

348-351

Jean Didier
21568 300th Street
Albany, MN 56307

October 17, 2010

VIA EMAIL AND ELECTRONIC FILING

Mr. David Birkholz, Project Manager
Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Re: Comment Regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for
the Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
MPUC Docket No.: ET2/TL-09-1056
OAH Docket No.: OAH 15-2500-20995-2
Sauk Centre to St. Cloud Draft Environmental Impact Statement August 2010

Dear Mr. Birkholz:

The undersigned submits the following comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") issued by the Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security for the Fargo – St. Cloud 345 kV Project ("Project") and asks that these matters be given consideration in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. These comments are intended to specifically address the DEIS regarding the Sauk Centre to St. Cloud proposed routes.

COMMENT 1: Impact of Project on Ambient Noise Level.

A. Evaluation of ambient sound level on respective routes

The DEIS carefully explains that the noise impact of the project is greatly dependent on the existing ambient sound level in the subject area. (p. 7-7). But it does not indicate the ambient levels on the respective route segments. While it is generally not the function of an EIS to evaluate the impact of the Project on individual property parcels, some differentiation of the ambient sound levels by route segment is needed for meaningful assessment of the impact of the Project on noise and to avoid erroneous conclusions. Additionally, since this is a question as to whether the Project will be in compliance with Minnesota Rules restrictions on noise levels, it would seem that issues of application to particular properties would also be appropriate.

On page 7-7, the DEIS states

"that for cumulative increases resulting from sources of different magnitudes, the rule of thumb is that if there is a difference of greater than ten dBA between noise sources, there will be no additive effect (i.e., only the louder source will be heard and the quieter source will not contribute to noise levels). Therefore, predicted noise levels associated with the transmission line are typically much lower than the ambient noise in the project area and will not increase the existing background noise (emphasis added).... Table 5.1-6 provides noise levels associated with common, everyday sources and places the magnitude of noise levels discussed here in context."

But the conclusion that the transmission line noise levels (45.5-48.5 dBA at p. 7-16) are much lower than present ambient noise (80 dBA for heavy truck traffic) is only valid for the majority of the proposed route, not the routes and route sections proposed for the Sauk Centre to St. Cloud portion. This conclusion may be valid for Route D, but does it apply equally to woodlands (30dBA) and bedrooms with open windows (dBA 40) in rural areas along some of the other routes? Table 5.1-6 points out the possibility that the higher decibel transmission noises would become THE ambient noise in many of those areas.

B. Evaluation of sound level of transmission lines

DEIS, p7-16 to 7-17:

Transmission lines produce noise under certain conditions. The level of noise depends on conductor conditions, voltage level, and weather conditions. Generally, activity-related noise levels during the operation and maintenance of transmission lines are minimal and do not exceed MPCA noise standards outside of the right-of-way. ...In foggy, damp, or rainy weather, transmission lines can create a crackling sound due to the small amount of electricity ionizing the moist air near the conductors. ... During light rain, dense fog, snow and other times when there is moisture in the air, transmission lines will produce audible noise approximately equal to household background levels. ...The proposed transmission lines were modeled using referenced noise values and with a 3dB reduction per doubling of distance to simulate divergence due to distance from a line source. ... Table 7.1-13 presents the L5 and L50 predicted for proposed transmission lines for the project. The L5 is a noise level that will not be exceeded more than five percent of the time. Using the L5 for demonstrating compliance with the MPCA L10 standard is conservative because the noise level exceeded 10 percent of the time will be less than noise level exceeded five percent of the time.

This appears to say that there may be some variance in noise of the Project due to weather conditions, causing the lines to exceed residential decibel limits at least "five percent of the time." It does not address whether the wind along particular routes, as would be shown by detailed wind maps, or other factors such as the deflectors the Applicant says it will put on the lines for mitigation of injury to birds will increase this noise and if so, how much. Some of the routes have windy areas and ridges, as well as bird deflectors on the lines that may increase the noise level on the lines. The DEIS does not address these special circumstances as they will

affect particular routes (not particular properties.) Nor is it clear what "five percent of the time" means. Is this 1.2 hours per day, 8 hours a week, or 18.25 days per year? In other words, what is the incident duration?

COMMENT 2: Impact of Project on Property Values.

