

**STATE OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**ROUTE PERMIT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A HIGH  
VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE AND SUBSTATION**

**IN WRIGHT AND STEARNS COUNTIES**

**ISSUED TO  
NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY  
AND GREAT RIVER ENERGY**

**PUC DOCKET No. E002, ET2/TL-09-246**

In accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850, this route permit is hereby issued to:

**NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY AND GREAT RIVER ENERGY**

Northern States Power Company, dba Xcel Energy, and Great River Energy are authorized by this route permit to construct a new approximately 28 mile 345 kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line located in Wright and Stearns counties and a new substation in Stearns County in the State of Minnesota, from the Monticello Substation in Monticello to a new Quarry Substation in St. Joseph Township.

The transmission line and substation project shall be built within the route identified in this permit and as portrayed on the official route maps, and in compliance with the conditions specified in this permit.

Approved and adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of July 2010

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

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Burl W. Haar,  
Executive Secretary

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e. large print or audio tape) by calling 651.201.2202 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.

## **I. ROUTE PERMIT**

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) hereby issues this route permit to Northern States Power Company, dba Xcel Energy, and Great River Energy (Permittees) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850. This permit authorizes the Permittees to build approximately 28 miles of 345 kV transmission line in Wright and Stearns Counties from the Monticello Substation in Monticello to a new Quarry Substation in St. Joseph Township.

## **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Permittees are authorized to construct a project comprising Monticello Substation modifications, a transmission line and a new Quarry Substation as described in the Application and summarized below:

1. A 345 kV high voltage transmission line extending southwest from the existing Monticello Substation until intersecting with County State Aid Highway 75 (CSAH 75) and I-94. The Route then follows CSAH 75 and I-94 until west of Fish Lake where the Route then follows I-94 to the intersection of I-94 and State Highway 23 to the proposed Quarry Substation, as depicted in the attached maps;
2. Including the Applicants' requested modifications to the Monticello Substation, a new Quarry Substation, and connection to the existing St. Cloud to Sauk River 115 kV transmission line at the Quarry Substation;

The proposed structures will primarily include single-pole, double-circuit capable, self-weathering or galvanized steel structures that will range in height between 130 and 190 feet. If required for long spans or in environmentally sensitive areas, two pole installations are allowed. The span length between structures will typically range in length between 600 and 1,000 feet depending on site-specific considerations. The proposed line will be built using double-circuit capable poles; only one circuit will be installed for this Project. The second position will be available for a possible future additional circuit. The right-of-way for the proposed 345 kV electrical transmission line will generally be 150 feet in width.

## **III. DESIGNATED ROUTE**

The approved route is shown on the aerial photos attached to this permit and further designated as follows:

**A. Route Width and Alignment.** The width of the designated route will be limited to 600 feet approximately as depicted on the attached route maps dated June 25, 2010, and unless otherwise indicated on those maps. The final alignment (i.e., permanent and maintained rights-of-way) will be located within this designated route unless otherwise

authorized below. This width will provide the Permittee with the flexibility to do minor adjustments of the specific alignment or right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions.

The designated route identifies an alignment that minimizes the overall potential impacts relating to the factors identified in Minn. Rule 7850.4100 and which was evaluated in the environmental review and permitting processes. As such, this permit anticipates that the actual right-of-way will generally conform to this proposed alignment unless changes are requested by individual landowners or unforeseen conditions are encountered, or are otherwise provided for by this permit. Any alignment modifications within this designated route shall be located to have comparable overall impacts relative to the factors in Minn. Rule 7850.4100 as does the alignment identified in this permit, and shall be specifically identified in and approved as part of the Plan and Profile submitted pursuant to Part IV.A. of this permit.

Route width variations outside the designated route may be allowed for the Permittee to overcome potential site specific constraints. These constraints may arise from any of the following:

1. Unforeseen circumstances encountered during the detailed engineering and design process.
2. Federal or state agency requirements.
3. Existing infrastructure within the transmission line route, including but not limited to roadways, railroads, natural gas and liquid pipelines, high voltage electric transmission lines, or sewer and water lines.
4. Planned infrastructure improvements identified by state agencies and local government units and made part of the evidentiary record during the contested case proceeding for this permit.

Any alignment modifications arising from these site specific constraints that would result in right-of-way placement outside the designated route shall be located to have comparable overall impacts relative to the factors in Minn. Rule 7850.4100 as does the alignment identified in this permit and also shall be specifically identified in and approved as part of the Plan and Profile submitted pursuant to Part IV.A. of this permit.

