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PUBLIC COMMENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010
6:00 p.m.

In the Matter of the Application for a Route Permit for
the Bemidji-Grand Rapids 230 kV Transmission Project

PUC Docket Number: E017, E015, ET6/TL-07-1327

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1 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for coming out
2 this evening. This is the public information and
3 public comment meeting for the proposed
4 Bemidji-Grand Rapids 230 kV transmission line, and
5 the purpose of this meeting is to take comments on
6 the draft EIS.

7 My name is Suzanne Steinhauer. I'm with
8 the Minnesota Office of Energy Security. We're the
9 lead federal -- I'm sorry, the lead state permitting
10 agency for the project and the lead on the
11 environmental impact statement.

12 Also here tonight is Stephanie Strength.
13 She's with the USDA Rural Utilities Service, and
14 they're the lead among several federal agencies that
15 have prepared the EIS.

16 I also have Jamie MacAlister, who you may
17 have met at the sign-in table. She's also from OES
18 and able to help people with some of the public
19 participation aspects. There are a couple folks
20 here from the forest service, Cathy Thompson and --

21 MS. BROWN: Christine Brown.

22 MS. STEINHAUER: Christine Brown, thank
23 you. Also with me tonight are Greg Poremba and
24 Meghan Sweeny from ERM. ERM is the consulting firm
25 that we've worked with to prepare the EIS.

1 My role in the project is to develop a
2 record for the Minnesota decision process. The
3 decision maker is -- in Minnesota for transmission
4 lines of this size is the Minnesota Public Utilities
5 Commission. My role is to develop a record for them
6 to make a decision.

7 And, I'm sorry, we have also -- Christine
8 is here to record the comments in the meeting. And
9 we'll ask people to come up and to use the
10 microphone, if they can, to speak slowly so that she
11 can have an accurate record of the comments here
12 tonight.

13 The purpose of the meeting tonight is to
14 provide an opportunity for the public to ask
15 questions and provide comments on the completeness
16 and accuracy of the draft environmental impact
17 statement prepared for the project.

18 I realize that most of you are here
19 because you have a preferred place that you'd like
20 to see the route go, and we'll take those comments.
21 I do want to let you know, we'll get into this a
22 little bit later, there will also be another set of
23 public meetings in late April, April 21st through
24 23rd, that will be in the project area. I don't
25 have the actual locations, but it will be in

1 locations similar to this set of meetings.

2 That is -- in the Minnesota process, it's
3 a contested case hearing that will be presided over
4 by a judge, by an administrative law judge. And
5 that also is the venue where the applicants will
6 advocate for their preferred route. Any member of
7 the public and, I expect, some agencies will also
8 advocate for a route. So we'll take your comments
9 tonight. To the extent that we can address them in
10 the final EIS, we will do so.

11 The proposed project is, depending on the
12 route selected, between 68 and 113 miles. It begins
13 at the Wilton Substation, which is located a little
14 bit west of here, and ends at the Boswell Substation
15 in Cohasset. Depending on the route selected, the
16 route may include either an expansion of the
17 existing Cass Lake Substation or a new Cass Lake
18 substation. Also, a Nary breaker station, which for
19 purposes of -- for your and my purposes is similar
20 to a substation, near Nary.

21 As I mentioned before, in Minnesota there
22 is one route permit, and that's issued by the Public
23 Utilities Commission. No person, no entity can
24 construct a transmission line of more than
25 100 kilovolts without a permit from the Public

1 Utilities Commission. The Commission will determine
2 the route, where the actual route will go, and any
3 conditions that should be included in the permit.

4 The rules for the administration of the
5 Power Plant Siting Act are found in Minnesota Rules
6 7850. I do want to make clear, the Commission
7 has -- when they make their decision, they balance a
8 number of factors, but they have to make their
9 decision based on the record.

10 As I said earlier, my role is to
11 develop -- to begin developing a record for the
12 Commission to make their decision on, and the record
13 will be further developed in greater detail in the
14 contested case hearings in April.

