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P U B L I C M E E T I N G

on the  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING MEETING  
for the  
MESABA ENERGY PROJECT

PUC Docket: E6472/GS-06-688

hosted by  
Minnesota Department of Commerce  
and  
Department of Energy

held at  
Hoyt Lakes Arena  
Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota  
November 28, 2007; 7:00 p.m.

REPORTED BY:  
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I N D E X

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Warren Koskiniemi ..... 27

## 1 PROCEEDINGS

2 BILL STORM: Good evening, folks. Thank you  
3 for coming. My name is Bill Storm, I'm the project  
4 manager for the Department of Commerce, Energy Facility  
5 Permitting staff. The Department of Commerce's role in  
6 this process is to assist the decision-maker, which is  
7 the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in their  
8 determination of issuing a site permit for Mesaba  
9 Energy Project.

10 Before I start, I would like to point out a  
11 couple things. One is, there's a sign-in sheet on the  
12 table in the front. I'd appreciate if you would sign  
13 in. There's also a box to check if you want to be put  
14 on my mailing list. By checking that box, you will get  
15 notices of pertinent events, upcoming meetings, when  
16 the hearing is going to be held and that sort of thing.  
17 So if you would, please sign that if you haven't done  
18 so.

19 Additionally, on the front desk there are  
20 public comment sheets. The meeting tonight is to  
21 solicit comments from the public on the draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement. We encourage you to  
23 speak tonight on the draft Environmental Impact  
24 Statement, and we also encourage you to submit written  
25 comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

1 Your comments must be submitted to my office or the  
2 Department of Energy's office by January 11, 2008.

3 On the table is a comment sheet to aid in your  
4 efforts in that. If you don't feel comfortable  
5 speaking tonight, you can fill this out with your  
6 comments, fold it, staple it, put a stamp on it, mail  
7 it to my office. You can also send your comments to my  
8 attention on your own personal stationery or you can  
9 e-mail or fax your comments to me also, and that  
10 information is on the sheet.

11 Additionally, there are blue cards on the  
12 front desk. These blue cards are to facilitate  
13 speakers, for people who want to speak tonight. We ask  
14 if you know right now that you want to speak, that you  
15 fill out one of these blue cards and hand it to Cat,  
16 who is servicing our front desk there, and when I'm  
17 done giving with my presentation and the DOE is done  
18 giving their presentation, I will call people from  
19 these cards if they would like to speak. You don't  
20 have to speak. You can definitely submit your  
21 comments, as I said, written to me. Right now I have  
22 no cards filled out. So if you would like to speak, I  
23 encourage you to speak.

24 Additionally, there are the slides that I'm  
25 going to go through tonight out there, copies of the

1 slides if you want them. You're more than welcome to  
2 have a copy of them.

3 As I stated, tonight's meeting is a public  
4 meeting to solicit comments on the draft Environmental  
5 Impact Statement that was produced for the Mesaba  
6 Energy Project. The Mesaba Energy Project is being  
7 handled under PUC, Public Utility Commission Docket  
8 E6472/GS-06-688. I ask, if you do submit written  
9 comments to me either through your own stationery or  
10 e-mail me or fax me, please put the docket number on  
11 there.

12 Tonight's meeting is a joint meeting with the  
13 Department of Energy and the Department of Commerce.  
14 We held a meeting last not in Taconite. Tonight we are  
15 here in Hoyt Lakes.

16 The agenda for tonight's meeting is pretty  
17 simple. I'm going to run you through a short five  
18 slides of the state process showing you what we've done  
19 to date. The DOE will then talk about their role in  
20 this project, the funding role and what their role has  
21 been in this project to date. And then lastly your  
22 comments, and that's mainly what we're here to get, is  
23 your comments.

24 Whether you're for the project or against the  
25 project, tonight's meeting is more on if you had a

1 chance to look at the draft Environmental Impact  
2 Statement, are there issues in it, specific issues in  
3 the draft Environmental Impact Statement that you feel  
4 are not adequately addressed or that you feel you would  
5 like to see more information on. What we'll do, once  
6 we get your comments, is we will coompile all your  
7 comments and we will make responses to them, and that  
8 will go into the final Environmental Impact Statement  
9 document.