**B. Right-of-Way Placement.** Where the transmission line route parallels existing highway rights-of-way, the transmission line ROW shall occupy and utilize the existing highway right-of-way to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the criteria in Minn. Rule 7850.4100, the other requirements of this permit and the requirements for highways under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, in accordance with Mn/DOT rules, policies, and procedures for accommodating utilities in trunk highway rights-of-way.

**C. Right-of-Way Width.** The 345 kV transmission line will be built primarily with single pole structures, which will typically require a 150 feet ROW. Where specialty structures are required for long spans or in environmentally sensitive areas, up to 180 feet

of right-of-way may be employed. When the transmission line is placed cross-country across private land, an easement for the entire right-of-way (150 to 180 foot width) shall be acquired from the affected landowner(s). Permittees shall locate the poles as close to property division lines as reasonably possible.

#### **IV. PERMIT CONDITIONS**

The Permittees shall comply with the following conditions during construction of the transmission line and associated facilities and the life of this permit.

**A. Plan and Profile.** At least 20 calendar days before right-of-way preparation for construction begins, the Permittees shall provide the Commission with a plan and profile of the right-of-way and the specifications and drawings for right-of-way preparation, construction, cleanup, and restoration for the transmission line. The documentation shall include maps depicting the plan and profile in relation to the route and alignment approved per the permit.

The Permittees may not commence construction until the 20 days has expired or until the Commission has advised the Permittees in writing that it has completed its review of the documents and determined that the planned construction is consistent with this permit. If the Permittees intends to make any significant changes in its plan and profile or the specifications and drawings after submission to the Commission, the Permittees shall notify the Commission at least five days before implementing the changes. No changes shall be made that would be in violation of any of the terms of this permit.

#### **B. Construction Practices.**

**1. Application.** The Permittees shall follow those specific construction practices and material specifications described in the Xcel Energy and Great River Energy Application to the Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit, dated April 8, 2009, and as described in the environmental impact statement and findings of fact, unless this permit establishes a different requirement, in which case this permit shall prevail.

**2. Field Representative.** At least 10 days prior to commencing construction, the Permittees shall advise the Commission in writing of the person or persons designated to be the field representative for the Permittees with the responsibility to oversee compliance with the conditions of this permit during construction. The field representative's address, phone number, and emergency phone number shall be provided to the Commission and shall be made available to affected landowners, residents, public officials and other interested persons. The Permittees may change the field representative at any time upon written notice to the Commission.

**3. Local Governments.** The Permittees shall cooperate with county and city road authorities to develop appropriate signage and traffic management during construction.

**4. Cleanup.** All waste and scrap that is the product of construction shall be removed from the area and properly disposed of upon completion of each task. Personal litter, including bottles, cans, and paper from construction activities shall be removed on a daily basis.

**5. Vegetation Removal in the Right-of-Way.** The Permittees shall minimize the number of trees to be removed in selecting the right-of-way. As part of construction, low growing brush or tree species are allowable within and at the outer limits of the easement area. Taller tree species that endanger the safe and reliable operation of the transmission facility need to be removed. To the extent practical, low growing vegetation that will not pose a threat to the transmission facility or impede construction should remain in the easement area.

**6. Erosion Control.** The Permittees shall implement reasonable measures to minimize runoff during construction and shall promptly plant or seed, erect silt fences, and/or use erosion control blankets in non-agricultural areas that were disturbed where structures are installed. All areas disturbed during construction of the facilities will be returned to their pre-construction condition.

**7. Temporary Work Space.** The Permittees shall limit temporary easements to special construction access needs and additional staging or lay-down areas required outside of the authorized right-of-way. Space should be selected to limit the removal and impacts to vegetation.

**8. Restoration.** The Permittees shall restore the right-of-way, temporary work spaces, access roads, abandoned right-of-way, and other private lands affected by construction of the transmission line. Restoration within the right-of-way must be compatible with the safe operation, maintenance, and inspection of the transmission line. Within 60 days after completion of all restoration activities, the Permittees shall advise the Commission in writing of the completion of such activities. The Permittees shall compensate landowners for any yard/landscape, crop, soil compaction, or other damages that may occur during construction.

**9. Notice of Permit.** The Permittees shall inform all employees, contractors, and other persons involved in the transmission line construction of the terms and conditions of this permit.

