



Organizational Impact Statement

1. **Name of Organization:** Loudoun County Equine Alliance (LCEA)
2. **Contact Person:** Kelly Foltman, DVM, President
3. **Mission:** The mission of the Loudoun County Equine Alliance is to present a unified voice to actively advocate, educate and communicate the goals, initiatives and benefits of the horse industry, in order to advance the interests of all equine disciplines and the entire equestrian related industry.
4. **Constituency:** Loudoun County and surrounding county equestrians and enthusiasts.
5. **Summarize the key issues related to the Mid-Atlantic Resiliency Project as they affect your organization's mission and constituency:**

Most of Loudoun's horse industry lies in the rural west. According to the most recent survey of the horse industry in Loudoun performed in 2013 by the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia, the County is home to over 14,000 horses. The total economic impact of the horse industry in Loudoun was calculated to be \$180 million annually (not including property tax revenues). The study also concluded that the horse industry creates over 2,700 jobs in the County, and draws approximately 78,000 spectators to equestrian events a year, with one third coming from out of state.

Loudoun's equestrian stables are mostly on parcels smaller than 40 acres, especially in the northern sections of the county where lot density is highest. According to the 2013 survey, the most common horse property size is 10-19 acres. Any transmission line across properties of this size would encumber most of the property from equestrian use.

The most recent U.S. Agricultural Census has Loudoun County ranked number two in the state after Fauquier County for the number of equine FARMS, another indicator of the strength of the horse community in Loudoun. To be listed as a farm in the census, the stable must generate an income of at least \$1,000 annually. However, in Loudoun, most properties are private and not directly generating revenue, so the actual number of horse farms in the county is underestimated in this national survey.

Loudoun is home to an exceptionally high number of Olympic-caliber equestrians and professionals who make their living boarding, training and showing horses. The value of the top-level competition horses can easily be \$100,000 or more. No owner of competition horses would want their horse trained in an area in proximity of a transmission line and no owner would be comfortable allowing access for transmission maintenance to a pasture containing their valuable horse. Maintenance via helicopter could be equally problematic. Given the choice between two equal training or boarding

barns (feed, stall and turnout only), one at a property with a transmission line near pasture, barns and arenas and one without, a client paying the average training board of \$2000 or more monthly or boarding fee of \$800-\$1200 monthly would seek the facility without the transmission line. Even with those prices, profit margins are thin. Reducing prices would be economically disastrous.

In 2019, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a master plan for development of a county-wide linear parks and multi-modal trail system. This plan envisions use of trails throughout western Loudoun by equestrians. Creating this system of interconnected trails has begun and any disruption of its development by the building of a transmission line would subvert a highly popular and economically valuable initiative. Trails along transmission line corridors are not desirable as they lack shade and most riders find the hum of the wires and the overall environment around the towers antithetical to the type of experience they are seeking when trail riding. In the 2013 survey, 63% of respondents cited trail riding as an activity they enjoy – even Olympic riders on top competition horses trail ride!

Unpaved roads are also important for equestrians. The effort to preserve western Loudoun's unpaved road network includes having it placed on the National Register of Historic Places – the application is currently under review by the National Park Service. Disruption of this historic and recreational asset (it is highly valued by cyclists as well and gravel cycling events draw thousands of participants to Loudoun) would be a detriment to the County.

6. Describe specific results/outcomes to your mission and constituency that will arise if the transmission lines are built in Loudoun County Greenspace. Be as specific as possible, including any statistics that are available to you:

The financial impact to boarding and training farms could be insurmountable to those businesses for the reasons discussed above. Furthermore, most wealth for horse farm owners is in their property, which would be negatively impacted by a transmission line on property or within the viewshed.

Loudoun County has long been branded “horse country” and the equestrian community works hard to ensure that a strong equine industry can thrive here. Transmission lines crossing horse properties are a threat not only to those property owners but to the health of the entire industry. Equestrians are vital stewards of rural land – once they begin to pack up and leave, a cascade of other economic impacts will be felt across traditional agriculture, agri-tourism and direct horse care enterprises such as farriers, veterinarians, feed and tack stores.

- 7. List any research sources that support your projections of the impact on your mission and constituency:**

[Loudoun County Equine Alliance \(loudounequine.org\)](http://loudounequine.org)

https://loudounequine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Loudoun-County-Equine-Surveys-Report-of-Results.FINAL_.pdf

[Census of Agriculture - 2022 Census Publications - State and County Profiles - Virginia \(usda.gov\)](http://usda.gov)

[Here's Where the Wealthiest U.S. County *Actually* Is \(fodors.com\)](http://fodors.com)

8. Share individual case studies of people, places, or things that will be affected by this project (no more than three):

I believe the Taintors are doing one, and possibly Loudoun Therapeutic?

9. Upload any visuals available that illustrate or support your impact statement.