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PUBLIC COMMENTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 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: Good evening. Thank you
2 very much for coming to the meeting tonight. I
3 appreciate your interest in the project.

4 My name is Suzanne Steinhauer. I'm with
5 the Minnesota Office of Energy Security. I'm
6 representing here the Minnesota Public Utilities
7 Commission, which, for a transmission line of this
8 size to be constructed in Minnesota, it requires a
9 permit from the Public Utilities Commission.

10 We're at the public information meeting
11 on the draft environmental impact statement for the
12 proposed Bemidji-Grand Rapids 230 kV transmission
13 line.

14 It was working.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: There it goes.

16 MS. STEINHAUER: Okay. The purpose of
17 this meeting this evening is to provide an
18 opportunity for the public to ask questions and
19 provide comment on the completeness and accuracy on
20 the draft environmental impact statement. The draft
21 environmental impact statement was prepared jointly
22 to meet both federal agency needs and the Minnesota
23 Public Utilities Commission needs. We both require
24 the environmental impact statement be prepared for a
25 project of this size, but the way that fits into the

1 decision-making process is a little bit different.

2 With me here tonight is
3 Stephanie Strength from the USDA Rural Utilities
4 Service. The RUS, or Rural Utilities Service, is
5 the lead federal agency on the federal side of the
6 project.

7 I also have Ray Kirsch, who's the
8 gentleman in the blue sweater back there. He's my
9 colleague at the Office of Energy Security, and he's
10 here -- he can try to answer -- he can provide
11 some information to you on the process, the
12 Minnesota process.

13 I know that there are a number of other
14 people representing the other federal agencies and
15 the Band and I'll let Stephanie introduce them.
16 Also with me tonight is Greg Poremba and
17 Meghan Sweeney. They are with ERM Consulting.
18 That's the firm we engaged to prepare the draft
19 environmental impact statement.

20 And we also have here a court reporter,
21 and her purpose tonight is to transcribe a complete
22 and accurate record of the meeting and the comments
23 received.

24 My role in the project and in the
25 environmental review is to develop a complete record

1 for the Commission to make their decision on. In
2 the state process, the EIS does not identify a
3 preferred alternative. But my job is to provide
4 a -- is to get that information out there into the
5 record, which is one of the first things that the
6 draft EIS does, and also to -- now that it's out
7 there, receive comments from the members of the
8 public, from agencies, from interested persons, and
9 that becomes part of the record upon which the
10 Commission makes their decision.

11 The proposed project, depending on the
12 route selected, is between 60 and 113 miles of
13 230 kV transmission line. We'll have a map up here
14 a little bit later. There's also a map over on the
15 other side of the room. The transmission line would
16 extend from the Wilton substation, just located on
17 the western edge of the project west of Bemidji, to
18 the Boswell substation in Cohasset.

19 The project includes improvements to both
20 the Wilton and Boswell substations. And depending
21 on the route selected, the project may also expand
22 or construct a substation in Cass Lake and/or add a
23 breaker station -- which is essentially, for the
24 purposes of you and I, another substation -- near
25 Nary.

1 As I mentioned earlier, for transmission
2 lines of this size, they can't be constructed in
3 Minnesota without a permit from the Public Utilities
4 Commission. A high voltage transmission line is
5 considered to be anything over 100 kilovolts. This,
6 again, is 230 kilovolts, so it falls into the
7 mandatory EIS category.

8 The Commission must make their decision
9 based on the record. There are a number of
10 statutory requirements for things that they need to
11 consider that are developed in more detail in the
12 administrative role.

13 I'm going to walk you through -- this
14 doesn't -- you do have a -- I don't know if you were
15 able to pick up a handout sheet, this is included in
16 the handout, but because it's reduced it's not
17 necessarily visible. But I want to walk you through
18 the Minnesota process -- review process.

19 The applicants, Otter Tail Power,
20 Minnesota Power, and Minnkota Power Cooperative,
21 submitted a route permit application to the Public
22 Utilities Commission in the beginning of June 2008.
23 The Commission accepted that application as
24 complete, which basically means that the review and
25 public information then -- the review starts, at the

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end of June.

We were out here in the project area for scoping meetings in the summer, I believe it was August of 2008. Along the same time frame there was an advisory task force which was comprised of members of local units of government.

The purpose of the scoping phase, the scoping comment period, was to gather information and comments from the public and from agencies on the routes that should be considered in the environmental impact statement, and then effects that need to be evaluated.

As a result of the public comments that came in, the advisory task force recommendations, and then agency review, the OES issued a scoping decision in March of 2009. That outlined the routes that would be evaluated and the factors that would be discussed in the EIS. RUS also issued a scoping decision that met the federal needs.

In the intervening year we've been preparing the draft environmental impact statement. It's a large document, there were copies outside. And that I'll go over briefly sort of the things that we looked at, that's what we spent the last year preparing. That was released on February 23rd

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of this year.

And that brings us to the -- I'm sorry. That brings us to the public comment period. The draft environmental impact statement, the public meetings, this is the last of five meetings that we've held on the project in the project area.

We will be taking oral comments here tonight. There are also written comments that we'll receive until April 26th. I just want to direct your attention to the comment forms that were available when you signed in. I would recommend that you take them, not because you need to follow this form, but it does provide the contact information, my e-mail and mail address, as well as the website where information on the project can be found.

Towards the end of the comment period, Minnesota also requires -- for projects of this size it's assumed that there will be some controversy and that there will be, perhaps, some difference of opinion about -- excuse me -- where the line should be and what factors should be included in the permit, any type of mitigation that should be included in the permit.

The EIS sort of begins to develop the

1 record on that, but the record is further developed
2 in a process that's called a contested case hearing.
3 We'll have meetings here in the project area
4 April 21st through 23rd. There will be a meeting in
5 Cass Lake, I don't know exactly where it will be.
6 But if you did sign in on the sign-in sheet and
7 checked the box, you'll get direct mail notice of
8 that. Notice will also be provided in local
9 newspapers.

10 The purpose of the contested case hearing
11 is to further develop the record for the Commission
12 to make their decision on. At that point, the
13 applicants will advocate for what they believe is
14 the best route. There are also opportunities for
15 any member of the public or agencies also to
16 advocate for what they believe is the best route
17 and/or factors that they believe should be mitigated
18 in the permit, any type of permit conditions that
19 can be placed on the project. Conditions may be
20 either related to construction or operation of the
21 project.

22 After the close of comments on the draft
23 environmental impact statement, all of the comments
24 received -- that we've received orally at these
25 meetings as well as any written comments received by

1 April 26th will be included in the final
2 environmental impact statement. Those comments will
3 be included and responded to in that document. The
4 public hearing will also have a comment deadline, I
5 don't know what that is yet.

6 Again, this is for the state process.
7 All of that information, the final EIS, which
8 includes the information in the draft, the comments
9 received both orally and in writing, responses to
10 those comments, the comments and testimony received
11 during the public hearing, the contested case
12 hearing, goes to the administrative law judge.

13 The administrative law judge reviews --
14 all that information is called the record. He
15 reviews the record and will make a recommendation to
16 the Commission on which route should be selected and
17 any type of permit conditions that should be
18 included in the permit issued by the Public
19 Utilities Commission.

20 This, again, just -- this slide just kind
21 of briefly reiterates what I talked about. Again, I
22 want to reiterate, and we'll keep coming back to
23 this, written comments are due by April 26th. We
24 would welcome oral comments tonight. I know even if
25 you make a comment tonight, sometimes you may go

1 home or you may -- something else may occur to you,
2 you may talk to neighbors and have other comments or
3 questions that you want to add, you can do that as
4 many times as you like, and all of those will be
5 included and addressed in the final environmental
6 impact statement.

7 And then moving forward, the dates again
8 for the contested case hearing are April 21st
9 through 23rd, which is the Wednesday through Friday
10 before the comment period on the draft EIS closes.
11 The final EIS will be issued -- we don't have a time
12 frame on that. I expect it will be sometime in the
13 summer. A lot of that depends on the comments that
14 come in and we'll need to address those.

15 The EIS -- the draft EIS evaluated three
16 route alternatives. They're shown on the map over
17 to the side as the red, blue, and yellow
18 alternatives. The applicant -- in their route
19 permit application, the applicants asked the
20 Commission to consider a route width of 1,000 feet,
21 within which they would locate a narrower
22 right-of-way.

23 Right-of-way or easement are used sort of
24 interchangeably. That represents the area that's
25 cleared and needs to be maintained as clear for

1 construction and operation of the project. The
2 applicants have asked for a right-of-way of
3 125 feet. That's something that the Commission will
4 consider in their review of the project. There may
5 be areas where they feel that 125 feet is
6 appropriate, there may be areas, depending on the
7 information that they review, that they believe a
8 more narrow area needs to be defined.

9 Within that 1,000-foot route, in order
10 to -- as I mentioned, it's a lot of area, 68, 69
11 miles, 113 miles. Within that area we asked the
12 applicants to identify a 125-foot right-of-way that
13 at least initially looked feasible from an
14 engineering perspective.

15 That doesn't mean that's either the
16 location or the width of the right-of-way that would
17 be approved, but that provides a better comparison
18 of what the actual effects would be in that area and
19 allows us to better compare the effects between the
20 routes and also between a number of alternative
21 route segments for the project.

22 There are -- I should back up a little
23 bit. In addition to the three routes, there are 20
24 alternative route segments. They're represented --
25 some of them are so small they don't really show up

1 on the overview maps, but they represent different
2 ways of getting between areas that -- there may be
3 some congested areas and also ways of getting
4 between Routes 1 and 2. So perhaps what ends up
5 being the best route is a mixture of different
6 routes.

7 And this, again, is an overview map
8 similar to the one that's up front.

9 The EIS evaluated a number of factors
10 that the Commission needs to consider when they
11 determine the location and the conditions for a
12 final route permit for the project. For all of
13 those 1,000 foot -- for all of those routes and
14 segment alternatives, we looked at and identified 21
15 different issue areas: Aesthetics, air quality and
16 climate, geology and soils, water resources,
17 floodplains wetlands, biological resources, species
18 of special interest or threatened and endangered
19 species or significant biological communities,
20 cultural resources, land use, socioeconomic,
21 environmental justice, recreation and tourism,
22 agriculture, forestry, mining, community services,
23 utility systems, traffic and transportation, safety
24 and health, and noise. And, again, we did this in
25 order to compare the routes along all these

1 different factors. A route or a segment that may
2 look good in one may look not so good when you
3 evaluate it on another criteria.

