PUBLIC COMMENTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2009

9:00 a.m.

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

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
20800 Kendrick Avenue
Lakeville, Minnesota

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MR. EK: I guess we'll have a question/comment period. So if I could have folks -- if you do have a comment, if you could just form a line here and comment into the microphone and we can see if we can answer any of your questions.

If you could come up to the microphone, please, yeah.

MS. JOHNSON: Is it okay for short people?

MR. EK: If you can --

MS. MACCABEE: Can we do it so they face us?

MS. JOHNSON: Yeah, I think I will face you.

MR. EK: Well, we can --

MS. JOHNSON: How about halfway?

MR. EK: Halfway so the court reporter can also see you, too.

So if you could state your name and spell it for the court reporter.

MS. JOHNSON: Sure. My name is Patricia Johnson, P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A, J-O-H-N-S-O-N. I live at 3940 220th Street East in Hampton Township.

We bought our property, built a home, and have lived there for 28 years. After learning in

January that the proposed transmission route would significantly impact the homes on 220th Street, we began visiting with our neighbors. Many were unaware that a utility line was proposed. A few had attended early meetings and been assured that the line was not going as far north as 220th Street. Everyone we spoke to expressed concern about the health impacts, decreased property values, and impairment of their quality of life.

My neighbors signed petitions to enable me to be a member of the advisory task force being conducted by the Office of Energy Security. We are all concerned about the lack of any state agency to balance the public interest against those of 11 utilities with unlimited resources.

Hampton Township is a rural community. Along 220th Street, the route CapX utilities have said they prefer for a high-voltage 345 volt (sic) transmission line. We are a neighborhood of retirees, farmers, and families with young children.

In this small segment of the route, from just west of Milepost 14 until the proposed new Hampton electric power station, there are 25 homes impacted by the CapX utility's proposed route with 60 adults and 12 children.

In this small stretch of route, 2.5 miles, there's six adults with or in remission from cancer, another four adults and one child with a chronic illness and, subsequently, compromised immune systems, and two older adults with pacemakers and defibrillators. There are three homes where grandparents are providing daycare to their grandchildren, there is a licensed daycare for eight children under the age of six.

The Cambodian Buddhist temple, a unique religious and cultural institution, is one of the largest in the United States. It is also on the short stretch of 220th Street. The temple serves a community of over 8,000 Cambodian Buddhists in Minnesota. Outdoor celebrations are held several times a year at the temple, drawing attendance from the surrounding states.

The area north of the temple building is used for farming and providing vegetables for the Twin Cities farmers' markets. There's a housing -- there's housing on the property and the monks live there full time, as well as having worship services.

Another unique land use is a resource breeding operation on 220th Street right across from the temple, their pastures border the right-of-way.

The owners derive their income from contracts to breed mares and raise foals for clients in the racing industry. Horses in this industry can be valued at tens of thousands of dollars. And the conditions under which mares breed foals, including the impacts of electric fields, are important to customers in their competitive business.

The Hampton Woods, designated by Dakota County as a significant conservation and biodiversity significance area, has a long stretch of frontage along 220th Street. It contains a large tract of old sugar maple, red oak forest. The Hampton Woods provides habitat for a diverse number of natural plant species as well as wildlife.

My husband and I have just completed converting 100 acres parallel to 220th Street to natural prairie with contributions from the Dakota County DNR and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. The goal is to provide additional habitat for wildlife in the area, to mitigate flood plain issues, and promote the natural environment.

The noise, aesthetic impacts, and electromagnetic field from the proposed high-voltage line along 220th Street would impact our home, our

goal in protecting the natural environment, and the property, lives, and the unique land uses of our neighbors. We think the best way to avoid these impacts would be to stop the power line at Lake Marion, if this is feasible.

In the alternative, we have asked the Kestrel group to develop an alternate route segment that would avoid the impacts on the Hampton Woods, the Cambodian Buddhist temple, and all the unique land uses and vulnerable people on 220th Street, and it would reduce the number of homes adjacent to this part of the power line.

On behalf of our family and our neighbors, I request that the environmental impact statement for the Brookings power line include analysis of the impact on children, health, property values, and unique land uses, and include the alternative of stopping the line at Lake Marion and the alternative route to be prepared for the Hampton area that avoids 220th Street to minimize negative impacts by the high-voltage power line.

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you. Thank you for your comment, excellent.

I just want to point out to folks that is

a very, very, very good example of the type of comments that we would like to see. Very effective, goes into great detail on the items that are of concern. So that's -- just for you, that's a very good example of comments we'd like to see.

So go ahead, sir. Please state your name and spell it.

MR. BAUER: I'm Bernard Bauer and I guess we own the land where this now-famous Hampton Corner is sitting right on. And we own the land that is east of it, south of it, west of it, and north of it. So I guess I find it a real problem, you know, even to be that concerned about the route because the route, seems to me, is going to end up on ours no matter where the route is. So I will skip that part of it, where the routing is going.

But anyway, this power -- this land that I'm talking about is used for farming, obviously, because it is an Ostrander-type soil and it has a 90 CER, which is a very high rating. It's -- that means, if somebody doesn't know, it's supposed to be certified equivalency rating and there is nothing higher than 100.

And we did own land in the southern part of the state and we never have had any that was 90,

even in Mower or Dodge County. That doesn't mean there isn't some that maybe gets closer to 100, but I don't know of any, I've never run across any. But this is 90 because it is Ostrander and it is basically level, Ostrander is never perfectly level. But anyway, that's the end of that.

But I guess we are getting almost fed up on all this stuff coming through our farm. First it was -- Highway 52 took a corner off of about three -- oh, I guess it was about four acres. I think they paid my dad at that time, that was back about 50 years or more, like, between $50 and $100 an acre to make it kitty-corner. Make us -- now we've been farming that on a kitty-corner angle now for the last 50 years or more for them few hundred dollars that he got out of it at the time.

Then it was the power line that came from Prairie Island went through and they -- I can remember it as well as yesterday, they came through and they said we've got all these people signed up on this side of you and that side of you and we're paying $3,000 to go through your farm -- through the middle of the farm, $3,000, the rights through the middle of your farm, do you want to sign up today or what do you want to do, you know?

1 My brother was standing there alongside
2 of me and he didn't pause a moment, he said I'll
3 give you twice that much if I never see you again.
4 Well, we did see them again and they came through.
5 But, I mean, this tells you how much power we have,
6 you know, with eminent domain on their side and not
7 on our side.
8 But anyway, the next thing was -- after
9 that power line went through, then it was the
10 bridge -- 47 overpass bridge over 52. Then they
11 took a couple acres of ours, again, kitty-corner
12 across the corner, about 160 perfectly square --
13 another Ostrander-type soil, they took another
14 corner off from that. And then after that, this is
15 only like not much more than a year ago, they went
16 kitty-corner through our farm with a pipeline.
17 I guess we are really getting tired of
18 it. And besides that, sometimes they think, you
19 know, money will solve it. Well, as far as I'm
20 concerned, as far as the two sons are concerned that
21 want to be in farming, they're not concerned about
22 that little bit of money that you get. Because you
23 know how far it would have went, that $100 -- or $50
24 my dad got. Or we got, you know, $3,000 when a
25 power line went through the middle and we put in

irrigators. And how could we put in irrigators when they've got a power line right through the middle of your farm?

So then we had to substitute, you know, a couple little irrigators with piping it here to there and over there and wire it underground and everything. And that went to heck after a few years and then we had to do it all over again. Where otherwise you would have went right through the middle of the farm and put a center pivot in and there would have been no piping or anything. The wire would have went underground from Dakota Electric right through the middle of the farm. That would have been very simple and much, much cheaper. I couldn't even begin to say how much it cost us on the bitter end.

But anyway, I guess I don't have that much to say. I guess I would add, again, routing isn't going to solve it for us, I don't think, no matter where they route because I think they want to hit Hampton Corner. I'm not sure but -- they've never told me that, I don't know why they don't tell me that. But we've been to different meetings, we've talked to different people on the phone, but it never comes to a conclusion that, yes, we're

1 going to hit this corner.
2 Well, this is all irrigated around there
3 and I don't know what they're going to do with our
4 irrigators. If they're just going to say the heck
5 with it, we don't care about your irrigators. I
6 don't have no idea, they never talk to us about it.
7 I have asked about it, but they all seem to evade
8 the question, I guess.
9 But the other thing I was also going to
10 mention was the health thing. We live on 210th
11 Street, I think this other lady was 220th. But
12 anyway, we have lost four people that live on 210th
13 through cancer and we think it's because this
14 existing power line that is there probably has
15 something to do with it.
16 But it isn't that I'm so smart, I think
17 it has a lot to do with what we hear from -- the
18 Mayo Clinic says. They call where we live cancer
19 alley. Now, I don't know why they give it that
20 name, but I think it's because a lot of people from
21 our area go there because they have problems. And
22 they probably get diagnosed here and then they go
23 down there and then, from that, they gave it that
24 title.
25 Now, I don't think it's a good title to

have and if we get more of this, I don't think that's going to help us very much at all. In fact, I think, you know, it might be the detriment that will get most of us around that area some day. I might be mistaken there.

