VALLEY LINK TRANSMISSION

# Joshua Falls to Yeat — 765kV Line

*Community Information & Decision Guide*

Campbell County to Culpeper County, Virginia | 115 Miles | March 2026

*This document is intended to help landowners, residents, and local leaders understand the proposed project — its potential benefits and its potential costs to land, nature, and community — so they can make an informed decision about whether to support or oppose it.*

## 1. Project Overview

**Valley Link Transmission — a joint venture of Dominion Energy, Transource, and FirstEnergy Transmission — proposes to construct a 115-mile, 765-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line from Joshua Falls in Campbell County to the Yeat substation in Culpeper County, Virginia. This would be the largest transmission line ever built in Dominion Energy's territory.**

| Project Fast Facts | Project Timeline |
|---|---|
| Length: ~115 miles | 2025 Q3–Q4: Route development |
| Voltage: 765 kilovolts (kV) | 2026 Q1–Q2: Community meetings |
| Counties crossed: Up to 9 | 2026 Q3: SCC filing |
| Tower height: ~135–160 feet | 2026 Q4 – 2028 Q3: Permitting & easements |
| ROW width: ~200 feet (estimated) | 2027 Q2–Q3: SCC approval expected |
| Proponent: Valley Link (Dominion, Transource, FirstEnergy) | 2028 Q4 – 2029 Q2: Construction |
| Regulator: Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) | 2029: Projected in-service date |

**The project is identified by PJM Interconnection — the regional grid operator — as essential to meeting Virginia's rapidly growing electricity demand, driven primarily by large data center expansion in Northern Virginia.**

## 2. EMF Fact-Check: What Valley Link Says vs. What the Science Says

**Valley Link's FAQ states: "Scientists across the globe have studied the potential health impacts of EMF since the 1970s and found no cause-and-effect link between EMF exposure from power lines and negative health impacts."**

! **Verdict: Mostly accurate but incompletely stated. The claim reflects mainstream scientific consensus but omits important nuances and a formal classification by a WHO-affiliated body.**

### What the science actually says:

#### Points of agreement with Valley Link's claim

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Cancer Institute both state that no consistent evidence of a causal link between low-level EMF from power lines and human cancer has been established.
- Decades of research involving tens of thousands of studies have not produced definitive proof of harm at standard residential exposure levels.
- Power line EMF is "non-ionizing" — it cannot directly break DNA strands the way X-rays or gamma rays can.

#### What Valley Link's claim leaves out

- In 2002, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) — a branch of the WHO — classified extremely low frequency (ELF) electromagnetic fields as "possibly carcinogenic to humans" (Group 2B), based on limited evidence of a link to childhood leukemia. The U.S. EPA and National Cancer Institute both acknowledge this classification.
- The French national health agency (ANSES) recommends limiting ELF-EMF exposure near schools, hospitals, and for pregnant women, and calls for new schools and hospitals to avoid proximity to high-voltage lines.
- A 2023 scientific review found that EMF exposure in insects — including bees and other pollinators — was associated with disrupted navigation, impaired reproduction, oxidative stress, and developmental problems. This has potential implications for agriculture along the corridor.
- Some studies have found associations between high-level occupational EMF exposure and elevated miscarriage risk and other reproductive health concerns, though results are not fully consistent across studies.
- A 765kV line produces significantly stronger electromagnetic fields than a typical 115kV distribution line. The voltage level matters — Valley Link does not address this distinction in their FAQ.

**Bottom line for residents:**

Valley Link's EMF reassurance is not false, but it presents an incomplete picture. The preponderance of evidence does not prove harm. However, international health bodies have stopped short of declaring these fields fully safe, and ecological impacts on pollinators are a genuine and documented concern. Residents living close to the proposed corridor — especially those with young children — may wish to seek independent information rather than relying solely on the project proponent's FAQ.

## 3. Environmental & Ecological Impacts

**The following potential impacts are drawn from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service guidance, the Piedmont Environmental Council's analysis of this specific project, peer-reviewed literature on transmission line construction, and Valley Link's own project materials.**

| Category | Concerns / Potential Harms | Project Proponent's Position |
|---|---|---|
| **Forest Clearing** | Thousands of acres of forest must be permanently cleared for the right-of-way (ROW). The Piedmont Environmental Council estimates this project would clear a continuous corridor through central Virginia's forests, fragmenting habitat and eliminating mature tree canopy. | Valley Link states the project will be "built with transparency and care for the environment" and will engage communities to minimize impacts. Specific forest-loss acreage has not been published. |
| **Habitat Fragmentation** | A 115-mile, ~200-foot-wide cut through continuous forest creates a hard edge that disrupts movement corridors for deer, black bear, bobcat, songbirds, and other interior-forest species. Interior forest species that avoid edges are most vulnerable. | Valley Link has committed to surveys for threatened and endangered species in coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources. |
| **Wetlands & Waterways** | The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service identifies cleared ROWs as a continuous source of sedimentation into waterways. Stream crossings disturb riparian buffers. Wetland fill may require Army Corps of Engineers permits. | Multiple water protection permits are required, including Army Corps Section 404/Section 10 permits and Virginia Water Protection Permits. |
| **Bird Collision & Electrocution** | The U.S. Forest Service estimates power line collisions kill hundreds of thousands to 175 million birds annually in the U.S. Eagles, hawks, and other large soaring birds are especially at risk along a corridor cutting through Virginia's rural landscape. | Tower design details have not been finalized. No bird-safety commitments have been publicly stated for this project to date. |
| **Pollinator Impacts** | A 2023 scientific review documented EMF-related disruption of bee navigation, reproduction, and development. A 200-foot mowed/ maintained corridor through agricultural and forested land also eliminates critical pollinator forage habitat. | Valley Link acknowledges it will study EMF and design to minimize it. No specific pollinator protection plan has been disclosed. |
| **Invasive Species** | Newly disturbed ROW corridors are a documented pathway for invasive plant species (e.g., kudzu, autumn olive, tree of heaven) to establish and spread into adjacent forest and farmland. | Regular vegetation management of the ROW will be required throughout the project's lifespan. Methods (chemical vs. mechanical) have not been specified. |
| **Land Development Pressure** | The Piedmont Environmental Council warns that high-voltage transmission lines function like highways, creating development pressure within several miles for substations, data centers, and related infrastructure. | Valley Link frames the project as an economic benefit, creating jobs and supporting Virginia's competitiveness. |