15 Yeah.

16 MR. POREMBA: Just keep going?

17 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes, sorry. This is
18 sort of a process flow diagram. The applicants,
19 Minnkota Power, Otter Tail Power, and Minnesota
20 Power, submitted a route permit application for a
21 transmission line route in June of 2008. I saw a
22 number of you here in the summer of the 2008, about
23 15 months ago. And we held scoping meetings. The
24 purpose of those scoping meetings was to receive
25 comments from the members of the public and also

1 from agencies to determine which routes will be
2 evaluated in the EIS and what impacts need to be
3 evaluated also in the EIS.

4 Based on the comments that we received
5 through the scoping comment period, agency review of
6 the proposed routes, and also the recommendations of
7 an advisory task force, the OES issued a scoping
8 decision in March of 2009. We spent, essentially,
9 the last year developing the draft environmental
10 impact statement. It's the large three-volume set
11 of binders that's out there. There are also copies
12 available -- hard copies available in public
13 libraries. It's available on our website. We can
14 go through that contact information, and we have a
15 limited number of CDs here if anybody's interested
16 in taking.

17 And so that brings us to the EIS public
18 meetings that are held here. The purpose, as I
19 iterated before, is to receive comments on the
20 information, specifically the accuracy and
21 completeness of the information included in the
22 draft environmental impact statement.

23 The green box, then, to the left, as I
24 mentioned earlier, is the contested case hearing.
25 That takes the information that's in the draft EIS

1 and develops that further and -- to build a record
2 for the Commission to make their final decision on.

3 The comment period for the draft
4 environmental impact statement closes on April 26th.
5 We're taking oral comments here tonight. There's
6 also -- you can provide us with written comments, we
7 can take them here. There are comment sheets
8 available at the sign-in table. I encourage you to
9 take them, not because your comments need to fit on
10 this sheet, but because it does provide the contact
11 information and you may want to give some to your
12 neighbors.

13 The comments received before the close of
14 comments will be addressed in the final
15 environmental impact statement, and then subsequent
16 to that, the -- again, for the state process -- the
17 federal process, and Stephanie will get into this,
18 is a little bit different.

19 The judge will take all the comments
20 received in the draft EIS -- will take the final
21 EIS, which includes comments on the draft, will take
22 comments and testimony received in the contested
23 case hearings, and will make --

24 You can go up, I think, to the next one.

25 Will make a recommendation to the Public

1 Utilities Commission. The Commission is not bound
2 to follow that recommendation, but it will -- the
3 judge does a good job. He will take it very
4 seriously and the Commission will take the
5 recommendation very seriously. And that feeds into
6 the Commission's route permit decision.

7 I think we can roll through to the next
8 one.

9 This just reiterates the milestones. The
10 application was filed in June of '08 and the
11 Commission accepted it as complete in the end of
12 June 2008. We had scoping meetings out here in the
13 project area in the summer of 2008.

14 The EIS scoping decision was issued in
15 March of last year. The draft EIS was issued
16 February 23rd. We're right now in the public
17 comment period, and the public comment period closes
18 April 26th of this year. And then again, at the
19 same time we're taking public comments, towards the
20 end of that, we'll move on to the contested case
21 hearing, and I'm happy to try to answer questions
22 about that.

23 The draft EIS evaluated three route
24 alternatives. They're shown, I think, in the next
25 slide, also in the map up here. The two route

1 alternatives in generally the Highway 2 area, those
2 are about 68 and 69 miles, and then a longer route
3 alternative to the north, which is about 113 miles.

4 The applicants requested a route of
5 1,000 feet. So we looked at that 1,000-foot route,
6 within which they would locate a narrower
7 right-of-way. The applicants have requested a
8 125-foot wide right-of-way to be located within that
9 route.

10 For the purposes of comparison, we looked
11 at -- we asked the applicants to identify a
12 right-of-way that they believe is feasible from an
13 engineering perspective, and we looked at that to
14 provide a comparison between the routes. That's not
15 necessarily the route that would be permitted, but
16 it allows us to compare the impacts in a narrower
17 area and to, based on that, determine if there might
18 be areas where it should deviate from what the
19 applicants have said is a feasible route.

20 In addition to the three routes, there
21 were 20 alternative route segments that were also
22 evaluated. Some of them are so small they don't
23 really show up very well on the map. Most of them
24 are -- a number of them connect Routes 1 and 2 to
25 allow those two routes to be moved back and forth.