The DEIS concludes that "Property values for parcels of land crossed by or adjacent to the proposed transmission line are not anticipated to significantly change." p. 7-14. This conclusion is unsubstantiated and in fact contradictory to the support it cites:

A literature review was conducted to determine if conclusive impact assessments can be made. These studies included appraiser studies, attitudinal studies, and statistical analyses. *None of the studies reviewed during this research provided conclusive findings which could isolate the impacts of transmission lines on property values.* (emphasis added) Property values for parcels of land crossed by or adjacent to the proposed transmission line are not anticipated to significantly change. *Literature reviews indicate that although value losses up to 20 percent have been reported (EPRI, 2003), study results are highly dependent on methodology and location.* (emphasis added) pp 7-14: 7-15.

From this the DEIS concludes that the Project is not anticipated to significantly affect property values? This makes no sense.

All but one of the proposed Sauk Centre to St Cloud routes deviate from the interstate highway. Along the interstate, property prices may already reflect the noise and visual disturbance of the interstate. But once again, most of the routes in this proposed segment do not fit the aggregate of the entire Fargo to Monticello route. Sprinkled among the farms in this rural landscape are high value homes on acreage. These are likely the homes built or purchased by people who seek to live in quiet scenic places. These are the sorts of residences one often finds in reasonable proximity to cities. It is these higher value homes and similar refuges that will be most seriously impacted in value by impairments of view and non-natural noise. (See for example, *A LULU of a Case: Gauging Property Value Impacts in Rural Areas*, P. Barton Delacy, MAI, ASA, CRE, Real Estate Issues, FALL 2004.) To evaluate the impact in the aggregate on the valuation of these more sensitive properties, the EIS should include information on viewsheds along various routes (reflecting topography) and noise impact. Stearns County tax, land and land use records are likely to also provide data for impact valuation along the respective routes. As stated at p. 7-46, "residences having an unobstructed line of sight of the proposed 345 kV electrical transmission line would view the line. The distance between these residences and the line would also dictate the field of view, for example, a foreground or background view." The DEIS does note that loss of value for residential parcels results from concern about health and visual impacts, yet no information about viewsheds along various routes or the noise level effect in rural residential areas is given.

A source used in the DEIS, "EPRI, 2003" acknowledges that value losses of up to 20% have been reported. This source was not accessible to me, it appears to be on a "members only" website, the Electric Power Research Institute, "funded by membership participation in its research activities" with "members represent(ing) more than 90% of the electricity generated and delivered in the U.S." It does appear that property value losses can be significant.

COMMENT 3: Route D

Route D alternatively addresses above ground and buried lines along the interstate as it moves through and between three towns: Melrose, Albany and Avon. The distance of the buried option in Avon is ten miles, for a total of thirteen buried miles. I assume this is a potential maximum, and not the only distance that may be used. If it is the only distance that may be used, it is objectionable in that it arbitrarily frames the route to make the buried option impossibly expensive. In that case, I ask that shorter options that realistically seek optimal placement of buried segments for appropriate distances along the line be evaluated.

COMMENT 4: Health Effects

As a citizen not trained in medical matters and electricity transmission, I must rely on my governmental representatives to protect me and others from the effects of this line. A quick search on the internet shows me that government websites such as that of the NIH and province of Saskatchewan Canada indicate real health concerns. I ask that the final EIS address these concerns and, as a document from my government, provide honest evaluation of how to protect to its citizens.

Please contact me at (320) 845-7363 or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jean M. Didier, J. D.

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056

Name: Roland Ellingson
Address: #487
City: Manhattan State: ND ZIP: 57741

Please share your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including any further information to be addressed in a Final EIS for the proposed Fargo to St. Cloud 345 Kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line Project.

Turn this form in today or mail to the address provided on the back (use additional sheets as necessary). You may also email comments to David Birkholz, Site Permit Manager at david.birkholz@state.mn.us with TL-09-1056 in the subject line. Faxed comments can be sent to 651.297.7891. Comments must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, October 18, 2010.

Concern: Farm building site.

Ottertail Co. Oscar twshp.

Property I am responsible for lies adjacent to #94.

The farm site was established circa 1868. Buildings include renovated house everything current standards including well and sewage system installed 1990's. Barn, substantial building, quonset, garages. Designing (archetecutural landscaping) in process to minimize the impact of #94. Property contiguous with the building site includes native grass species and trail marks from the Red River-Ox Cart trail, trail Rothsay to Fergus Falls for present markers, neither established at the time of the Ox Cart usage.

The buildings and site are a vital part of the development of the property.

