

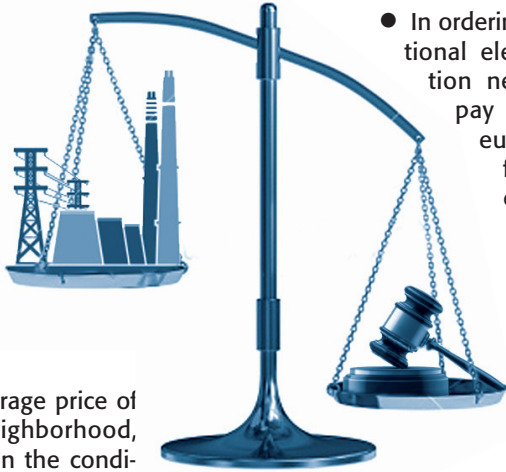
FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES

The Myth:

Electricity transmission companies always win court cases or complaints filed against them.

The Facts:

- After years of opposing the construction of new overhead high voltage power lines through their community, Tsawwassen, British Columbia residents won their battle (CBC 2009). B. C. Hydro purchased 105 homes for \$62 million as part of a voluntary buyout program for residents who did not want to live with the overhead lines running through their backyards. Residents had cited evidence that these overhead lines cause cancer, and had demanded that B. C. Hydro bury this particular line; however, the line was built above ground. After purchasing these homes, B.C. Hydro put them on the market again, listing them well below the average price of homes in the neighborhood, and selling them on the condition that buyers were aware of the power line hazard.



- Schutt (1996) indicated that EMF litigation could become more common than asbestos litigation due to the proliferation of EMFs emitted by overhead high voltage power lines. He cited many cases which were quickly moving U. S. courts toward the “majority view” that holds that damages caused by the public’s health fear of high voltage power lines, thereby causing property devaluation, are always compensable by the power companies. This view holds that the reasonableness of the public’s fear is assumed or is irrelevant; if the public’s fear depresses market value, the property owner should always be compensated.

- In 1999, the Moon Lake Electric Association in western Colorado and eastern Utah was criminally charged under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act for bird mortalities caused by power line and tower strikes, and from electrocutions (Manville 2005). The utility company pleaded guilty, paid a \$100,000 fine, and promised to implement a bird protection plan. Similar fines were paid by electric utility companies in other cases.

- In ordering the French national electricity distribution network (RTE) to pay almost 400,000 euros to livestock farmers, the courts established that there is a link between EMFs from overhead high voltage power lines and disease among animals (Agence France Presse 2008). The Civil Court at Tulle, France sentenced RTE to pay for the “direct, material and certain” prejudice suffered by a dairy farm situated on land crossed by a high voltage power line. A farm family had reported breathing problems and weakened immune systems in both cows and pigs; abnormally low pig birth rates and high piglet mortality; and undersize heifers, some afflicted with hemorrhages, abortions and 10% milk loss.

For information on what you can do go to www.reta.ca

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