**C. Periodic Status Reports.** Upon request, the Permittees shall report to the Commission on progress regarding finalization of the route, design of structures, and construction of the transmission line. The Permittees need not report more frequently than quarterly.

**D. Complaint Procedure.** Prior to the start of construction, the Permittees shall submit to the Commission, the procedures that will be used to receive and respond to complaints. The procedures shall be in accordance with the requirements set forth in the complaint procedures attached to this permit.

**E. Notification to Landowners.** The Permittees shall provide all affected landowners with a copy of this permit and the complaints procedures at the time of the first contact with the landowners after issuance of this permit.

The Permittees shall contact landowners prior to entering the property or conducting maintenance along the route and avoid maintenance practices, particularly the use of fertilizer, herbicides, or pesticides, inconsistent with the landowner's or tenant's use of the land.

The Permittees shall work with landowners to locate the high voltage transmission lines to minimize the loss of agricultural land, forest, and wetlands, and to avoid homes and farmsteads.

#### **F. Completion of Construction.**

- 1. Notification to Commission.** At least three days before the line is to be placed into service, the Permittees shall notify the Commission of the date on which the line will be placed into service and the date on which construction was complete.
- 2. As-Builts.** The Permittees shall submit copies of all the final as-built plans and specifications developed during the project.
- 3. GPS Data.** Within 60 days after completion of construction, the Permittees shall submit to the Commission, in the format requested by the Commission, geo-spatial information (GIS compatible maps, GPS coordinates, associated database of characteristics, etc.) for all structures associated with the transmission lines, each switch, and each substation connected.

#### **G. Electrical Performance Standards.**

- 1. Grounding.** The Permittees shall design, construct, and operate the transmission line in a manner that the maximum induced steady-state short-circuit current shall be limited to five milliamperes, root mean square (rms) alternating current between the ground and any non-stationary object within the right-of-way, including but not limited to large motor vehicles and agricultural equipment. All fixed metallic objects on or off the right-of-way, except electric fences that parallel or cross the right-of-way, shall be grounded to the extent necessary to limit the induced short circuit current between ground and the object so as not to exceed one milliamperes rms under steady state conditions of the transmission line and to comply with the ground fault conditions specified in the National Electric Safety Code.

**2. Electric Field.** The transmission line shall be designed, constructed, and operated in such a manner that the electric field measured one meter above ground level immediately below the transmission line shall not exceed 8.0 kV/m rms.

**3. Interference with Communication Devices.** If interference with radio or television, satellite or other communication devices is caused by the presence or operation of the transmission line, the Permittees shall take whatever action is prudently feasible to restore or provide reception equivalent to reception levels in the immediate area just prior to the construction of the line.

#### **H. Other Requirements.**

**1. Applicable Codes.** The Permittees shall comply with applicable requirements of the National Electric Safety Code (NESC) including clearances to ground, clearance to crossing utilities, clearance to buildings, right-of-way widths, erecting power poles, and stringing of transmission line conductors. The transmission line facility will also meet the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's (NERC) reliability standards

**2. Other Permits.** The Permittees shall comply with all applicable state rules and statutes. The Permittees shall obtain all required local, state and federal permits for the project and comply with the conditions of these permits. A list of the required permits is included in the route permit application and the environmental impact statement. The Permittees shall submit a copy of such permits to the Commission upon request.

**3. Pre-emption.** Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 216E.10, subdivisions 1 and 2, this route permit shall be the sole route approval required to be obtained by the Permittees and this permit shall supersede and preempt all zoning, building, or land use rules, regulations, or ordinances promulgated by regional, county, local and special purpose government.

**J. Delay in Construction.** If the Permittees have not commenced construction or improvement of the route within four years after the date of issuance of this permit, the Commission shall consider suspension of the permit in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7850.4700.

#### **K. Special Conditions.**

1. The alignment along Mn/DOT controlled-access highways, in particular I-94, shall occupy and utilize the existing highway right-of-way to the maximum extent practicable. In most instances, this would indicate structure placements within 18 to 25 feet of Mn/DOT right-of-way, which is consistent with Mn/DOT policies and procedures.