Request this property be accorded respect

Roland Ellingson
P.o. #487
306 No. Broadway
Manhattan Mont.
59741

Signature: Roland Ellingson Date: 10-18-10

Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: apache@web.lmic.state.mn.us
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2010 4:11 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: Fredericksen Mon Oct 18 16:11:13 2010 ET2, E002/TL-09-1056

This public comment has been sent via the form at:
www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/publicComments.html

You are receiving it because you are listed as the contact for this project.

Project Name: Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Project

Docket number: ET2, E002/TL-09-1056

User Name: Janel Fredericksen

County: Wilkin County

City: Wahpeton

Email: janelfredericksen@smithstregre.com

Phone: 701-642-2668

Impact: To Whom it May Concern:

The DEIS made available on or about August 31, does not provide an accurate comparison of the Preferred Route and Route A. The Preferred Route data provided for the Fargo - Alexandria portion of the route includes the area from Alexandria to the Bison Substation for the Preferred Route. The data provided for Route A, only goes to the North Dakota border in Southern Wilkin County and does not include the more than 50 miles of route that would continue North on the North Dakota side. So the environmental impacts for the more than 50 miles of route excluded from the study on the North Dakota side have not been taken into consideration.

In addition, once the route reaches North Dakota along the proposed Route A, there are several farmsteads that would be impacted. There is one private airstrip and two helicopter pads immediately adjacent to the east-west portion of the route on the North Dakota side. There is a significant amount of air activity in the area and the proposed transmission line poses a significant threat to the safety of those residents and others using that airspace.

The amount of cropland impacted on the North Dakota side is significant. The farmland located along the proposed route is some of the richest farmland in North Dakota and the value per acre would be approximately \$4,000.00. The proposed line would impact the production of vital small grains, corn and sugar beets.

The DEIS does not compare apples to apples in the data it provides for the two routes. The negative impact on the environment and the health, safety and welfare of those along Route A, all of proposed Route A, must be considered. When compared completely, the greater environmental impact cannot be justified.

Janel B. Fredericksen
Attorney at Law
Smith, Strege & Fredericksen, Ltd.
P.O. Box 38
Wahpeton, ND 58074
(701)642-2668
Mitigation:
Submission date: Mon Oct 18 16:11:13 2010

This information has also been entered into a centralized database for future analysis.

For questions about the database or the functioning of this tool, contact:

Andrew Koebrick
andrew.koebrick@state.mn.us

357-359

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Aric and Nicky [hanselwelch@brainerd.net]
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2010 11:57 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Cc: Blaine Hansel; Chuck & Karen
Subject: TL-09-1056

Dear Mr. Birkholz,
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EIS for the CapX2020 line from Fargo to St. Cloud. My family owns property along the preferred route alternative and I have broader interests in impacts to the natural resources of this great area where I grew up. I appreciate that the document was split into segments allowing for easier review.

I again question why a different alternative was not considered past between Alexandria and Fergus Falls. There are other possibilities that both existing corridors are much more direct with less corners and jogs than the alternative route submitted by CapX. I had suggested this in my comments on the scope of the EIS and will continue to do so.

There is also an error on page 5-41 on the description of the location of the Hansel Lake Rest Area. The rest area is located 0.4 miles southeast of the intersection of Ottertail Co. Hwy 35 and I94 (or exit at mile marker 67), **not** 0.4 miles from the US Hwy 59 intersection with I94.

Finally, this area from Alexandria to Fargo is an extremely important area in the central flyway for migratory waterfowl and the information provided in the draft document regarding migratory bird impacts of the transmission line is rather cursory. I would suggest including impacts of electromagnetic fields on biology and physiology of birds. There is a lot of scientific literature in the area of impacts of bird strikes on transmission lines and I think it would be beneficial for those considering the impacts to have specific scientific citations supporting the assertions in the document. The claim in the document is that the impact would be minimal, but there is not much evidence presented to support that claim (ie no citations or population modeling done to show if x percent of the local populations is displaced or killed by the line, what would the population impacts be?). These claims maybe true, but more evidence needs to be presented to support them. Those with a scientific background reviewing the document will want additional supporting data and it should be up to the preparer of the document to produce that information.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and for considering these comments. Please confirm receipt of this email.

