PUBLIC COMMENTS

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009

1:00 p.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

Best Western Marshall Inn
1500 East College Drive
Marshall, Minnesota

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MR. EK: So now I guess we'll open it up to public comment. And I failed to mention that there were green cards in the back for people who wanted to speak, and in the hurry of getting this all ready I didn't let people know.

So why don't we just go this time with a show of hands, and if I could have a person come up here and, please, we'll have you face the court reporter, state your name, and then your comment, if you could.

MR. DOLAN: My name is Michael Dolan and I'm an affected landowner, or potentially affected.

The question I have is relatively simple. If we go through the trouble of submitting a written comment later than today, will someone in your office or another office actually get back to us and give us a response as to whether or not it was accepted or why it was rejected or what the other alternatives might be to that concern that we have? In other words, will somebody actually let us know that you received it and actually considered it?

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you. Yes, we actually receive all the comments, we go through them, and in a memo or in the scoping decision we would describe

the different alternatives and possibly what was accepted, what was not accepted, why, and so on and so forth.

MR. DOLAN: So you will respond to our specific questions?

MR. EK: We wouldn't send you a direct letter back, no.

MR. DOLAN: So we really don't know whether it's being considered, in other words.

MR. EK: Well, you would see in the scoping document that eventually comes out, and if you're on the project contact list you would receive notice and actually receive that scoping document, and it would show the items that you requested. And if they weren't requested, you can call and ask why.

MR. DOLAN: Thank you.

MR. EK: And then you would -- and then again, I should say, in the Draft EIS, once that's put out, there is that second comment period, you could bring that question up again as to why this wasn't addressed in the EIS and so forth.

MR. DOLAN: Thank you.

MR. EK: Anybody else? State your name.

MR. WAMBEKE: My name in Dan Wambeke, I live over by Green Valley with my wife Joy, over

there, and my son Toby and my two-year-old daughter, Anna.

I want to reiterate some of the comments that were already put in about the importance of keeping away from homes. For me, as a father, I don't feel that I could live with putting my children extremely close to one of these lines. And I don't feel that anybody else should have to make that decision either. And I realize that there's some -- it's difficult to determine what is an acceptable distance, but I know there are a handful of homes along this line that are uncomfortable, quote, unquote, shall we say. So that's the first comment I want to make.

And along that line, I'm -- I do have some concerns about the accuracy of some of the information that's in the route application. I know my own home is -- was marked incorrectly, which miscategorized how close we actually were. And as I looked, anyone can go out to Google Maps and to Microsoft's maps site, and at least in Lyon County they have a nifty feature where you can -- there's aerial photography. And when I did that I discovered several other homes that were miscategorized.

So I think as we go forward in this process I want to make sure that everything is accurately represented so that an evaluation can be made. And just for your information, I'll submit or I'll e-mail you the information that I have so far. I just looked at Lyon County, of the portion of the line between -- or that goes from Brookings to the Lyon County substation.

And the second comment I wanted to make, I think an evaluation should be made not only on proximity to homes, but the impact on trees that are around homes. There are some -- or there's sort of kind of a vague statement in the route application right now about minimizing the number of trees in the right-of-way as much as possible, but all you have to do is just step outside today to know why there are trees around people's homes. And there are several cases where there are groves that are liable to be taken down in the process. So I think that would be a categorization that's missing from the route -- or the current evaluation of things that should be added.

And it seems to me I had a third thing to say, but I can't remember what it was, so I'll send that to you as well.

So, thank you.

MR. EK: Thank you. Just to reiterate, the locations, please put that in the comment letter so we can look at that. That's something important. And to get on the item of tree breaks, or whatever you want to call them, there have been past permits where we've -- where those are considered, past projects where tree breaks are considered. So it is something that's thought about during the process. Even though you may not have seen it here or in the application, it is an item that is thought about during the environmental impact statement process. Just to let you know.

Any other comments? Sure.

MR. OFTEDAHL: Perry Oftedahl from Hanley Falls.