2. The Permittees are allowed to install six conductors at highway crossings and interchange locations in order to minimize transportation disruption in the event additional lines are authorized along the route.
3. For the alignment along CSAH 75, the Permittee shall consult with Mn/DOT and the Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) regarding methods to minimize damage to vegetation along the Great River Road that can be preserved and installation of replacement vegetation to limit visual impacts on the Great River Road.
  - a. The Permittee shall, to the extent practicable, preserve the natural and cultural landscape and use design and construction techniques and procedures to prevent unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of vegetation in the right-of-way in the vicinity of the Great River Road. In consultation with Mn/DOT and MN-MRPC, the Permittee will:
    - Install vegetative buffers to limit visual impacts;
    - Select plants that will reflect native river species and limit native species cultivars;
    - Design plantings that will reflect a natural, non-geometric layout;
    - Maximize opportunities to restore trees;
    - Maximize opportunities to install maximum height vegetation (e.g., taller trees closer to poles, large shrubs and low trees at locations of maximum sag).
  - b. The Permittee shall minimize the number of trees to be removed along the Great River Road. The Permittee shall remove only taller trees within the right-of-way that endanger the safe and reliable operation of the transmission facility. To the maximum extent practical, low growing vegetation that will not pose a threat to the transmission facility or impede construction should remain undisturbed in the right-of-way. Should removal of vegetation require herbicide application, the Permittee shall avoid directly or indirectly affecting native prairie and rare plant species.
  - c. Applicants shall provide a report to the Commission as part of the Plan and Profile submission that describes the consultation with Mn/DOT and MN-MRPC and details Applicants' plan for minimizing removal of vegetation and replanting where vegetation removal is required.

## **V. PERMIT AMENDMENT**

The permit conditions in Section IV may be amended at any time by the Commission. Any person may request an amendment of the conditions of this permit by submitting a request to the Commission in writing describing the amendment sought and the reasons for the amendment. The Commission will mail notice of receipt of the request to the Permittees. The Commission may amend the conditions after affording the Permittees and interested persons such process as is required.

## **VI. TRANSFER OF PERMIT**

The Permittees may request at any time that the Commission transfer this permit to another person or entity. The Permittees shall provide the name and description of the person or entity to whom the permit is requested to be transferred, the reasons for the transfer, a description of the facilities affected, and the proposed effective date of the transfer. The person to whom the permit is to be transferred shall provide the Commission with such information as the Commission shall require to determine whether the new Permittees can comply with the conditions of the permit. The Commission may authorize transfer of the permit after affording the Permittees, the new Permittees, and interested persons such process as is required.

## **VII. REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF THE PERMIT**

The Commission may initiate action to revoke or suspend this permit at any time. The Commission shall act in accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Rules part 7850.5100 to revoke or suspend the permit.

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
COMPLIANCE FILING PROCEDURE  
FOR PERMITTED ENERGY FACILITIES**

**1. Purpose**

To establish a uniform and timely method of submitting information required by the Commission energy facility permits.

**2. Scope and Applicability**

This procedure encompasses all compliance filings required by permit.

**3. Definitions**

Compliance Filing – A sending (filing) of information to the Commission, where the information is required by a Commission site or route permit.

**4. Responsibilities**

- A) The Permittees shall eFile all compliance filings with Dr. Burl Haar, Executive Secretary, Public Utilities Commission, through the Department of Commerce (DOC) eDocket system. The system is located on the DOC website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/home.jsp>

General instructions are provided on the website. Permittees must register on the website to eFile documents.

- B) All filings must have a cover sheet that includes:
- 1) Date
  - 2) Name of submitter / Permittees
  - 3) Type of Permit (Site or Route)
  - 4) Project Location
  - 5) Project Docket Number
  - 6) Permit Section Under Which the Filing is Made
  - 7) Short Description of the Filing

Filings that are graphic intensive (e.g., maps, plan and profile) must, in addition to being eFiled, be submitted as paper copies and on CD. Copies and CDs should be sent to: 1) Dr. Burl W. Haar, Executive Secretary, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN, 55101-2147, and 2) Department of Commerce, Energy Facility Permitting, 85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN, 55101-2198.

## PERMIT COMPLIANCE FILINGS<sup>1</sup>

**PERMITTEES:** Xcel Energy and Great River Energy  
**PERMIT TYPE:** HVTL Route Permit  
**PROJECT LOCATION:** Wright and Stearns counties  
**PUC DOCKET NUMBER:** E002, ET2/TL-09-246

<b>Filing Number</b>	<b>Permit Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>1</b>	Section IV.B.2	Contact information for field representative	10 days prior to construction
<b>2</b>	Section IV.A.	Plan and profile of right-of-way	14 days before ROW preparation or construction
<b>3</b>	Section IV.F	Notice of completion and date of placement in service	Three days prior to energizing
<b>4</b>	Section IV.F.3	Provide As-built and GPS information	Within 60 days of construction

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<sup>1</sup> This compilation of permit compliance filings is provided for the convenience of the permittees and the PUC. However, it is not a substitute for the permit; the language of the permit controls.

