

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**AND AVAILABILITY OF THE**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**CANNON FALLS TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT  
PROPOSED BY XCEL ENERGY**

**Dakota and Goodhue Counties, Minnesota**

**PUC Docket No. E002/TL-06-459**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) Energy Facility Permitting staff will hold a Public Hearing on the HVTL Route permit application submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) by Northern States Power Company's (d/b/a Xcel Energy) concerning the proposed Cannon Falls Transmission Project.

**Wednesday, August 30, 2006  
Cannon Falls Government Center  
Council Chambers  
918 River Road  
Cannon Falls, MN**

The public hearing will be held on Wednesday, August 30, 2006, at the City Council Chambers, Cannon Falls Government Center in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. The hearing will convene at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Deborah Pile of the DOC/EPF staff will preside as the hearing examiner.

**Description of Project.** The facility (i.e., Cannon Falls Transmission Project) for which the permit is requested is a 0.98 mile (5,170 ft) double circuit 115 kV/115 kV transmission line, 1.3 miles (6,945 ft) of two single circuit 115 kV transmission lines, a new substation (Colvill) and the expansion of the Cannon Falls Transmission Substation.

The proposed Cannon Falls Transmission Project is required to support the interconnection of the Cannon Falls Energy Center.

**Statutory Authority.** Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 116C.51-.697) a route permit from the PUC is required to construct a high voltage transmission line (HVTL). A HVTL is a conductor of electric energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operating at a nominal voltage of 100 kilovolts or more. The adopted rules for the administration of power plant site permits are contained in Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400. The rules establish the requirements for submitting and processing a permit application.

The application is being reviewed under the Alternative Review Process (Minnesota Rules 4400.2010) of the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes 116C.51 to 116C.69). Under the Alternative Review Process, an applicant is not required to

propose any alternative sites or routes. The Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting Staff prepares a document called an Environmental Assessment, and a public hearing is required but it need not be a contested case hearing. The PUC has six months to reach a decision under the Alternative Process from the time the application is accepted.

The official process begins with the determination by the PUC that the application is substantially complete. The PUC accepted the application on May 4, 2006; the final route permit decision must be made by November 4, 2006.

**Environmental Assessment.** As part of the permitting process, the DOC/EFP staff prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the project. On June 5, 2006, a public meeting was held by the DOC/EFP staff at the Cannon Falls Government Center to discuss the project with interested persons and to solicit input into the scope of an Environmental Assessment to be prepared on the project. The Environmental Assessment was completed by DOC/EFP staff on July 31, 2006, and is available on the PUC webpage cited at the end of this notice.

**Hearing Examiner.** Ms. Deborah Pile will preside at the hearing as the hearing examiner. The hearing examiner's role is to conduct the hearing and compile a record for the PUC to consider in reaching a final decision on the permit. The hearing examiner does not write a report and does not make a recommendation to the PUC. Ms. Pile's address is Minnesota Department of Commerce, 85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198, phone number (651) 297-2375.

**DOC/EFP Project Manager.** Bill Storm of the DOC/EFP staff is the project manager. Mr. Storm can be reached at the DOC offices in St. Paul, tel: (651) 296-9535, fax: 651-297-7891, e-mail: [bill.storm@state.mn.us](mailto:bill.storm@state.mn.us).

**Public Advisor.** The public advisor for this project is Deborah Pile of the DOC/EFP staff. Ms. Pile can be reached at the DOC offices in St. Paul, tel. (612) 297-2375, e-mail: [deborah.pile@state.mn.us](mailto:deborah.pile@state.mn.us). Ms. Pile can be contacted with questions about the procedure being followed in this matter.

**Hearing Procedure.** This proceeding is being conducted under the alternative review procedures of Minnesota Statutes section 116C.575 and Minnesota Rules parts 4400.2000 to 4400.2900. This public hearing is less formal than the contested case hearings conducted by the Office of Administrative Hearings. By way of example, the procedures to be followed here do not require formal intervention by parties, or a prehearing conference, or prefilings of written testimony.

The purpose of the public hearing is to compile the record for the PUC to consider in making a final decision on the permit request. The DOC/EFP staff will attend the hearing and make a brief presentation about the project and introduce into the record a number of documents relating to the project, including the application, the Environmental Assessment, and certain procedural documents. Representatives of the applicant (Xcel Energy) will be present to offer evidence and to answer questions. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of DOC/EFP staff and Xcel Energy representatives, to make statements, and to offer written comments and material into the record.

The record will remain open until September 11, 2006, at 4:00 p.m. to provide interested persons an opportunity to submit written comments to the hearing examiner. Upon closure of the public comment period, the hearing examiner will compile the record and transmit it to the PUC. The docket is tentatively scheduled to come before the PUC for a final decision during its regularly scheduled meeting on November 4, 2006.

**Project Information.** Additional information on this project, including the application and the environmental assessment, are available on the PUC's web page at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=16573>