4 There are copies of the EIS available if
5 you'd like to look at them outside on the table.
6 There are also copies available in public libraries
7 in the project area, and I have a limited number of
8 CDs. And tonight's the last meeting so I can feel
9 free to give them all away. If you're interested in
10 that, you can see me or Ray afterwards and I'd be
11 happy to provide you with that.

12 The EIS is also available for downloading
13 on our website, there's a link there. Our website,
14 the OES website, also contains some information more
15 generally on the review process and what the
16 Commission does.

17 Again, the purpose of tonight's meeting
18 is to receive comments on the draft EIS. Comments
19 should -- during the meeting and during the comment
20 period should be focused on the content of the draft
21 EIS, and specifically, the accuracy and completeness
22 of the data.

23 Again, this is a big -- it's not -- for
24 the state of Minnesota, it's not the only part. But
25 it is the big part that goes into the record for the

1 Commission to make their decision on. It provides a
2 baseline comparison between the different
3 alternatives, so we want to ensure that that
4 information is accurate and complete to the best of
5 our ability.

6 And my contact information is here, my
7 business cards are there, and it's also provided in
8 the comment sheet. I think I'll turn it over to --
9 and, again, I want to reiterate the comment period
10 closes on April 26th. And I'll turn it over to
11 Stephanie now.

12 MS. STRENGTH: Good evening. Can you
13 hear me in the back? Okay. I am Stephanie
14 Strength. I'm with U.S. Department of Agriculture,
15 Rural Utilities Service. We're part of Rural
16 Development, you may have known us before as REA.
17 The purpose of our agency is provide financing
18 assistance to utilities in rural America. We're
19 involved in this process today as a joint lead
20 agency with OES in the preparation of the
21 environmental impact statement.

22 There are three agencies that are also
23 cooperating agencies with us in this analysis and in
24 the EIS process. Those agencies are U.S. Forest
25 Service - Chippewa National Forest, and that is due

1 to the potential for the routes to cross forest
2 service land. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and
3 that is due to the potential for impacts on wetlands
4 as well as waters in the U.S. Then the last is
5 Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, specifically Department
6 of Resource -- DRM, Department of Resource
7 Management. Thank you.

8 We have representatives from all three of
9 the cooperating agencies that are here tonight. We
10 will be taking the oral comments into the draft EIS
11 process, and afterward we'll be available for
12 questions as well.

13 RUS is involved in this project because
14 Minnkota Power Cooperative has approached us for
15 financing for their portion of this project. That
16 request and our consideration of it is what we call
17 a federal action. Before the government can take a
18 federal action, we have to assess what the impacts
19 would be on human health and environment.

20 For our process, it's a little different
21 than the state, although we're working together so
22 that you don't have see one of those huge EISs from
23 each one of these agencies and you don't have a
24 different set of meetings from each one of these
25 agencies.

1 When we're approached with a project, the
2 very first thing we have to do is consider what is
3 it that is needed, and in this case, we've put out a
4 preliminary document that we called an alternatives
5 evaluation. That's where they said that there's a
6 problem, in this case reliability, and then address
7 different ways that they can fix that problem. Is
8 it generation, is it conservation, is it a
9 transmission line? In this case, the transmission
10 line was what was selected as being the proposed
11 best option for that fix.

12 When transmission is selected, the next
13 decision is where are you going to put the
14 transmission line. So we also have a preliminary
15 study on that which identified different routes for
16 consideration. We went out, along with the state,
17 to do the scoping meetings, so we could get input
18 from the public and from agencies to see what we
19 were missing, if there were further things we needed
20 to consider.

21 That information was all fed into -- all
22 the comments that were received through the scoping
23 process, those earlier meetings, the meetings of the
24 agencies fed into the draft environmental impact
25 statement that is the subject of the meeting today.

1 And basically the draft environmental
2 impact statement looks at the project, the routes
3 with all of those 21 different resource areas, and
4 lets us know what the potential impacts could be.
5 The reason we're having the meeting tonight is to
6 get comments on that information we've put out there
7 to see if there's things that have been missed, to
8 see if there are, you know, any clarifications that
9 need to be made in the document so that we can then
10 finalize the report into the final environmental
11 impact statement.

12 At that point, we'll come back out and
13 we'll have an opportunity for public review.
14 Before -- and this is where the state and the
15 federal process splits a little. The PUC makes a
16 decision for the state. For the federal agencies,
17 each agency will issue and publish in the newspaper
18 what's called a record of decision. And that record
19 of decision will not only say which of the routes
20 they would consider either permitting or, in our
21 case, financing, but conditions on how that project
22 could be constructed.

23 That, in a nutshell, is the process.
24 Let's see, wrong way. And all the comments received
25 tonight orally or through the written comments

1 received through April 26th, they'll all be answered
2 and addressed by and reviewed by all of the agencies
3 involved in this process in the final EIS.

4 If your comments pertain to cultural
5 resources or Section 106 issues, you don't need to
6 worry about commenting in more than one location.
7 We'll make sure that information goes into both
8 processes and analyses.

9 The RUS website lists all of the -- for
10 download all of the preliminary studies that we did,
11 as well as all the notices that have been out, as
12 well as all of the draft environmental impact
13 statement, and anything in the future coming out on
14 this project. My contact information is there, all
15 of this is on the one-page handout. So if you
16 prefer to comment directly to RUS, you can do that
17 either in writing or in e-mail.

18 Let's see. With that, we'll go over the
19 rules of the meetings. So far I have one green
20 speaker card. If you have signed up and you want to
21 sign up for a green speaker card, we call those
22 first. I don't know if there's any others, just the
23 one.

24 After that, you can raise your hand and
25 we'll bring a microphone over to you. And it's very

1 important that when you receive the microphone that
2 you state your name and spell it because we do have
3 a court reporter tonight. She will be recording
4 your comments so that it gets into the record so
5 that the agencies can find the answer to your
6 question and put it into the final EIS.

7 So please state your name and spell it
8 and please be respectful and speak clearly. You
9 know, this is a project that people probably feel
10 strongly about and we may not all feel the same way.
11 And so if we can be respectful of each other's
12 opinions and everyone can feel comfortable to speak,
13 we'll get better comments.

14 Five minutes for each person to speak,
15 and that's just to appreciate everyone's time and
16 allow everyone a chance to speak without being here
17 for the entire night. Let's see, and you can also,
18 of course, use the written comment sheets or submit
19 comments through e-mail or on the PUC's -- the OES's
20 website.

21 With that, I'm going to hand it over to
22 Suzanne, and our first speaker is -- I'm going to
23 butcher this last name, Joe Michaletz.

24 MR. MICHALETZ: I'm going to hold my
25 question until later.

Commenter 56 – Darrell Magoon

21

1 MS. STRENGTH: Okay.
2 MS. STEINHAUER: Okay. Yes, the
3 gentleman in the orange. If you could wait until
4 the mic is there, please.
5 MR. MAGOON: I'm Darrell Magoon,
6 D-A-R-R-E-L-L, M-A-G-O-O-N. My physical address is
7 50334 279th Avenue in Bemidji.
8 I have a 40-acre parcel that Route 1 is
9 supposed to go through, and I just got a printout
10 here tonight. At the time -- when was it, last
11 year, this was an accurate printing. But since that
12 time, a pipeline, Enbridge pipeline, altered their
13 proposed route and they went underneath Great
14 Lakes -- it's called TransCanada now.
15 And they went on the southern side of it
16 and it's right -- right now it's right along where
17 the proposed Route 1 is. So someone would need to
18 take a look at that on my property. And it also
19 affects the 40 to the west behind me. They did the
20 same thing there, also.
21 So if they're considering Route 1, they'd
22 have to somehow change it through our properties
23 there.
24 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for that
25 comment. That's helpful, and we'll try to develop

Responses

Comment 56-1

Thank you for your comment. In September 2009, the PUC approved Enbridge Energy's request for a deviation from the permitted route in this area to address environmental and cultural resource concerns associated with crossing the Necktie River. Revised maps with the new pipeline alignment have been requested from Enbridge Energy.

56-1

Commenter 57 – Kenn Mitchell

1 that.

2 The gentleman in the red hat.

3 MR. MITCHELL: I'm Kenn Mitchell,
4 K-E-N-N, two Ns, M-I-T-C-H-E-L-L.

57-1

5 What is the health risk factor to the
6 people and the animals living near this so-called
7 power line? I mean, there have been reports out and
8 they're not good for people that live near this
9 power line, so why is it that you want to put it
10 through the city of Cass Lake and Bena, people live
11 there.

12 I drove down -- aren't you people even
13 worried about me and my people, or is my skin too
14 dark, I'm not white enough? That's my problem. You
15 white folks did not even consider us as people. Did
16 you ever ask us if we want this power line near us,
17 did you even ask if we want it through our
18 reservation?

57-2

19 We already got a pipeline that's
20 contaminating the land, now we need you people to
21 come in here and contaminate our air, the air we
22 breathe. Do you want our kids and our generation to
23 be having cancer and whatever?

57-3

24 I mean, come on, give me an answer here,
25 huh? You didn't even look at the health factors of

Responses

Comment 57-1

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

Comment 57-2

A discussion of the cumulative effects from the Project and pipelines appears in Section 4 of the EIS.

Comment 57-3

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

Commenter 57 – Kenn Mitchell

57-3
(cont.)

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the people.

MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for your
comment.

MR. MITCHELL: It's not a comment, it's a
question. Answer it.

MS. STEINHAUER: The question is a good
question and a complicated question.

MR. MITCHELL: It's not complicated.
It's a simple question, simple answers. You guys
didn't even look at the health factor of this thing.

MS. STEINHAUER: The draft environmental
impact statement does include a chapter on human
health and safety. This is a comment and a question
that we get --

MR. MITCHELL: It's not a comment, it's a
question. I want an answer.

MS. STEINHAUER: Do you want to answer
that?