And one of my comments kind of echoes the last one, concern about health issues. The preferred route runs about a hundred feet from my house, and so I'm worried about health issues, I mean now and in the future. Not only for myself, but for my grandkids and further on down the line, being that close to my actual house. And the possibilities of moving it to the other side of the road so it's a little farther away, where there's

bare farmland, rather than preferred route closer to the house.

And also the question of the preferred route versus the alternate route, was the alternate route chosen because it's -- or put second because it's more costly to go that way? Was there more farmhouses along that alternate route? You know, what was the reasoning for the preferred route?

Thank you.

MR. EK: Thanks for your comment.

Any other comments? Please state your name.

MR. GALHONES: Albert Galhones (phonetic), Lincoln County, Limestone Township. My concern is that if a pole -- first of all, I understand that the poles are to be roughly 1,000 feet apart. Is that correct?

MR. EK: That does depend on the topography, and I forget what exactly is in the route permit but, yes, there are figures of 700, 1,000 -- to 1,000 feet.

MR. GALHONES: My concern is that if a pole, at its proposed placement, would be in such a place that it would be difficult for a farmer, say, to get between the pole and another obstruction,

like trees or wetland, to get between there with machinery, is it possible, will it be possible for that farmer to mitigate the placement of that pole? To, you understand what I mean, to discuss the placement.

MR. EK: Sure, during final design. That's something -- I believe something that I believe Craig might be able to answer for you here.

MR. POORKER: Sure. Now, that's a good question. That's a real detailed question. I think when we eventually get a route, if we do, that's a question that -- or a thing that we're going to have to negotiate with each individual landowners, where the poles go. And I think we're going to have to work really closely with landowners and farmers on those situations, because there are a lot of issues that go into where we put a pole. I mean, issues could be tile lines, other underground features that may be there, do you want it on the fence line or would you rather have it north or south, on a property corner, we'll try to hit property corners as much as we can as well. So those are a lot of details that we'll have to work with each individual landowner on, in that eventuality.

And also to address your question as

well, on how do we pick the preferred over the alternate. I'm not sure, Hanley Falls, you're in the portion from Lyon County to Granite Falls. I can comment on that portion right there, there's a 115 kilovolt line that runs up there right now, and it's our intent to take that line out and replace it with this one here. So I'm hoping that that impact is going to be minimal. But that existing 115 kV line, I know, is probably pretty close to the roadway, and the road authorities really like us to be right on the edge of their right-of-way, just outside of the road right-of-way.

MR. GALHONES: So farther away from the road.

MR. POORKER: Yep. It's a township road, as I recall, and their right-of-way is most likely 33 feet, so we'd probably be out there with our centerline 35 to 38 feet or something like that.

MR. GALHONES: It could put it right through the middle of my garage.

MR. POORKER: We don't want to be doing that.

MR. GALHONES: Because if you move farther away from the right-of-way, you're moving closer to my house. You know, and obviously, if you

put it on the other side of the road, there is a farm there, but I got neighbors down the road where their house is on the other side of the road, and the odds are you can't have poles there going back and forth.

MR. POORKER: Sure. We like to do that as little as possible, but if there is something there and we need to engineer around it or build around it, that's something we certainly need to take into consideration, definitely. And did I answer all your questions?

MR. GALHONES: No, I have one more.

MR. POORKER: Okay.

MR. GALHONES: First of all, on this question here, if I understood you right, you said that you could come in, move inland from the right-of-way. Is that correct?

MR. POORKER: Can we move inland from further -- a little bit further away from the road?

MR. GALHONES: Correct.

MR. POORKER: I think there are probably situations we can do that. Again, those are specifics that we'll work with with the landowners while we're in the design phase.

MR. GALHONES: Now, for the most part,

you follow the road. Is that correct?

MR. POORKER: Yes. For the most part, again, we looked at the criteria, the routing criteria, and that's addressed pretty well in section four, I believe, in the permit application. We tried for the most part to follow roadways, existing transmission lines where we can, we can do that very often. We also try to follow field lines. If we can't follow a roadway or perhaps a railroad, and we have to go out away from a roadway, we try to stick to like quarter section lines in most cases where there is a field line or a field break line.

MR. GALHONES: You can hold it. Is there any statute or statement by you people that you cannot go diagonally where there's an offset, where you cannot go diagonally across the field with an offset?