1 Again, we looked at a 1,000-foot-wide route there
2 and then a narrower feasible right-of-way.

3 The EIS also, for all of those, for the
4 routes and alternative route segments, evaluated,
5 looked at them through, sort of, 21 different
6 prisms. We looked at the aesthetic impacts, air
7 quality and climate impacts, geology and soils,
8 water resources, floodplains, wetlands, biological
9 resources, species of special concern -- or
10 threatened or endangered species or communities --
11 cultural resources, land use, socioeconomic,
12 environmental justice, recreation and tourism,
13 agriculture, forestry and mining, community
14 services, utility systems, traffic and
15 transportation, safety and health, and noise. And
16 the Commission has to weigh all these different
17 factors for the routes in their final route
18 determination.

19 Hard paper copies are available for
20 review out in the lobby. I ask that -- I would ask
21 that you please not take them so we can carry those
22 forward to the other meetings. There are a couple
23 of CD copies that we can provide you with. There
24 are also copies available in local libraries and on
25 our website, which I think is the next slide, on the

1 RUS website. Those are noted in the handouts.
2 Please feel free to take those.

3 Tonight, again, the focus of the meeting
4 is to receive comments on the draft EIS. The
5 comments during this meeting and the comment period
6 should be focused on the content of the draft EIS.
7 More specifically, the accuracy and the completeness
8 of the data.

9 After Stephanie's presentation, we'll
10 open it up for public comments. And a couple of
11 people have preregistered, and I'll call on -- we'll
12 call on those people first. We'll ask you to please
13 come to the front of the room and speak slowly and
14 spell your name so that the court reporter can get
15 that down.

16 Please be respectful. I think that it's
17 probably fair to say a lot of people have very
18 strong opinions about where they would like the
19 route to go, and they're very dear to them. I mean,
20 it's very personal. But other people may have just
21 as strong an opinion about something else. So
22 please be respectful.

23 Please limit your comments to five
24 minutes in order to allow everybody to speak. After
25 I've gone through the people that have

1 preregistered, then we'll just take people as they
2 raise their hand and ask them to come forward and
3 comment.

4 There will be transcripts available.
5 Comment sheets are also available. If you prefer
6 not to speak or if -- even if you speak tonight, if
7 something occurs to you later, please feel free to
8 provide written comments. They don't have to be on
9 this form, but it does provide the contact
10 information. They can be sent by fax, by U.S. mail,
11 by e-mail. And also we have an ability -- you can
12 comment directly on our website.

13 If you can scroll down, please. One
14 back.

15 And, again, that's on the longer slide
16 presentation. Please take one home with you.
17 Comments may also be submitted directly online, and
18 I receive those as an e-mail. All of the comments
19 are logged. And to the extent that we can respond
20 to them, they will be -- all the comments will be
21 included in the final EIS in the responses that we
22 can make to them. Comments, again, are due
23 April 26th of this year by 4:30.

24 MS. STRENGTH: Good evening. Can
25 everyone hear me? Okay. I'm Stephanie Strength.

1 I'm with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural
2 Utility Service. It's also part of Rural
3 Development. We're an agency that gives financing
4 assistance to utilities to serve rural America. We
5 are one of the federal agencies involved in this
6 project. Also, we are preparing this EIS with the
7 state jointly.

8 And then, can you see the lower part of
9 the slide presentation of this map?

10 UNIDENTIFIED: Um-hmm.

11 MS. STRENGTH: Okay. There are three
12 what we call cooperating agencies, which are also
13 federal entities that are developing the
14 environmental impact statement along with RUS and
15 OES. And that is the U.S. Forest Service - Chippewa
16 National Forest, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and
17 the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

18 Each of these agencies has a different
19 decision that they have to make with regard to this
20 project. Whether it's a permit to cross land,
21 whether it's a permit to allow the conversion of
22 wetlands, or in our case, to decide whether or not
23 to agree to finance this project.

24 Go to the next slide, please.

25 Okay. So as I mentioned, we give

1 financing assistance. Minnkota Power Cooperative
2 has approached us for financing assistance for their
3 portion in this project. When that happens, that's
4 called a federal action, which means we have to look
5 at what the impacts would be of this project.