MS. STRENGTH: I understand your concern.
In the draft environmental impact statement we have
a chapter that discusses EMF as well as the health
impacts. It's not a simple answer and there are
studies -- there a lot of studies on this and the
information -- can you hear me?

MR. MITCHELL: But you don't care how

Responses

Commenter 57 – Kenn Mitchell

57-3
(cont.)

1 close to us you're building this thing.
2 MS. STRENGTH: One of the main factors
3 that's considered in routing transmission lines is
4 proximity to residences, and there are a lot of--
5 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Look where you've
6 got it, right through our city, right where
7 everybody are. Right next to Bena we've got a
8 school with kids, you didn't even consider that,
9 look.
10 MS. STRENGTH: At this point --
11 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Point.
12 MS. STRENGTH: -- none of the routes have
13 been selected as the preferred and they're all under
14 consideration --
15 MR. MITCHELL: Did you ever ask us if we
16 want this thing through our reservation?
17 MS. STRENGTH: We're happy to take your
18 comments.
19 MR. MITCHELL: You're like Enbridge, you
20 don't give a shit.
21 MS. STRENGTH: Excuse me, one thing --
22 MR. MITCHELL: You feel that you come in
23 and just -- come in through our reservation without
24 asking us about it. The Tribal Council don't speak
25 for the people. If you give a few dollars, they'll

Responses

57-3
(cont.)

Commenter 57 – Kenn Mitchell

25

1 sign anything without even asking the people. They
2 don't speak for us.

3 Why don't you ask the people if we want a
4 referendum vote, if we want this through our land,
5 our reservation? Did you ever think of that, why
6 didn't you ask us? We're people too, you know, but
7 you guys don't seem to think so.

8 MS. STRENGTH: Okay. I appreciate your
9 comment. One thing that will be done in result of
10 the comments that we've had throughout several of
11 the meetings regarding EMF, since the section of the
12 impact statement is very large and discusses that,
13 we will be preparing a fact sheet that can give you
14 links to the latest information that we have as the
15 federal agency on what the potential impacts could
16 be.

17 And we have agreed that we will make that
18 available to the different entities in the area, and
19 it will be published in the tribal newspaper, okay.

20 MR. MITCHELL: The problem with you
21 printing things like that in the tribal paper, it's
22 not the truth. You have a history of that. You
23 don't -- the history is that you guys don't tell us
24 the truth.

25 MS. STRENGTH: Thank you for your

Responses

**Commenter 57 – Kenn Mitchell;
Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman**

26

1 comments. Do you have other comments you'd like to
2 make? In order to give everybody a chance to speak
3 tonight --

57-4

4 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. One more comment is
5 this, it's my understanding you guys are going to
6 use this eminent domain to take our land to go build
7 your power line. Okay. I'm going to tell you here
8 in front of all these people and these witnesses, I
9 now take any land that you try to claim, I take it
10 back under the eminent domain. Because I am a ward
11 of the federal government and the federal government
12 supercedes the state government. And if you guys
13 want to try and take my land, fine. But I will see
14 you in court and you're going to be paying a hefty
15 price.

16 MS. STRENGTH: Thank you for your
17 comment.

18 Is there anyone else who would like to
19 speak, make a comment? Okay.

20 MS. SHERMAN: Good evening. My name is
21 Elizabeth, E-L-I-Z-A-B-E-T-H, Sherman,
22 S-H-E-R-M-A-N. My physical address is 14004
23 Wakonabo Drive Northwest. Spelling,
24 W-A-K-O-N-A-B-O, Drive Northwest. P.O. Box 854,
25 Cass Lake, Minnesota 56633.

Responses

Comment 57-4

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

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

27

1 I would like to ask --
2 MR. MITCHELL: Give me a minute, okay.
3 MS. SHERMAN: Okay.
4 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. I'm going to do
5 something I don't normally do. I'm going to pull
6 out my asemaa and I'm going to tell you this:
7 Whoever tries anything, they're going to be in
8 trouble. Nanikana (phonetic).
9 MS. SHERMAN: Actually, I have three
10 questions. My first question is, and I know that
11 you're from the Office of Energy Security, and
12 Stephanie, you're from the Rural Utilities Service,
13 I would like to know if there are officials here
14 from the cooperative, Minnesota Power, Minnkota, and
15 Otter Tail. I would like to ask them this first
16 question. Are they here?
17 MS. STEINHAUER: There are people from
18 the applicant.
19 MS. SHERMAN: Okay. The question is, the
20 state of Minnesota has a state law that they passed
21 that requires the state of Minnesota to commit to
22 25 percent renewable energy. And I would like to
23 ask you applicants, why are you not making a
24 commitment to put forth that 25 percent renewable
25 energy? Why not start in Northern Minnesota with

Responses

Comment 58-1

Please refer to the comment response from Ms. Steinhauer that appears directly below the comment. A discussion of the Project purpose and need appears in Section 1.1 of the EIS. A discussion of alternatives considered but not evaluated in the EIS appears in Section 2.3 of the EIS.

58-1

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

28

1 renewable energy? And I understand the state of
2 Minnesota is now trying to repeal that law, but
3 they're showing good faith until 2025. So could you
4 please answer that?

5 MS. STEINHAUER: I can try to answer
6 that. You're correct, there is a renewable energy
7 mandate by 2025, 25 percent. The state of Minnesota
8 has a two-part process for any proposed transmission
9 line.

10 First is, is it needed? In that process
11 we do look at alternatives, which would include
12 generation, including renewable energy generation.
13 We looked at the possibility of adding renewable
14 energy as well as more traditional forms of energy.
15 We looked at the possibility of different
16 transmission alternatives.

17 The federal government also looked at
18 that as part of their review to determine whether
19 transmission is the best way to meet the need. The
20 state of Minnesota determined that there is a need
21 for transmission between these two substations, and
22 they determined that in July of 2009.

23 The question for the state of Minnesota
24 is once the need for the project is determined,
25 where will it go and how will it be constructed and

Responses

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

1 operated.

2 MS. SHERMAN: Okay. But that still does
3 not answer why that superceded the need or the
4 desire to seek renewable energy.

5 MS. STEINHAUER: The project was applied
6 for as a reliability -- as a transmission
7 reliability project. And the applicants had to
8 demonstrate that the need was for reliability, not
9 for bringing new generation in. They meet different
10 needs.

11 MS. SHERMAN: Okay. The impact, the
12 financial, the socioeconomic, and the health factors
13 you have to consider are going to far outweigh the
14 cost of renewable energy, much more, and it's time
15 that these power companies start looking at
16 renewable energy and making that commitment.

17 And they may feel that it's -- in the
18 short term that it's very expensive, but in the long
19 term we've got health factors that we've got to
20 consider for our people along this route. Not only
21 on this reservation, but all the way from Wilton to
22 Grand Rapids.

23 My next question, to what extent have you
24 considered those scientific definitive studies
25 linking leukemia and brain cancer to children, and

Responses

Comment 58-2

A discussion of socioeconomic impacts of the Project appears in Section 3.11 of the EIS. A discussion of potential health and safety effects appears in Section 3.20 of the EIS.

Comment 58-3

A discussion of EMF appears in Sections 3.20.1.1 and 3.20.2.2 of the EIS. Text in Section 3.20.1.1 has been supplemented with an additional subsection titled "Continued Research on EMF Health Effects" that contains a discussion of ongoing research on the potential health effects of EMF.

58-2

58-3

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

Responses

58-3
(cont.)

30

1 neurological disease such as Lou Gehrig's and
2 Alzheimer's to adults? As far as the long-term
3 exposure to the electromagnetic fields of these
4 power lines, to what extent have you really
5 considered it?

6 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for the
7 comment. There is information in the draft
8 environmental impact statement, and I would
9 appreciate your comments once you've had an
10 opportunity to review that and the position -- and
11 the summary that RUS is putting together to comment
12 on whether you believe that is adequate or not.

13 MS. SHERMAN: Okay. I want to go on the
14 record that on behalf of my tribe here at Leech Lake
15 and our children that we totally oppose this power
16 line. Because we have our tribal school on the
17 shortest route, the central corridor which is
18 68 miles, and we know that you've already planned on
19 putting that through that route.

20 We have our tribal school, we have our
21 daycare centers, we have people that live along that
22 route and they will be exposed on a long-term basis.
23 And guess what's going to happen? And like this man
24 (indicating) said, you have not even considered
25 life, a human life over money.

58-4

Comment 58-4

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

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

58-5

1 And we are going to oppose it, and we
2 have tribal trust land that goes from boundary to
3 boundary on our reservation and Congress has a trust
4 responsibility to this tribe and to our lands. And
5 so the state of Minnesota, with the introduction of
6 their Minnesota bill on eminent domain and it looks
7 like they've lined their ducks in a row to have
8 access, priority consideration along that easement
9 and that right-of-way of that railroad and that
10 pipeline. And so guess where it's going, folks? We
11 know it's going to go through the central corridor.

58-6

12 And what about our wetlands through
13 Blackduck? We have environmental -- federal
14 environment laws that protect our wetlands and our
15 natural habitat and our culture, those animals,
16 those fish, those eagles, those flyers, those
17 crawlers, they are our relatives and they are going
18 to be impacted severely.

58-8

19 And there's been research done by a
20 doctor that worked at our IHS hospital here in
21 Bemidji -- or excuse me, Cass Lake, Dr. Becker. And
22 I was told by Greg Chester just a little while ago
23 that he did extensive research on electromagnetic
24 fields and how long-term exposure causes fetus --
25 affects the fetuses and stillbirths and actually

Responses

Comment 58-5

A discussion of the trust responsibility appears in the Executive Summary and Sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 of the EIS.

Comment 58-6

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

Comment 58-7

A discussion of impacts to wetlands appears in Section 3.6.2 of the EIS. A discussion of impacts to biological resources appears in Section 3.7.2 of the EIS. A discussion of environmental permits and regulatory approvals that may be required for the Project appears in Section 6 of the EIS.

Comment 58-8

Text in Section 3.20.1.1 has been supplemented with an additional subsection titled "Continued Research on EMF Health Effects" that contains a discussion of ongoing research on the potential health effects of EMF.

Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman

1 aborts the fetus.

2 And so you can imagine what it does to
3 our cell tissue in our bodies and how that impacts
4 our children, our adults, our elders. And I'm
5 saying that you need to consider human life
6 irregardless of what it is. And it doesn't matter
7 what socioeconomic status that person is in, it's
8 human life and life in our natural habitat.

9 The subsistence that our natural habitat
10 will be eating will be severely impacted to the
11 point where it's going to be just a path of
12 destruction, and that's what I call it, it's a path
13 of destruction.

14 I have fought the Enbridge pipeline along
15 with my Enbridge family. I call them my Enbridge
16 family because we became a family defending our
17 homelands, defending our people, defending our
18 natural habitat, defending our sacred waters. And I
19 am here to go on record to voice that we are
20 totally, totally in opposition to this power line.

21 I guess I addressed the third question.
22 It wasn't necessarily a question, it was about
23 eminent domain. I am just here to go on record that
24 the state of Minnesota and the federal government
25 cannot just introduce their Minnesota bill on

Responses

Comment 58-9

Text in Sections 1.2.3, 1.3.5, and the Executive Summary has been modified to clarify that all Route and Segment Alternatives would avoid crossing on or over tribal trust land.

58-9

**Commenter 58 – Elizabeth Sherman;
Commenter 59 – Vikki Howard**

33

58-9
(cont.)

1 eminent domain because eminent domain does not apply
2 to trust lands. It might apply to allotted lands,
3 but not trust lands, and Congress defines Indian
4 country boundary to boundary.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for your
7 comment. They are a part of the record now.

8 Yes. We'll bring the mic over.

9 Excuse me, I just want to clarify, if you
10 would like to introduce your address, that's fine,
11 but it's not a requirement. Just the main thing is
12 that we have your name spelled correctly.

13 MS. HOWARD: Okay. My name is
14 Vikki Howard, V-I-K-K-I, H-O-W-A-R-D.

15 I have a question and then I just want to
16 make a comment. My question is, I know in the
17 process of defining of the routes for the power
18 line, at one point there was a line that went down
19 through Highway 200 around Walker and then up to
20 Bemidji. What happened to that line, why was it
21 eliminated?

22 MS. STEINHAUER: That was introduced as
23 part of the federal process, so I'm going to let
24 Ms. Strength answer that.

25 MS. STRENGTH: Through the scoping

Responses

Comment 59-1

Three Route Alternatives (Route Alternatives 1, 2, and 3) were identified in the state Scoping Decision signed by the Director of the OES on March 31, 2009 and the federal Scoping Decision signed by the Director of Engineering and Environmental Staff, Rural Utilities Service on December 3, 2009. An alternative that follows Highway 200 was evaluated in the Macrocorridor Study, prepared by the Applicants for the RUS in June 2008. Based on the evaluation conducted under the Macrocorridor Study, the corridor that follows Highway 200 was eliminated from further consideration in the EIS by the RUS. Impact analysis for this corridor was not conducted for the EIS.

59-1

Responses

34

1 process several additional alternatives were added
2 for consideration, the northern route that we have
3 today and then two that went further south. Those
4 routes were added because through the federal
5 process we felt that only having the central
6 corridor routes, 1 and 2, didn't give us enough of a
7 difference in what the impacts could be and we
8 needed to look further to see if there was another
9 area or another route that would have less impacts
10 or that should be looked at through the EIS.

11 After the public meetings, the public
12 comment, the cooperating agencies all met and looked
13 at the information on those corridors. There were
14 some studies that were done and we looked at which
15 ones should be carried forward into the draft
16 environmental impact statement because they did give
17 us a good, you know, range of options, they were
18 possible routes.

19 The two routes that went further south
20 were shown to have greater impacts and there were
21 some other concerns with it. There's a lot of
22 information, and to try to give you an answer to
23 summarize it right now wouldn't do justice to the
24 work that went into it.

25 But that is spelled out in a document

Commenter 59 – Vikki Howard

35

1 that's on the RUS website, which is on that handout
2 that I have at the front, it's called the scoping
3 decision or the scoping report. And it's the one
4 that federal agencies put out and it really explains
5 why those other alternatives were eliminated and why
6 Route 3 was added.

7 MS. HOWARD: Okay. Is Route 3 the
8 northern route, then?

9 MS. STRENGTH: Yes.

10 MS. HOWARD: Was the impact from -- the
11 southern route around Walker, was that from after
12 the public meetings that they held? Were those
13 public meetings held in Walker and Longville and
14 Remer?

15 MS. STRENGTH: I don't believe so.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Walker.

17 MS. STRENGTH: Walker, okay.

18 MS. HOWARD: Was it environmental impact
19 or people impact?

20 MS. STRENGTH: It was an environmental
21 impact. There's a lot information on it if you want
22 to look at that, and I really appreciate comments.
23 If there's something that we've missed in that
24 analysis, it would be very helpful for the final
25 EIS.

Responses

Commenter 59– Vikki Howard

1 MS. HOWARD: I'm just bringing that up
2 because there seems to be a large impact of the
3 central corridor. And I'm going to make a written
4 statement, but I'll also make a public comment
5 tonight here, too.

6 In the central corridor going through the
7 midst of the Leech Lake Reservation Nation -- and I
8 want to speak on behalf of, also, the bald eagle
9 nation, Leech Lake is -- has the largest nesting
10 area of the bald eagle outside of Alaska. This is
11 their home and we know that this is going to affect
12 their breeding ground.

13 The birds that will come forward from the
14 bald eagle, their whole nesting area, their hunting
15 area, and where they live. But more importantly, it
16 will affect the people of Leech Lake Nation and our
17 neighbors and friends that have all lived here most
18 of their lives.

19 I'm a parent of a student at
20 Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Tribal School outside of Bena
21 here, west of Bena. And there are 300 children that
22 go to school there and they will be within range of
23 those electric/magnetic fields. And I know you
24 wouldn't want your children attending that school if
25 there was a big power line going by.

Responses

Comment 59-2

A discussion of species of concern in the Study Area, specifically birds, appears in Section 3.8.1.1 of the EIS.

Comment 59-3

A discussion of EMF appears in Sections 3.20.1.1 and 3.20.2.2 of the EIS.

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is located approximately 200 feet north of the northern boundary Route Alternatives 2 and 4. If Route Alternative 2 or 4 is selected and a 125-foot ROW would be required for the Project in the area of the school, the distance between transmission line structures and the school would be at least 262.5 feet. The actual distance may be greater depending on the Route Alternative selected and final alignment of transmission line.

59-2

59-3

Commenter 59 – Vikki Howard

1 And I ask all of you that work for those
2 companies and for the national security, how
3 comfortable you would feel having your children in a
4 school that was within range of electromagnetic
5 fields? You know, that really concerns me.

6 So I'm going to speak on behalf of those
7 children at Bug-0-Nay-Ge-Shig School, that's their
8 home, that's their school. It's the central
9 location and the heart of our nation here at Leech
10 Lake, and they have every right to be there, to be
11 safe.

12 And I also want to speak on behalf of all
13 the water that will be impacted. Because the water
14 tables in Northern Minnesota here at the three
15 largest lakes here on the Leech Lake Reservation,
16 they feed the Mississippi River flowage all the way
17 down to New Orleans. It starts here. All the water
18 that goes into the Mississippi River comes from here
19 within the Leech Lake Nation.

20 And so that's another impact. And maybe
21 there's not a lot of our people here tonight, but
22 those of us that are here, we're speaking on behalf
23 of those people that don't have -- are able -- are
24 comfortable to articulate our desires and our
25 concerns regarding to our land, our children, our

Responses

Comment 59-4

A discussion of the effects of the Project on water resources, including the Mississippi River, appears in Section 3.4 of the EIS.

59-4

Commenter 59 – Vikki Howard

38

1 families, and the wildlife, our brothers and sisters
2 of the earth that we share this earth with.

3 So I want to put that on record because
4 that's the impact that this will have on those
5 central corridors going through starting at the Ball
6 Club community, Schley, Bena, Cass Lake, and I'll
7 even speak on behalf of people in Bemidji.

8 And I don't know how the meeting went in
9 Bemidji this week, what statements were made there,
10 if there were concerns. But we're concerned here at
11 Leech Lake for that. Miigwech.

12 MS. STRENGTH: Thank you. I do want to
13 mention that all of the transcripts from the
14 meetings, including the Bemidji one, will be made
15 available.

16 MS. HOWARD: On your website?

17 MS. STRENGTH: Do you know when they will
18 be -- will it be with the final EIS or is it sooner?

19 MS. STEINHAUER: I think it will be
20 sooner.

21 MS. STRENGTH: Okay. It takes a while to
22 have them processed and typed and posted, but they
23 would be on the OES website that's on the handout.

24 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes.

25 MS. YOUNG: Good evening, everybody.

Responses

Commenter 60 – Shirley Young

1 Usually when we have a meeting when our people get
2 together we usually have a prayer before we start,
3 so I wish that would have happened.

4 But anyway, my name is Shirley Young,
60-1 5 S-H-I-R-L-E-Y, Y-O-U-N-G, and I'm from Bena. I'm
6 totally opposed to this going through where I live.
7 I'm surrounded right now by the pipeline, I have one
8 on the left and one on the right. And now you want
9 to put this transmission line through, probably over
10 my head, and I do not want that to happen.

11 A lot of the things that I had planned on
12 saying have already been said, so I'm not going to
13 repeat, and I feel the same way as the three people
14 that have spoken. I feel the same way they do.

15 I belong to the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig school
16 board, and that is one of the questions I wanted to
60-2 17 ask. How many miles or how many feet would the
18 transmission line be from the school before it was
19 okay to be there? That's one of the questions.
20 Could you answer that for me, please?

21 MS. STEINHAUER: I can't answer your
22 question directly because I don't know actually
23 where the school is. And we can go over the maps
24 and we can look at that. There can't be any
25 structures within the right-of-way of a transmission

Responses

Comment 60-1

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

Comment 60-2

A discussion of the proximity of structures to the transmission line appears in Section 3.11.2, Impacts to Homes and Structures, of the EIS. Text in this section has been modified to expand the discussion of potential impacts to homes to include other building structures.