10 Just a little refresher from the PUC  
11 standpoint, again, you have two agencies here. You  
12 have the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and you  
13 have the Department of Energy. I'm speaking for the  
14 state's role in this process. The Public Utilities  
15 Commission in Minnesota has the authority for siting  
16 large electric generating power plants, transmission  
17 lines and pipelines, and the statutes for those rules  
18 are up there.

19 The PUC in making their determination will be  
20 making three determinations at the end of this process.  
21 The first will be the adequacy of the draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement. The second will be  
23 whether to issue a site permit and what conditions  
24 should be part of that site permit. And the third item  
25 would be which site should be selected, the Hoyt Lakes

1 site or the Taconite site.

2 And this slide -- if you remember, we were  
3 here in August of '06 for a scoping meeting, an initial  
4 public meeting to inform the public of the project and  
5 to solicit what the public thought were important  
6 issues that should be in the draft Environmental Impact  
7 Statement.

8 This slide just represents the Department of  
9 Commerce's relationship with the PUC. As I said, the  
10 PUC is the final decision-making body. They have  
11 authority over wind projects, pipelines, transmission  
12 lines and power plants. The Department of Commerce  
13 serves the PUC in an administrative capacity. We set  
14 up the public meetings. We make the public notices.  
15 We are responsible for production of the environmental  
16 documents that are associated with a given project.  
17 But the ultimate decision is the PUC's.

18 This is another slide that was also used  
19 during my presentation back in August. This is a slide  
20 that shows the process that we use to evaluate a given  
21 project. I just want to run you through the process a  
22 little bit to bring you up to speed of where we're at.  
23 The first block you can see is an applicant. An  
24 applicant who wants to build a pipeline, transmission  
25 line, or a large power plant submits an application to

1 the PUC. Excelsior Energy submitted such a permit  
2 application, and it was a joint application. It  
3 included the power plant, the transmission line and  
4 pipeline requirements for the project, on June 19th,  
5 2006.

6 The next step, the PUC evaluated that  
7 application, and this is a function that the Department  
8 of Commerce does for the PUC. We go through the  
9 application, make sure that all the information that  
10 needs to be there according to the rule is there, and  
11 then we make a recommendation to the PUC. In this case  
12 the PUC accepted the application as complete on July  
13 28, 2006.

14 In that accepting the application, the PUC  
15 also authorized the establishment of a Citizens  
16 Advisory Task Force and they authorized the Department  
17 of Commerce to assemble that task force and oversee it.  
18 On August 1st, 2006 the Department of Commerce did  
19 appoint a Citizen Advisory Task Force for this project.

20 The next step that you see on the flow chart  
21 is the public meeting, an EIS scoping. On August 22nd  
22 and 23rd of 2006 the Department of Commerce, myself,  
23 held public information and scoping meetings for this  
24 project. The point of those meetings was to inform the  
25 public of the project and to solicit input from the

1 public on what they believe should be in the  
2 Environmental Impact Statement.

3 The next step is the scope. The scope is a  
4 document that's released by the Department of Commerce  
5 that states given all the information we got from the  
6 public, this scoping decision states what will be in  
7 the Environmental Impact Statement; and that was  
8 released on September 13th, 2006.

9 And that brings us to the draft Environmental  
10 Impact Statement, which was released on November 5th,  
11 2007 and why we are here.

12 This is just a rundown of the list I just  
13 went through, hitting the milestones that bring us to  
14 the point that we're at today.

15 And as we look into the future, if you recall  
16 that flow chart, these are some of the milestones we  
17 have yet to hit in the future. Note that most of these  
18 dates are tentative. The one date that isn't tentative  
19 and the one date that's real important for tonight's  
20 meeting is the close of the comment period on the draft  
21 Environmental Impact Statement is January 11, 2008. So  
22 you need to have your comments to myself, Bill Storm,  
23 or the DOE representative, Rich Hargis, and he will  
24 provide that information when he speaks, by January 11,  
25 2008.

1           As we move beyond that, these dates become  
2 tentative, but these are the dates we're shooting for.  
3 A contested case hearing, which will be back up here;  
4 we'll have a contested case hearing in Taconite and an  
5 contested case hearing here in Hoyt Lakes with an  
6 Administrative Law Judge presiding over the case.  
7 We're hoping to get that in on January 29th through  
8 31st, 2008. The contested case hearing will be an  
9 opportunity for the public to speak to the project, to  
10 an objective third-party, being the ALJ. That process  
11 will also have a comment period associated with it, and  
12 the comment period in that process will end in February  
13 of 2008.