Sincerely,
Nicole Hansel-Welch

360-361

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Kathleen Heim [lkheim@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2010 5:35 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: TL-09-1056

Dear David Birkholz,

As you requested, I'm contacting you relating to CapX2020 in regards to The Kathleen A. Heim Trust property I own which is located on 33629 County Road 4, Sartell, Minnesota, 56377 in Stearns County.

This relates to a recorded beautiful Minnesota Century Farm owned and operated since 1873 by the Heim family for 138 years. I've lived on the Heim family farm for over 50 years and hopefully will continue to live here on this well preserved historical Century Farm.

My major crops are corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and meadow hay. We must keep this in production for now and the future. We have a lot of wildlife including many deer, wild turkeys, pheasants and numerous birds along with beautifully wooded areas that pave the way to the river. Our Century Farm is a treasure. I'm very proud of the Century Farm status. My husband was the fourth generation resident to live and work on the 320 acres of farmland located on County Road 4 and County Road 133 in Stearns county.

Now the human impact of living and working near the huge power lines would be a problem and hazard on this property. Property values will drop for both farming and non-farming use of the land with power lines on them. This will have an enormous financial impact on my family for many years because of paying taxes and not being able to fully use the land.

Please consider an alternate route for the power line since going through this Century farm is far from a direct path to the substation and it creates such an impact on the property for many years.

Thanks,

Kathleen A. Heim
The Kathleen A. Heim Trust

362-366

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Ken Heim [heim_ken@msn.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 8:48 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Cc: skaufman@san.rr.com; shariheim@yahoo.com; lkheim@aol.com; Kevsuealex@aol.com
Subject: CapX2020 near St. Cloud

David,

I'm contacting you related to CapX2020 for 33629 County Road 4, Sartell, MN 55377 for property owned by The Kathleen A. Heim Trust.

This relates to a recorded Century Farm owned since 1873 by the Heim family.

I'm trying to catch up on plans which I only learned of recently which could drastically impact this property. I look forward to attending the next meeting as I understand I just missed something in September near St. Joseph.

I have some questions about how this will impact the property:

- Livestock, poultry, wildlife impact for initial and also showing future expansion to full scale?
- Human impact living, working and enjoying the property under the power lines?
- Tax value of property after power lines are run through it showing loss to use over 20-100 years?
- Will the power lines ever go through middle of property or will it always be on edge between land owners?
- Property values both for farming and non-farming use of land with power line over it to understand how much financially this could impact us considering this could be in family for many-many years.
- Does Century Farm status matter to people choosing path?
- Understanding of who is going to determine the value of the land taken from the owner by easement? This is not something we desire for something we have cherished and watched over for so many years.
- Who is going to pay taxes on land taken by easement over long-term limited use especially in area developing and having increase taxes?
- Understanding of what property will no longer be usable with power lines, like buildings, no roads under, irrigation?
- Projection for cost to land for having easement assuming 25, 50, 100+ years ownership in for something being handed down generation after generation
- What can't the power line cross over?

I've included my other family members because we all have questions and there seems to be so little answers in the material about the impact to the property. I read the Agricultural statement and it really didn't point out anything more than how to get weeds addressed or damage to property from the construction. This is not really what I was expecting to learn nor was it my first or last concern. I was more concerned about the above questions which I can't seem to find answers for. I look forward to your help understanding this better.

Thanks,

Ken Heim

October 11th, 2010

Mr. David Birkholz
Energy Facility Permitting
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St Paul, MN 55101

Re: CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud Transmission Route; DEIS Analysis and Comments

Docket #: E002/TL-09-1056

We purchased our 35 acre property on September 18th, 2009. We have many plans for the 35 acres. We have two young children. This was one of the reasons we moved to the country. We wanted to have our children grow up with lots of area to play and to learn how to live and work on a farm. We also have plans of starting a organic grass feed beef, Chicken and produce farm. I also have plans of starting a daycare in the future. This will allow me to stay home with my children. After living here for a few weeks we heard from one of the neighbors about a power line that may be going along the back of our property. If these power lines run through our property we will not be able to utilize our plans of organic farming or a daycare. We cannot even put in a irrigation system to water the crops. Our land would not be of use for what we purchased it for. We also would not be able to sell for what we purchased it for because of the lower property values that come with power lines on your property. Please take these points into consideration in the final DEIS.

-The DEIS has failed to reference proliferation data. In Preferred Route and Route A- the proliferation is excessive and causes much harm to our way of life and environment. This needs to be included in your final EIS.