The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School is located approximately 200 feet north of the northern boundary Route Alternatives 2 and 4. If Route Alternative 2 or 4 is selected and a 125-foot ROW would be required for the Project in the area of the school, the distance between transmission line structures and the school would be at least 262.5 feet. The actual distance may be greater depending on the Route Alternative selected and final alignment of transmission line.

Commenter 60 – Shirley Young

1 line.

2 MS. YOUNG: Okay. Okay. I have family
3 all over the Leech Lake Nation, so I'm speaking for
4 them and I'm speaking for my children, my
5 grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren that are
6 yet to come, and I do not approve of this
7 transmission line going through our reservation.

8 Maybe it will be cheaper for you to put
9 it through this way, but I see that there's another
10 line going around the Blackduck way. So that is how
11 I feel and I do not approve of this. And I know --
12 I've read up, too, on what this has caused for
13 different -- you know, the different diseases and
14 things that it does to the people, and I just feel
15 that it's not right for our people.

16 And if we don't speak up for our people,
17 for the people that can't speak for themselves, then
18 who's going to do it? We need to speak up for all
19 of the Leech Lake people that aren't here tonight,
20 and I'm so grateful for these people that are here
21 to speak up for the people that do not have a voice.

22 And I have haven't always been able to
23 speak up either, but I'm doing it now for the
24 people. And I know -- the Bemidji meeting, I know
25 there was a lot of opposition there, too, and I'm

Responses

Comment 60-3

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

60-3

Commenter 61 – Barry Babcock

41

1 sure you're going to find more and more as you have
2 your meetings. Thank you.

3 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for your
4 comment.

5 MR. BABCOCK: Barry Babcock, I live in a
6 rural area of Lakeport Township in northern Hubbard
7 County.

8 MS. STEINHAUER: I'm sorry. Could you
9 please spell your name so that the court reporter
10 can --

11 MR. BABCOCK: B-A-R-R-Y, B-A-B-C-O-C-K.

12 I'll admit, I'm not acquainted with the
13 nuances of the power line other than the fact of the
14 electromagnetic field, nor I was that acquainted
15 with the nuances of the Enbridge pipeline other than
16 the horrific effects that were taking place up in
17 northern Alberta and that it was -- it's very dirty
18 oil.

19 And but I -- as a white person, and I
20 don't want to come here tonight and sound like I'm
21 patronizing to my Native American friends here, but
22 I know I grew up in the culture of white society
23 where racism -- to be outright, you know, blunt
24 about it. It's the atmosphere that I grew up in.

25 But having made a lot of acquaintances,

Responses

Commenter 61 – Barry Babcock

42

1 good friends in the Cass Lake area, I've come to
2 learn about treaty rights, treaty and hunting
3 rights. And the land -- the treaties -- all the
4 major treaties that were signed in this state with
5 the Native Americans, the Ojibwe and the Dakota, is
6 what became -- those parcels of land are what became
7 the building blocks of what's now Minnesota.

8 And these hunting and fishing rights,
9 gathering rights, when those were given to the
10 Native Americans when they gave away their land or
11 sold their land or outright stole it from them, or
12 they got a real raw deal on it, that was under the
13 understanding that they needed those rights in order
14 to maintain their identity and culture to fish and
15 hunt and to be healthy, physically healthy and
16 mentally healthy at the same time in order to
17 maintain their identity as people.

18 And having been here and as part of the
19 state for quite a few years, I'm going to be 62
20 shortly, and I've seen what's happened in Northern
21 Minnesota here, how it's been cut up and carved up
22 with development and power lines and pipelines, and
23 now we're even looking at sulfide mining projects,
24 there's eight to twelve different proposed sites in
25 the state.

Responses

Commenter 61 – Barry Babcock

43

1 But what we're doing here is we're
2 denying these people what -- their identity by --
3 with these treaties they were to maintain these
4 hunting and fishing rights. With the impact that
5 this is having on wetlands and the Enbridge
6 pipeline, there's been oil spills in Cass Lake.

7 And at a recent rally I heard a
8 well-known Native American speaker talk about when
9 he was in Mexico, they were warned not to drink the
10 water. Now when you come to Cass Lake, they warn
11 you not to drink the water here, too.

12 I empathize with your job that you people
13 are -- you know, you have a job to do, and I don't
14 want to sound like I'm just dumping on you, but I'm
15 not even sure if this draft environmental impact
16 statement is done under federal NEPA or if this is
17 state, Minnesota Environmental Protection Act.

18 But my experience with EAWs and EISs are
19 that pretty much the tablet's -- the rules are
20 already set. They're determined before we even get
21 to those. Even now they're weakening. The
22 Environmental Quality Board of Minnesota has a lot
23 of proposals where they're going to -- what we have
24 as citizens is going to -- our access to the
25 Minnesota Environmental Protection Act is being

Responses

Comment 61-1

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

61-1

Commenter 61 – Barry Babcock

44

61-1
(cont.)

1 weakened and yearly in the legislature there's some
2 bill that's passed that further corrodes the
3 Minnesota environmental act, whether it's an ethanol
4 plant where they get to get under the wire on
5 environmental review if they keep it under a certain
6 size, or a hog feedlot.

7 And even with the recent draft
8 environmental impact statement for this nonferrous
9 sulfide mining up by Ely along Birch Lake that was
10 just condemned by the Federal Environmental
11 Protection Agency.

12 So although I'm not -- I haven't read the
13 draft environmental impact statement and I'm not
14 acquainted with it, I've just become very suspect to
15 it. And people, ordinarily citizens, don't have the
16 access that we're supposed to be guaranteed through
17 NEPA and MEPA. It seems to be more that it's like
18 these Dick Cheney-esk backdoor corporation decisions
19 that determine pipelines, power lines, sulfide
20 mining, timber access, whatever.

21 But anyhow, I guess I don't have a
22 question, but I just wanted to make that comment
23 here tonight.

24 MS. STEINHAUER: Thank you for that
25 comment. That's part of the record.

Responses

Commenter 62 – Greg Chester

1 I'm sorry. I realize it wasn't a
2 question, but the EIS is prepared to meet both
3 federal and state need. On the federal side, it is
4 to meet the National Environmental Policy Act and
5 Section 106 consultation. On the Minnesota side,
6 it's prepared in order to meet the Power Plant
7 Siting Act requirements for a transmission line of
8 this size, to reiterate and clarify.

9 MR. CHESTER: Thank you. My name is
10 Greg Chester, G-R-E-G, C-H-E-S-T-E-R.

11 A little bit farther away, I don't want
12 to deafen people in here.

62-1

13 I want a point of clarification. The
14 Dr. Becker that did the research on electromagnetic
15 fields was from New York State, not from here. And
16 he did find that there was a major increase -- or an
17 increase in spontaneous abortions of woman who lived
18 within a certain range of the 765 kilovolt power
19 line in that area.

20 He has spent over 40 years -- 45 years of
21 research in that field. The -- one thing I'm
22 wondering about here is that I guess Minnkota is the
23 person in charge here and I think should be up in
24 front and speaking.

25 There's an old saying that if one only

Responses

Comment 62-1

A discussion of EMF appears in Sections 3.20.1.1 and 3.20.2.2 of the EIS. Text in Section 3.20.1.1 has been supplemented with an additional subsection titled "Continued Research on EMF Health Effects" that contains a discussion of ongoing research on the potential health effects of EMF.

Commenter 62 – Greg Chester

1 has a hammer, everything is a nail. And it seems
2 that since they have the hammer or the power, the
3 coal-fired power plant to the west of us, they want
4 to feed everything with that coal-fired power plant.

62-2

5 And I think it's time that we use our
6 brain power, our energies, to bring in renewable
7 energy and use it here locally so we won't need this
8 power line at all and we can do away with a lot of
9 these coal-fired power plants. I think it's time to
10 act and act now.

11 Why give away billions of dollars to
12 build these monsters that are hurting us, that are
13 hurting our children, and will hurt our
14 grandchildren? I think it's time that we followed
15 up on the wisdom that our great educational
16 institutions have developed in our population and
17 lean on the wisdom of the indigenous people that
18 have been here a lot longer than we have and follow
19 that.

20 I'm reminded of this program I heard
21 today where they were talking about this French
22 experiment where they -- the researcher got a
23 subject to turn the power up on an electric shocker.
24 And if a person mis-answered a question, they would
25 turn it up a little bit further. And they got him

Responses

Comment 62-2

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

Commenter 62 – Greg Chester

1 to go all the way to 450 volts and the guy was
2 screaming and shouting. And what I envision here is
3 the people from Minnkota getting you to turn the
4 power up on us, how much will these people be
5 willing to take before they are -- you know, are in
6 total agony?

7 We've already lost many, many people here
8 from the -- this, what do they call it? The box
9 factory down here where they used to put telephone
10 poles into open pits of creosote, and from that
11 whole area the people who lived there are suffering
12 from autoimmune disease. Now you're going to put
13 something else that is probably just as toxic
14 through the same area and through a much greater
15 part of the Ojibwe people's territory.

16 Back in 1898, the Ojibwe people were
17 surrounded and their forest was being chopped down,
18 and they turned to the United States and said
19 protect us from your people, protect us from your
20 corporations. And they brought in the U.S. Forest
21 Service to do that, to protect their forest -- not
22 our forest, their forest from the United States
23 citizens and corporations. It's time that we U.S.
24 citizens put our foot down and follow through on
25 their plea 100 years ago and stop this. They want

Responses

Comment 62-3

A discussion of cumulative effects of the Project and the St. Regis Superfund Site in Cass Lake appears in Section 4 of the EIS.

