



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: October 20, 2009

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for a 345 kV Transmission Line from Brookings County, South Dakota to Hampton, Minnesota

PUC Docket Number: ET2/TL-08-1474

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security (OES) announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Brookings to Hampton 345 kV transmission line project. The OES will hold public informational meetings to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the Draft EIS.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING DATES & LOCATIONS

November 12, 2009 (Thursday)	November 13, 2009 (Friday)	November 16, 2009 (Monday)
<p>1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. & 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</p> <p>Lonsdale VFW 115 2nd Avenue Southwest Lonsdale, MN</p>	<p>1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. & 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</p> <p>Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites 20800 Kenrick Avenue Lakeville, MN</p>	<p>1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.</p> <p>Prairie’s Edge Casino & Resort 5616 Prairie’s Edge Lane Granite Falls, MN 56241</p>
November 17, 2009 (Tuesday)	November 18, 2009 (Wednesday)	November 19, 2009 (Thursday)
<p>1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. & 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</p> <p>Best Western 1500 East College Drive Marshall, MN</p>	<p>1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. & 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</p> <p>Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel 39375 County Highway 24 Morton, MN</p>	<p>5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</p> <p>Brass Top Hall/ Wild Hog Saloon 514 Main Street Henderson, MN</p>

Public Information Meeting. The first half hour of each meeting will be an open house followed by a brief presentation. Following the presentation members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments on the Draft EIS. Representatives from the OES and the Applicants will be available for both the open house and presentation portion of the meeting to answer questions. A court reporter will also be present during each meeting to transcribe any verbal comments from the public.

The OES will accept written comments on the scope of the EIS until **Monday, November 30, 2009**. Please include Docket No. ET2/TL-08-1474 on your comments. Comments should be mailed, emailed, or faxed to:

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Comments may also be submitted online via the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) energy facility permitting website at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/publicComments.html>

Project Documents. The Draft EIS discusses the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and evaluates 26 route alignment alternatives and 47 route segment alternatives as identified in the EIS Scoping Decision Document.

Electronic versions of the Draft EIS and other documents relevant to this matter are available for viewing and downloading on the Commission's website:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19860>, and on the Department of Commerce's eDockets website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter year "08" and docket number "1474").

The Draft EIS will also be available at public libraries in the cities listed below after October 23, 2009:

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|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Brookings, South Dakota | ▪ Redwood Falls | ▪ New Ulm |
| ▪ Bird Island | ▪ Chaska | ▪ Henderson |
| ▪ Montevideo | ▪ Shakopee | ▪ Granite Falls |
| ▪ Northfield | ▪ Montgomery | ▪ Lakeville |
| ▪ Ivanhoe | ▪ Farmington | ▪ Marshall |
| ▪ Hutchinson | ▪ Saint Peter | |

Project Description. Great River Energy and Xcel Energy propose to construct and operate a 345 kV transmission line, approximately 237 miles long, beginning at the state's western border near Hendricks, Minnesota, and ending south of the Twin Cities metro area near Hampton, Minnesota. The Applicants have proposed two possible routes for the transmission line, a preferred and alternate route. These routes cross portions of the following counties: Lincoln, Lyon, Yellow Medicine, Chippewa, Redwood, Brown, Renville, Sibley, Le Sueur, Scott, Rice, and Dakota.

The Applicants' proposal also includes the construction of four new substations and the expansion of four existing substations. New substations include the Hazel Creek substation near Granite Falls, the Helena substation near New Prague, the Cedar Mountain substation near Franklin, and the Hampton substation near Hampton.

Review Process. Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. 216E), a route permit from the Commission is required to build a high voltage transmission line. A route permit application for the project was filed by the Applicants on December 29, 2008. The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on January 29, 2009. The Commission has one year from the time the application is accepted to complete the permitting process and make a decision on the route permit.

Route permit applications for high voltage transmission lines are subject to environmental review (Minn. Rules 7850). OES staff collected comments for the scope of the EIS by convening two advisory task forces, holding public scoping meetings throughout the proposed project area, and accepting written comments from March 30, 2009, through April 30, 2009. The EIS Scoping Decision Document was issued on June 30, 2009. On October 20, 2009, OES staff released the Draft EIS. Comments received during the Draft EIS public information meetings and during the Draft EIS comment period (October 20, 2009, to November 30, 2009) will be reviewed, responded to, and included in a final EIS.

Public hearings on the Brookings-Hampton 345 kV route permit will be held from November 30, 2009, to December 11, 2009, and will be presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ). A separate notice of these public hearings will be published in newspapers of general circulation throughout the proposed project area. Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak at the hearings, present evidence, ask questions, and submit comments. The ALJ will submit a report to the Commission containing findings of fact, conclusions, and a recommendation on a route permit for the proposed transmission line.

Additional information on the transmission line route permitting process is available on the Commission's energy facility permitting website: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>

Project Mailing List. Persons interested in adding their names to the Department of Commerce mailing list for this project should contact the OES project manager, public advisor, or register online at: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/#MailingLists>

Project Contacts. If you have questions or if you would like further information about this project please contact:

Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security

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