-Under grounding was given a top priority by the Advisory Task Force and many people are concerned that Excel is not serious with under grounding and their cost estimates may be exaggerated. At the St. Joe meeting that I attended an individual ask that your office the Office of Economic Security to conduct a special Advisory Task Force . You agreed with the individual and gave verbal feedback like this is an excellent idea by shaking your head in agreement. Several in attendance applauded when he sat down. What happened! Whose side are you on? I was told that the OES is to watch out for the interest of MN citizens. Please give me detailed documentation why an item as important as under grounding was not given consideration for a special Advisory Task Force.

-With two small children I have a right to expect that your values of amperage stated is accurate. Higher amperage means my children may be exposed to higher EMF's. Please give me an explanation to why your amperage could be several times higher than what you stated. I have no experience in power line transmissions so please explain in laymen terms why it is OK to have values stated that could be as high as 1200 to 1500 MVA when we were originally told somewhere around 264 in the DEIS.

-Route D (I-94) with under grounding would be the route that would cause the least amount of harm. This is the route that I favor.

Below are many of my concerns and research that I have found on these issues. Please consider all that I have written and alternative routes. The Purpose of my comments is to identify potential alternatives to and impacts of the proposed project that should be fully addressed in the Environmental Report being prepared by the Department of Commerce. So please consider all that is mentioned below.

- 1) **Aesthetic and Visual Pollution** – The towers supporting CAPX2020 transmission line are 175-foot, galvanized, single pole structures. The galvanized, single poles of the tangent structures range 3-4 feet diameter, with corner structures ranging 4-5 feet in diameter. The right-of-way, which measures 150 feet in width, is frequently cleared of all vegetation except grass or other low-growing plants. Depending upon topography, forests, and other factors a transmission line may be visible from a distance of three miles or more. In fact, those who study the effect of new transmission lines on views commonly begin their analysis three miles out. Such a scene detracts from the scenery of an otherwise natural view in a rural, undisturbed environment.
- 2) **Adverse Effects on Home and Property Value** – Several studies indicate a negative impact from HVTL's on Property Values. The changes can reflect a range between a 6.3 - 53.8% reduction in the value of property's adjacent to an HVTL. In an article published in the Journal of Real Estate Research, appraisers indicated residential property values can be affected to varying degrees by transmission lines and that market values of these properties is, on average, 10.01% lower than the market values for comparable properties not subject to the influence of HVTL's,
- 3) **Health and Human Effects (Electromagnetic Fields)** - There is a growing consensus that the electromagnetic field (EMF) emitted by transmission lines pose a genuine health threat. In 2006 the State of Maryland concluded: "*Studies have consistently shown increased risk for childhood leukemia associated with ELF magnetic fields...*" A 2005 study conducted in England and Wales showed that one out of every hundred or so cases of childhood leukemia occurring within 2,000 feet of a high-voltage.

Dr. David Carpenter, Director, Institute for Health and the Environment at the University of Albany, New York, an expert in the areas of EMF's, in a testimony to the State of Minnesota, Public Utilities Commission, indicated a STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT association between EMF/ELF and Childhood Leukemia. In adults, Dr. Carpenter references evidence for a relation between

EMF exposure and adult cancer and neurodegenerative diseases is “sufficiently strong”.

1) Adverse Effects on Agricultural Operations and Livestock - Due to the rural nature of the proposed Preferred and Alternate A “North” Routes, agricultural operations will undoubtedly be significantly affected. Primary agricultural production crops include corn, soybeans, oats, wheat, sugar beets, and alfalfa/hay. Primary livestock found within the Preferred and Alternate A “North” Routes include dairy cattle, beef cattle, sheep, swine and poultry. The permanent impacts associated include pole placement, while temporary impacts during construction may include soil compaction, disruption of agricultural practices (e.g., center pivot irrigation) and crop damages within the right-of-way at proposed structure location, locations of permanent access, and other work areas. While farmers will be compensated for their loss of productive agricultural land, the loss of productive land, in and of itself, can have lasting effects on a farm’s overall production in future years. There are also “nuisance effects”, such as the induced charges in electric fence lines and vehicles building electric charges directly under HVTL’s. In addition, CAPX2020 does not recommend refueling of vehicles directly under HVTL’s.