62-3

Commenter 62 – Greg Chester; Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

1 an intact, healthy forest.
2 One of my students here about 15 years
3 ago wrote a beautiful little paper where her father
4 slapped her on her hand and told her no, you can no
5 longer drink the water from the pond behind our
6 house. They were able to drink the water straight
7 from the ponds and lakes around here up to the
8 1970s, at that particular one.
9 This is their Garden of Eden. We don't
10 have the right -- we don't have any right to butcher
11 it. We have the responsibility to protect it.
12 We're just guests here in their territory. We're
13 just guests, and we should act responsibly as
14 guests. Thank you.
15 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. Grey shirt.
16 MS. KNOWLES: Hi. My name is
17 Becky Knowles, B-E-C-K-Y, K-N-O-W-L-E-S. I live up
18 in Hines, Minnesota, just along the proposed
19 northern corridor.
20 I see the proposal to run this new power
21 line right through the heart of the Leech Lake
22 Reservation as just yet further ecological and
23 cultural degradation of the homeland of the Leech
24 Lake Band of Ojibwe.
25 I was at a recent meeting with top

Responses

Comment 63-1

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS. Potential impacts of the Project on resources specific to the Lake Leech Reservation are discussed throughout the EIS. Consultation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is ongoing.

63-1

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

49

1 leaders from federal agencies and they were
2 addressing climate change. And they were asked at
3 this meeting to specifically talk about what each of
4 their agencies is doing about climate change. And I
5 was most interested that the representative from the
6 U.S. Forest Service said that the forest service has
7 identified environmental justice as one of the
8 priority considerations for the entire Forest
9 Service as they go forward addressing the fact of
10 climate change.

11 So the federal agencies there were NOAA,
12 USGS, the National Parks Service, the U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. And
14 they all were in total agreement with directions
15 from their secretaries, Secretary Salazar and
16 Secretary Vilsack, that climate change is a fact and
17 climate change will be addressed as these agencies
18 go forward.

19 And so, again, the U.S. Forest Service
20 has identified environmental justice as a primary
21 priority consideration as they address climate
22 change. So I know you've addressed environmental
23 justice in your report.

24 Since we began this process, this
25 proposal to run this power line right through the

Responses

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

50

1 heart of the reservation, things have changed. The
2 fact of climate change has been acknowledged, the
3 federal administration has changed, the realization
4 by the American people -- not all of the American
5 people, certainly, but the realization by our
6 federal agencies that climate change is a fact and
7 will have to be acted on, that has changed.

8 Also, the recognition that tribal people,
9 indigenous people have not been treated to the full
10 extent of the trust responsibility that the federal
11 agencies have, that has been acknowledged as well.
12 And so the secretaries of Interior and the
13 secretaries of the USDA are working hand-in-hand,
14 according to what I just learned at this meeting, to
15 right some of those -- some of the ways that the
16 indigenous rights have been overlooked in the past.

17 Further, it's common knowledge -- it was
18 pointed out at this meeting that I just came from
19 that as you increase the use of coal-fired power
20 plants you increase the mercury emissions in the
21 air. These increased mercury emissions are going to
22 increase the risk of the methylmercury being
23 produced and the bioaccumulation of methylmercury,
24 the toxic chemical in the fish and the other animals
25 that the Leech Lake people rely on for their very --

Responses

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

1 for their very livelihood.

63-2

2 I mean, these folks are living off the
3 land as they have done, and it's the federal
4 responsibility to ensure that that ability to live
5 off of their homeland is not compromised. This
6 power line running right through the heart of their
7 homeland would certainly compromise that.

63-3

8 This idea that -- I just heard it in the
9 hallway just a moment, too, that the electromagnetic
10 field is attenuated or lessened as you move away
11 from the line. Well, that's fine and good, but that
12 doesn't provide any protection whatsoever for the
13 humans and other animals that are using the
14 right-of-ways.

15 These right-of-ways and -- of all sorts,
16 the roads, the railroad right-of-ways, the various
17 utility right-of-ways that crisscross this Leech
18 Lake Reservation, they're used by animals and
19 people. There are -- there are lots of traditional
20 resources that are growing along these
21 right-of-ways.

22 So the fact that, well, yeah, the
23 electromagnetic field is attenuated or lessened, and
24 as long as you stay a certain distance from the line
25 then you're not at risk, that provides no protection

Responses

Comment 63-2

Potential impacts of the Project on resources specific to the Lake Leech Reservation are discussed throughout the EIS. Consultation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is ongoing.

Comment 63-3

A discussion of EMF appears in Sections 3.20.1.1 and 3.20.2.2 of the EIS. Text in Section 3.20.1.1 has been supplemented with a discussion of persons working and engaging in other activities within the ROW.

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

1 for the people who would be otherwise using that
2 right-of-way.

63-4

3 So, in essence, if you're saying that for
4 the people to be safe from the electromagnetic field
5 they need to stay 125 feet, 62 feet on other side of
6 the line, away from the line, then you're in essence
7 saying you're going to be putting up a fence and
8 that right-of-way no longer is useful to these folks
9 for gathering and hunting.

10 And finally, I'm involved with a lot
11 of -- I'm a biologist and I work for the Leech Lake
12 Band. But I'm an ecologist more than anything and
13 I'm working with all the different agencies and
14 scientists on landscape scale considerations of
15 managing our lands, managing our working landscapes
16 with all of the various threats coming down the
17 pike.

63-5

18 And what I learned at all of these
19 meetings, and I heard it again today, that this
20 landscape right here -- this Leech Lake Reservation
21 that includes these three major lakes of the
22 headwaters of the Mississippi River, this very
23 landscape of the Leech Lake Band, has been
24 identified just within the past five to ten years by
25 both state and nonprofit biologists as being an area

Responses

Comment 63-4

A discussion of typical EMF levels for a 230 kV transmission line are displayed in Figure 3.20-2 contained within Section 3.20 of the EIS. The estimated peak magnitude of electric field density directly beneath the transmission line conductor is 2.6 kV/m, below the 8 kV/m threshold established by the State of Minnesota and would not require limited access to the Project ROW. The estimated peak magnetic field beneath the transmission line conductor is 260 mG. Minnesota has not established any thresholds for magnetic fields, but these levels are below established international thresholds.

Comment 63-5

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

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles

Responses

63-5
(cont.)

53

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of high conservation value.

I actually heard it mentioned today and I was not supposed to repeat it, but here we go on public record, there actually is a consideration of establishing a new federal wildlife refuge -- wildlife refuge -- wildlife refuge within this land mass. This is -- ecologically this is very high quality land, the waters are of ultimate -- high value. Biologically, this landscape is very, very, valuable -- very valuable.

And to dissect it -- bisect it once again with more corridor is just -- it should be unconscionable. And in addition to its ecological value, this landscape may well be eligible to be listed on National Register of Historical Places.

So this particular landscape, the Leech Lake Band's homeland, is unique in many, many ways. The degree of overlap with the U.S. Forest Service is unique. The fact that this Forest Service was established to protect this land on behalf of the Leech Lake people, that is a unique occurrence.

The fact that this landscape will very well qualify to be listed as a historic district and the fact that this entire landscape is of potentially high conservation value, all of that

Commenter 63 – Becky Knowles; Commenter 64 – Steven Griep

Responses

1 works together to say we do not need an extra set of
2 disturbance going through the very heart of it,
3 particularly when there is an alternative, which is
4 why we worked hard to have something other than the
5 central corridor put into this project.

63-6

6 So I live up near the northern corridor,
7 this thing would be coming by my house. But in this
8 particular case, I say put it in my backyard. This
9 landscape here is too valuable to just disregard
10 those factors and just continue to disturb it.

11 MS. STEINHAEUER: Thank you.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Good job, Vikki.

13 MR. GRIEP: My name is Steve Griep,
14 S-T-E-V-E-N, G-R-I-E-P. And I just live a few miles
15 south of here, it would be along the corridor -- the
16 Route 1 corridor.

64-1

17 And a comment I have that hasn't been
18 mentioned and deals with the environmental impact
19 statement is the socioeconomic part of it, is that
20 high lines are a real eyesore, and to run them
21 through the heart of the Chippewa National Forest --
22 which has to be one of the largest tracts of forest
23 in this country.

24 I certainly agree with what people have
25 said about the health aspect of the people and all

Comment 63-6

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

Comment 64-1

A discussion of potential visual impacts of the Project appears in Section 3.1 of the EIS.

Commenter 64 – Steven Griep; Commenter 65 – Nicole Beauliao

Responses

1 that, but just the environment, the beauty of the
2 area around here is -- you can't duplicate it. And
3 I guess that's all I really have to say.

4 MS. STEINHAEUER: I want to give everybody
5 who wants to speak tonight the opportunity to do
6 that. I also want to respect people's time and not
7 keep people here if everybody believes they've had
8 an opportunity to speak.

9 We are accepting written comments through
10 April 26th, and so if you think of something later,
11 there is a variety of contact information. As long
12 as we get that by April 26th to either myself or
13 Stephanie, that will also be part of the record for
14 this project.

15 And Stephanie and I, as well as
16 representatives from the applicant and the Forest
17 Service, will be around afterwards to answer
18 questions, if you're more comfortable asking
19 questions in that format.

20 I don't see any hands, so I'm -- oh.

21 MS. BEAULIAO: Good evening. My name is
22 Nicole Beauliao, N-I-C-O-L-E, B-E-A-U-L-I-A-O.

23 I guess I don't really have a question,
24 but I have something to say. I am a Leech Lake
25 enrollee here. I grow up in Bemidji, but this is a

Commenter 65 – Nicole Beauliao

65-1

1 very, very touchy thing that you guys are trying to
2 bring to our reservation here. Not only is there
3 ecological importance, there is cultural importance.
4 And I don't expect you guys to understand that, but
5 you need to listen to these people.

6 We had a very frustrated elder here
7 tonight, and I can understand his frustration. Our
8 identity is being questioned here for the future of
9 the Anishinaabe people. Let me remind you guys, you
10 guys, the government, never defeated the Ojibwe
11 people. We allowed you guys to live here out of
12 brotherhood. We held our hands out and we helped
13 you, we let you raise your children here, and all
14 you do is take, take, take.

65-2

15 We don't have much left. We -- our
16 language is on the verge of being absent, our
17 culture, our identity, and that is scary. And I
18 really like what Greg had to say and I don't think
19 it could have been said any better. You guys are
20 visitors here, don't forget that. This is our land
21 here. We were the original inhabitants and now we
22 are being taken from and taken from.

23 And I was talking to a young man
24 yesterday and we got into a real deep discussion and
25 he had a really awesome analogy. He said it's as if

Responses

Comment 65-1

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS. Potential impacts of the Project on resources specific to the Lake Leech Reservation are discussed throughout the EIS. Consultation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is ongoing. A discussion of the potential affect on cultural resources appears in Section 3.9 of the EIS.