But anyway, I guess that's it. Okay.

MR. EK: Thank you for your comments, sir. And I'm sorry to hear about your past experiences, but I strongly urge you, don't let those past experiences discourage you from submitting what may be a different alternative as you see -- around your farm to the -- what's proposed up here and submitting it to us to take a look at that. I really don't -- don't let the past discourage you now for submitting something that we can take a look at.

Again, this is a proposal, it's not set in stone yet. And that's the purpose of these meetings and these comment periods, is to get your input. And I can tell you for a fact, all those comments come across my desk. And I spoke to you before and I know there's hesitancy for people to believe that, but I do indeed look at all the comments that come across my desk.

So I really encourage you to, you know,

submit -- point out your farm, you know, provide that information in a comment so we do have it. And we also -- whatever you orally said here, we do have it on record as well.

But an alternative -- it sounded like you were just relegated (sic) to the point that the line was going to be there. But I do strongly suggest you submit what might be an alternative to what you see.

Thank you for your comments.

MS. HELMBERGER: Hi, I'm Cindy, C-I-N-D-Y, Helmberger, H-E-L-M-B-E-R-G-E-R.

And I was at a meeting last night in New Prague and there were about 400 people, roughly, there. So Patrice (sic), we totally agree with exactly what you're saying. I live between Helena and Lake Marion, so I would like to shut it down and stop it at Helena.

So I don't mean that to be combative, what I'm saying is that you've got everybody that -- nobody has come and said, my god, I want this thing. I want it in my backyard. So you've got everybody west of you that doesn't want it, we want it stopped at Brookings. We just do not want this anywhere for everything that you've stated.

So I'm bringing some new comments so I'm not repeating last night -- what I said. But, basically, I guess because I'm on the Scott County side -- apologies to anyone on the Rice County side, but I think everybody has to make their statement as far as what their interests are.

Rice County has about 6,000 people in the affected townships, Scott County has about 8,000, so just the math of that alone. There's actually more houses in Scott County affected by the direct center line, if you will. Based on the zero to 500 feet, there's 105 on the preferred, which is in Scott County, versus the alternate, 81. So you've got about a 24-house difference there.

My other concern is that not all of the households on the route segment were notified, and I'm not just talking about -- excuse me for a second, this blue line. I happened to look at Appendix C, Map MP01, lines HM113 and -189 are on our section, 16 and 17 in New Market. Nobody got notified of a -- letters there.

I also have a major concern that people that directly have an easement on that were not certified mailed, I did say that last night. Any other kind of monetary information typically comes

1 certified mail. I've had goofy things come to me
2 certified mail. So something that could potentially
3 cost people huge financial -- $100,000, $500,000,
4 you need to certified mail that.
5 The brochures that you sent -- again, I
6 did say this last night, I apologize -- you need to
7 write on there, this is a major power line going
8 through your backyard and then people would have
9 opened it. So you would have had thousands of
10 people turning out, so I think that was a real
11 problem on CapX's end.
12 I also noticed that on my route segment,
13 it's more the yellow line than the blue line, it has
14 me as having -- not farming, we farm. We've got
15 livestock about 30 feet away from that line. So I
16 need to submit my item on that so you know that
17 we're farming that as well.
18 The financial loss, so let's say you come
19 in and you give me $10,000 for an acre, which I
20 doubt even you'll give me that. In the future, I
21 could probably have two or three lots at $200,000,
22 now I'm out $600,000. I really don't see why
23 somebody sitting on the other side of Hampton or
24 wherever, Minneapolis, why they shouldn't pay an
25 extra $5 a year in electricity, but I'm supposed to

be happy that I'm going to be losing a half million dollars in lots.

Even if people don't even want to have -- you have that easement, they don't want to lose that either. Even if they're not going to be gaining financially from it, they don't want to give up that easement.

Also, for future projects -- just so people know, once you give up an easement, anything goes. They can eventually triple the line, if they get an application for it, cell phone towers. Once that easement's there, you have given up rights to everything on there. I'd like it to be on record that if this goes through and people are forced into an easement, that any other future projects, disruption, or any item that goes through there, it becomes a new compensation for those people, that it's just not a one-time compensation.

And again, my apologies to people if you're here from Rice County, but I think everyone has to look at -- globally, I don't want it. Trust me, I don't want it whatsoever. I don't think it's needed, there's not been an upgrade in 50 years, and I don't think any of you have lost electricity. I have not lost it, except for maybe a couple of

hours. So I really think the need is not there. The population is not going to explode like it has in the last 50 years. So the electricity -- I just don't see the need for this.

It's about three more miles to route it down in Rice County. If you take from Helena to Lake Marion, it's just three more miles at the cost of $8 million to CapX. Well, you take the loss of the values of property, those not even on that blue line, if you took a section of land and everybody can see those power lines, now their property value has decreased.

So the $8 million is a pittance to CapX to do alternate routes. And I hope that Rice County, if it goes that way, they can come up with an alternate as well. I don't know why you can't route it way further south. Someone said last night, do it where there's thousand-acre lots and it doesn't affect as many people. That cost is just pittance to CapX and all of the utilities. I think there's alternate solutions. My goal is that South Dakota just shuts it down completely so that none of us in Minnesota have to worry about it at all.

As far as the Lake Marion substation, I know you guys want to beef that up. It's 12 to 16

1 acres that you're looking at purchasing. I don't
2 know that you have sent a letter to everybody in
3 that area. And on the east side of that area, I
4 think it's really critical that you do that as well.
5 I think everyone along that strip of Pillsbury needs
6 to know that you're trying to really ramp this up.
7 And the other thing is, as far as
8 replacing trees, people have planted a lot of trees.
9 That was a lot of manual work, a lot of hours of
10 watering, feeding. And if you come and strip those
11 through, are you willing to replace trees that
12 probably cost $1,000 to put in a 30-foot tree? And
13 if somebody has about 800 of those, are you willing
14 to pay that much money to do that? Because people
15 are going to demand that that will be part of the
16 easement cost.
17 So thank you for your time.
18 MR. EK: Thank you for your comment. And
19 just on the -- thank you for all of your comments,
20 they're very precise, effective, and we have them in
21 the record.
22 But on the tree thing, yes, that is in
23 the permit. If trees are damaged, removed, and so
24 forth because of the transmission line, yes, the
25 power company or the Applicants would be required to

compensate for that.

But very good comments, that's another very good example of comments. Very precise on what the person felt and what should be examined in the environmental impact statement. So I appreciate it, thank you.

MS. HELMBERGER: Thank you.

MR. EK: Do you want me to move that up for you? Let's see here, there we go. That's great.

MR. MACDONAGH: Hello, my is Peter MacDonagh. I've been retained by the Johnsons on 220th Avenue (sic) and I'm with the Kestrel Design Group and I'm on the faculty at the University of Minnesota in landscape architecture and architecture. I'm a landscape architect, an arborist, and a horticulturist. And our -- we specialize in sustainable natural inventories.

And I guess the fundamental guidelines here are to avoid human and environment harm, avoid as many homes as possible, avoid childcare/vulnerable people, avoid unique land uses, avoid areas of biological diversity, limit river impacts, and avoid rare and endangered species.

And I'd also like to speak to the idea of

1 stopping the line at Lake Marion substation. I'm
2 not an expert in electrical issues or electrical
3 transmission or needs, but this seems to impact,
4 particularly, a great number of -- there's a great
5 number of impacts. And so that's one proposal.
6 So let me hold that up. So that's the
7 Lake Marion --
8 MR. EK: I can hold that up for you.
9 MR. MACDONAGH: So that's the Lake Marion
10 substation and this is the proposed Hampton
11 substation and we're suggesting that this route be
12 stopped here (indicating). And so that's one
13 option.
14 And then there are two routes that are
15 being proposed, the first one is the -- running a
16 power line down 220th Street and here's a list of
17 some of those impacts, let me turn this around.
18 So that's this route right here
19 (indicating), where it ends up in that Hampton
20 substation. So there's 5.7 miles, 26 homes within
21 500 feet, three -- 14 homes within 300 feet, 150 --
22 within 150 feet, there are five homes, there's
23 7.7 acres of wetland impacts -- in acres, and 3,600
24 feet of the Vermillion River, south branch, is
25 impacted.