6 In this case, we're doing an
7 environmental impact statement. And rather than
8 preparing that huge document on our own and then
9 having the state do one and having each agency do
10 one, we're doing one jointly and together and having
11 the meetings together so you only have to come to
12 one set of meetings and read one document. And,
13 again, it just lists the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe,
14 Chippewa National Forest, and the Corps of Engineers
15 as the cooperating agencies.

16 All of the comments, as Suzanne
17 mentioned, that are received before April 26th will
18 be addressed in the final environmental impact
19 statement. After the close of that comment period
20 and we put out the final environmental impact
21 statement, there will be another opportunity for
22 public comment.

23 At this point is where the state and
24 federal processes differ. Where they go on with the
25 hearing and the judge makes a determination, each of

1 the agencies that I mentioned will be recording
2 their decision as far as which alternative that they
3 would consider either permitting or, in our case,
4 financing. And there would also be in that decision
5 the list of what sort of conditions we might want to
6 see as far as how it could be constructed and where.

7 All of that information would be
8 published, not only on OES's website, but also on
9 RUS's website, which -- go to the next slide -- is
10 listed right here. And this is the one-page handout
11 that was on the comment table which has everything
12 in my slide show presentation including our agency's
13 website where there are preliminary documents, there
14 are the public comments received during scoping, and
15 then the EIS would be listed, as well as, in the
16 end, all of the record of decisions from the
17 different agencies. And they will also be published
18 in the newspapers where you probably, hopefully, saw
19 the notice for this meeting tonight.

20 Can we go back to the previous slide?

21 Thank you.

22 So the EIS is prepared by federal
23 agencies because of a little act called the National
24 Environmental Policy Act. We also have Section 106,
25 which deals with historic properties. Both of these

1 regulations have a public involvement portion.

2 We do this together. So if you have
3 comments tonight that address cultural resources or
4 historic properties, that will also play into the
5 actions that we're taking on Section 106. So you
6 don't have to worry about trying to comment in two
7 locations.

8 Go to the next slide, please.

9 So you can comment directly to Suzanne in
10 all the ways that she has provided. You can also
11 comment directly to myself. The comments will go to
12 both places. All the agencies will be sharing this
13 information and reviewing and commenting together
14 and working together to make sure that we're coming
15 to, hopefully, the same decision when we get to our
16 records of decision and what happens through the
17 state process as well.

18 So, with that, I will hand it back over
19 to Suzanne so we can start the comment period, and
20 thank you very much.

21 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you.

22 As I mentioned before, if you could
23 please come up and speak into the microphone. If
24 you're unable to get up, we can bring the microphone
25 out to you. But we did let loose a little bit this

Commenter 18 – Jerry Solheim

Responses

1 afternoon, or I didn't pursue the microphone, and I
2 know that the court reporter had difficulty hearing
3 and recording an accurate transcription.
4 So the first name I have here is
5 Jerry Soleheight (phonetic). I'm sorry. It could
6 be Solheim. If you could please spell your name for
7 the court reporter.
8 MR. SOLHEIM: You bet. Are you the court
9 reporter? I'm not on trial, right?
10 Jerry, J-E-R-R-Y, Solheim, that's S like
11 in September, O-L-H-E-I, M like in Mary.
12 Just a couple of real quick comments.
13 Number one, this should be underground. This is
14 totally ridiculous to have these ugly things in our
15 skyline. It's terrible. There's absolutely no
16 reason why this shouldn't be underground.
17 They just put in a couple of pipelines
18 through our area. I believe one of them is
19 36 inches, and if that can be driven all the way
20 from Canada to somewhere in Wisconsin, it's totally
21 ridiculous to have these lines. We have way too
22 many of them. It should be underground.
23 And it should be -- number two, it should
24 be following existing right-of-ways. Why screw up
25 beautiful areas, virgin areas, with a new

18-1

18-2

Comment 18-1

A discussion of the option to underground the transmission line appears in Section 2.3.4 of the EIS.

Comment 18-2

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS. A discussion of the existing linear features and new corridor requirements for the Route Alternatives appears in Table 2-1 of the EIS.