Comment 65-2

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

Commenter 65 – Nicole Beauliao

65-2
(cont.)

1 the government came here, took everything you
2 possibly could have when we held our hand out with
3 peace and brotherhood. You got a huge plate heaping
4 of our food, our game, our vegetables. We're hungry
5 people trying to get at that plate, like, hey, we
6 taught you how to grow those vegetables, we taught
7 you how to hunt this game and you keep pushing us
8 away out of gluttony.
9 And I think that that really clarifies
10 the way we feel and that our relationship with the
11 U.S. Government is not -- there is nothing good
12 coming -- that came out of that and it continues
13 just to worsen and worsen. And I haven't heard one
14 good thing come out of anybody's statements tonight,
15 not one good thing.
16 My kids go to the Bug-0-Nay-Ge-Shig
17 School. And I don't know if you guys are aware, but
18 the Bug-0-Nay-Ge-Shig School holds our niigaane
19 program. That is our most vital source of the
20 revitalization of our language. That language holds
21 our identity, and you guys want to take that from
22 us, almost.
23 That's basically what you're saying with
24 these routes here. And yeah, this is going to bring
25 brain cancer, this is going to bring infant

Responses

Comment 65-3
A discussion of EMF appears in Sections 3.20.1.1 and 3.20.2.2 of the EIS.

65-3

Commenter 65 – Nicole Beauliao

Responses

65-3
(cont.)

1 mortality, as if our rates aren't high enough. It's
2 going to raise it right to the roof. There goes our
3 language, there goes our identity, there goes our
4 ceremonies.

5 And I heard a lot of sighing going on
6 back here (indicating) when our elder was up here
7 talking, he has every right to be frustrated. He
8 grew up watching this corruption and putting us down
9 constantly, putting us down and pushing our issues
10 under the rug as if they don't exist.

11 And this appalled me, this makes me sick
12 to my stomach, knowing that you guys want to make --
13 what it is is at the end of the day, it's a paycheck
14 and a comfort zone. A paycheck, a comfort zone,
15 versus the original inhabitants of the United
16 States.

17 And I see a pregnant young lady up here
18 (indicating). Now, I want you to put yourself in my
19 position, imagine your kid being exposed to things
20 like this. That is not right, that's not human.

21 Miigwech.

22 MS. YOUNG: Could I ask another question?
23 My question is, who benefits from this transmission
24 line coming through here?

25 MS. STEINHAUER: I'm sorry. Can I ask

Commenter 66 – Shirley Young;

59

1 you to please restate your name for the court
2 reporter?

3 MS. YOUNG: Oh, I'm sorry. My name is
4 Shirley Young. Do I have to spell it?

66-1 5 That's my question. Who benefits from
6 this huge power line coming through here, does the
7 Leech Lake people benefit from this? I don't think
8 so. I think it's just taking some more of our land
9 that has already been taken from us.

66-2 10 And like the young lady said, it seems
11 like that's all that happens is taking, taking,
12 taking from the Anishinaabe people, and I'm really
13 tired of it. It saddens me that I know once I'm
14 gone from this earth that my grandchildren, my
15 great-great-grandchildren will no longer have any
16 more land. They might not even be alive once they
17 live under this power line that's going right over
18 my house.

19 That's all I have to say.

20 MS. SHERMAN: Elizabeth Sherman.

21 You heard very compelling statements by
22 very concerned residents of your proposed corridor,
23 and I would ask that you humble yourself to pay
24 attention to what you heard tonight because it's far
25 too compelling to not listen.

Responses

Comment 66-1

A discussion of the Project purpose and need appears in Section 1.1 of the EIS.

Comment 66-2

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS. Potential impacts of the Project on resources specific to the Lake Leech Reservation are discussed throughout the EIS. Consultation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is ongoing.

Commenter 67 – John Green

1 And I ask you please, please, do not let
2 this transmission line power line go through our
3 reservation.
4 Miigwech.
5 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. I think we have --
6 excuse me. Okay. We'll take another comment now
7 and then, depending on how many more people, it may
8 be time to break so that the reporter can take a
9 break. But we'll be happy to take your comment now.
10 MR. GREEN: My name is John Green
11 (phonetic). I don't know how to spell that, I
67-1 | 12 guess, my name is Geewagan (phonetic). But I'd like
13 to know why this has to come through our
14 reservation, why can't they go around?
15 Did you tell everybody what a threat this
16 is -- health threat this is? Hello?
17 MS. STEINHAUER: That's your comment?
18 MR. GREEN: Yeah. It's a question.
19 MS. STEINHAUER: The -- my response to
20 your first comment is, there are three routes under
21 consideration, and that's part of what we're out
22 here for is taking comments on those.
67-2 | 23 MR. GREEN: Okay. We would appreciate it
24 if you did not go through our reservation and go
25 around. We just had this pipeline come through here

Responses

Comment 67-1

Please refer to the comment response from Ms. Steinhauer that appears directly below the comment. A discussion of the alternatives considered in the EIS appears in Section 2.2. The state and federal scoping decisions are included in Appendix A of the EIS.

Comment 67-2

Thank you for your comment. It has been noted and included in the record for this EIS. A discussion of cumulative effects of the Project and the Enbridge Energy pipeline expansions appears in Section 4 of the EIS.

Commenter 67 – John Green; Commenter 68 – Greg Chester

Responses

67-2
(cont.)

61

1 and this is a terroristry (phonetic) that you're
2 proposing, you know.

3 So I can speak for a lot of people that
4 they do not want this coming through our
5 reservation. But, you know, I speak for myself
6 right now, but there's a lot of people who won't
7 speak up because everything is -- everything was
8 either taken from them or they were forced into
9 doing what they had to do to survive. And we're
10 still in the survival thing. You know, it may not
11 seem like that to the non-Native people, but that's
12 the way it is. So that's all I've got to say.

13 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes.

14 MR. CHESTER: Greg Chester, speaking a
15 second time.

16 Just a brief comment, I notice that we
17 really have not gotten any answers to any of the
18 questions out here to this point in time, and I
19 would respectfully ask the folks from Minnkota, if
20 there are any people here from Minnkota, if they
21 could come up and answer any of the questions that
22 have been proposed.

23 MS. STEINHAUER: Mr. Chester, the meeting
24 is being conducted by the state of Minnesota and the
25 RUS, and the purpose of the meeting is to take

Commenter 68 – Greg Chester

62

1 comments on the project.

2 The applicants have had meetings, they
3 have a position, and they continue to advocate for
4 that position. The purpose of this meeting is to,
5 in a neutral setting, take comments on that. I
6 don't want to cut you off, but April 21st through
7 23rd, the contested case hearings, one of which will
8 be held in Cass Lake, those will be presided over by
9 a judge. The applicants, as well as myself, will be
10 available to answer questions. The OES will
11 cross-examine the applicants. Any member of the
12 public can directly ask them questions at that time.

13 MR. CHESTER: But wouldn't it be
14 appropriate to at least answer a few of the
15 questions that have been brought up here at this
16 meeting? And if the people from Minnkota have those
17 answers, you know, we're not in an adversarial
18 relationship, we're simply asking for answers.

19 MS. STRENGTH: I understand what you're
20 saying. The answers to the comments and oral
21 portion of the meeting will be answered in the final
22 environmental impact statement. The reason for that
23 is, rather than give you an answer today from
24 myself, from Suzanne, we get the answer from the
25 actual people who are experts from the resource area

Responses

Commenter 67 – John Green

63

1 that your question's coming from.
2 There will be opportunities after we have
3 the oral portion, where if you have questions and
4 you want to speak one-on-one with the
5 representatives, you can try to get your questions
6 resolved that way. But we want make sure that we
7 give responses that are accurate and that build on
8 what's already been put out in the draft
9 environmental impact statement into the final. So
10 there will be answers, it's just not a format where
11 we're going to sit here and go through the details
12 and specifics on what, in a lot of cases, are very
13 lengthy analyses.
14 UNIDENTIFIED: Just going through the
15 motions.
16 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. The gentleman --
17 MR. GREEN: Have you made an agreement
18 with Leech Lake yet for this power line, the Tribal
19 Council or anything, or are you talking to them
20 about it?
21 MS. STEINHAUER: The state of Minnesota
22 and the RUS are working with the Leech Lake Band DRM
23 to prepare the environmental impact statement. The
24 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will make a
25 determination on the route, and how that affects the

Responses

Comment 67-3

Consultation with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is ongoing. Information regarding necessary permits or approvals to cross the Leech Lake Reservation has been requested from the LLDRM.

67-3

Commenter 68 – Elizabeth Sherman

64

1 reservation is something that the applicants would
2 need to work with the band on.

3 MR. GREEN: You know, they did that with
4 the pipeline. They said that it wasn't coming
5 through. Next thing you know, they're digging up
6 the thing, you know. So they paid no attention
7 whatsoever to the statement from the research that
8 they did. The band didn't -- the DRM made a --
9 recommended that they shouldn't do that, but they
10 did it.

11 We are concerned, you know. So I'm here
12 to find out what I can and so is everybody else, I
13 guess, you know. So that's where I'm at, I want to
14 know.

15 MS. SHERMAN: I have one more question.
16 Elizabeth Sherman.

17 You said the southern corridor has been
18 scratched, right, along 200?

19 MS. STEINHAUER: There was a corridor
20 that was looked at along 200, and that's not been
21 carried forward.

68-1 | 22 MS. SHERMAN: And why was it not carried
23 forward?

24 MS. STRENGTH: There are a lot of reasons
25 that are in detail in the document we put forward,

Responses

Comment 68-1

See response to Comment 59-1, which addresses the same concern.

Commenter 68 – Elizabeth Sherman

65

1 the scoping report decision. But in essence, what
2 we can say is that the northern corridor avoided the
3 Leech Lake Reservation, and that was one of the
4 things we were trying to look at in the analysis, is
5 a route that avoided the Leech Lake Reservation,
6 what it'd look like and what the impacts would be.
7 So the northern route was carried forward to do
8 that.

