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*Acting Colonel David P. Stem  
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Commanders, Supervisors & Deputies,

Over the past year the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project has been developing a route to install new power lines that will run through Baltimore, Carroll and Frederick Counties. This project will stretch the entire length of Carroll County and has been a contentious issue with landowners, the Piedmont group and lawmakers. The Piedmont group has identified a route the powerlines will go and have identified properties they wish to use in order to build the system. They have also filed with the Maryland Public Service Commission and the federal courts to gain access on properties to start surveying for the project.

Two things need to be addressed in order for members of this office to understand my stance on the progress of this project:

First, no member of this office will be authorized to work for the Piedmont Reliability Project group under a reimbursable project or secondary employment. There was a request made by the group to have off duty or reimbursable deputies respond with them and make contact with landowners so surveying could be done. This will not be approved under any circumstance.

Second, our office will not get in the middle of a civil dispute between landowners and the Piedmont group. We will not respond and enforce a civil court order to allow the Piedmont group onto anyone's property. If you should get a call from the Piedmont group advising that a landowner will not let them onto their property to survey, please explain that the policy of the sheriff is to not intervene, and they should seek relief from the courts if owners refuse access. We will respond if there is a criminal act taking place such as an assault or trespassing, but will not respond to force a landowner to comply with a civil access order.

This is obviously an evolving issue, and as more information becomes available, I'll relay it to patrol so you can take the appropriate action.

Sheriff DeWees

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