14           The next step that we're -- the next  
15 milestone that we have is the final EIS, and again, the  
16 final EIS will be the compiling of the comments  
17 received in this process and responses to the comments,  
18 answering the questions, trying to resolve some of the  
19 issues. We're hoping to have the final EIS out March  
20 7, 2008.

21           The ALJ will then assemble the record,  
22 findings of fact, recommendations and conclusions, and  
23 he'll produce that in a report, and that report will  
24 come back to the Department of Commerce, and we're  
25 hoping that the ALJ can have that done by March 21st,

1 2008. Once that is done, I will take the record, the  
2 information I have to date, all the public comments  
3 from starting way back from the beginning, August of  
4 '06, up to and including the ALJ's report, and I will  
5 produce a briefing paper about this project to the PUC  
6 for their final decision.

7           Again, the decision that they're going to be  
8 making is three-pronged; the adequacy of the  
9 Environmental Impact Statement, whether a pipeline  
10 route and transmission line route should be granted and  
11 what conditions those permits should have; and three,  
12 site selection. And in this case it's the Hoyt Lakes  
13 site or the Taconite site. And I'm hoping to bring  
14 that before the PUC on May 22nd, 2008.

15           If you're interested in tracking information  
16 on this project, if you'd like to see a copy, an  
17 electronic copy of the draft Environmental Impact  
18 Statement or you would like to see what other comments  
19 the public has made either about the draft  
20 Environmental Impact Statement or previous comments  
21 that were made by either agencies or the public in the  
22 past as we worked our way up to this point, you can go  
23 to the MPUC Energy Facility Permitting website, and  
24 that's the address up there, and you will see a file  
25 register. This is the file register I made the second

1 week the project was existing. Now it's like four or  
2 five pages. But each of the items in the file register  
3 are documents. The Environmental Impact Statement is  
4 up there, the scoping decision is up there, the ALJ  
5 report will be up there when we get to that point,  
6 public comments I received from agencies, public  
7 comments I received to date will all be listed up  
8 there, and they will be in p-d-f format so you can  
9 click on them and look and read the information that's  
10 available.

11 Now to talk about why we're here. Again,  
12 we're here to solicit comments about the draft  
13 Environmental Impact Statement. I encourage you to  
14 comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement,  
15 and I encourage you to be as specific as possible. If  
16 you have an issue, if you think the draft Environmental  
17 Impact Statement is deficient in an area or you think  
18 an area needs to be more flushed out, you know, be as  
19 specific as you can.

20 I would normally limit the speakers to five  
21 minutes. As I said, so far I have nobody who has  
22 signed up to preregister. Oh, I do have one. When the  
23 DOE is done with their presentation, I will call first  
24 using the cards, and then if you haven't filled out a  
25 card but have since decided you want to speak, I will

1 ask for a show of hands and call on you one by one that  
2 way. So five minutes per speaker. Once I go through,  
3 give everybody a chance to speak, we can certainly  
4 allow people to speak again if they would like. As I  
5 said, preregistered speakers first.

6 We are preparing a transcript of the meeting  
7 tonight. Kate is our transcriptionist here tonight, so  
8 I ask that if you are going to speak, that you come to  
9 the mike, you state your name, you spell your name,  
10 speak slowly, probably not like I've been doing  
11 tonight, and clearly so she can get your information  
12 down as accurately as possible. If you have written  
13 testimony, written prepared papers that you're speaking  
14 from, it would really help if you would give her that  
15 when you're done speaking. We can certainly give them  
16 back to you if you need them.

17 Again, I want to remind you, if you want to  
18 comment but you don't want to speak orally, you want to  
19 submit your comments in writing, you can submit them to  
20 either me or Rich Hargis of the DOE, but they have to  
21 be in by January 11, 2008. Okay.