**Commenter 18 – Jerry Solheim;
Commenter 19 – Keith Pommprening**

1 right-of-way when we already have a right-of-way?
2 Highway 2, there's a right-of-way on both sides of
3 the road. It's already cut, it's already planned,
4 it's already delivered. All they have to do is put
5 it there. And again, it should be underground.
6 Enough said.
7 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you.
8 The next person I have is
9 Keith Pommprening.
10 MR. POMMPRENING: My name's
11 Keith Pommprening, K-E-I-T-H, P-O-M-M-P-R-E-N-I-N-G.
12 What I have here is a copy of a letter I
13 sent to Suzanne on August 28th -- August 25th of
14 2008. And my first thought is in the area has --
15 already has -- you know, if you have an area that's
16 already got a transmission line or a pipeline on
17 your property, you're doing your fair share to
18 support the common good of the people. In football,
19 you know, if they pile on, it's called piling on,
20 you get penalized for that. I mean, you know,
21 they're already doing their share.
22 And one question of the wisdom of
23 running -- I question the wisdom of running power
24 lines and gas lines together. You do not bundle gas
25 lines and electric service to your house. When a

Responses

Comment 19-1

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

Comment 19-2

Text in Section 3.18.2.2 has been supplemented to include a discussion of the potential for the Project to interfere with natural gas and crude oil pipelines and result in ignition of released natural gas or crude oil. Text in Section 3.18.3.3 has been supplemented to included mitigation measures to address potential interference.

19-1

19-2

Commenter 19 – Keith Pommrening

19-2
(cont.)

20

1 fire and explosion like the one in Clearbrook
2 last -- well, a couple winters ago now, took out
3 both services, and then we'd be out of gas and out
4 of electricity.

5 Just the service being there would
6 increase the chance of diaster. Having them
7 side-by-side would increase the likelihood and
8 resultant danger and damage exponentially.

9 Gusset plates fail, like the I-35 bridge.
10 Bolts strip and work loose, and wind pressures on
11 the towers, would a falling tower rupture a gas
12 line? Are the pipeline people in favor of having
13 the lines in close proximity? One would think the
14 power lines would greatly hinder their ability to
15 add new pipes and service the existing ones.

16 Would they want heavy equipment and --
17 working on their pipes or servicing near the
18 existing ones? Who would want to -- would they want
19 heavy equipment working around their buried pipes?

20 Easements give power and gas line people
21 free access to one's land and cause excess
22 restrictions on what the landowner can do with the
23 land. Of course, the power lines would greatly
24 reduce the owner's property values. In some
25 instances, a fairer option would be to let the power

Responses

Comment 19-3

A discussion of loss of land use to private land owners appears in Section 3.10.2.2 of the EIS.

Comment 19-4

Discussion of potential impacts to property value appears in Section 3.11.2 of the EIS.

Comment 19-5

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

19-3

19-4

19-5

Commenter 19 – Keith Pommrening

19-5
(cont.)

1 company buy the land and buildings at the pre-power
2 line value. This way the line could remain -- the
3 power line could -- can maintain the -- this way the
4 power line can maintain the property and pay taxes
5 and rent back to the original owner. The original
6 landowner would have a chance to buy the land back
7 after the power lines decides to buy and abandoned
8 the power line.

19-6

9 Another friend of mine told me that, you
10 know, if you have gas, you know, like oil fields or
11 something, you get royalties. If you have a power
12 line going across your property, they pay you once
13 and you don't get any more for it. I mean, they
14 continue to use it, they should continue to pay.
15 That's a pretty good idea.

19-7

16 State land is for the use and benefit of
17 the residents of Minnesota, why not use this land as
18 much as possible? What better way to use the
19 resources of the state to help the most people? Do
20 not enrage citizens and decrease property values of
21 the overtaxed residents any more.

22 A corridor through state land would be a
23 great thing for the residents of this state. It
24 would improve habitat for large and small game, it
25 would allow the DNR to be able to rapidly respond to

Responses

Comment 19-6

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

Comment 19-7

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

**Commenter 19 – Keith Pommrening;
Commenter 20 – Lester Hiltz**

1 a forest fire, and be a blessing to anyone lost in
2 the forest. Access for logging and hunting would
3 improve and would enable the state to better
4 maintain its lands, its forests, and its wildlife.

19-8

5 The towers make nesting sites for
6 raptors. The big challenge here would be working
7 with the forestry department's attitude on the use
8 of forest lands.