MR. POORKER: Yes. I think your question is are we going to go diagonally across fields in some cases. And the answer to that, or his question was is there a statute. It's not a statute, but I think it's in the rules, they tell us as much as we can to avoid that situation. And I don't think -- I think there are very few cases on this whole project, both on the preferred and alternate, where

we are going diagonally across any fields. We're doing our best to stay out of farmers' fields. And I don't think we have anything diagonal on this project.

MR. GALHONES: Thank you.

MR. POORKER: Thank you.

MR. EK: Any other questions? Comments? Can you state your name?

MR. BOERBOOM: My name is Galen Boerboom, I live between Ghent and Minneota.

First of all, I'd like to address what you had said earlier when you got up about sending out the letters with your first mailing. The mailings looked like junk mail, to be honest with you, so I don't think a lot of people commented or even looked at it. Secondly, we were advised that we could have a public task force committee, there was two of them, you said, that were up by the New Prague area.

MR. EK: Correct.

MR. BOERBOOM: We applied, and from my understanding, we were denied, or not given a chance to have it. I went to a township meeting. We were also told that all government agencies where the line was run through was notified. The township

board never knew anything about it, nor the next one to us didn't know anything about it. So right away red flags go up, mistrust is placed, and then when we're not allowed this input by the public task force, there's a lot of mistrust that comes, and a lot of answers -- questions that are not answered. So some of this stuff you say I don't believe. And I don't know how the other people feel, but I know when you made the comment about the task force, I seen people look at each other here and say how come we weren't allowed.

MR. EK: Well, I don't know how to answer that question, because we did send out letters to all townships, all counties, all regional development commissions, all large cities. And no, we did not receive any --

MR. BOERBOOM: Oh, yes, you did. And I'll tell you the guy that called you was Ross Thompson from our township, and he was sent mail from your office and he e-mailed it back. Any comment on this, Dan?

MR. WAMBEKE: I had called a couple of times, but I'm just a citizen.

MR. BOERBOOM: There's another member of the township board in here, sitting right there.

MR. BUYSEE: I called you and e-mailed you, hoping to be on a task force.

MR. EK: Okay. Well, we didn't receive a response from --

MR. BOERBOOM: You did.

MR. BUYSEE: I talked to you specifically.

MR. EK: And your name?

MR. BUYSEE: Brian Buysee.

MR. BOERBOOM: So, in other words, we're supposed to sit in this room and believe everything else that's said.

MR. EK: I'm sorry you feel that way, sir.

Any other questions, comments?

MR. OFTEDAHL: Just a comment. I was wondering on like of the size of the poles and the distance between, is there a specific, you know, if your building site is so long, is it possible, if it does go through your place, that you'd have a pole at the beginning and at the end, you don't have one in the middle of your yard? I mean, is there a minimum distance that the poles or towers have to be set apart, and then the height of them or whatever? Any specifics on that?

MR. POORKER: That's a good question and that gets back to what we were talking about. We work really hard with the landowners when we're designing so we don't end up with a pole in your yard. If we need to span through, that's certainly something we can do. Minimum, we try not to put them too close together because they're a few thousand dollars a pole, but we can certainly space them out, you know, before and after, to lengthen those out a little bit.

MR. OFTEDAHL: So it's possible.

MR. POORKER: Oh, yeah, it's definitely possible. And we try to work hard to not put them in people's yards and span through that.

MR. OFTEDAHL: And how much sag is there? I know there's quite a bit of sag, especially in the summertime on the existing lines. So what's the height of them and the sag in them?

MR. POORKER: All right. The question is how much sag is there. Of course, these transmission lines are going to sag the most when it's really, really hot and when it's under full load, which is going to be when it's hot, of course, we're all running our air conditioners at that time. We do have to design this so that those wires are a

minimum distance above the ground, and I believe it's 35 to 40 feet. So we have to design for that maximum sag. So it's going to be in those hottest conditions. So we do have to design it for that to make sure that we are above the ground that certain distance.

MR. EK: Thank you.

MR. GALHONES: I have another comment I'd like to make.

MR. EK: All right.