22 I'm going to turn it over to the DOE for their  
23 presentation. Jason Lewis.

24 JASON LEWIS: Thank you, Bill. Welcome. It's  
25 good to be here tonight. My name is Jason Lewis. I'm

1 the U.S. Department of Energy's federal project manager  
2 for the DOE's participation in the Mesaba Energy  
3 Project. My colleague here tonight, Rich Hargis, has a  
4 separate and independent responsibility as the NEPA,  
5 EIS document manager to ensure that the National  
6 Environmental Policy Act process is completed for the  
7 project. The results of that activity will be used by  
8 the DOE decision-makers, myself included, in our  
9 decision-making of whether or not to continue  
10 cost-share, co-funding for the project beyond the  
11 current developmental activities.

12           Why is the DOE interested in this project?  
13 The office of fossil energy's ultimate goal is to  
14 achieve the commercialization of a zero emissions  
15 coal-based electric power generation plant. This  
16 project is not that. But as the state of the art low  
17 emissions gasification style electric power generation  
18 project, it is the next logical vital step towards that  
19 zero emissions plant.

20           Again, I'd like to welcome you here. It's an  
21 honor to be here. We welcome your comments, we look  
22 forward to them. At this time I would like to  
23 introduce Rich Hargis, and he'll go through the NEPA  
24 process from the federal perspective.

25           RICHARD HARGIS: Thanks, Jason. My name is

1 Rich Hargis. My role is managing the preparation of  
2 the DOE, NEPA document, and it's a joint document now  
3 with the State of Minnesota. I work for the Department  
4 of Energy, National Energy Technology Laboratory. We  
5 have two other DOE members here. George Pokanic is  
6 project engineer on the project. He's also responsible  
7 for coordinating the consultation with the state's  
8 historic preservation office, as well as consultation  
9 with the Native American Tribes regarding their  
10 concerns. Bernadette Ward is also here -- she's  
11 standing in the back of the room. She's a public  
12 affairs representative. You might have seen her when  
13 you came in the door there.

14 Okay. Well, obviously we're here tonight, as  
15 Bill said, to get your oral comments on the draft  
16 Environmental Impact Statement that we prepared. You  
17 can also provide written comments if that's what you  
18 prefer. Oral comments, written comments are treated  
19 the same in preparing the final EIS. Your comments are  
20 very important to us at the DOE, and I'm sure Bill  
21 feels the same way, in ensuring that we analyze all the  
22 environmental impacts and that we have given the proper  
23 emphasis of the impacts to the EIS.

24 For written comments, it's important for you  
25 to know that your name and address will appear in the

1 final EIS unless you prefer that that information be  
2 withheld, you have to let us know that. And all  
3 comments received by January 11, 2008, that's the end  
4 of the comment period, will be considered in preparing  
5 the final EIS.

6 The driving force for the federal  
7 environmental review process is the National  
8 Environmental Policy Act from 1970, and it applies to  
9 all federal agencies. Any action that federal agencies  
10 take, they have to consider what the environmental  
11 impacts are. It's a national charter for protection of  
12 the environment, and the mandate is that environmental  
13 information must be made available to, not only the  
14 public, but the federal officials that are responsible  
15 for making decisions, so that the appropriate  
16 consideration can be given to the environmental impacts  
17 in any decision we make that could have significant  
18 impacts on the human environment.

19 This is kind of like what Bill Storm's slide  
20 was; where we are in the process. Our process actually  
21 started a little earlier than the state's process. We  
22 issued a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental  
23 Impact Statement on October 5th, 2005, and shortly  
24 after that we held public scoping meetings in Taconite  
25 and Hoyt Lakes, just like Bill did a year ago. So our

1 process actually started a little over two years ago.  
2 The DOE's public scoping period ended in November of  
3 2005. And we knew at that time that this was going to  
4 be a joint process with the state, but as Bill said,  
5 the state process couldn't start until Excelsior  
6 submitted the site permit application, and that didn't  
7 happen until later in 2006.

8           Also during the federal scoping period back  
9 in 2005 we wanted any federal agency that could have an  
10 interest to participate in our process. And as a  
11 result the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest  
12 Service agreed to participate as cooperating agencies.  
13 So that draft Environmental Impact Statement that you  
14 have now also includes the participation of those two  
15 federal agencies.

16           On November 9th of this year the DOE issued  
17 their notice of availability of the draft EIS, and  
18 there was a mandatory 15-day waiting period before the  
19 public hearings that we're having this week. We had  
20 the Taconite public hearing yesterday, and today we're  
21 here.

