



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 30 2017

**US Army Corps of Engineers
Norfolk District Regulatory
Office
Received by: RLS
Date: March 31, 2017**

The Honorable Douglas W. Lamont, P.E.
Senior Official Performing the Duties of
the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Mr. Lamont:

On January 17, 2017, former Secretary Sally Jewell sent you a letter expressing her concerns about the proposed Dominion Surry-Skiffes Creek-Whealton Transmission Line project in southeastern Virginia. I have reviewed your March 21, 2017 response as well as the March 20, 2017 response from the Norfolk District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). In addition to these communications, senior members of our staffs and the Council on Environmental Quality met March 10, 2017, to discuss the concerns expressed in Secretary Jewell's letter.

I am honored to serve as Secretary of the Interior and am strongly committed to responsible stewardship of the Colonial National Historical Park (Park), the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, and all of the invaluable assets maintained by the National Park Service for current and future generations of Americans. I appreciate your continued willingness to engage, both recently and over the past several years, with the Department of the Interior (Department) on the issues presented by the proposed transmission line and its proximity to the Park.

The information provided by the Corps reflects thoughtful and thorough consideration of the issues raised by my predecessor related to the potential impacts of the project, the need for the project, possible alternatives, and the role of mitigation. The Corps has taken into account the concerns of various parties and vigorously participated in development of potential mitigation that is intended to enhance the visitor experience within the entire region. Notably, in a letter dated March 1, 2017, PJM, the regional transmission organization, recently affirmed that the project is the only viable option to resolve grid reliability issues.

In addition, I understand that the Corps has consulted with the Pamunkey Tribe and has identified mitigation measures agreeable to the Tribe. I understand that the Corps, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, and Dominion Virginia Power are continuing to evaluate a potential Memorandum of Agreement pursuant to the process established under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Department stands ready to sign a final agreement as a concurring party and to work with the other signatories to carry out its terms.

Thank you for carefully considering and addressing the concerns of the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Zinke', with a large, sweeping initial 'R'.

Ryan K. Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

Cc: USACE Commanding General
Norfolk District Commander