MR. GALHONES: There's some misinformation going on around here, I've been hearing it from other people. Some fellows say that you're going to put the poles or the support structures on the edge of the right-of-way. Some others have said that you may put the poles anywhere within the 150 feet of right-of-way. Now, which would be correct?

MR. POORKER: Okay. For the most part we're going to try to stay right along the road right-of-way as much as we can, if we're going along the road right-of-way. Are we going to go out further than that? In most cases, no, unless there's something right there we need to be aware of. But our right-of-way is 150 feet wide, 75 feet

each side of the transmission line centerline. And so we're going to stick right to the middle of that right-of-way. And for the most part, we're going to be just like maybe 5 feet outside of a road right-of-way, whether it's a 33 foot or four rod road, we'll be just to the outside of that. If it's a 50-foot right-of-way on a county road, in some cases our centerline will be at 55 feet from the center of the road. But for the most part, we're going to try to parallel those as best we can.

MR. EK: Thank you.

Any other comments, questions? Please state and spell your name, sir.

MR. DIEKEN: My name is Harold Dieken, D-I-E-K-E-N. I have a couple of comments here.

Number one, on your flow chart there, of the different procedures and process you go through, I'd like to know if, one, if the certificate of need is denied, if the routing process stops at that point?

And number two, in regard to trees and lines of this stature, which are single pole, this must not be the first time you've done this, so I'd like to know the exact technique you do for dealing with groves, as to the width of the trees or

whatever. Here's the thing. I've got a mile and a half of this highlighted, so I'm getting a pretty good dose of this. And during the early '70s I planted numerous wind breaks along this path, and I'm hard-pressed to have a high line come through and bulldozers take out my trees. So there must be a standard or a procedure or whatever so you can tell us what to expect, that it ain't the last-minute decision that we're hearing about.

And number three, on this citizen task force, I too filled out an application, I too sent it e-mail and, yes, you did reply to me. I have got your e-mail reply in my computer at this moment. So don't tell us that you didn't receive any replies with the citizen task force information and that we filled out and returned to you. That is not true.

Thank you.

MR. EK: All right. On the task forces, I guess I should clarify that. We need more than -- a task force is made up of a regional development commission, a county, a township within the county. If we don't receive enough requests from those entities, we statutorily cannot set up a task force. And therefore we did not receive the required local government entities to set up the task forces along

the western portion of this route. So, yes, certainly I may have received yours, I may have received another gentleman's, but in order to set up a task force we are required to have certain local government representatives included to set up that task force.

Let's see. Your other question was tree breaks. What I would suggest is you submit a comment, where you live, the tree breaks you have, the concerns you have with those tree breaks, so we can identify those in our environmental impact statement and know where they are, where you're located, and address that issue.

And I forget your third issue.

MR. DIEKEN: The certificate of need.

MR. EK: Oh, the certificate of need. Yes, you're correct. I'm not an expert on that, that's a separate docket from this. This is routing, there's certificate of need. I believe in the next few weeks the Public Utilities Commission will be deliberating or making a decision on the need of the project. I believe you are correct, if they decide it's not needed, well, then, I believe this does go away, the routing. The project does need to be needed, so that will determine what goes

forward from here.

MR. DIEKEN: I'd like to address one more thing. Getting back to your citizens advisory task force, I didn't see anywhere's in that application where it said we had to have a minimum number of applicants not to be represented out here. I feel as though that the people out here have got just as much right to be represented on a citizens task force as those people up at New Prague or Prior Lake. Probably even more so. We're in agricultural land out here and our land is adversely affected with this.

MR. EK: Thanks for your comment. We'll take that under consideration.

Any other comments, please?

MR. DEBBAUT: Yes. I have to identify myself, Delmer Debbaut. And I'm concerned about, my daughter-in-law has a day care center. It's kind of a unique situation because it's out in the country, the house sits right up next to the right-of-way. Even if you put the poles on the other side of the road it's still only 30 or 40 feet from the house. Now, is there a safety hazard of magnetic fields? Is the state going to come along and say, hey, you can't have a day care center underneath these power

lines? It might shut her out of business. That is a legal business, she's licensed by the state. If the state don't say anything, maybe the mothers who bring in their children there will say, oh, I don't want my child underneath that wire, it's giving off all kinds of radiation and what have you.