1 So -- and then there's Hampton Woods
2 right here (indicating), which is a -- there's the
3 stars that are asterisked on here are -- a county
4 biological survey from DNR picked up these
5 endangered species here, and there five species --
6 federally- or state-endangered species, Blanding's
7 turtle, Loggerhead shrike, big tick-trefoil, these
8 are two plants, American ginseng, and so that's an
9 issue. There are four public waters crossings,
10 stream crossings.
11 MR. EK: If you could speak into the mic.
12 MR. MACDONAGH: Sure. There are 43 NWI,
13 National Wetland Inventory -- in crossings, and then
14 I mentioned the -- and then the Vermillion, which is
15 a trout stream. So that's the main route that's
16 being proposed.
17 And then the second is a southern route,
18 which comes down and across, up to the Hampton
19 substation. And there's 109 homes that would be
20 impacted on that route within 500 feet of the center
21 line. And it would go through Hampton -- the town
22 of Hampton, and there are five, also, species
23 impacted through that section as well, that southern
24 route. There are three stream crossings, 27 wetland
25 adjacencies within 150 feet. And we also have a

1 plant -- a rare plant community on that route as
2 well.
3 And based on the number of impacts on
4 this one -- from the preferred is 66, but in this
5 one, this alternate, is proposed at 109 impacts to
6 homes. And it does not seem to be a particularly
7 good-faith effort. It seems like not something
8 that's been really given a lot of thought, I could
9 be wrong. But --
10 And then, also, I wanted to hold up this
11 board right here (indicating). So this is the
12 community on 220th, the Buddhist temple where, as
13 Trish Johnson said earlier, there are -- monks live
14 there, as well as they have outdoor rituals and
15 ceremonies for their temple. And then there's the
16 unique land use of the stud farm also on 220th, and
17 then the number of houses that are also being
18 impacted along that route.
19 And then the last thing I'd like to
20 emphasize is that, if the Hampton substation is a
21 requirement, then why is it to the north and why
22 can't it be further south? I don't -- again, I'm
23 not an electric -- I'm not an electrical engineer
24 and I'm not a specialist in transmission of these
25 kinda of issues, but at this Hampton substation, 27

architectural sites within a mile, it basically goes through downtown Hampton. There's another mesic prairie in the middle of the substation area, one public waters, wetland, and again, there are two endangered -- rare and endangered species, state and federal, in that location as well.

So anyway, those are my main points that I wanted to make about the -- both the -- the issue of stopping at Lake Marion or the two proposed routes or the Hampton substation and its impacts.

Thanks.

MR. EK: May I just ask, will you be submitting, maybe, these maps or this information, possibly?

MR. MACDONAGH: Yes. For the record, yes.

MS. MACCABEE: By April 30 for sure.

MR. EK: Great. In any form, I mean, you don't need them today.

MS. MACCABEE: A big file cabinet.

MR. EK: Exactly. No. But it would be beneficial information, so that's why I asked, it would be great to see.

You did have one question about the Hampton -- the location of the Hampton substation

1 and I was -- Craig, I don't know if you might be
2 able to answer why it couldn't be put to the south
3 or why it's suggested to be put where it is in that
4 location?
5 MR. POORKER: Yeah. The Hampton
6 substation is proposed in that circle, or oval,
7 whatever it is there, north of Hampton -- north or
8 northwest of Hampton because of the interconnection
9 requirement -- not requirement, but what our
10 planners and engineers want to see is that we
11 connect into that 345-kV transmission line. And so
12 wherever that substation ends up being, they do want
13 to connect into that 345.
14 And Mr. Bauer commented about possibly
15 going across his property, that would be the
16 shortest distance. Is that the best way to go?
17 We're not sure of that. That's why that circle is
18 there, because we don't know where the sub will be
19 and where we might connect into that existing 345-kV
20 transmission grid.
21 MR. EK: And then just, also, to let you
22 folks know, you're not limited to suggesting
23 alternative routes, but you can also suggest
24 alternative locations for the substation, too. I
25 failed to mention that, that's also a possibility

that we would, you know, accept and, of course, take a look at.

So, additional commenters, please.

If you could state your name and spell it, please.

MS. ENGGREN: My name is Mary Ann Enggren, M-A-R-Y, capital A, N-N, E-N-G-G-R-E-N.

I get a little nervous, I'm not a public speaker. My proposed route would be to go much further south and avoid that Hampton -- and this beautiful area entirely.

My home is on a narrow two-lane road, 220th Street East in Farmington, Minnesota, Castle Rock Township. The proposed and preferred route of the Brookings line would run on the west and the north side of my home. You have colored me purple, dark purple, possibly even red, being that I'm going to be attacked from two sides, potentially.

I live in the country on four acres with my three sons and my 17-month-old grandson half time. We are blessed to live in an area with Mother Nature at her finest. The purpose of my statement is to express my adamant opposition to the -- I'm sorry, the proposed CapX initiative.

I believe that insufficient time has been

allowed to study the impact of the critical environmental, health, and aesthetic risks, not to mention the decreased value of properties and homes. More time must be allocated to assess actual need, examine energy alternatives, and assess impacts and outcomes.

I also oppose the preferred route and, at the very least, if approved, the line should stop at the Lake Marion substation. Given that coal-fired plants would initially be the primary source of power being generated, this initiative contradicts and undermines initiatives to save energy and reduce the carbon footprint.

This line is not in line with the Minnesota Clean Energy Act. The United States government has advised power companies to avoid building near residential areas. This proposed line runs next to and in between homes. A stance in European countries imposed restrictions on the construction of, or expansion of, power lines near human habitation. Norway, England, Sweden, Spain, and Australia (sic) are just a few of these countries.

The concerns I have are many. Health, I am a cancer survivor, I am in remission. CapX

1 information related to health concerns show there
2 are no threats to human or animal health. My
3 research and my medical background shows there are
4 many health concerns due to EMF. EMF has been
5 linked to a variety of health problems. Childhood
6 leukemia rates are double for children in close
7 proximity to high-voltage power. Brain tumors are
8 increased in both children and adults. If we are
9 concerned about EMF from cellphones, I know we
10 should about concerned about EMF from a 345 volt
11 (sic) line.
12 High level power line EMF can interfere
13 with a pacemaker's ability to sense normal
14 electrical activity in the heart, suppression of the
15 hormone melatonin, which acts as an antioxidant in
16 our bodies. Decreased melatonin also causes
17 disruption in sleep patterns. High-frequency EMFs
18 have sufficient energy to directly break chemical
19 bonds, causing damage to molecules, ranging from
20 water to DNA, leading to an increased risk of
21 cancer, including breast.
22 Engineers are not known for their
23 interest or medical knowledge, that's not their area
24 of research or expertise. At medical facilities, we
25 wear badges that measure stray radiation and the

levels are checked monthly for safety reasons. Who will be checking our safety?

Environmental. You will be destroying trees, altering wetlands, and for my area, we have the Hampton Woods. Interrupting migration patterns, natural habitats will be permanently destroyed. EMF is known to cause an increase in the number of tumors and the size of tumors in animals. We need to do everything we can to save and maintain our wetlands, trees, and other natural habitats, not destroy them. We have a tall stream preservation river and your line would run next to it.

Aesthetic. These monstrous towers would destroy our beautiful scenery. I chose to live in the country for its beauty and to be with nature.

Noise. The constant buzzing, snapping, and cracking will destroy the peace of living in the country at all of our homes, our sanctuaries. It's called noise pollution. I will be unable to open my windows and doors and listen to the birds. The animals will leave due to the noise. The continued sound that I want to hear is from geese, ducks, and the many varieties of birds in my backyard, including bald eagles and hawks.

Property values. This property line

(sic) route would cause a huge decrease in my property and my home value. Studies show a 20- to 60-percent decline in property values next to major power lines. My land would not be taken, but I will not be compensated. This is significant, who compensates me for this loss? This is my major lifetime investment.

When an activity raises threat or harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken. You must examine the full range of alternatives. We should not have to pay in terms of our health, damage to the environment, increased rates, or decrease in our property values.

I ask that you find an alternative route that is not 220th Street, close to homes, temples, farms, and wildlife reserves. I ask you to deny the preferred route, find one that goes through an open area, if one has to be it -- at all. So better yet, no line. But let's find a viable alternative. This should be at your cost, not ours. And I ask you again to -- if it has to be, to stop it at the Lake Marion substation.

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you for your comment. And all of those items -- well, especially since you

1 commented on them, we will be identifying in the EIS
2 and analyzing -- study them.
3 I'd like to ask if the information you
4 had on EMF and so forth, if maybe after the meeting
5 you could possibly -- I could get your e-mail
6 address and you could maybe forward me some of that
7 information?
8 MS. ENGGREN: Certainly.
9 MR. EK: Because I would really like to
10 have that.
11 And then you brought up -- it was a need
12 question on whether this is needed. And just to let
13 folks know, there's been -- it's about -- need and
14 routing are two separate processes for the Public
15 Utilities Commission. So we're -- right here,
16 today, we're discussing routing of this project.
17 There's been about a two- or three-year process for
18 this project in deciding the need, the PUC will be
19 deciding the need for this project.
20 And they've gone through -- everything's
21 closed now. Next Wednesday they will be hearing
22 oral arguments from folks that have been involved
23 through this whole need process. And then Thursday
24 the Commission, Public Utilities Commission will
25 actually deliberate on whether this project is

needed and make a decision on yes, it's needed, or no, it's needed (sic).