9 The southern route had additional
10 impacts, and since it did not parallel a
11 transmission line, there were the potential for more
12 wetland impacts and some other things that made
13 it the decision of the cooperating agencies to
14 eliminate the southern route from further
15 consideration and instead go forward with the
16 northern route.

68-2 17 MS. SHERMAN: How many acres in that
18 southern -- on Highway 200 would impact our
19 reservation if you would have went through there, or
20 do you know how many acres of Leech Lake
21 Reservation?

22 MS. STRENGTH: I don't have that
23 information with me.

24 MS. SHERMAN: Okay. Do you know what I
25 believe, and I'd like to go on record to say this, I

Responses

Comment 68-2

See response to Comment 59-1, which addresses the same concern.

**Commenter 68 – Elizabeth Sherman;
Commenter 69 – Becky Knowles**

68-3

1 believe that was scratched and disregarded because
2 of socioeconomic class. Because we have many
3 non-Native people, non-Indian people who are from
4 the higher socioeconomic class who own resorts, own
5 lake-front property who have the clout and the power
6 to get you to stop that route.

7 But here we are on this reservation,
8 poverty-stricken, from the lower socioeconomic
9 class, with no power. But I'll tell you one thing,
10 we do have spiritual power. There is such a thing
11 as spiritual justice. There might not be no justice
12 made out on earth, but there is spiritual justice.
13 And we as Ojibwe cling to that and we put our hope
14 in that.

15 MS. STEINHAUER: I want to make sure that
16 other people who haven't spoken yet have an
17 opportunity to speak.

18 MS. KNOWLES: I have another comment.

19 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes.

69-1

20 MS. KNOWLES: This is Becky Knowles
21 again.

22 I've been involved with this review
23 process for three years now, since the pipeline and
24 this power line were first proposed. It seems to me
25 now, even down to the very end, that the burden is

Responses

Comment 68-3

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

Comment 69-1

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

69-1
(cont.)

Commenter 69 – Becky Knowles

67

1 on the Leech Lake people and those of us at DRM to
2 somehow find the time and expertise to conduct this
3 environmental review, to come forward with our best
4 assessments of the work that's put forward.

5 The department of -- the state Department
6 of Natural Resources, they have an entire division
7 of environmental review, people whose job is to do
8 nothing but review one proposed project after
9 another. The Leech Lake Band has no such
10 department.

11 So the scientists within DRM who have
12 been reviewing this work and been meeting with the
13 applicants for the past three years, we are doing
14 that just on the side of the work that we are really
15 obligated to do by the grants that we're under.

16 So it seems to me that there's a real
17 injustice going on here. Perhaps this is the
18 environmental injustice, in that the band just
19 simply does not have the resources to complete the
20 evaluation. And now, I will likely never read the
21 EIS. I mean, I simply don't have time. We have to
22 divide it up within ourselves, who can look at this
23 part, who can look at that part.

24 So the fact that you don't get adequate
25 responses and arguments against this project may not

Responses

Commenter 69 – Becky Knowles

Responses

69-1
(cont.)

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reflect that fact that the arguments aren't there, it may reflect more that the Leech Lake Band just simply has not been able to muster the legal power, the scientific power, the time to put into the environment review.

And the other thing, this has really, really bothered me from the very beginning of this, is the sense of inevitability, and I've even heard it again here tonight. It's as if, as I heard someone say in the back, this is all just going through the motions, and that has been endlessly frustrating for me because we are very, very busy with the work we're supposed to be doing, and yet we've all been taking time off to conduct these environment reviews with the pipeline and the power line.

And yet, through the whole thing, we keep getting this sense of inevitability from the band members, from the applicants, just that this is going to happen, this is going to happen. And so it's like we are trying to spend as much time as we can to put forward the strong arguments why this thing should not cross the Leech Lake Reservation. And yet, between the sense of inevitability and the insufficient time and resources to adequately mount

Commenter 69 – Becky Knowles; Commenter 70 – Sydney Harper

Responses

69-1
(cont.)

1 an argument against this thing, it's -- those folks
2 might be right, that it would not be because there's
3 not adequate arguments to support running this thing
4 around the reservation. So I still say do not come
5 across this landscape.

6 MS. STEINHAUER: Yes. There's somebody
7 in the back who hasn't spoken yet.

8 MS. HARPER: My name is Sydney Harper,
9 S-Y-D-N-E-Y, H-A-R-P-E-R.

70-1

10 I don't know much about this, but I'm
11 looking at your map, there doesn't seem to be many
12 towns or anything up there on Route 3. So why not
13 just put it up there and not affect many people that
14 way?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Because it costs more,
16 that's why.

17 MS. HARPER: Can you explain that to me,
18 please?

19 MS. STEINHAUER: I will have to take that
20 as a comment because that's part of what we're out
21 here to get comments on.

22 MS. HARPER: Okay.

23 MS. STEINHAUER: The state has not
24 determined the route for the project. That's part
25 of the intent of this meeting and the meetings that

Comment 70-1

Please refer to the comment response from Ms. Steinhauer that appears directly below the comment.

Commenter 71 – Susan Indieke

1 will happen at the end of April, is to get comment
2 on the different route alternatives.

3 MS. INDIEKE: My name is Susan Indieke
4 S-U-S-A-N, I-N-D-I-E-K-E.

71-1

5 Is it my understanding that the meeting
6 that you're going to be holding April 23rd through
7 the 26th (sic) you will give us answers to our
8 questions, it's not going to be just comments?

9 MS. STEINHAUER: The meetings that are
10 held April 21st through 23rd -- and these are,
11 again, just the state meetings, the federal agencies
12 are not part of that process. If you mean is the
13 answer going to be where the route will be, we will
14 not answer that. That's part of what those meetings
15 are held for.

16 MS. INDIEKE: No. That's not why I'm
17 asking. All these people are asking you questions
18 and you're saying all this is is a comment meeting.
19 Will the questions be answered at that time -- that
20 we have?

21 MS. STEINHAUER: There will be an
22 opportunity to ask questions and for the applicants
23 and myself to respond to them. Whether you believe
24 those answers are adequate, I can't tell you. But
25 yes, that's the intent of the contested case

Responses

Comment 71-1

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

Responses

Commenter 71 – Susan Indieke; Commenter 72 – John Green

71

71-1
(cont.)

1 hearings.

2 MS. INDIEKE: So if we want answers to

3 our questions, we have to come back to that meeting?

4 MS. STEINHAUER: And if you can make a

5 comment tonight or in writing, we can respond to

6 that in the final environmental impact statement.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: They're lying to us.

8 MS. INDIEKE: Well, you also said that

9 you could answer our questions individually tonight,

10 why can you answer them individually but not as a

11 group?

12 MS. STEINHAUER: It really depends on the

13 nature of the questions and the detail. It's a

14 large document and I don't have all that information

15 here.

16 Yes, that gentleman (indicating).

17 MR. GREEN: My name is John Green.

18 Do you expect us to just say, well, go

19 ahead and put that power line through here and just

20 back off and get out of your way? That's a very

21 simple question.

22 MS. STEINHAUER: The --

23 MR. GREEN: This is our home.

24 MS. STEINHAUER: No, I do not.

25 MR. GREEN: This is our home, you know,

Commenter 72 – John Green; Commenter 73 – Shirley Young

72-1 1 and this was set aside by Congress to be our home.
2 This is where we were put because we weren't wanted
3 anywhere else. So why do you want to come through
4 here? You know, it's true. So leave us with what
5 we've got, you know.

6 That's what I'm saying, and I'm sure
7 that's what everybody else is thinking, too. You
8 know, as Native people we don't need to -- we
9 already have infected blankets, you know, and this
10 is another infected blanket. It's a sickness. So I
11 think you understand what I'm talking about.

12 MS. YOUNG: Shirley Young.

73-1 13 I think people have stated that there's
14 not a lot of people here to show their support for
15 this, not wanting this transmission line to go
16 through. But as a Bug-0-Nay-Ge-Shig school board
17 member, I think I speak for every one of our
18 students out there that go to the school, I think I
19 speak for the staff, and the administration even,
20 because we discussed this at a board meeting last
21 month.

22 And I know that our little kids out there
23 are -- they get angry when they see trees getting
24 cut down, even. We have tree huggers out there at
25 the school, they don't want the power -- this

Responses

Comment 72-1

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

Comment 73-1

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

**Commenter 73 – Shirley Young;
Commenter 74 – Elizabeth Sherman**

73

1 transmission line to go through.

2 And I've had three of my children
3 graduate from the Bug-0-Nay-Ge-Shig without having
4 to worry about this big power line coming through
5 and getting these diseases that it causes. So that
6 is what I'm speaking for, our little kindergarten
7 kids up to the 12th grade.

8 At one time we had a daycare out there,
9 but we no longer have it. But I would speak for
10 them, too, because my grandchildren went to the
11 daycare and now they are starting to attend the
12 school. And that is my statement. Thank you.

13 MS. SHERMAN: I think those of us have
14 already figured out the process and your
15 methodology -- I'm Elizabeth Sherman -- and your
16 methodology in presenting this meeting. And I
17 believe -- it is my opinion and probably I can speak
18 for others here in this room that this is -- you
19 have lies, just like your forefathers, you have
20 lies. You presented lies to us, you're pretentious.

21 But we are smart people and we've got you
22 figured out. And we know why you're here, you are
23 here because you are going through the motions. And
24 you're going to put this power line in irregardless
25 of what we say about human life.

73-1
(cont.)

74-1

Responses

Comment 74-1

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

Commenter 74 – Elizabeth Sherman

74

Responses

74-1
(cont.)

1 And so you have to live with yourself,
2 you have to go to bed at night, including Minnkota,
3 Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power, and you have to
4 look at yourself. You are responsible for human
5 life that you're destroying.

6 And so I'm wasting my time, you're
7 wasting yours, and so I'm just going to leave right
8 now because there's no point in discussing or
9 sharing these comments any further because you're
10 totally disregarding our feelings, our lives, and
11 the future of our children.

12 MS. STEINHAUER: Would anybody else like
13 to comment?

14 Seeing no hands, I will close the public
15 comment portion of the meeting. We're off the
16 record now, and we are available to try to answer
17 questions.

18 (Public comment concluded.)
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