I'm very concerned about the placement of this power line. I would be happy if you went a half a mile and went through the field, I would say nothing about that, or I don't see why you can't go a mile north and reconstruct that power line that goes to that substation.

MR. EK: Could you tell me where you're located?

MR. DEBBAUT: Section 27, Underwood Township, in Redwood County.

I'm very concerned about this 'cause that is a legal business. You're taking away her livelihood.

MR. EK: Well, I can't comment on what -- I believe it's the Department of Public and Human Health that oversees day cares, I'm not sure, so I can't comment on what their rules are. But I can tell you that's an item, health and safety, electromagnetic fields, that's an item that we

automatically analyze in the environmental impact statement on any impacts that it might have.

I also suggest -- you mentioned some alternatives, I suggest you put into a comment those alternatives of moving that line north through your property, or the other one, south, I believe you said. I suggest that you put that in a comment so we know, otherwise we will not know. However, we will have it transcribed here, so that will be helpful. But a comment would also be helpful. And just to let you know, we do study that in great detail, electric and magnetic fields.

MR. DEBBAUT: Who do I send a comment to?

MR. EK: There should be a comment form in the back. Why don't I just go ahead -- yep, that's it. And all the information is on there, you can either just send this in, the address is on the back, there's also e-mail right here, and then online.

MR. DEBBAUT: I can't e-mail, I'm not smart enough to have a computer.

MR. EK: But there you go, there's the address, then, and just send it on in.

Any other comments, questions?

MR. WAMBEKE: I don't have any more

comments, but I do have a couple of questions for, hopefully, Craig, you can answer.

The first question, and this might be an engineering thing so if you don't know, that's okay. One of the peculiarities that I noticed in the route application, there's a table in there that says what the magnetic field is at various distances from the route centerline. And now the route as it is proposed right now is a single circuit, but it's an upsized single circuit so at some point in the future a double circuit could be put on it. The peculiarity I noticed is that the magnetic field is greater on a single circuit line than it is on a double circuit line. So I was wondering if you could address that.

And then my second question is in regard to the actual -- you know, all the maps have the 1,000 foot wide, but within that there's a proposed centerline. Could you just explain the process that went in to determining where that proposed centerline went? You know, why was it shifted in some cases and in other cases not. And in particular, I realize you want the flexibility to work with landowners and all that, but how reasonably certain can we feel that that's where

it's going to go?

I'll tell you, I'm sitting in a situation right now where if the route would flip to the other side of the road from where it is, as far as I'm concerned it's an eviction notice. So if you could address that, that would be great.

Thank you.

MR. POORKER: Dan, what was your first question?

MR. WAMBEKE: It was why the magnetic field is greater for a single circuit than it would be for a double circuit.

MR. POORKER: First off, you're right, I'm not an engineer, I never wanted to aspire to something like that. But your question, I've been told that, yes, for a double circuit line there is less magnetic field at the right-of-way than there is for a single circuit. Why that is, I don't know. It's something about cancelling each other out, and I'm sure there's some good engineering speak for that. But that is what I've been told. And the portion that is double-circuited, initially, when we filed for this project with the certificate of need, it was proposed to be double circuit from Lyon County to Helena, that portion was always going to

be double circuit. But we heard things in the certificate of need proceedings that suggested we need to upsize this a little bit and plan for some of the future renewable energy that could be coming online. And there's a lot of that in this area. So it is being proposed to be upsized from there. And that single -- or that second circuit will be coming on at a later date. That will have to be determined depending how much wind energy comes online and things like that.

Your second question, Dan?

MR. WAMBEKE: The process that went into figuring out where that line goes and how -- I mean, were engineers consulted in the process at all, or is that just a best guess right now?

MR. POORKER: You hit it on the head. We did come up with a proposed centerline, but that's all it is. It's more a reference centerline than anything else. And you'll see that it does jump the road now and then and we are on one side of the road as opposed to the other. And the reason for that is exactly right, if there's a home that's really close to the road we'd probably jump the road to avoid that and then stay on the other side of the road for as long as we could. But there's going to be some

more detailed work again, it's not cast in stone. And the PUC may very well tell us you will be on this side of the road from here to here. In other cases they might leave that up to us and surveying and engineering work. But that's exactly why we moved around. If we were on one side of the road, it was to avoid some of those homes.