| Category | Concerns / Potential Harms | Project Proponent's Position |
|---|---|---|
| **Agricultural Land** | The 115-mile corridor would cross active farms, potentially splitting parcels, limiting farming practices beneath the lines, and reducing land values. Permanent easements restrict landowner use. | Valley Link has begun landowner outreach and easement acquisition. Compensation terms have not been publicly disclosed. |
| **Scenic & Historic Landscapes** | The project crosses one of Virginia's most historically and scenically significant rural landscapes. Views from the Blue Ridge, historic properties, and heritage sites may be permanently altered. | Valley Link has committed to coordination under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for impacts to historic properties. |

# 4. Landowner Rights & Next Steps

**If your property is in or near the proposed corridor, you have important legal rights and opportunities to participate. Here is what you should know:**

### Your Rights as a Landowner

- You do not have to allow surveyors onto your property without consent. "Permission to survey" is a voluntary request — you can decline.
- If Valley Link obtains SCC approval, they may have the right to acquire easements through eminent domain (condemnation). An SCC Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) is required first.
- You are entitled to fair market compensation for any easement. You can negotiate — and you should consult a real estate attorney before signing anything.
- You can file formal comments or testimony with the Virginia State Corporation Commission when the CPCN application is filed (expected Q3 2026).
- Your local Board of Supervisors and state legislators can also weigh in on the project during the SCC process.

### How to Make Your Voice Heard Now

- Attend Valley Link's community open houses (scheduled 2026 Q1-Q2) and ask questions on the record.
- Use the GeoVoice interactive mapping tool (announced by Valley Link) to submit route feedback.
- Contact your county Board of Supervisors and ask them to formally engage in the SCC permitting process.
- Contact Virginia state legislators to express support or opposition.
- Reach out to the Piedmont Environmental Council (pecva.org), which is actively monitoring this project.
- Watch the Virginia SCC docket for the CPCN filing (expected Q3 2026) — public comment periods are time-limited.

# 5. Weighing the Tradeoffs

**This is a genuinely complex decision. The project addresses a real problem — Virginia's electricity grid is under unprecedented strain from data center growth — but the costs fall unevenly on rural landowners, farmers, and natural ecosystems, while the benefits flow primarily to urban and commercial consumers. The following table summarizes the core tradeoffs.**

| Arguments FOR the project | Arguments AGAINST the project |
|---|---|
| • PJM has identified this as essential infrastructure for grid reliability.<br>• Virginia's electricity demand is growing faster than at any time since WWII.<br>• The project will support integration of renewables and next-generation nuclear energy.<br>• Construction will create jobs along the corridor.<br>• 765kV lines carry more power per mile of corridor than lower-voltage alternatives, potentially reducing total footprint.<br>• Landowners will be compensated for easements. | • The primary driver of new demand is data centers — private commercial facilities, not homes or hospitals.<br>• Thousands of acres of forest will be permanently cleared.<br>• Rural landowners and ecosystems bear the costs; urban/commercial consumers get the benefits.<br>• Permanent easements restrict agricultural and other land uses for generations.<br>• No underground option has been proposed or studied for this corridor.<br>• EMF, while probably not causing major human health effects, has documented impacts on pollinators. |

# 6. Key Contacts & Resources

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| **Valley Link / Project**<br><br>Website: vltransmission.com<br><br>Project page: vltransmission.com/joshua-falls-to-yeat<br><br>GeoVoice mapping tool: announced for 2026<br><br>**Virginia Regulatory Body**<br><br>Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC)<br><br>scc.virginia.gov<br><br>CPCN application expected Q3 2026 | **Environmental Advocacy**<br><br>Piedmont Environmental Council<br><br>pecva.org \| 540-347-2334<br><br>Warrenton, VA & Charlottesville, VA<br><br>**For Landowners**<br><br>Consult a Virginia real estate attorney before signing any easement documents or permission-to-survey forms.<br><br>Virginia State Bar Lawyer Referral: vsb.org |

*This document was prepared for community information purposes and does not constitute legal advice.Sources: Valley Link (vltransmission.com), Piedmont Environmental Council, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, World Health Organization, National Cancer Institute, EPA, IARC, ANSES, Environmental Health Sciences.*