



ZVAKANAKA

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Dear Bongi

Following the email I sent to you on Friday, I still cannot access the document as your website is not live.

However I would like to lodge the following comments/concerns to be taken into account for the Draft EIA closing 18th April 2013.

We own a 74 hectare farm bordering Philip Potgieter's farm Vlakfontein. The existing powerline runs along this boundary on Potgieter's side of the farm. We do not farm but have an income from tourism by hiring out 2 self-catering cottages and an exclusive camp site. It has taken us 9 years to build up our guest base and people stay with us for peace and quiet and to enjoy the beautiful Soutpansberg Mountains.

These are our concerns:

1. Visually, what is already an eyesore will become doubly so – we have planted trees to block the view of the powerline from our one cottage, but it would take a decade or more to have trees grow tall enough to block out the proposed new line.
2. The building of the new line in our vicinity will be very noisy and disruptive – there is no way that this could be blocked from us and I could not, in all fairness, assure prospective guests that they will find the peace and tranquility they are looking for.

If a construction camp for labour were to be built near where the powerline is to be erected, the noise from it on the weekend would destroy our business completely. This is because our prevailing winds come from the east and the sound travels amazingly effectively from this direction. We could not offer guests a tranquil weekend with the sounds of music and other gaiety that usually come with settlements of this sort.

3. I predict that our bookings will drop off substantially having a devastating financial impact on us. It will also mean that it will take us years to rebuild the reputation we had before the work on the powerline commences.

4. Our farm is a haven for animals such as bushbuck which get shot at by surrounding farmers because they threaten their orchards and we have built up a population of bushbuck, bush pig, duiker, porcupine, baboons, vervets, leopard, brown hyeana, honey badgers and many more smaller creatures. Many of these animals have lost their fear of humans and we have regular, close sightings of them. Our concern is that, if labourers were in the area many of these animals would be poached, especially in the eucalyptus forest which would be hard to police.
5. On a broader scale, it is sad to think of the impact that this construction will have on the beautiful and highly sensitive flora, fauna and landscape of the mountain.

Yours faithfully

Gail Maytham