MR. EK: Thanks, Craig.

Any other comments, questions?

MR. OFTEDAHL: If you will jump the road to avoid homes, then why are some homes still -- the line is still on that side of the road?

MR. EK: Actually, what could happen is it could jump the road several times. You jump the road in one place, run along, jump the road in another place.

MR. OFTEDAHL: I don't want it by my neighbor's house either.

MR. EK: Right. There is that possibility where it could jump the road more than one time. And there's feasibility issues and engineering issues with that. But, yes, that's something that has been done in the past.

MR. OFTEDAHL: My concern is the health thing with stray voltage, whatever you want to call

it. I'd rather have it move farther away, but then my neighbors want it as far as they can from them too.

MR. EK: Right, because it would be running along their side of the road then. Yes, there is that possibility of having it jump back then to the other side. Yes.

Any other comments or questions?

MR. WAMBEKE, SR.: I'm Dan Wambeke, Senior, W-A-M-B-E-K-E. I guess my concern is with these magnetic fields, what impact do they have on livestock and wildlife? I know I've seen articles on it where it shows that they become disoriented and they kind of lose their sense of direction.

MR. EK: I can't answer your question here today. I can tell you that is a subject that we do study in the environmental impact statement, and that includes the electric and magnetic fields as well as stray voltage issues. And that the stray voltage kind of deals with the livestock issues and so forth, where the electric and magnetic fields are more of a human health type safety risk. And both of those are automatically analyzed in the environmental impact statement. I can't give you answers here today, of course, because we have to

get to that environmental impact statement. But I can tell you that it will be analyzed.

MR. WAMBEKE, SR.: Okay.

MR. EK: Any other questions, comments? State your name and spell it, please.

MR. LIBAT: John Libat, J-O-H-N, L-I-B-A-T. I was just wondering if anyone could tell us the approximate cost per lineal foot, per lineal mile, of this line that's proposed?

MR. EK: Sure. I think I should know that, it's in the application. Maybe Craig can give you a figure.

MR. POORKER: I don't remember what the cost is per mile, but I think the total cost for the preferred route is, I believe, $700 million, so a couple million dollars per mile.

MR. LIBAT: Thank you.

MR. EK: Another question?

MR. DIEKEN: Harold Dieken. I'd like to know, on your environmental impact study, what weight do farm windbreaks carry? Very important, not too important, don't count at all? And another thing, if a farm windbreak is involved, and this is a question for the power line man there, what do they actually do with the trees? Do we go over them

or are they bulldozed out, or how wide a strip are we talking, and the general guidelines that you use?

MR. EK: Well, first, to answer your question about the environmental impact statement and tree breaks. That subject holds just as much weight as any other subject in the environmental impact statement. Nothing is graded, everything is just important as the next. And we look at that through the route. There may be certain areas where there are more tree breaks and so we'll have to focus on those areas. However, no, we don't discount a tree break that may be in an area where there are none others. So, no, it all holds the same weight, each subject.

As for routing around them or what final design may be, maybe Craig can answer that. But there is -- that possibility again comes up of jumping across sides of roads to avoid those, and back and forth I know is one option. Craig may know others.

MR. POORKER: I'm not sure of other options, but I certainly understand. We've done other projects before, usually smaller projects, and I really understand the importance of windbreaks. That's something that our local governments and the

state's been telling us to do for a long time, to build those windbreaks to protect your fields, protect your homes, so they're are very, very important, I really understand that.

And also, if we have to take them down, your other question was what do we have to clear, I think. And that's typically 75 feet, they're pretty much the whole right-of-way. However, some lower growing trees are certainly okay, if they're 15 to 20 feet tall they can be replanted. Just so we can have access to the line, so we can drive down the road or down the centerline or something like that so we can inspect the poles.

So other plantings, if we have to, it's certainly allowed -- it's probably best to talk with any utility company before you do that just to make sure that that's okay and the species is correct.