Depending on that decision next Thursday, if they say no, this project goes away. If they say yes, this routing process does continue and -- from there. Those meetings are open to the public, folks are more than welcome to attend. But, however, it's not an opportunity for folks to comment at those meetings. They can listen, but you can't go up and comment and raise your hand and so forth.

But I just wanted to let folks know that there are two different processes when it comes to need and routing. So next week they will decide the need of the project.

Thank you for your comments.

MR. BEISSEL: You kind of threw a -- Jerry Beissel, Hampton.

MR. EK: I'll move that up for you.

MR. BEISSEL: You kind of threw a -- B as in boy, E-I-S-S-E-L.

I had a little bit to say, but it was on need, you just ruined it. But anyway, I think we don't need it. But why have we got a Northern States Power plant, what, 20 miles the way the birds fly from Hampton? Now we're going to put another

substation right in Hampton, why do we need it when we've got that big place right there?

Here I was thinking, gees, the wind's always blowing that way, couldn't they -- maybe if something ever happens and now they're routing to Hampton.

But now they're going to put one on the other end of town and a lot of people don't have cable TV, how much noise I am going to get from it? I don't have cable, I don't ever plan on getting it. Are we going to be able to even listen to our TV after that? What the government did with the boxes and everything else, now we've got that going on.

And another thing, somebody said it's going to go south of Hampton. Well, when they get there, then they're going to go back -- even if they -- I hope they don't ever go through Hampton like that other route is, that would really be bad.

But if they did it in the south of Hampton, I think they should quit it at Lake Marion, too. Because if we've got the Northern States down there, why do we need it to come right to Hampton, why can't we go south? Nine times out of ten, they're going to Rochester from our place and then they're going to go by us anyhow, so why don't they

1 just head that way right now?
2 That's really all I've got to say.
3 MR. EK: Yeah. The questions -- most of
4 the questions you brought up are on need. And
5 unfortunately, I'm not part of that whole need
6 process on why they need the line here or why that
7 plant is there and why this line is needed.
8 And that's what I was getting at, there
9 has been a whole year's -- a couple years of
10 determining and arguments on whether it's needed and
11 so forth. Unfortunately, I can't answer those
12 questions.
13 The question you asked about the TVs and
14 reception issues, we've studied that in past EAs and
15 EISs and so forth, and have found it not to be an
16 issue, that the transmission lines do not impact TV
17 reception and so forth. So that should not be an
18 issue. However, at the same time --
19 MR. BEISSEL: Yeah, but everybody else's
20 got cable.
21 MR. EK: No. But that's even over the
22 air lines, we looked at that. Radio, cell phone, TV
23 transmission, that's part of the -- that's a subject
24 we do look at in the environmental impact statement.
25 And, you know, in past studies we found that not to

be -- that not to be impacted by high-voltage transmission lines.

However, that doesn't stop us from continuing to study it in this environmental impact statement.

MR. BEISSEL: What about the -- are they going to -- are they going to go right to Rochester from there? Why don't they just go south as they're going there, instead of going right by all this housing area, through the town?

MR. EK: Craig, maybe --

MR. POORKER: Yeah.

MR. BEISSEL: And why haven't you put a power plant there already, 20 miles away from -- probably the way the bird flies from the Hampton?

MR. POORKER: The reason for the substation at this Hampton location is so that we can interconnect into that existing 345 kV line, which is the reason that we can't go just south to Rochester and La Crosse from there. But the reason for that substation is to interconnect to that existing 345 and get that grid system connected.

MR. BEISSEL: But there's nothing there now.

MR. POORKER: Right. But that's -- this

proposal, this transmission line, would interconnect into that existing substation -- or that existing 345 kV line. And that's the reason for a substation right there, it's to connect the two.

MR. BEISSEL: But why not go south further, what's the difference?

MR. POORKER: Because the 345 line from there, from Hampton, I believe, goes north and it goes east, it does not go south.

MR. BEISSEL: Is it there now?

MR. POORKER: The transmission line, yes.

MR. BEISSEL: It is there now.

MR. POORKER: Yeah. It's an existing 345 kV line that comes out of Prairie Island.

MR. BEISSEL: The one that comes across the south of town (sic)?

MR. POORKER: Pardon?

MR. BEISSEL: The one that comes across the south of town?

MR. POORKER: Northeast of Hampton, right. Yup, that's the one. That's a 345 kV transmission line.

MR. EK: Thank you for your comment, sir.

MS. MACCABEE: My name is Paula Maccabee, and that's M-A-C-C-A-B-E-E. I live in St. Paul,

1 Minnesota, not in this area, but I represented the
2 Citizens Energy Task Force during the past year in
3 the CapX 2020 certificate of need proceedings. And
4 in these routing proceedings for just the Brookings
5 line, I'm representing Patricia and Robert Johnson
6 who live on 220th Street.
7 Now, as a lawyer for CETF, we've been
8 arguing in front of the Public Utilities Commission
9 and went through an administrative trial all last
10 summer that the power lines are not needed for
11 regional reliability.
12 And recently, we made a motion to reopen
13 the record at the Public Utilities Commission on the
14 basis that the recession has resulted in actual
15 declines in electric demands and that the lines are
16 not needed.
17 And we've also argued that even if this
18 line is needed, the Brookings line, it should be a
19 wind line and there should be requirements that any
20 new capacity be wind. So far, the utilities have
21 vehemently opposed that and the agencies have not
22 supported this. So this power line, if it goes
23 through, is likely to contain a substantial portion
24 of coal energy rather than being the wind line that
25 it is advertised as.

These are issues that will not be included in today's EIS, it is before the Public Utilities Commission. I wanted to make just one correction of what Scott Ek was saying. Usually oral argument does not include comments from the public. I think due to the level of interest in the CapX proceedings, Bret Eknes, who's the staff over at the PUC, has said that members of the public will be allowed an opportunity to talk if it's less than three minutes. And it's strongly recommended that you send an e-mail or make a call 24 hours ahead of time to get permission.

So if you came here because you just want to say the thing is not needed and make that argument, it's not really this part of the proceeding. But you can call or e-mail Bret Eknes at the PUC and make a very brief statement next week.

During the certificate of need proceeding, one of the things Steve, he had did, is try to focus on bringing in evidence of the -- on behalf of citizens about the harmful effects of power lines and trying to make sure that they minimize the impacts on human beings and on the environment.

1 So the next couple comments I'm making
2 are really on behalf of Citizens Energy Task Force
3 as well as the Johnsons, is that I want to make sure
4 that we include in this environmental impact
5 statement detailed analysis of the environmental
6 impacts.
7 And I'm leaving Attachment A, it's an
8 excerpt, about 10 or 12 pages, from the record of
9 the certificate of need proceedings. The
10 Administrative Law Judge made some findings that
11 power lines impact human beings and the environment.
12 And then I also included excerpts from the Citizens
13 Energy Task Force proposed findings of fact, with
14 all the reference to the record.
15 And some the specific impacts that were
16 documented in the other case are impacts on
17 landscape and the environment, decrease in property
18 values, audible noise, electric fields, and
19 electromagnetic fields. And our position is that
20 the environmental impact statement is required to
21 make a more thorough analysis of these issues than
22 was done in the certificate of need.
23 And we'd like to highlight some specific
24 areas where we think the EIS should be more
25 in-depth. First, the EIS should identify protected

1 and valued natural resources in the Dakota County
2 area, that's also Dakota County farmland and natural
3 area program sites. And that the EIS should
4 identify cultural and religious/unique land uses,
5 and that should be avoided and not be impacted by
6 the power line.
7 Second, the data in the certificate of
8 need proceeding regarding effects on property
9 values, was not original research. It used research
10 from the Arrowhead power line, which is in
11 Wisconsin. And we've already heard people comment a
12 little bit about people who live in this area are
13 choosing to be near the Twin Cities and yet have the
14 peace and quiet of a rural lifestyle. And so we
15 strongly recommend that the Brookings EIS talk to
16 local Realtors, local appraisers, and get more
17 accurate information about the impacts of this power
18 line on property values. Because the estimate that
19 was made in the certificate of need case of zero to
20 14 percent is likely to be a substantial
21 understatement of what the impacts would be on some
22 of these homes.
23 And that's actually relevant to the
24 utilities, because if they are taking a very
25 valuable piece of property and diminishing its value

by 20 or 30 percent, it may be just as inexpensive to go further south, go to a wide open space, and not have to pay those costs.