22           The public comment period ends, typically for  
23 a federal process, it ends in 45 days from the day we  
24 issue the notice of availability. But because of the  
25 time of year, the holiday season and the size of the

1 document, we extended that comment period to 63 days in  
2 this case. So the public comment period on the draft  
3 EIS ends January 11, 2008 to get your comments to me at  
4 the Department of Energy or Bill Storm. We're going to  
5 combine the comments received by both agencies, treat  
6 them the same.

7           What we do then is we'll compile all the  
8 comments. We'll list all the comments in a separate  
9 section of the EIS, and then we'll list a specific  
10 response to each and every comment that we receive and  
11 show you where we made changes in the EIS if we did.

12           After we've done that, we'll distribute the  
13 final EIS. Anybody who requests a copy will get one.  
14 Just send me a note saying you'd like one.

15           After we've prepared and distributed the  
16 final EIS, we'll issue a notice of availability again  
17 in the Federal Register, and there will be a 30-day  
18 waiting period from the point of that publication in  
19 Federal Register until a decision can be made. And the  
20 DOE's decision will be whether to provide continued  
21 support, as Jason said, under the Clean Coal Power  
22 Initiative.

23           This is the same slide pretty much that Bill  
24 showed. As Bill said, please focus your comments, if  
25 you have written or if you'd like to make any oral

1 comments, please focus them on the draft EIS. Comment  
2 cards are available. And please state your name and  
3 spell it for the court reporter. Bill.

4 BILL STORM: Thank you, Rich. I have two  
5 cards that have been filled out, so I will call on  
6 these people first. Once they are done speaking, I  
7 will ask for a show of hands, and I will select from  
8 the audience. The first preregistered speaker is Norm  
9 Voorhees. And if I butcher your name, my apologies.

10 NORM VOORHEES: My name is Norm Voorhees,  
11 N-o-r-m V-o-o-r-h-e-e-s. I represent Ironworkers  
12 Local 512 here in the State of Minnesota, approximately  
13 200 members on the Iron Range, and approximately 1700  
14 in the State of Minnesota. We support the Mesaba  
15 Energy Project 100 percent, not only for the jobs it  
16 will create for our members in the construction  
17 process, but the long-term benefits that it will bring  
18 to the area and the environment, not only for the State  
19 of Minnesota, but for the nation and the rest of the  
20 world.

21 We feel this project will move Minnesota to  
22 the forefront of technology in producing electricity,  
23 which is becoming more and more in demand and less  
24 available. The proposed technology that they want to  
25 use to do this plant is the cleanest and most

1 affordable that's available to us right now. And we're  
2 seeing our electrical demands go up, and there's just a  
3 crunch on the energy grid, not only for our livelihoods  
4 as lighting the schools and the hockey arenas, but also  
5 the industry that depends on the electricity. Solar  
6 and wind technology is in its early stages, but it just  
7 cannot generate the power demands that we need.

8 I understand this hearing is for either this  
9 site or the site over in Taconite, but, you know, I  
10 think they need to build two plants on the Range  
11 because the demand is there. And we owe it to our  
12 children to move this technology forward, our children  
13 and our grandchildren, so we can start cleaning up the  
14 environment and set the stage for the rest of the  
15 country and the world.

16 The last coal gasification plant to my  
17 knowledge that was built was approximately 10 years ago  
18 in Florida. And before that, I talked to a gentleman  
19 that worked in Beulah, North Dakota, approximately 33  
20 years ago, coal gasification; and that old technology,  
21 it needs to be upgraded. They've tried to keep up with  
22 EPA emissions, and they are with putting scrubbers in  
23 and stuff. But I think this new technology is  
24 something that we need to do for future generations.  
25 Thank you. (Applause)

1           BILL STORM: Thank you, Norm. Next up is Bob  
2 Tammen.

3           BOB TAMMEN: Bob Tammen, T-a-m-m-e-n, Soudan,  
4 Minnesota. I have a hard copy of my remarks, so if I  
5 ramble a little bit, if you would consider the hard  
6 copy as my official testimony.

7           I'd like to address the job creation aspect  
8 of this project. Now, not everyone has a job where we  
9 want it, but we don't appear to have a severe  
10 unemployment problem in northern Minnesota. I'm a  
11 retired electrician, and as a condition for drawing a  
12 pension, I had to quit electrical work. This fall I  
13 received a letter from my pension fund authorizing me  
14 to return to electrical work while I drew my pension.  
15 I've attached that letter as Exhibit 1. Apparently our  
16 economy does not have an adequate supply of electrical  
17 workers.