And what do we do with the wood? That's usually up to the landowner. We certainly have to pay significantly for windbreaks, they are not cheap when we have to acquire those. But what do we do with the wood? Usually we ask the landowner what they want us to do with the wood. So if it's yours, a lot of times we negotiate with the landowner to cut it up into eight-foot lengths, sometimes four

feet, stack it, take away the brush or chip the brush or whatever you want to do. That's something that is certainly negotiable.

MR. EK: Any other questions, comments?

MR. GALHONES: Albert Galhones again. When a landowner signs an easement -- it's probably a legal question, maybe you can't answer it -- but when a landowner signs an easement, can another entity ride, so to speak, ride on the back of that easement to put in, say, a gas line, a line of some other kind, underground or above ground?

MR. EK: You're correct, I can't answer that question.

MR. POORKER: That's a really good question. If you didn't hear it, when we acquire an easement, what can anybody else do on it. And the answer is nothing, without getting your permission. Because when we acquire an easement for a transmission line, that's all we get. That's all the document says, is that we can have it there for that transmission line. Sometimes we write in information about maybe a local co-op can bury a line in there. And that's about it. It's still your private property, you still do with it what you're doing now. If you're farming it, there's no

reason you can't do that then. And if somebody else comes along that wants to use it, whether it's a bike trail or put another buried telephone cable or anything like that, it's your private property, they still need to get permission and an easement from you to do that.

MR. GALHONES: Thank you.

MR. EK: Any other questions or comments? All right.

MR. OFTEDAHL: Perry Oftedahl. Probably not one that you want to answer right now, but when you come along and you want to get the landowners to sign the easements, if a landowner refuses to sign an easement, does it really matter, and it's still going to go through?

MR. EK: That's a question I can't answer either. Craig can answer that question.

MR. POORKER: And that is a question I hate answering, 'cause I think you know what the answer probably is and it's a word I hate saying, but it's eminent domain. And usually, at least the company I work for and the people I've worked with acquiring easements were pretty good at getting an easement and making it satisfactory somehow. Whether we need to mitigate something with you as a

landowner or we need to pay for some damages or whatever, we're usually pretty good at that. And the utilities, the electric utilities that work in this state are usually pretty good, all of us, at getting a satisfactory easement. Sometimes we can't, but that's what the system is there for. Sometimes people think that our offer is way off. Usually we can negotiate that pretty well. Or there might be other reasons for eminent domain, too, there might be title problems or we can't find somebody to get an easement from them, or there are situations like that where we have to go through the eminent domain process.

MR. EK: Again, any other questions, comments? With that, I encourage -- certainly. If you could please spell your name.

MR. COUDRON: Okay. Mike Coudron, C-O-U-D-R-O-N. In regards to your last comment there, if you could clarify for me, your offer for the easement, would that be per parcel of land, would that be a base for each one and then you negotiate from there, or where will that start and how will that be involved?

MR. POORKER: All right. That was a good question, too. How do we pay for easements, right?

We buy it by the acre. I know some of you that have had transmission lines go across your property back in the '40s or '50s or something like that, we used to pay per pole. But we base it now, we look at how many acres that you have, how many acres we're encumbering with the easement, and we pay you based on what land values are right now. Hopefully it's back up there the way it was a year ago when corn prices were up there about eight bucks a bushel and land prices were right up there with it. But we do pay for easement value, your land value, per acre basis, and there are a lot of other things that we need to pay for, too. Crop loss, if we damage your crop we need to pay you for that. We need to pay you for soil compaction, tree damage, and things like that. Anything that impacts your property or impacts the easement that we're getting from you, we need to compensate for all those things. I answered your question? Anything else? I think that's a question that comes up frequently, so thanks.

MR. EK: Any additional questions, comments?

All right. Well, what we'll have is an open house after this, I believe the meeting here ends at 4:00, I believe. And I encourage you to go

grab a comment sheet in the back, go to the back and find a map sheet, maybe fill out that for an alternative. Identify your concerns so we can have them when we put them into the scope, when we write the environmental impact statement. Very important.

So thank you for coming, thank you for your questions, comments, and we'll all be around here to answer any questions you might have.

(Public comments concluded.)