There is also growing evidence to suggest the negative effects of HVTL’s and EMF’s on milk production and animal behavior. In 2004, the 12th International Conference on Production Diseases in Farm Animals, Michigan State University cited several examples of decreases in milk production of up to 50%. Dairy farmers have experienced the problem of cows dancing, stepping, tail-switching, and kicking off milkers, resulting in incomplete milking, declining milk production, and impaired health performance. There also is no opportunity for a organic farm to exist in the line of the project.

ALTERNATIVES

The Interstate 94 corridor as an Alternative Route

- **Primary Route Alternative:** The inclusion of Interstate 94 in the Environmental Impact Study, from Freeport to St. Cloud as an alternative route, with slight route detours or modifications, including short-distance under-grounding, to accommodate high-population density or problematic areas.

Locating an Alternative Route in the least “harmful” location of Stearns County

- **Secondary Route Alternative:** The inclusion in the Environmental Impact Study of an alternative route which more closely parallels the Interstate 94 corridor than the current Preferred and Alternate A “North” Routes. This route should be of shorter distance as it diverts from I-94 and utilize existing rights of way, such as roads and existing transmission corridors, to the fullest extent possible to comply with Minnesota’s Policy on Non-Proliferation.

Under-Grounding

The use of under-grounding or “burying” of HVTL’s, especially in geographic areas with sensitive environments and ecologies or scenic viewpoints has been utilized in other projects. A HVTL project in Chisago County utilized HVTL under-grounding to avoid the sensitive and scenic areas of the St. Croix River. Under the State of Connecticut Law, new construction of HVTL’s in urban areas must utilize under-grounding to minimize affects on human settlements and reduce EMF exposure in buffer zones near residential areas, schools and playgrounds. Technologies, such as under-ground “Super-conductors”, provide for high-efficiency, high-voltage electrical transmission, 0% EMF exposure and minimize required rights-of-way (25 feet vs.150 feet). Additionally, under-grounding offers minimal impact on area aesthetics and avoids the contentious battles between citizens, townships and cities pertaining to HVTL placements. The utilization of under-grounding should be considered, at least for short-distances in problematic areas, as part of the Melrose to South St. Cloud portion of the CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud HVTL project.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Robin and David Heinen
39941 County Road #5
St Joseph, MN 56374
320 363-4655

380-384

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Tom Herdering [beaverdam@albanytel.com]
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2010 1:50 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: TL-09-1056

David,

Tom and I didn't attend the last meeting, but are still concerned about the Transmission lines going down County Road 17. With CapX being still in process we have heard we should voice our opinions before Oct. 18th.

We would appreciate any alternative considerations other than County Road 17 as the main route for the lines. We currently farm almost half of our crops along County Road 17 which would effect our business tremendously.

With this line being placed on crop land less feed would be able to be processed and we would end up buying more of our feed. The cost of feed is always rising which we would have to pay for. The farm equipment will constantly have to go around the poles making it less profitable by losing time and having more fuel costs. As these lines are being placed in the ground a lot of the crop around it will be destroyed by compaction not just the pole itself which would take away more of our valuable crop land. Some of these fields also have drain tile in which should not be disturbed. We sometimes irrigate this land and spray the crops. How will our irrigator get around these poles without rusting them with water? We do not want to lose valuable crop land when there is a chance these lines could be placed on swamp land rather than workable fields.

The electro magnetic field effects animals and will again affect our profitability. If these transmission lines are placed on private property we feel a payment to the land owner should be received each year to compensate for any inconveniences and loss of valuable crop land. Also we feel that any disturbed land should be placed back the way it was before being tampered with. If the land had crops in or could have been planted in at the time we feel we should be compensated for it at that time.

With all the added costs to our business with these lines going in, it will not be as profitable. And as we all know, if a business is not profitable, they usually end up going out of business. I really don't care to have that happen to our livelihood or family business.

Tom and Sandra Herdering Family
and
Alvin and Carol Herdering

385-386

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: John Huls [johnhuls@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 8:05 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: CAPX NORTH ROUTE

This is to encourage and promote the location of the powerline along the southern proposed route along interstate 94 and not along the northern route as proposed. I own property on the proposed northern and along highway 94. It makes much more sense to locate along either the highway or utilize the southern route as proposed. Further, my private airstrip will be directly and negatively be impacted. My airstrip is registered with the Mn aeronautics department. It has been located on my property and utilized by me since 2003. Construction of a powerline would render my airstrip unusable. Sincerely, John F. Huls landowner

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Jacobson, Gregg A. [gregg.jacobson@wellsconcrete.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 07, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: TL-09-1056
Attachments: Capx 2020 proposed route wcp.pdf

October 7, 2010

Mr. David Birkholz;

I attended the Capx2020 public meeting in Albany MN on the evening of September 29, 2010. We have been in contact with the folks from the city of Albany and have met several times in the past with representatives from this project. This past July we had some folks attend our open house event along with a State Representative on this matter and gave them a personal tour of our facility and explained the concerns we had with the route E.