9 So in conclusion, it's obvious that the
10 powers who set this route have not done their
11 homework and the public is not being well served.
12 It would be best if the proposal routes were tabled
13 and some effort and wisdom were brought to bear and
14 find a better proposal. Thank you.

15 MS. STEINHAUER: Lester Hiltz.

16 MR. HILTZ: My name is Lester Hiltz,
17 L-E-S-T-E-R, H-I-L-T-Z.

20-1

18 And my comments and concerns on this
19 line, it goes right through my property, Route 1.
20 And how much is this going to devalue our property?
21 The pipeline went through my property and it
22 devalued it considerably.

20-2

23 The safety of living underneath it. Can
24 any of the people that is going to put this line in
25 give me or the rest of us -- that it's going to be

Responses

Comment 19-8

A discussion of the use of transmission line structures as nesting sites appears in Section 3.7.2.3 of the EIS. Additional information on the use of Project structures as nesting sites is presented in the Avian Mitigation Plan, included as Appendix I.

Comment 20-1

Discussion of potential impacts to property value appears in Section 3.11.2 of the EIS.

Comment 20-2

A discussion of potential safety and health effects appears in Section 3.20 of the EIS.

Commenter 20 – Lester Hiltz; Commenter 21 – Doug Bjerke

Responses

20-2
(cont.)

23

1 safe underneath that line? And can you promise that
2 there's going to be no EMFs from this line? I don't
3 believe that you can, but you will probably never do
4 that.

5 Will there be any noise underneath this
6 line? That's another comment that I have. A lot of
7 these lines, if you stand underneath them, there is
8 going to be noise underneath these lines. And if
9 you've got it right next to your house, it does not
10 make you very happy.

11 The other thing is, how are we going to
12 be compensated for this line going through our
13 property? If it's anything like the pipeline, it's
14 not good.

15 Another thing, what can you do with the
16 property after the line goes through? Can you put
17 trees on it, can you put houses on it? No. You can
18 cut it for lawn, that's about all you can do. And
19 my property is a third-generation, as of myself.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. STEINHAEUER: Thank you. Doug Bjerke.

22 MR. BJERKE: Doug Bjerke, B-J-E-R-K-E.

23 I just had some questions about what's
24 the line loss per mile of line? What's the cost of
25 construction of the line per mile? And the

Comment 20-3

A discussion of impacts to noise levels appears in 3.21.2 of the EIS.

Comment 20-4

A discussion of the easement acquisition process appears in Section 2.4.3 of the EIS.

Comment 20-5

A discussion of impacts to homes appears in 3.11.2 of the EIS. A discussion of the loss of land use to private land owners appears in Section 3.10.2 of the EIS.

Comment 21-1

Text in Section 2.2 has been supplemented with information on the line loss reduction for the Route Alternatives.

Comment 21-2

A comparison of the costs to construct each Route Alternative appears in Table 2-1, which is located in Section 2.2 of the EIS.

20-4

20-5

21-1

21-2

Commenter 22 – John Robinson

24

1 difference in the routes seems to be about 45 miles
2 between the shortest to the longest, and in talking
3 with a gentleman in the back there, they were
4 talking about five megawatts of loss per mile of
5 line, I think.

6 At approximately \$600,000 per mile to
7 construct, that comes out to be somewhere around
8 27 million, I think, difference between the lines.
9 And I'm just wondering how many houses can be heated
10 with the electricity loss per mile, per day, per
11 year, or over the life of the line?

12 And I guess that's the only comments I've
13 got.

14 MS. STEINHAUER: John Robinson.

15 MR. ROBINSON: Do you have any questions
16 about how to spell my name? J-O-H-N.

17 I live on the Route 2 plan for -- right
18 under Lake Irving. And we had the pipeline go
19 through and I saw across the way one of my neighbors
20 lost about 75 feet of depth of woods between his
21 house and the pipeline. And I've noticed that the
22 noise from the highway is terrible, and I think it
23 has to do with the dropping of all the trees to make
24 the widening of the -- and now where I live is in
25 the city of Bemidji and I think it's a developed

Responses

**Commenter 22 – John Robinson;
Commenter 23 – Peter Guggenheimer**

25

1 residential community. And I think it would be a
2 shame to, you know, make the environment -- living
3 environment worse by funneling all the noise from
4 the highway.

