact the Delaware River, currently designated "Wild and Scenic;" and 66 historic sites and districts listed or eligible for listing in the National Register, including a mile-long section of the D&H Canal, a National Historic Landmark District. At least 265 archaeological sites are in the path of the proposed power line. For more information about local opposition to the project, visit Communities Against Regional Interconnect at www.caricoalition.org.

Solution: In affected areas, concerned citizens have encouraged their neighbors to sign petitions, distribute information door to door and e-mail power companies and elected representatives. In addition, a national coalition of historians, conservationists and those concerned with energy efficiency could help change the political and corporate climate of building more power plants and transmission lines rather than seeking sustainable solutions. It's time to consider a broader range of options to meet energy needs before causing irreparable harm to exceptional historic and environmental resources.

Sites on the 2007 list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* are:

Brooklyn's Industrial Waterfront, N.Y. -- Once a booming 19th-century industrial waterfront supported by generations of immigrants, Brooklyn's heritage is at risk as historic dockyards and factories are being demolished by developers anxious to cash in on the area's newly hip status.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, N. Mex. -- The earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States, the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, known for its austere physical beauty, rural solitude and remote isolation, is threatened by a \$225 million commercial Spaceport, a venture planned adjacent to one of the most pristine and sacred segments of the Trail.

H.H. Richardson House, Brookline, Mass. -- The last home and studio of famed 19th-century American architect Henry Hobson (H.H.) Richardson – the creator of Boston's much loved landmark Trinity Church – is vacant and vulnerable to demolition unless a preservation-minded buyer comes forth to rescue the legacy of the man who created the "Richardsonian Romanesque" style.

Hialeah Park Race Course, *Hialeah, Fl.* – The drop dead gorgeous 1925 racetrack known for its stunning Mediterranean architecture and pink flamingos, Hialeah Park – frequented by celebrities such as Winston Churchill, Harry Truman and Seabiscuit – is threatened with a planned 3,760-unit condo and apartment complex with nearly one-million-square feet of retail and 200,000-square-feet of office space, which would destroy much of the storied park.

Historic Places in Transmission line Corridors, *Va., W. Va., Md., Pa., N.Y., N.J. Del.* – Seven states – many of them in the Mid- Atlantic region -- are waging battles to protect everything that's irreplaceable about their communities as massive 150-foot tall, 75-foot wide high voltage transmission lines are planned that will blight historic landscapes and usurp private property rights. Proposed transmission lines would cut through private land, publicly held open space, neighborhoods, historic sites, historic districts and magnificent viewsheds.

Historic Structures in Mark Twain National Forest, *Mo.* -- Established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1939, the 1.5-million-acre Mark Twain National Forest is known for rocky bluffs, pastoral views and historical sites which speak to the region's rich heritage – from intact 19th-century frontier farmsteads to New Deal-era fire lookouts and ranger stations. Today, due to U.S. Forest Service budget limitations, many properties are vacant, unsecured, deteriorating and threatened with demolition.

Historic Route 66 Motels, *Ill. To Calif.* -- Affectionately called “The Mother Road,” Route 66 is known for quirky roadside attractions and unique mom-and-pop motels, constructed between the late 1920 and late 1950s and often clad in neon. In recent years, Route 66 motels in hot real-estate markets have been torn down at record rates, while in cold real-estate markets, motels languish and are being reclaimed by the forces of nature.

Minidoka Internment National Monument, *Jerome County, Idaho* -- From 1942 to 1945, thousands of Nikkei (Japanese American citizens and immigrants of Japanese ancestry) were sent to south central Idaho to live in camps under armed guard at the Minidoka Relocation Center. Today a National Monument, the site, which once contained more than 600 buildings, offers scant visitor services or interpretive information, is routinely looted of artifacts and is threatened by insensitive local land-use planning, including the proposed siting of a massive animal feed operation just over a mile away.

Philip Simmons' Workshop and Home, *Charleston, S.C.* -- Beloved master blacksmith Philip Simmons has spent the better part of 80 years adorning his hometown with intricate ornamental ironwork – gates, fences, stair rails and window grills -- but with no plans to preserve his home and studio, the legacy of this 95-year-old artisan is in jeopardy.

Pinon Canyon, *Colo.* -- In Southeastern Colorado, under uninterrupted blue skies, the Pinon Canyon area includes scenic buttes, river valleys, family ranches and historic and archeological sites that span 11,500 years. The area is threatened by the U.S. Army's plans to expand its Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site by as much as 418,000 acres, a move that could lead to forced condemnation of private lands and damage or destroy historic Santa Fe Trail monuments, ranches, and historic and prehistoric archeological sites.

Stewart's Point Rancheria, *Sonoma County, Calif.* -- The Kashia Pomo Native American tribe has inhabited this Northern California land for thousands of years. But because a federal program to protect tribal historic resources is seriously under-funded, the Kashia, like many tribes, is losing its sacred and historic sites to looters, vandals and the elements.

Since 1988, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has used its list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* as a powerful alarm to raise awareness of the serious threats facing the nation's greatest treasures. This year, the Trust celebrates the list as one of the most effective tools in the fight to save the country's irreplaceable architectural, cultural and natural heritage. The list, which has identified 189 sites through 2007, has been so successful in galvanizing preservation efforts across the country and rallying resources to save one-of-a-kind landmarks that in just two decades, an astounding 52 percent of the sites have been saved and rehabilitated. While the fight is not over for many of these historic places, only 6 sites have been lost since the Trust launched the *11 Most Endangered* program. **For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org/11most/20th.**

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified 189 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. While a listing does not ensure the protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. **For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org/11most.**

****High resolution digital images of the sites can be obtained at press.nationaltrust.org****

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC headquarters staff, six regional offices and 28 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust's web site at www.nationaltrust.org.

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