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR  
HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINES**

**A. Purpose:**

To establish a uniform and timely method of reporting complaints received by the Permittees concerning Permit conditions for site preparation, construction, cleanup and restoration, operation and resolution of such complaints.

**B. Scope:**

This document describes Complaint reporting procedures and frequency.

**C. Applicability:**

The procedures shall be used for all complaints received by the Permittees and all complaints received by the Commission under Minn. Rule 7829.1500 or 7829.1700 relevant to this Permit.

**D. Definitions:**

Complaint: A verbal or written statement presented to the Permittees by a person expressing dissatisfaction or concern regarding site preparation, cleanup or restoration or other LWECs and associated facilities site permit conditions. Complaints do not include requests, inquiries, questions or general comments.

Substantial Complaint: A written Complaint alleging a violation of a specific Site Permit condition that, if substantiated, could result in Permit modification or suspension pursuant to the applicable regulations.

Unresolved Complaint: A Complaint which, despite the good faith efforts of the Permittees and a person(s), remains to both or one of the parties unresolved or unsatisfactorily resolved.

Person: An individual, partnership, joint venture, private or public corporation, association, firm, public service company, cooperative, political subdivision, municipal corporation, government agency, public utility district, or any other entity, public or private, however organized.

**E. Complaint Documentation and Processing:**

1. The Permittees shall document all Complaints by maintaining a record of all applicable information concerning the Complaint, including the following:
  - a. Name of complainant, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
  - b. Precise property description or parcel number.
  - c. Name of Permittees representative receiving Complaint and date of receipt.
  - d. Nature of Complaint and the applicable Site Permit conditions(s).
  - e. Activities undertaken to resolve the Complaint.
  - f. Final disposition of the Complaint.
2. The Permittees shall designate an individual to summarize Complaints for the Commission. This person's name, phone number and e-mail address shall accompany all complaint submittals.
3. A Person presenting the Complaint should to the extent possible, include the following information in their communications:
  - a. Name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.
  - b. Date
  - c. Tract or parcel
  - d. Whether the complaint relates to (1) a Site Permit matter, (2) a LWECS and associated facility issue, or (3) a compliance issue.

**F. Reporting Requirements:**

The Permittees shall report all complaints to the Commission according to the following schedule:

**Immediate Reports:** All substantial complaints shall be reported to the Commission the same day received, or on the following working day for complaints received after working hours. Such reports are to be directed to Wind Permit Compliance, 1-800-657-3794, or by e-mail to: [DOC.energypermitcompliance@state.mn.us](mailto:DOC.energypermitcompliance@state.mn.us), or. Voice messages are acceptable.

**Monthly Reports:** By the 15th of each month, a summary of all complaints, including substantial complaints received or resolved during the preceding month, shall be Filed to Dr. Burl W. Haar, Executive Secretary, Public Utilities Commission, using the Minnesota Department of Commerce eDocket system (see eFiling instructions attached to this permit).

If no Complaints were received during the preceding month, the Permittees shall submit (eFile) a summary indicating that no complaints were received.

**G. Complaints Received by the Commission or OES:**

Complaints received directly by the Commission from aggrieved persons regarding site preparation, construction, cleanup, restoration, operation and maintenance shall be promptly sent to the Permittees.

**H. Commission Process for Unresolved Complaints:**

**Initial Screening:** Commission staff shall perform an initial evaluation of unresolved Complaints submitted to the Commission. Complaints raising substantial LWECS Site Permit issues shall be processed and resolved by the Commission. Staff shall notify Permittees and appropriate person(s) if it determines that the Complaint is a Substantial Complaint. With respect to such Complaints, each party shall submit a written summary of its position to the Commission no later than ten days after receipt of the Staff notification. Staff shall present Briefing Papers to the Commission, which shall resolve the Complaint within twenty days of submission of the Briefing Papers.

**I. Permittees Contacts for Complaints:**

**Mailing Address:** Complaints filed by mail shall be sent to:

**ATTN:** Timothy Lisson  
Xcel Energy  
1414 West Hamilton Ave STE. 3  
Eau Claire, WI 54701

**Tel:** (715) 737-2513

**Email:** timothy.j.lisson@xcelenergy.com