

How Deep is the Clean Line Corruption at the U.S. Department of Energy?

Get out your hip-waders, folks, it's going to get pretty deep!

According to [this article](#), in 2011 former Secretary of Energy Steven Chu appointed Lauren Azar to a position at the DOE in order to carry out the administration's political agenda.

Chu's selection of Azar was largely seen as a sign of the Obama administration's intense interest in expanding the grid to support renewables and tackle climate change, sources said.

Azar got the finger pointed at her as the impetus for a controversial

memo that urged federal power marketing agencies (PMAs) to use their authority to help get privately funded transmission projects built.

As laid out in the memo, she also championed Texas-based Clean Line Energy's application to partner with DOE through its never-before-used authority under Section 1222 of the Energy Policy Act, which would allow a PMA with federal authority to site the line and overcome state opposition.

It's not about reliability or economics of the grid, it's about federal support for certain companies with personal ties to the DOE:

Jimmy Glotfelty, founder of Clean Line Energy Partners and a former senior electricity adviser for President George

W. Bush, said Azar should be remembered for trying to build infrastructure and integrate renewables in a thoughtful and cooperative manner.

"The customers of PMAs are pretty protective, and if you ask a lot of people who have been in her shoes -- including myself -- it's not uncommon to get into debates with customers of PMAs," he said. "They're tough negotiators."

Clean Line, with its DOE-connected "vice president," became the only transmission company to take advantage of Sec. 1222 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 during a very convenient RFP process run by the DOE in 2010. But the pre-Azar DOE just wasn't aggressive enough:

Azar brought that same spirit to DOE. She helped bring

together the "federal family" in 2011 -- nine agencies key to streamlining federal permitting of major new power lines that could have taken up to 15 years to garner approval (Greenwire, Oct. 5, 2011). DOE already had existing authority to do so under 216(h) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, language that allows the agency to coordinate federal and environmental reviews.

"DOE, until I got there, implemented [the rule] in somewhat of a tepid manner," she said. "I came in like gangbusters as I always do and not only helped to lead the rapid respond team for transmission but helped DOE draft some rules for 216(h), negotiate with the nine agencies."

Shortly after Azar was appointed, Clean Line submitted an ["updated" application](#) under Sec. 1222 in order to use the federal power marketing agencies to take land for its private gain and override state denials.

*The Honorable Lauren Azar
Senior Advisor to the
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue
SW
Washington, D.C. 20585*

August 17, 2011

Dear Lauren,

With development efforts well under way, the Plains & Eastern Clean Line is positioned to help meet President Obama's call for 80% clean energy by 2035. The Plains & Eastern Clean Line will provide

affordable, renewable power to millions of customers in the southeastern United States. Regulatory and permitting approvals at the state and federal levels are the critical path items. Since submitting a proposal in July 2010, the Plains & Eastern Clean Line has made substantial development progress, strengthening the case for a partnership with the Department of Energy (DOE) and Southwestern under Section 1222 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

The attached document provides an update on our efforts, including the widespread support the project has received from a diverse group of stakeholders. It also supplements the original application with respect to how the project is necessary to accommodate

*the increase in demand for transmission capacity and how the project is consistent with needs identified in transmission plans or otherwise by the appropriate transmission organization. Projects like the Plains & Eastern Clean Line have the potential to return the United States to a global leadership position in clean energy. **The private sector has the resources and the desire to invest in our aging infrastructure and we respectfully ask that the DOE exercise its authority to make it possible. We appreciate the attention you are giving the Plains & Eastern Clean Line.** We will be in Washington, DC regularly in the coming months and would like the opportunity to sit down with you and your team to review*

the project materials and respond to any questions.

Magically, the DOE entered into an [Advance Funding and Development Agreement](#) with Clean Line in early 2012, despite the fact that Clean Line did NOT meet all [the statutory criteria in Sec. 1222](#). Sec. 1222 requires that a project:

*2) is consistent with--
(A) transmission needs identified, in a transmission expansion plan or otherwise, by the appropriate Transmission Organization (as defined in the Federal Power Act [16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.]) if any, or approved regional reliability organization*

Clean Line's projects are not a part of any transmission expansion plan, therefore they cannot be "consistent with" a plan that does not include them.

Instead, the DOE relied on:

DOE has emphasized the need for additional high voltage transmission capacity to deliver renewable resources from transmission-constrained areas, stating in its "20% Wind Energy by 2030" Report that "If the considerable wind resources of the United States are to be utilized, a significant amount of new transmission will be required."

[GRID2030](#) is probably the highlight of Clean Line "vice president" Glotfelty's career at the DOE. And then Glotfelty leaves the DOE after setting the stage, and personally invests in Clean Line Energy Partners?

[Clean Line brags:](#)

Jimmy worked for George W. Bush, for almost eight years,

*at both the gubernatorial and presidential levels. He led the Bush Administration's efforts on electricity issues with Congress and the electric utility industry. In this capacity, **he founded Office of Electric Delivery and Energy Reliability at the Department of Energy (DOE) and served as its first Director.***

Let's see... which office is undertaking DOE's consideration of Clean Line's application under Sec. 1222?

*The Department of Energy's (DOE) Section 1222 Program is administered by the **Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE).***

Wow! What a coincidence! A DOE appointee uses his office to set up a scheme whereby private investors can override state

authority and regional transmission planning processes, and then leaves his position to personally invest in just such a scheme? And the office he "founded" is now in a position to approve his financial scheme?

Something stinks here...

Maybe this guy should investigate and clear up the appearances of federal actions undertaken for private profit?

Whether the department will take the same approach under Chu's successor, MIT nuclear physicist Ernest Moniz, remains unclear.

I don't think that Moniz has a clue what his underlings are up to, but that's no excuse to let this federal land-taking scheme continue.

Clean Line's plans are a for-profit initiative masquerading as a

political agenda. And DOE's political agenda is favoring corporate interests over the interests of the citizens and consumers it is supposed to serve. Let's clean the stink out of our federal Department of Energy!