18           We've also been told about all the spin-off  
19 jobs this project will create to keep our young people  
20 in northern Minnesota. A few months ago I was reading  
21 the want ads and saw a Hibbing company was advertising  
22 for electrical and hydraulic technicians. I suppose  
23 that's good news. The bad news is I was reading a  
24 South Dakota newspaper. I've attached that want ad as  
25 Exhibit 2. Our fine Iron Range employers are already

1 going to a low-wage, non-union state for employees.  
2 How many more projects do we build before our employers  
3 go to the next logical step of hiring illegal  
4 immigrants?

5 I think if you look at the numbers, this  
6 project is going to produce exorbitantly priced  
7 electricity in our backyard. It's not competitive.  
8 It's a liability for northern Minnesota. Thank you.  
9 (Applause)

10 BILL STORM: Thank you, Bob. Those are the  
11 two preregistered speakers that we have. Again, I  
12 encourage you to speak. Does anyone else in the  
13 audience want to speak to this issue tonight? Going  
14 once, going twice. Yes. Would you please step to the  
15 mike and state your name and spell it.

16 JEAN DALLAS: My name is Jean Dallas, J-e-a-n  
17 D-a-l-l-a-s. I wasn't prepared to make a comment  
18 tonight, but my concern is that when we've got an  
19 800-page EIS document that is basically impenetrable  
20 for the layman to get through, and it's very technical,  
21 and it's very difficult for members of our community to  
22 understand the technology that's involved in a project  
23 like this. And we read news reports where  
24 representatives of Mesaba Energy say one thing, and  
25 then representatives of Minnesota Power say another

1 thing. It's very complicated, and I don't know how we  
2 can be expected to make informed decisions on something  
3 of such major impact in our communities.

4 I don't know that there's a solution to this  
5 problem, but it's a concern of mine. And I don't know  
6 how you get through these huge EIS statements. I mean,  
7 they're intimidating for a normal person. And one  
8 person interprets it one way and another person  
9 interprets it another way, so that really people end up  
10 feeling powerless, and they make their choices based  
11 on, you know, yes, we need jobs for your communities,  
12 but is this really the best choice for our community.  
13 It's a dilemma. That's just my opinion. And I don't  
14 have a solution to that or a suggestion on how to solve  
15 that, but it's an issue that I think needs to be  
16 addressed in some way. I guess that's it. That's all  
17 I have to say. It's a very difficult issue.

18 I think that we do have an imbalance in the  
19 information that we're receiving through our media  
20 sources, and it leaves people frustrated because  
21 they're not sure whether they should support a project  
22 like this, because they want to support it because they  
23 want the economic benefits, but they're concerned about  
24 the environmental issues. It's just so overly  
25 complicated that it's difficult for them to make a

1 truly informed choice or opinion about it. That's my  
2 statement. (Applause)

3 BILL STORM: Thank you for your comment.  
4 Okay; I'm going to open it up to the floor again. This  
5 gentleman right here. Please step to the mike, state  
6 your name and spell it.

7 GORDON SMITH: My name is Gordon Smith,  
8 G-o-r-d-o-n S-m-i-t-h. I live in Hibbing, and I  
9 represent the Painters Local up in this area. And we  
10 currently have very high unemployment in the trades in  
11 this area right now, and we're looking forward to this  
12 project moving forward because of the job opportunities  
13 that it would create, and also the fact that there is a  
14 great need for energy with many potential projects in  
15 this area.

16 We live in a very industrialized area with the  
17 mining in this area, and are very dependent on the  
18 heavy industry for jobs; and with the demand of future  
19 power needs going forward with all these future  
20 projects, we feel that there is a great need for this.

21 There's been a lot of power plants, coal-fired  
22 ones proposed around the country, and a lot of them are  
23 being shot down in a lot of areas, and a lot of them  
24 are your basic coal-fired plants. And if we're going  
25 to continue to use coal-fired plants for our future

1 power needs, I think we really need to move into the  
2 new technologies so we have the cleanest burning plants  
3 available. I mean, everybody wants the cleanest  
4 environment available, but we have to have power; let's  
5 do it the best way we possibly can. Thank you.