Our intent for future expansion of this facility in Albany is to the South and have it plotted on our site plans issued to the state. Not only does this limit our expansion plans but would limit our present operations. I have included an aerial photo showing the proposed route E and the impact it would have on our operations.

I also understand the need for power and this stimulates growth and benefits our industry. It is unfortunate that what ever alternative route is chosen there is going to be complaints and some unhappy folks. If the power line is shifted to the South so it does not interfere with our existing operations we have no objections to power line going to the south of our property.

Thank you for your time,

Gregg Jacobson, P.E.

Vice President of Operations

WELLS CONCRETE

Direct 507-553-8188

Cell 507-380-6388

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gregg.jacobson@wellsconcrete.com

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City of Albany, MN
Wells Concrete Area

**Utilities Map With
 Proposed Electric Alternative**

- Sanitary
- Water
- Storm
- 1000 Ft Buffer - Proposed Alternative (Approx.)

388-394

September 16, 2010

David Birkholz

I strongly oppose the North "Preferred & Alternate Route A," for the CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud 345KV Transmission Line, based on the following principles.

1. Quality of Life

- A. Negative effects on ecology and environment, including natural areas and wildlife (ex. Shepards Lake, St. Wendel Swamp, which was given to the DNR from Stearns County. A rare swamp with unusual cold water bog and home to rare plants and numerous lady slippers.) And other ecologically sensitive wetlands and areas.
- B. Aesthetics, 175ft poles in a tranquil and rural settings.
- C. Preservation and integrity of family farms, including numerous "Century" and generational farms.

2. Significant Health Risks Associated with Electromagnetic Fields

- A. Electromagnetic Fields may contribute to Childhood and Adult Leukemia, Adult Brain Cancer, Lou Gehrig's Disease, Miscarriages and worsening of immune - related diseases.

3. Minnesota Policy on Non-Proliferation

- A. Minnesota Statute 216E.03 requires first consideration of potential routes that would use or parallel existing railroad and highway Rights of Way... such as the 194 corridor. 42% of the North Routes Approximately 39 miles creates new Rights of Way via private parcel lines, a clear departure from Minnesota's policy on Non-proliferation. Between Freeport and St. Cloud the proposed routes deviates dramatically and cut across rural and agricultural land.

4. Freeway Corridor verses Pristine Corridor

- A. The area near Avon, which the Avon Hills Initiative and St. Johns Abbey and University have opposed, was the original preferred route and follows Minnesota Statute 216E.03, this should be the route used. The line in that area could be buried under the lakes with no emissions of E.M.Fs and rest stops on both sides of the freeway could be eliminated due to many 24/7 convenience stores in close proximity.
- B. Spoiling Pristine, Rural, agricultural century farms and ecologically sensitive wetlands just doesn't make sense.

5. Negative Effects on Property and Land Values

- A. The 194 Corridor is already a spoiled view with the freeway itself, numerous billboards, trails, turkey farms, and etc.

Minnesota Statute 216E.03 requires first consideration of potential routes that would use or parallel existing railroad and highway Rights of Way... such as the 194 corridor. 42% of the North Routes Approximately 39 miles creates new Rights of Way via private parcel lines, a clear departure from Minnesota's policy on Non-proliferation. Between Freeport and St. Cloud the proposed routes deviates dramatically and cut across rural and agricultural land.

I think it would be totally irresponsible to not follow the 194 Corridor from Freeport to St. Cloud. Marrying up the pristine areas of wetlands, agricultural land, rural homes and farmhouses, many of which are century farms. We chose to live in this area because of these reasons and don't want it spoiled by a high voltage transmission line that seems more appropriately placed, on the 194 Corridor, where according to Minnesota Statute 216E.03 requires first consideration and would have less of an impact on that area.