5 As Bemidji grows, more and more trucks
6 are coming down the road. And my wife and I just
7 noticed this winter, it's -- since they cleared out
8 an area of marsh, it is unbelievably noisy, and
9 we're very, very disappointed in our property. And
10 I am very concerned that taking more trees down in
11 the right-of-way is going to make that living
12 community worse.

13 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you.

14 Peter Guggenheimer.

15 MR. GUGGENHEIMER: My name is Peter,
16 P-E-T-E-R, Guggenheimer, G-U-G-G-E-N-H-E-I-M-E-R.

17 I don't have any prepared comments, but I
18 just want to express my opinion that it would be far
19 less of a blight on the community to have this
20 utility following an existing highway as opposed to
21 running through people's personal property within
22 the community.

23 I don't think that there's going to be a
24 significant impact, visual -- of visual blight by
25 following a major trunk highway. If this

Responses

Comment 22-1

A discussion of impacts to noise levels appears in Section 3.21.2 of the EIS.

Comment 23-1

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

22-1

23-1

**Commenter 23 – Peter Guggenheimer;
Commenter 24 – Scott Dingman**

26

1 transmission line goes through a lot of personal
2 property space, a lot of people are going to be
3 affected. Their property values are going to be
4 diminished, and the enjoyment that they will have
5 from their personal property will be greatly
6 affected.

7 So I would strongly appeal to you to
8 consider what would be Route 2 following along the
9 highway.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you.

12 That is everyone that we've had
13 preregister. I believe there's a play rehearsal
14 going on next door. So at this time, I'd like to
15 open it up to comments. If you could raise your
16 hand and I'll call on you. And, again, if you could
17 please come up, and if you're unable to come up we
18 can bring the mic to you. Thank you.

19 Yes.

20 MR. DINGMAN: I'd like to speak, please.

21 I can get up there.

22 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. Please. Sorry.

23 MR. DINGMAN: My name is Scott Dingman,
24 D-I-N-G-M-A-N.

25 I've been listening tonight and I feel

Responses

Commenter 24 – Scott Dingman

1 like all of you, I don't want it by my place and I
2 think everyone's here for the same reason.

24-1

3 Some of the points that have not been
4 brought up that I think are important is looking at
5 the endangered species act. I do believe, if I'm
6 correct, the government can't do anything to
7 infringe upon endangered species.

24-2

8 On my land, I have very sensitive
9 ecosystems, as many of you probably do also. I have
10 very rare plants that grow underneath the power
11 line, the existing one. Now, if they widen it out,
12 they're going to destroy more of those sensitive
13 plants.

14 The last time they came in, they had this
15 great big machine. The guy can't even see where
16 he's going and he just ripped right through my land.
17 He actually went beyond the zone that they're
18 supposed to because he said he couldn't see where he
19 was going.

24-3

20 We also have wolves. They're an --
21 whether you like wolves or not, I'm not saying, but
22 they're an endangered species in Minnesota. In the
23 western part of the country they're not, here they
24 found subspecies. The northern route goes much
25 further in and through wolf country. It has an

Responses

Comment 24-1

A discussion of species of concern appears in Section 3.8 of the EIS.

Comment 24-2

A discussion on biodiversity, specifically effects on plants, appears in Section 3.7.2.1 of the EIS. Further discussion on plant species of concern appears in Section 3.8.1.5 of the EIS. Biological surveys were conducted for the Study Area; however, only public lands were included in the Project surveys. A discussion of species identified within the Study Area during biological surveys appears in Section 3.8 of the EIS.

Comment 24-3

A discussion on the Gray Wolf as a species of concern appears in Section 3.8.1.2 of the EIS.

**Commenter 24 – Scott Dingman;
Commenter 25 – Gabriel Wakonabo**

28

1 impact. Wolves normally shy away from humans. I've
2 camped many nights in the mountains, they've never
3 bothered me. They're a beautiful sound.

4 And I know there are probably people who
5 hate wolves out there and others who love them. But
6 these are important issues, I think, that we need to
7 also address.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. Please, in the
10 grey sweatshirt.

11 MR. WAKONABO: Gabriel Wakonabo,
12 W-A-K-O-N-A-B-O. Just a few quick notes.

13 What is the real need for this line? Are
14 the lights not on right now? What about wildlife
15 endangerment? If a bald eagle strikes one of these
16 lines, will these companies go ahead and pay for the
17 rehabilitation of said animals?