Another thing is, we are requesting that there be more a intensive investigation of the issue of audible noise. In the Administrative Law Judge's finding in the certificate of need proceedings, the information that CapX submitted, which was about this same power line, was insufficient to show that noise levels would meet state nighttime noise level rules. There's state rules on the subject in residential areas.

And what's interesting is the routing application used different numbers for the same power line. So if you compare page 6-14 of the routing application for the Brookings line, with page 9.21 of the CapX 2020 certificate of need, you get inconsistent numbers.

So I'm asking staff to look at this, maybe actually go out and do some testing of 345 kV lines during wet and foggy conditions where the -- and make sure that the impacts of these power lines on noise are not being understated in the routing application.

Similarly, in the routing application

there wasn't really any information about the noise impacts of substations. It was just this sort of blanket statement that the design and distance will be enough so it complies with state rules. And I think that it's incumbent on staff -- and I know you've got an engineering firm working with you -- to get a much more detailed analysis on that. Once again, the certificate of need, there was no analysis of substation noise and that is an important issue.

There are also important gaps in the analysis in the routing application and actually being carried over from the certificate of need, are the impacts of magnetic fields, which we think it's very important that the EIS take care of.

It first pertains to human pacemakers and defibrillators. Both the environmental report and the certificate of need and the routing application, and that's pages 3-18 to 3-19 of the routing application, acknowledge that the predicted electric fields from this power line could produce interference with certain types of pacemakers.

The EIS needs to identify how many and what type of pacemakers and defibrillators are actually used by residents in the path of the power

1 lines and make sure that the power lines don't put
2 these residents at risk of either morbidity or
3 mortality from interference with the pacemakers.
4 Ms. Johnson has actually gone door to
5 door and there are apparently two older folks with
6 defibrillators and pacemakers right on this route
7 and there needs to be avoidance. It's one thing to
8 say I don't want to look at it, it's another thing
9 when people have their lives and their health at
10 risk. And the sort of statement that, well, even if
11 there's interference, they can right themselves. I
12 certainly wouldn't want it if it were a relative of
13 mine to have that risk happening.
14 In addition, the EIS needs to do a more
15 through analysis of the impacts of electric fields
16 and stray voltage on both human health and
17 livestock. We need to get both the research from
18 the literature and from the recent litigation.
19 There's a lot of recent litigation having to do with
20 the effects, primarily on dairy cattle.
21 But that will help us -- help the EIS
22 identify whether there's certain kinds of farming
23 operations or breeding operations that really should
24 be avoided if the impacts can't be mitigated with
25 enough distance. And so that's one other area where

1 I think the record is inadequate in the certificate
2 of need proceeding, and the routing application does
3 not provide enough information.
4 You had another person testifying, I
5 think she was a nurse, about electromagnetic fields.
6 The Administrative Law Judge in the certificate of
7 need proceeding, in her findings, 398 to 407,
8 recognized that there had been an association of
9 electromagnetic fields with cancer, in particular
10 with doubling the rate of childhood leukemia.
11 And at the edge of -- at the edge of the
12 right-of-way, the 75 foot over from the CapX 345
13 lines, the levels of EMF were higher than in the
14 studies that showed a doubling of childhood
15 leukemia. And she raised that issue with a concept
16 of prudent avoidance. One of the claims that was
17 made in the certificate of need proceeding is that
18 the -- that there's an association between the power
19 lines and cancer, but that's not the same as cause.
20 What I'm going to strongly recommend --
21 and I've brought a couple attachments, one is the
22 BioInitiative Report, it's about 600 pages of --
23 from an international group who looked specifically
24 at the impacts of electromagnetic fields on human
25 health, and we printed one because it's a nuisance

1 to print 600 pages. And then we also have a
2 peer-reviewed journal article from Dr. Dave
3 Carpenter and a coauthor, which basically -- it's
4 called Setting Prudent Public Health Policies for
5 Electromagnetic Field Exposures. And both of these
6 documents suggest that the evidence of causation is
7 much stronger than what the electric utility
8 industry would have us believe and suggests that
9 there needs to be wider right-of-ways and avoidance
10 of homes in order to really enact the policy of
11 prudent avoidance.
12 And I would actually suggest that staff
13 call Dr. Carpenter, I have spoken to him briefly.
14 He's in Albany, New York, his contact information is
15 on his article. Because this is more current
16 research, and his research, also, is in a
17 peer-reviewed journal in 2008. And I think in
18 trying to protect people and minimize human
19 settlement, there needs to be the most current
20 research on the impacts.
21 In addition to conducting a thorough
22 analysis of the adverse impacts on human settlement
23 and natural environment, we're going to be working
24 on alternative routes. I think the -- from our
25 perspective, the shorter the route, the less it's

1 necessary. If the Brookings line is necessary to
2 bring power into the Twin Cities, we'd asked --
3 we've asked that the Public Utilities Commission
4 consider the possibility that it quit at Helena and
5 Lake Marion would be sufficient to bring power into
6 the Twin Cities.
7 That may not be chosen by the Public
8 Utilities Commission, but that would certainly
9 reduce the number of impacts, because the dense area
10 of settlement tends to be in Scott County and in
11 Dakota County on the eastern end of this power line.
12 We looked at this. This short segment,
13 from Lake Marion on, is about 18 miles of a 237-mile
14 project. It's less than eight percent of the power
15 line's length, yet represents over one-fifth of the
16 residential exposures. So if it's possible from an
17 electric point of view to cut it off there, that
18 would be an excellent way to reduce exposure.
19 The other thing we've paid a lot of
20 attention to is looking at the alternatives. And
21 this is on behalf the Johnson family, because
22 Citizens Energy Task Force is not looking at
23 northern and southern routes, we're staying out of
24 that. But in light of the concerns of the neighbors
25 on 220th, we took a look at the -- the blue route,

the alternative southern route, to see if whether we could disrecommend that route. And looking closely, we have some concerns that that route is not optimized. A southern route would be suggested by the utility saying that they want to ring around the metro area.

And also, I think -- we talked to a number of neighbors who said that they had heard at these -- at meetings that a southern route was recommended because there's more big open spaces. This part in Hampton (indicating) is one of the areas where it doesn't look like the southern route was optimized. If you go over by 35W and Pillsbury, having those two wide corridors where there's a great deal of population density, looks like another place where the southern route was not optimized. And so we're looking -- and then, also, the southern route goes right across Chub Lake, which seems to me as sort of a perplexing choice from a natural resources perspective.

So we believe that if the decision of the Public Utilities Commission is that we need to -- the power line needs to go to Hampton, that there ought to be more of a serious effort to make this southern alternative minimize impacts on homes and

1 minimize impacts on natural features. And I guess I
2 understand, at this point, the ball's in the court
3 of the facility permitting staff and you have hired
4 consultants to help you and we would really request
5 that there be an effort to have a blue route that
6 doesn't hit so many people up by that New Market
7 area and doesn't go through the heart of the city of
8 Hampton, but actually tries to take as careful a
9 route as possible to avoid people and natural
10 features.
11 And finally, on behalf of, sort of, the
12 folks on 220th Street, this preferred route, maybe
13 it looked okay at a distance of 10,000 feet, but
14 when you go actually door to door, it's a route that
15 really does magnify the impacts. It's a clustering
16 of relatively dense residential areas, it's a unique
17 cultural resource. I think the Buddhist temple is
18 one of the largest in the United States. It serves
19 the entire 8,000-member Cambodian Buddhist community
20 of the Twin Cities area. And as you could see from
21 the pictures that Mr. MacDonagh showed, there are
22 gatherings there of thousands of people, as well as
23 the services and use for a meditation center. And
24 it seems in this great big state of ours, we could
25 avoid putting a route immediately next to that, as

well as next to the -- one of the few areas, the Hampton Woods, that is an area of high biological diversity significance in Dakota County.

We're going to tackle trying to get this small segment off 220th Street and hope that we can get the help of the State and your engineers to do a relatively more substantial job, which is find a southern route that is really a good-faith optimization and protects as many as people and natural resources as possible.

And I'm leaving today the excerpts from the certificate of need docket that talk about adverse impacts, the BioInitiative Report, and then the peer-reviewed article we offer of Dr. Carpenter that talks about EMF.

MR. EK: Great. Thank you for your comments. So you will be leaving this large document, great.

MS. MACCABEE: Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

MR. EK: I appreciate it.

MS. MACCABEE: I'm also leaving the summary. I just wanted -- which most of us have read.

MR. EK: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your comments.

Pull that up, again.

MR. MACDONAGH: Peter MacDonagh, Kestrel Design Group, University of Minnesota, and the last name's M-A-C-D-O-N-A-G-H.

