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Thank you for the music ... a special edition

1. Revolt is looking to collect powerlines protest songs. Our own “*Better Way*” came from Yorkshire singer-songwriter *Nicco* (David Nicholls) in the 1990s, moved by the approach then taken to impose the 400 kV line from Teesside to York upon the public. The full song can be downloaded from <http://www.revolt.co.uk/betway.html>

2. Northern Ireland group SEAT had a great version of the Johnny Cash song “Walk the Line” in 2012. Local singer Pascal Hughes does a fine job of narrating and singing – Johnny Cash lives! Well worth a listen. It can be heard and still photos seen, telling the story of John Woods walking the line, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcpJfgL5GRg>

3. SEAT has since changed its name and website. The song can also be linked from <http://www.burythecable.ie/song.html> .

4. Revolt correspondent Luther Gerlach at the University of Minnesota in the USA has a long history of academic analysis of protest issues. He authored the invited review article referenced below earlier this year. In the late 1970s Luther made a film “*Grassroots Energy*” which included a song “*I don't want no power line*”. The song was written and sung by Charlie Broten for his fellow protesters back then in Minnesota. None of the film or music was available on the web but Luther has given us a clip of the song and Charlie has given permission to upload it to the Revolt site. Luther writes: “Grassroots Energy is a film about opposition to a +/-440 kV DC transmission line built by Cooperative and United Power companies (CU) from North Dakota to Minneapolis and St Paul, Mn, and about local grassroots experiments in alternative forms of electricity production and distribution (symbolically) to contest the need for the CU line.”

Gerlach L.P , *Public Reaction to Electricity Transmission Lines, Reference Module in Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences*, Elsevier, 2014. 21-Mar-14 doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.09111-9.

5. The [wiki article](#) has more on 1970s opposition to the CU line and related events in Minnesota and lists these songs:

- "Minnesota Line" song by Nancy Abrams
- "We Don't Want No Powerlines Around Here" song by Russell Packard
- "Turn Of The Wrench" song by [Dana Lyons](#) about the Bolt Weevils ([Dana Lyons: Listen to Turn of the Wrench](#))
- "The Towers Are Falling" song by the Unity Theatre, Minneapolis
- "Powerline Blues" song by Charlie Broten

“*Turn of the Wrench*” can be heard and the lyrics seen at the above link.

6. At end of the 1990s, Luther made a 10 program TV series on ecological anthropology, and included *Grassroots Energy* in the series. A few years ago, he digitized it from the beta tape, and is now hoping to make independent clips to use

with talks. He says “*When I taught my courses in the classroom, especially large classes, I played music while students filed in and assembled.*” Cool!

7. Now in California, Charlie Broten has formed a group *String Theory* which has arranged the song more recently as *Powerline Blues*. A great bluesy high-energy performance can be heard here:

<http://stringtheorybishop.com/nick-and-charlie-s-cd>

8. In 2009 US protest groups rose up against the proposed monster 275-mile 765 kV PATH line ([news286](#)). Some links are given on the [Revolt links page](#). The [StopPathWV](#) site reports the termination of the PATH project in 2012. Victory for the protesters! It didn't end there. Keryn Newman “blogs [here](#) at StopPATH WV about energy issues, transmission policy, misguided regulation, our greedy energy companies and their corporate spin”. It was Luther again who put us on to Keryn and their song [Wrath against Path](#) (also called *Electric Avenue*), performed by *Electra* (aka Clissy Funkhouser) who wrote the lyrics. Clissy is a locally noted singer / songwriter / performer with amazing talent. Keryn has given permission to upload it to the Revolt site. The song MP3 can also be heard and downloaded at:

<http://stoppathwv.com/audio/pathsong.mp3> .

9. Here's one from the Scottish Highlands. Revolt [news201](#) of 21/11/2005 said “What a cracking idea - the Pylon Pressure group at Beaully has come up with a wombles hit song to support their cause. The lines "underground, overground, ..." are just made for it.” The new verses were sung by local schoolchildren at a public meeting at the Phipps Hall, Beaully, at 7.30pm, Monday 21 November. APPENDIX C to [news201](#) gave an extract from The Press & Journal 19.11.05 titled “MUM'S VERSION OF THE WOMBLES' SONG RECRUITED IN PYLONS BATTLE”.

10. In an ironic sequel to the Wombles song episode, the Press and Journal 16/12/2013 [reports a rebuff](#) of powerline firm SSE by the same Teanassie Primary School. Some eight years after the protest song, SSE had asked the school to star in a video about its network! Parents branded the approach as “disgusting”.

11. The wombles song had another mention in January this year. The Irish Times [reported](#) 30/01/2014: “It was like an episode of [Star Trek](#) yesterday, with a touch of [The Wombles](#) and some [American folk music](#) thrown in for good measure.”

12. Some more links follow from a July 2014 google search for “powerline protest sing”, after having discarded several irrelevant links.

13. An [aquatic protest](#) on Oct 4th, 2013, saw a parade of boats protesting at Rio Dulce, Guatemala, against the construction of a new powerline over the river, a project by the TRESKA corporation to provide power to the El Estor mining operation. “The whole thing turned into a huge aquatic party-parade to the sound of “*Johnny, la gente esta muy loca*” song.” Versions are on youtube but it's not specifically about powerlines.

14. [This link](#) gives the original lyrics and link to a 2009 California protest song. Extract: “May 31, 2009 (Lakeside) – Mountain Echo gave a debut performance of their new Powerlink protest song during a fundraiser at the Hazy Meadows ranch yesterday. East County Magazine has the exclusive videotape of the song performed

at the event, where more than 350 people gathered in opposition to the high-voltage powerlines proposed by San Diego Gas & Electric Co. View it here:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mwSZZ9zzxg>”

15. The [Northern Pass project](#) in New Hampshire has had its protest songs this year 2014. Extract: “The 60-minute film “[Northern Trespass](#),” made by artsy activists Jan Marvel and Michelle Vaughn ([who both appeared](#) on the *NH Magazine* “It List” last month, as did [Gary Long](#)) was preceded by their music video “[What We Have Left](#).” A new short film, “[The Power of Place](#),” by conservation photographer Jerry Monkman recently met a \$35,000 Kickstarter goal. Even shorter videos like “[Trees Not Towers](#)” by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests are being used to raise funds to buy lands and block Northern Pass routes through the state.”

The song “[What We Have Left](#)” by Jan Marvel can be heard at the youtube hyperlink.

16. A [2007 New York blog](#) has this: “Singer-songwriter [Pamme Swan](#) writes with the news that she can't wait to sing her original "Our Sweet Hovels" from her latest disc, "Patchouli Room," during a rally to protest the NYRI project from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Sherburne Park Bandstand. She says the song "was written in protest to the proposed powerlines. It's a big issue for a lot of the small towns in Central New York," Swan says.” Sadly the link to the song no longer works. Google for “NYRI project” finds many protests to this NY Regional Interconnect project, which appears to have been [stopped in 2009](#).

17. Now, there must be many more protest songs about pylons or powerlines around the world. We would love to keep a record of them and make them available on the revolt site if they are not already available on such as youtube. So please send us any details or clues.

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