

House Bill 1319

By: Representatives Wiles of the 34th, Ehrhart of the 36th and Massey of the 86th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 3 of Title 22 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 exercise of the power of eminent domain for special purposes, so as to prohibit the use of the
3 power of eminent domain to acquire any property for the construction of an electric
4 transmission line without the issuance of a certificate of public convenience and necessity
5 by the Public Service Commission; to provide for applications for such certificates and the
6 practice and procedure in connection therewith; to provide for related matters; to provide for
7 an effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Chapter 3 of Title 22 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to exercise of the
11 power of eminent domain for special purposes, is amended by adding at the end of said
12 chapter a new Article 8 to read as follows:

13 "ARTICLE 8

14 22-3-160.

15 (a) Before exercising the right of eminent domain for purposes of an electric transmission
16 line, the condemnor shall first obtain from the Public Service Commission a certificate of
17 public convenience and necessity. Such certificate shall not be unreasonably withheld.

18 (b) The Public Service Commission shall prescribe regulations pursuant to Chapter 13 of
19 Title 50, the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act,' relative to the requirements for
20 obtaining a certificate of public convenience and necessity which shall include:

21 (1) A requirement that the application for such certificate shall include a description of
22 the proposed project including its general route, a description of the public convenience
23 and necessity which support the proposed route, the width of the proposed transmission
24 line corridor, a showing that use of the power of eminent domain may be necessary to

1 construction of the transmission line, a showing that the public necessity for the
 2 transmission line justifies the use of the power of eminent domain, a showing that the
 3 proposed transmission line corridor is the feasible route which is least disruptive to the
 4 rights of private landowners, and a showing that the applicant has considered all
 5 reasonable alternative construction approaches, specifically including the consideration
 6 of both above ground and below ground construction;

7 (2) A provision for reasonable public notice of the application and the proposed route;

8 (3) A provision for the holding of at least three well-publicized public hearings
 9 concerning the application and the proposed route, at least one of which hearings shall
 10 commence between 6:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M., inclusive, on a business weekday;

11 (4) A provision for a hearing by the Public Service Commission on the application and
 12 the filing and hearing of any objections to such application;

13 (5) A requirement that all hearings shall be held and a final decision rendered on any
 14 application not later than 90 days from the date of the publication of notice required in
 15 paragraph (2) of this subsection; and

16 (6) Such other reasonable requirements as shall be deemed necessary or desirable to a
 17 proper determination of the application.

18 (c) In the event the application is not approved or denied within the time period provided
 19 for in paragraph (5) of subsection (b) of this Code section, the application shall be deemed
 20 to be approved by operation of law.

21 (d) The decision of the Public Service Commission may be reviewed by a judge of the
 22 superior court of the county in which the transmission line company has an agent and place
 23 of doing business. The review shall be by petition filed within 30 days after the action of
 24 the Public Service Commission and shall be determined on the basis of the record before
 25 the commission. The action of the Public Service Commission shall be affirmed if
 26 supported by substantial evidence."

27 **SECTION 2.**

28 This Act shall become effective July 1, 2002, and shall apply with respect to eminent domain
 29 proceedings filed on or after that date.

30 **SECTION 3.**

31 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.