And I wanted to follow up in regards to the Hampton Woods issue simply because it's something that we take a look at a lot in our work. And the map that I put up is -- well, this is the preferred route, the green across 220th, there's Hampton Woods right there (indicating). So this is Dakota County and this is a map produced by the DNR, the heritage section of the DNR. And these are the natural communities and rare species of Dakota County, Minnesota.

So there is quite a few of these produced for the state, most -- a good few of the counties have them. What I want to point out is, is this Hampton Woods right here. And at one time, as you all know, the county looked like this (indicating) with a lot the prairie, big woods, maple, basswood, and oak forests.

And this is the Minnesota River (indicating), for orientation, and this is the Mississippi River. And you can see that this Hampton Woods is the largest piece of natural area.

1 And when we say a natural area, we mean a sustaining
2 system, it's a system that can run on its own
3 without people having to give it various supports.
4 And this is the largest one outside these
5 two corridors here, this is part of the national
6 park, Upper Mississippi River National Park, and
7 this is part of the wildlife refuge on the Minnesota
8 River. So this is a very, very, very significant
9 piece. And just as -- also as a context, this is
10 Humorel (phonetic) Park right here (indicating),
11 well over 5,000 acres in size. The patch of forest
12 there that is self-sustaining is considerably
13 smaller than the Hampton Woods part.
14 So -- and if you take a look at this map
15 and you look for these little asterisks and stars,
16 which are these threatened, rare, and endangered
17 species, very, very few have -- very few of these
18 plant or natural areas have one of those on them,
19 and this one has two. The only places you can find
20 with multiple endangered species is when you go to
21 the very large holdings of the corridors.
22 And then, last, for the alternate route,
23 the proposed is to run through Chub Lake and that's
24 right here (indicating). And you can also see by
25 those colors that it is also an endangered plant

1 community and has endangered species here as well.
2 So the alternate route cuts through this
3 rare plant community and a very important
4 landscape-type, unique landscape-type, as does this
5 one which goes to the northern edge of Hampton
6 Woods.
7 So I wanted to bring those two things up
8 and put them in context. Just for scaling purposes,
9 each one of these is a township, 36 square miles.
10 Of the hundreds of square -- over 100 square
11 miles -- hundreds of square miles in Dakota County,
12 you can see these very, very isolated little
13 patches. And the larger patches are the most
14 valuable patches because we're missing most of what
15 we call interior species. Things that live in -- if
16 you have a lot of edge on something, it doesn't have
17 much strength and resilience for the long term.
18 But places that are shaped like this,
19 almost like a circle, have the most resilience. And
20 the bigger they are, the more you can have these
21 interior species, which are the threatened, rare,
22 and endangered ones, for the most part, rather than
23 the general species.
24 So I just wanted to add that in and that
25 was in reference to the 220th route, you can see

there's Hampton Woods (indicating). And then off the map here, the Chub Lake alternate, which also -- or the alternate which cuts through Chub Lake.

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you for your comment.

If you could state and spell your name, please.

MS. ENDRES: We've got the yo-yo bank microphone. Lori M. Endres, L-O-R-I, middle initial M as in Marie, E-N-D-R-E-S.

Well, I, like many, are concerned about the proximity to homes and the decrease in property value, and the compensation for that, health effects, and noise from the line. And all these things can be -- you can put a price on it. But how much price -- do you want to live where one of these lines go through? So you're going to give me X amount of dollars for the line going through, am I even going to be able to sell my house if I don't want to live there? Why would anyone want to purchase a house that this line goes right in front of?

I'd like just a show of hands, how many people are here because they want this power line? Let the record show, no one showed their show of

hands. And how many people are here because it directly affects property? Show of hands, I'd say that's about 75 percent.

You know, all is well, you had all these public hearings, but I would probably say the ratio of why people are here is because it goes by their property and they don't want it. So what can people in this room that feel like they're on this 237-mile stretch and they feel like they're one dot on the line, what can they do other than come here and try to be a voice? But they're against the big monster that's shoving it down their throat, we need this for the rest of Minnesota. Well, we don't want it. So what do we do? What do we, the speck, do about it?

You know, if you really need this line, why don't you consider going underground? It's going to cost a lot of money, but it ain't going to affect anyone's property value like this here line is. You know, if you have to have this line and you really feel like the little specks on this route mean something, then pay for it and go underground.

My idea is, everyone wants it stopped at Lake Marion, to go -- and you have to have it in Hampton because you've got to hook up to this other

345 line -- voltage line, why don't you just go to Prairie Island? Avoid Hampton, go right to Prairie Island.

MR. EK: Thanks for your comments.

And I just want to point out, I'm with the State of Minnesota, we are not building the line. So when you're directing those questions towards me as to why we're doing it, or why -- our -- my job is with the State of Minnesota to look at the application that was submitted to us for the proposed project. The State is not building the line and hasn't proposed these routes, just to clarify that.

To answer your question about being a dot or a speck on the map, I would argue that that's not true, that this process is all about the public getting involved. And what you can do is submit a comment, the comments are important. As I said, I receive the comments, I read them, and we look at them all. And they all go into the environmental impact statement, they all go into what final decision is made, when it's made. So it is important that you submit a comment.

There's been -- I just had a transmission line project a few weeks back -- a month ago,

comments submitted by the public actually changed the route that was proposed into their favorite. And that was approved by the Public Utilities Commission and that was mainly due to public comment on what was proposed.

So your comments are important. And so I suggest you put those comments in so we can know where you're at, which dot you are, what your concerns are, or where you are on this line and so forth so we can address those.

But I thank you for your comments.

MR. ERICKSON: Hi, my name's Joel Erickson, J-O-E-L, E-R-I-C-K-S-O-N, and I'm the city administrator in Lonsdale.

I just wanted to comment about -- I don't want to get north, south, east, west, your backyard, my backyard. But there's 3,000 residents that live in Lonsdale and it's proposed to touch the northwest corner of our city limits. My city council passed a resolution that we did not want it in within two miles of the Lonsdale city limits.

I know some of you are on the task force and know this, but the comprehensive land use plan for Lonsdale actually proposes growth northwest of the community, which will affect those current

property owner land values and also the future development of our city.

I've heard a lot of comments about staying rural and I agree with that, that's why I don't live in the metro area. But at the same time, there's also development issues that are going to be affected by this proposed 345 kilovolt power line.

So thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you for your comment.

Sir.

MR. HELMBERGER: Hello, my name is Joel Helmberger and I'm a New Market supervisor, H-E-L-M-B-E-R-G-E-R.

I just wanted let you know that yesterday morning I was at the Scott County Board meeting where they passed a resolution against the power line taking the northern route, unanimously. And last -- yesterday evening, I introduced a resolution at the township meeting and that passed also.

We're trying to wake up local government people on this and participation in a meeting like this helps.

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you, Mr. Helmberger.

If you could state and spell your name,

sir.

MR. SMITH: My name is Gary Smith, G-A-R-Y, S-M-I-T-H. I live 235th Street in Eureka Township, Section 12. Your proposed power line is going right over the top of my farm.

And I guess my comments are, I've got highly productive land there. I don't -- like this gentleman right there listed the number, I don't know what the number is. All I know is, I've got drainage tile in there and raise some pretty dang good crops.

We also -- my son and I are in the elk business. Right now we've got a herd of 41 head of elk, with -- another month and I'll have double that. We're concerned, we want to expand someday. I don't particularly want that power line running over the top of my elk herd. And I'm not sure what it will do to them, as far as if they'll abort or whatever.

We raise those elk, we've been in there -- well, I've lived on this farm -- excuse me, I've lived on this farm for 60 years, and my son and I have been in the business of raising elk for seven years now with the plans to expand.

You're running right across my farm with

it. Right on my southern border is the new oil line that just went in. I don't know how close you can be to an oil line. But -- and if you can't, you're going to be into my farm quite a ways, which just doesn't seem right. I'm going to have to live with this thing.

So I've got a family farm here, I want to hand it down to my sons, one of them's here with me today. And I guess, you know, I'm looking at this lady back here said -- or I guess she walked out, or somebody said that we have three minutes to talk at a public meeting or something like that or whatever, and I'm thinking, three minutes, you know, to give oral arguments when you're going to affect my property for the rest its life is, you know, kind of a slap in the face, you might say.

And you talk about natural resources -- protecting the natural resources, well, I'd say that my farm is just about important as anything else as far as the natural resources. We're raising hay, my son and I are in the hay business. My other son and I are in the elk business, but, you know, we're providing a living for two different families -- or three, myself included.

Today I do have -- I don't have a

prepared statement here, but also, a suggestion for this Hampton substation is, why don't you go a little further north and put it up on the U lands? There's a lot of open land up there, University of Minnesota owns it. Now they're proposing to build houses up there. Maybe I want to build houses on my farm someday, and I don't see why the U lands should be a sacred cow versus my farm or this gentleman's farm here in Hampton.