6 (Applause)

7 BILL STORM: Thank you for your comment.  
8 Again, to the floor, if you would like to speak, raise  
9 your hand. This gentleman, please step to the mike,  
10 state and spell your name.

11 BILL WHITESIDE: Bill Whiteside, B-i-l-l  
12 W-h-i-t-e-s-i-d-e. I didn't come today with a prepared  
13 text or anything. My concern is that we have yet to  
14 see the demand for energy that we are going to see in  
15 the near future. With the demand for energy resources  
16 getting tighter, with us seeing in our own communities  
17 possibly and across the world, violence and trouble in  
18 energy areas, where we're reaching out to bring in  
19 energy to supply our own needs. I think we need to  
20 recognize that we have to take the initiative to take  
21 care of our own future with resources that are close to  
22 our own areas, and especially an inexpensive resource  
23 such as coal compared to a lot of other resources.

24 If we don't do that, I think we're setting  
25 ourselves up for a situation where we're going to see

1 an even lower economic value of our monies, less  
2 resources for our people, poorer health conditions  
3 through lower living conditions; and these are what you  
4 might call some kind of social issues, and how this  
5 plays out in our communities and across our country.  
6 I'm just concerned that if we don't step up and take  
7 care of ourselves, that we're going to be sorry in the  
8 long run; and the long run may not be that far in the  
9 future.

10           Everybody wants to have clean air, everybody  
11 wants to have clean water, and that's why we're here,  
12 that's why we have the process where you guys are  
13 taking all the comments from people who have concerns  
14 and want to have clean air, have specific issues and  
15 specific knowledge brought forward here; I appreciate  
16 all that. And Excelsior brings forward the investment  
17 that they're willing to make, and the technology that  
18 they're proposing to put forward to try to ensure that  
19 we do have clean resources and the energy that we're  
20 going to need in the future. And I think it's real  
21 important for us all to work together and see that we  
22 can go there. Thanks. (Applause)

23           BILL STORM: Thank you for your comment.  
24 Again, to the floor, if you would like to speak, please  
25 raise your hand. Sir, in the back, please step to the

1 mike, state and spell your name clearly. Thank you.

2 WARREN KOSKINIEMI: Warren Koskiniemi,  
3 W-a-r-r-e-n K-o-s-k-i-n-i-e-m i. I'm 100 percent for  
4 this project. People that are worried about the  
5 pollutants and what have you not as far as water and  
6 air, what are you worried about? There's so many  
7 government agencies out here that you can't fart  
8 without getting a ticket. So I don't think that would  
9 be a major concern.

10 As far as which end of the Range to put it on,  
11 I agree with the one gentleman, two plants would be  
12 awesome. But as far as on the east end of the Range, I  
13 think the politicians, for lack of a better term, would  
14 open their arms to an influx of high skilled employees  
15 that this plant would require. We're not looking for  
16 immigrants coming from whatever country. It's going to  
17 take skilled labor to make this plant go. And I would  
18 think on this end of the Range we would be open arms as  
19 far as new kids for our schools and new people for our  
20 communities. Thank you. (Applause)

21 BILL STORM: Thank you very much. Again, I'd  
22 like to open it up to the floor. If you want to speak,  
23 raise your hand. Going once, twice.

24 Thank you very much. Again, I want to remind  
25 you that your comments, if you want to submit written

1     comments, you can submit them to either me or Richard.  
2     The comments need to be in by the 11th of January,  
3     2008. I encourage you to participate in the process.  
4     We will be back up here for the contested case hearing  
5     down the road. And I do appreciate you coming out.  
6     This process wouldn't work if it wasn't for the people.  
7     Thank you very much. (Applause)

8                   (Hearing concluded at 7:40 p.m.)

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COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

Be it known that I have reported and transcribed  
the foregoing Public Meeting;

That I am a notary public in and for the County of  
St. Louis, State of Minnesota;

That I am not related to any of the parties hereto  
or interested in the outcome of this matter;

That the foregoing is a true and accurate  
transcription of the proceedings to the best of my  
ability.

Witness my hand and seal this 10th day of  
December, 2007.

Kathleen M. Undeland  
Registered Professional Reporter

My commission expires  
January 31, 2010