18 Did renewable energy resources ever occur
19 to these companies? And will they continue to rely
20 on old technology which is dependent upon coal
21 fields, open-pit mining, and again, our own very
22 backyards are being mowed down and trampled over.

23 Remember, folks, that what we do here
24 affects others in our neighboring states, our other
25 fellow citizens. Companies that rely on coal are

Responses

Comment 25-1

A discussion on purpose and need appears in Section 1.1 of the EIS. The Minnesota Certificate of Need is discussed in Section 1.2.6 of the EIS.

Comment 25-2

A discussion of effects on biological resources appears in Section 3.7.2 of the EIS. Species of concern, including the Bald Eagle, are specifically addressed in Section 3.8.1.1 of the EIS.

Comment 25-3

Mitigation measures for species of concern are addressed in Section 3.8.3 of the EIS. Additional mitigation is included in the Avian Mitigation Plan, included as Appendix I.

Comment 25-4

A discussion of generation alternatives considered but not evaluated in the EIS appears in Section 2.3.1 of the EIS.

25-1 |

25-2 |

25-3 |

25-4 |

Commenter 25 – Gabriel Wakonabo

1 going to continue to harvest and collect and mine
2 those resources, and they're going to infringe on
3 their backyards just as well as ours.
4 Government subsidies come from taxpayers,
5 I believe, if I'm not mistaken, and are we not just
6 paying for our own infringements by corporations?
7 Who's really winning, who's gaining?
8 No follow-up for the environment impact
9 that's already been done by the recent pipeline. We
10 haven't even given it -- the chance for the
11 environment to even mend itself and we want to go
12 right down the same corridor with those precious
13 plants that grow underneath and the wildlife up on
14 the northern routes.
15 I'm also a Leech Lake Band member, and do
16 we really need to cut the reservation in half again
17 with another facility -- or utility? That's a
18 concern of mine, and I'll bring that up to my
19 constituents and my representatives of Leech Lake.
20 And then I'd like to see if there is an
21 agreement, one that requires that for every ten
22 years of transmission use that they also decrease
23 their carbon footprint by ten percent.
24 Thank you.
25 MS. STEINHAEUER: Thank you.

25-5

25-6

25-7

Responses

Comment 25-5

A discussion of the effects on vegetative cover appears in Section 3.7.2.1 of the EIS. Mitigation is addressed in Section 3.7.3.1.

Comment 25-6

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

Comment 25-7

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

Commenter 26 – Frederick Petrowske

1 Yes. The gentleman in orange.
2 MR. PETROWSKE: This is orange
3 (indicating)?
4 MS. STEINHAUER: I need new glasses. I'm
5 sorry.
6 MR. PETROWSKE: Frederick Petrowske,
7 F-R-E-D-E-R-I-C-K, P-E-T-R-O-W-S-K-E.
8 I'd just like to speak against Route 3,
9 the longer route. About a month ago, or a little
10 more than a month ago, I was in this room taking my
11 continuing education for a contractor license, and
12 the big focus was energy conservation.
13 Now, that longer route just goes against
14 everything that I was learning there as far as
15 energy conservation. To start with, the
16 construction costs would be much more, which takes
17 more energy. The maintenance cost over the life of
18 the line, the cost of operation, the longer lines
19 take more power. That's not conserving like
20 everyone's looking to do these days. And that's a
21 non-ending factor for the life of them, the power
22 line, it wouldn't stop.
23 So that's my statement.
24 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you.
25 I want to make sure that people who would

Responses

Comment 26-1

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS.

26-1

1 like to comment tonight feel that they have an
2 opportunity, but if something occurs to you later,
3 there are opportunities to provide written comments.

4 If you have questions, we'll be around
5 after the meeting. I'm not closing things off now,
6 I just want to give everybody an opportunity who
7 chooses to take that tonight.

8 Comments, going once, going twice, going
9 three times?

10 I will close, then, the formal part of
11 the meeting and we'll be available to try to answer
12 questions. That won't be part of the record, but to
13 the extent that we can provide you information, if
14 you'd like to do that. Thank you.

15 (Public comment concluded.)
16
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Responses