So I guess I -- that's just a suggestion, I'll probably make enemies with that suggestion. But I'd say route this line over nonproductive land.

So that's about all I've got.

MR. EK: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, very good comments and we have that alternative suggestion now in the record about moving the substation up into the U lands, which I don't believe we've heard that one yet.

MR. SMITH: I don't think you've looked at that.

MR. EK: No.

MR. SMITH: And I don't see why that University of Minnesota should be more sacred than my farm.

MR. EK: Certainly.

MR. SMITH: Or his family.

MR. EK: Oh, certainly. That's not off limits, it's something we can --

MR. SMITH: Right.

MR. EK: -- definitely take a look at.

MR. SMITH: You know, and I'll make enemies by saying put it over nonproductive farmland, which could be lowland, swampland, unfarmable land.

MR. EK: And at the same time, I wanted to suggest to you -- you know, again, this is a proposal. So I recommend you either, today, go back and get a map or a few maps, however many maps you need printed out --

MR. SMITH: Sure.

MR. EK: -- and suggest maybe an alternative around your farm or around the area that you're concerned about at your farm so we can take a look. That's the whole purpose of this, is getting input from folks on these proposed routes and maybe different ways to do it, better ways to do it.

MR. SMITH: Um-hmm. One thing about proposing alternate routes, it takes it off of my farm and puts it on somebody else's and you make enemies that way. I've seen that happen with the

oil line that just came through. So you need to find a route that doesn't impact other farmers or property owners as much as, we'll say, mine, rather than just shift it onto somebody else's property, is not real fair either. You know, so -- and I've seen that happen.

MR. EK: I understand that completely, and that's my job, actually, I have to deal with daily. And no, I understand that, it's a -- you feel like you're pitting neighbor against neighbor at times.

MR. SMITH: Right, exactly.

MR. EK: And it is unfair, I agree with you.

MR. SMITH: Yeah.

MR. EK: But in the same breath, though, you know, you're going to want to -- if you want to, you know, save your own property or have better ideas, maybe talk with your neighbor. Maybe both of you can get together and find out that there may be a solution that would help you both out.

You know, you have until April 30. You can print out maps, you can always give me a call, I could get you a bigger map. And if you think there's something better that can be done, such as

your suggestion of the substation --

MR. SMITH: Um-hmm.

MR. EK: -- you can also suggest an alternative around the area of your farm you're talking about.

MR. SMITH: I think there was an alternative. There's this group -- this lady, and I see she's walked out -- or she's up at the map back there.

Didn't your group actually have a proposed route that went a little bit north and followed Highway 50, cut into Farmington?

MS. MACCABEE: (Shakes head.)

MR. SMITH: No, that wasn't --

MS. MACCABEE: That wasn't my group, it might have been some individuals from Eureka who were doing that. But that wasn't something I was working on. I have heard of it.

MR. SMITH: Right. And I've never seen it proposed anywhere other than that meeting, so --

MS. MACCABEE: I don't know much about that.

MR. SMITH: All right. Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you. Yeah. And the route you'd be talking about, you wouldn't see because

this is straight from the application.

MR. SMITH: Right.

MR. EK: That route, if it's proposed or somebody submits it, that would be included in the EIS that my office, then, would be completing.

MR. SMITH: Just as long as it didn't go through the paper shredder, we'll see.

MR. EK: No. That doesn't happen, sir.

MR. SMITH: All right. Thank you.

MS. GREEMAN: Hi, my name is Carol Greeman, G-R-E-E-M-A-N. And I live on 240th Street -- well, I don't live there. So I'm impacted a little bit different than everybody else. I am this dot right here (indicating). We're dots now, I guess.

The way my property is impacted from this is purely -- pretty much financial. We bought this property with the intent of investing in it for our daughter's future. We have horses on the property, we've developed it, and we put a huge riding arena in.

And I know that they've talked about horses and livestock, and we have livestock all the way up and down our street. My concern on this is that, as you can see, our little strip right there

is huge compared to all the other places. Which means that our land, it could fall in between two properties or could run right through the middle.

Now, when, first of all, is that going to be decided?

MR. EK: As I said on that flowchart, you know, that final PUC decision would be January 29, 2010, by rule, so a year from now.

MS. GREEMAN: Okay. So then when that comes out, obviously, we don't have really that much say in it. I mean, you say that we do, but we really don't. I mean, we're tiny people, we can band together. But really, when it comes down to it, you guys have all the power, you're going to do what you want.

If this property is affected where the line ends up running right through the middle of the property, yeah, you give -- you pay us for those easements, but that's going to impact my whole property. I'm never going to be able to sell it, I'm never going to be able to do anything with it. I can't keep livestock there because horses are very sensitive to the electromagnetic fields. And they've researched -- they won't breed, they won't -- I mean, it affects them all the way around.

We have useless horses, I have useless land. I don't think that's fair to anybody.

I understand that there is probably a need for this, I'm, you know, fine. But for us who might end up with lines running right smack through the middle of our properties, what's going to happen then? Are we going to be compensated for our entire property because we can't use it anymore?

That's my comment, I guess.

MR. EK: I can't comment on the whole easement negotiation because that's not what the State does, that's what the actual applicant would do. If a permit --

MS. GREEMAN: I guess I was more directing it toward him.

MR. EK: -- is issued -- yeah. But what I'd like to comment on is your comment on being little people and not being heard, and that is not true. Not true.

What you can do is submit a comment, show us your location, show us your -- the issues you have with the route that is proposed as it is. Your comment will be looked at, it will be viewed, and it's important. Don't be discouraged, because if you don't say anything then we don't know. And

that's unfortunate, and I hope people don't --

MS. GREEMAN: I'm going to go back over here for a second.

MR. EK: -- don't not comment because of that.

MS. MACCABEE: Yeah. Maybe Mr. Poorker can explain the Buy the Farm provision of state law.

MR. POORKER: Sure.

MS. MACCABEE: Because that might give some more reassurance, too.

MS. GREEMAN: Right. I mean, to me, I'm in a very unique situation, where I don't live on the property that I own on this route, I live in Burnsville. So for me, if you want to buy my property, by all means, write me a check. But I know the people that live along my street don't feel that way.

For me, like I said, it was an investment. My investment, if this property is affected where this line runs right through the middle, or even it runs along the back property line like it says on there that it's proposed to do, even though the whole thing is yellow and they can go anywhere within there, I mean, I guess -- I just -- when is -- you know, how is this going to be

compensated? Because all these people that live along this street, nobody wants it there. Nobody wants it, but I don't want my neighbors to have it, either.

You know, if you're going to take it, take mine. I'm more than happy to sell it to you, but I wanted to compensated for what you're going to do to my property.

MR. EK: Right. And I was going to let Craig answer that whole easement --

MS. GREEMAN: Yeah.

MR. EK: -- question, but I just wanted to get to your -- the whole commenting and --

MS. GREEMAN: Right.

MR. EK: -- how I feel it's very important.

MR. POORKER: Thank you. The reason that -- most of our routes along this project, all 500 miles or so, is generally 1,000 feet. There are some locations where it's wider, for instance, river crossings and approaching Lake Marion substation. And the reason that went wider right there is because that is a significant challenge for us.

We've heard from people, follow roadways or follow field lines. Unfortunately, in that

three-, four-mile stretch right there, it was really hard for us to find something to route on, whether it was a property line, whether it was a roadway or anything like that.

Now whether the State tells us -- they're going to -- whether they're going to define a route for us through there or they may say, you negotiate with the landowners out there, they may tell us to do that just to try to find a route. Sit everybody down, maybe, and try to figure something out. So that's one of those difficult areas that we have right there and there are a lot of them like that.

About easement acquisition and compensation, we do have to -- of course, any property that we cross, whether there's a pole on your property or not, we have to pay for that 150-foot-wide easement. Those payments are based on your land values, but also other impacts, crop damage, soil compaction, damage to fences, damage to landscaping, tree damage, impacts to land values. If we are impacting your property values, we need to compensate you for that as well. You as a landowner should not have to suffer financially -- or because of your property values because of our project, and those are things that we need to pay for.

1 Buy the Farm statute, there is a statute
2 that came about in the late '70s, kind of a result
3 of that -- some of you -- you're probably not old
4 enough to remember it, but I remember it, some
5 people in this room remember what happened with that
6 AC line that came out of North Dakota down to the
7 Dickinson area.
8 And some new legislation passed because
9 of the way things were handled right there,
10 including eminent domain law and also a Buy the Farm
11 statute. Some -- it doesn't happen very often, but
12 some people -- some persons may want -- or
13 landowners may ask that the utility company buy them
14 out.
15 And if you want us to do that, there is a
16 process for that. It's the eminent domain process,
17 hiring appraisers and trying -- and negotiation a
18 satisfactory settlement. So that option is out
19 there. And it's -- I don't know the statute number,
20 maybe Paula does, but it is called -- it's nicknamed
21 Buy the Farm.
22 MS. MACCABEE: Not offhand.
23 MR. POORKER: Yeah. It's the Buy the
24 Farm statute.
25 MS. MACCABEE: My husband knows it.

MS. MAHOWALB: How do you define farm, like how big?

MR. POORKER: Well --

MS. MAHOWALB: Amy Mahowalb, M-A-H-O-W-A-L-B.

I mean, there's a house across from our farm that's maybe on 10, 11 acres, but it's 60 feet from the proposed line right now.

MR. POORKER: Right.

MS. MAHOWALB: And they're $120,000, maybe, ahead.

MR. POORKER: Yeah. It's the Buy the Farm statute -- or it's nicknamed Buy the Farm because that was kind of it's original intent, but it does not have to be a farm. It has to be a residence.

MS. MAHOWALB: Okay.

MR. POORKER: So if it's a half acre, quarter acre, something like that, that statute does apply to that, too. It does apply to any residence and it applies to contiguous property. So if you own 40 acres that we're going through, but you also own another 40 a couple miles north, we would only be we required to acquire the 40 acres that is being impacted by the transmission line.

MS. GREEMAN: So just to be clear, so if that lines ends up anywhere on my property, we can negotiate with you to buy that whole property?

MR. POORKER: That's correct.

MS. GREEMAN: Sweet.

MR. POORKER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What if it's adjacent?

MR. POORKER: Adjacent, if it's not --

MR. EK: We're going to need people, if they're commenting, to come up to the microphone and state their name so we can have it on the record of this proceeding.

MR. POORKER: Do you want me to answer that question?

MR. EK: Sure.

MR. POORKER: Okay. The question was, what if the easement is adjacent and not touching your property? There is no requirement for compensation for that. That is an aesthetic value that does get addressed, that is one of the criteria that we have to look at and the State is also going to be addressing that as well.

But we are required to pay -- or buy easements and pay for damages on property that we do

cross.

MR. EK: Thank you.

Ma'am, did you have a comment?

MS. BAUER: Yeah. Mary Lou Bauer.

Now, I was just -- about a year ago, we were in Cannon Falls at a meeting and one of the men that was sitting at the table questioned what profit this whole line is to Minnesota. He said that it's really going from Brookings down to La Crosse, La Crescent down there, in order to provide electric (sic) for the east coast -- or for points east. I don't remember his name.

And so if we don't -- if nobody's crying for electric in Minnesota, what good is this whole power line going to do to our state? And is that true, that we're just a connection for points east? He seemed to know something about it, he said he was on some kind of board and so on. I was quite interested at the time, but I don't remember anything.

MR. EK: Yeah. And the question you're asking gets into the whole need issue that I was talking about, that the Public Utilities Commission will be having their meetings next week, next Wednesday and Thursday. And that gets -- the

1 questions you've asked specifically are addressed in
2 that need, is this project needed?
3 And next week is when they determine
4 whether the project is needed, and depending on
5 that -- on their determination, this whole
6 routing -- or this whole process could go away if
7 they indeed find that it is not needed.
8 MS. BAUER: Well, is that one of the
9 things they're going to consider, if it helps the
10 people in Minnesota? Or is it -- or are they going
11 to say no, we're just the bridge from here to there
12 for all the congested people out east?
13 MR. EK: That's a good question. And
14 unfortunately, I'm -- you know, I'm with the routing
15 group. I don't see a PUC representative here this
16 morning. If you take my name down or get my number
17 or name, give me a call. I can direct you to the
18 PUC and hopefully they can answer that question.
19 Because those are questions that were
20 addressed in this whole need proceeding that's been
21 going on for a couple years now and, unfortunately,
22 I'm not involved in that process. I'm involved with
23 the routing, so I apologize that I can't answer your
24 question. But you might know more if you go to the
25 meetings next week.

1 If you could come to the microphone, sir.
2 MR. BEISSEL: Jerome Beissel, again.
3 I was just wondering, why didn't we know
4 about this before, that we could question this need?
5 Now it's going to be voted on next week and we
6 didn't know nothing about it until two weeks ago
7 that it's coming by this way, that way, and why
8 didn't we know this? That's all I wanted to know.
9 MR. EK: You should have been notified,
10 and I don't -- the PUC has their notification
11 process and I guess I can't answer your question why
12 you weren't notified.
13 MR. BEISSEL: Because --
14 MR. EK: But they do notify folks and
15 it's a process that's been going on for a few years
16 now.
17 MR. BEISSEL: We all -- I didn't mean to
18 interrupt. We all come here today because of -- we
19 think need -- a lot of times, why do we need it and
20 whatnot? But now you say you're out for need, but
21 we never knew nothing about this until maybe a month
22 ago. See, that's --
23 MR. EK: Again --
24 MR. BEISSEL: I think a lot of people
25 here probably didn't.

MR. EK: And, you know, I apologize. I can't comment on why you weren't notified because I don't -- that's not my part of the project. I'm here with routing, I'm not involved with the need side. So, you know, I can't comment on why you were or were not notified and/or involved with the whole need process.

So I'm sorry that I can't. I can, after the meeting, give you my information and I can direct you to people who can help you answer that question.

MR. BEISSEL: Okay. I forgot what I -- I don't know what I had, I interrupted. But I couldn't remember what I was saying. It could have been a --

MR. EK: Any additional comments, concerns, alternatives that might be proposed?

Yes, if you could come up, please.

MS. ENGGREN: Fortunately, and thankfully for my neighbors -- Mary Ann Enggren, M-A-R-Y A-N-N E-N-G-G-R-E-N.

I received this map (indicating), but the homes I see today are all yellow. And so when, you know, people come in and look, I don't feel that they really get a feel when they're not seeing red

and purple and how close these homes are. I mean, when it's all the same color, you just don't have -- it just doesn't stand out, it makes it a little less significant.

So I'm thinking that we should have -- you should have that so people can really see and feel it, for one thing. And then -- on your large maps, you know, as we all walk around.

And then I have a question regarding the approval or not approval, so it's not approved yet, correct?

MR. EK: The need is not decided upon yet.

MS. ENGGREN: I don't understand why there are job postings for the -- for this line?

MR. EK: I --

MS. ENGGREN: I mean, I'm just looking for an answer or --

MR. EK: I couldn't answer that question.

MS. ENGGREN: Okay.

MR. POORKER: What was the question?

MS. ENGGREN: There are already job postings for this line.

MR. POORKER: Job postings for construction of the line?

MS. ENGGREN: Yes.

MR. POORKER: That's a couple years out yet, there's a lot to go and I think the concern is probably keeping some of the employment -- jobs in Minnesota. And so job postings, no.

MS. ENGGREN: But it hasn't been approved and there's job postings?

MR. POORKER: There are job postings?

MS. ENGGREN: Yes.

MR. POORKER: Okay. I guess I'm not familiar with what the job posting are.

MS. ENGGREN: Linemen.

MR. POORKER: Not for this project, there shouldn't be.

MS. ENGGREN: There are, you can go to over to Dakota -- DCTC and they're posted.

MR. POORKER: At Dakota Electric (sic)?

MS. ENGGREN: No. DCTC, the school.

MR. POORKER: I'm not familiar. I have no idea, there may be jobs that perhaps Great River Energy or Xcel Energy or --

MS. ENGGREN: Yeah.

MR. POORKER: -- Otter Tail Power Company.

MS. ENGGREN: I mean --

MR. POORKER: But related to CapX, I don't think so. They may be hiring engineers or technicians or something like that, I'm not aware of that at all.

MS. ENGGREN: Okay. No, it's there.

MR. POORKER: Okay.

MR. EK: And as for the dots and so forth, that's our job now, is to take this application and verify all this information that the company supplied to us. So yeah, you're seeing this information now, but we're -- that's our job, is to dig into it and take a better look at it -- of those dots. What's important -- you know, I look at those dots as just markers to see the homes. I don't care what color they are, just as long as I can see that there are homes along the route, period.

But we -- and we will go through to ensure that the information that's provided in the application is accurate and correct. And that's part of the whole process and the environmental impact statement.

MS. ENGGREN: Okay.

MR. EK: Additional comments, questions?

With that, then, again, I urge you to either submit a comment in writing today, you can

hand it to us today, send it via e-mail, online, submit a comment. You're more than welcome to go into the back, have a map printed out, submit an alternative that way if you have a comment, fax, U.S. mail. All that information is on the comment sheets out front and the handouts of the presentation I have.

But thank you all for coming and I hope you do comment on the project.

(Meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.)