Sincerely,

Pamela Kavel John
42157 Co Rd 3
Holdingford, mn

395-397

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: A&K Custom Cabinets [akcustom4@albanytel.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2010 8:59 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: Fargo-St. Cloud 345k Transmission Project

Hello Mr. Birkholz,

This e-mail is in regard to our concerns about the possibility of the transmission line on the Fargo-St. Cloud project coming across our property. My family and I live at 30846 County Road 10, Albany, MN. Overhead power lines that come across residential and agricultural properties will decrease our property values and cause negative impacts on the environment and our own health.

I would favor the proposed plan of having the power line follow Interstate 94. Go underground through places like the Albany Golf Course. Having a golf course dug up for one year to do the installation is a small impact versus having it run across the rural areas where we, as property owners, have to deal with the negative impacts of above ground, high voltage lines.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ron and Karina Kalthoff
30846 County Road 10
Albany, MN 56307
(320)845-6069

398-401

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: skaufman@san.rr.com
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2010 11:48 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: PUC Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056 CapX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV HVTL

David Birkholz, State Permit Manager
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Dear Mr. Birkholz:

I am writing to you regarding the CapX2020 on behalf of my mother, Kathy Heim and The Kathleen A. Heim Trust, as a land owner on the Applicant Preferred Route (located at 33629 County Road 4, Sartell MN, 56377 in Stearns County). I am a former resident from the LeRoy Heim Family Homestead which is noted in the Stearns County Historical Records as a Century Farm. I still have a vested interest in this property since I am noted as one of the trustees of this estate. This is also the place we call our home and bring our children when we wish to escape the city and reconnect with others that we grew up around. I've reviewed your August 2010 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and am also aware of other more suitable areas under consideration for the CapX Project.

I understand you are considering in your route the property that I grew up on which has been in our family for four generations since about 1873 when George and Maria Heim first purchased it. This is not an acceptable alternative to our family. We plan to pursue maintaining the majority of this family property in its natural habitat for future generations to enjoy and this would have a far reaching aesthetic impact. It is one of the few remaining pieces of farm land, wetland, and wooded forest in the community due to the rapid development that the area has undergone over the years. My parents have been burdened with having to make allowances for other development needs in Stearns County such as widening of roads and power lines on County Road 4 and County Road 133. This has impacted us all and has gradually reduced the amount of property within the estate. Now the proposal is to further divide this well preserved historical farm which has been in our family for about 138 years with these high voltage transmission lines. A route along an interstate seems more suitable and less costly for the project & customers.

This beautiful piece of property is a natural habitat for much wildlife. We enjoy our trips to the area and often travel to the creek near the far end of the property. There is much wildlife to be seen in the area and it is a wonderful sight to see that these animals still have a place to call home without power lines looming overhead and possibly causing genetic mutations or health issues to them and us. This is not in our family's plan for the use of our property since we all prefer to reserve its use to harvest food for animals and humans, trees, and shelter for the wildlife amongst a growing city.

The urban sprawl has already decreased the number of frogs in the area and we do not wish to see this happen to the birds, deer, ducks, eagles, foxes, geese, hawks, muskrats, pheasants, turkeys, turtles, and other animals that inhabit this area. Please reconsider since this project would burden our family property forever. We have unique concerns relative to the LeRoy Heim Homestead and this natural environment that go beyond sentimental reasons with this property being in the family for generations. It is the place we call home for us as well as the wildlife we enjoy photographing without the hazards of electric magnetic fields overhead and the possibility of stray voltages impacting anything. Waterfowl typically are more susceptible to transmission line collision, especially if the transmission line is placed between agricultural fields that serve as feeding areas and wetlands or open water, which serve as resting areas. In these areas, it is likely that waterfowl and other birds

will be traveling between different habitats, potentially increasing the likelihood of avian conflicts with the transmission line. Some species depend on large areas of undisturbed habitat and their survivability decreases as fragmentation increases.

Best Regards,
Sandra (Heim) Kaufman

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402

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Kroll, Thomas [TKROLL@CSBSJU.EDU]
Sent: Thursday, October 07, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: CapX2020 and Saint John's

David,

In follow up to the meeting you had in St. Joseph, we have the following question:

- 1) Which category was used in table 7.1.4 for Saint John's Abbey land which has all of our 2,740 acres zoned in Stearns County as Educational/Ecclesiastical (EE)?

Thanks.

Tom

Thomas Kroll
Land Manager and Arboretum Director
Saint John's Abbey and University
New Science Building 108
Collegeville, MN 56321-3000

320 363 3126

403-405

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Laurie Lee [lauriejeanlee@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, October 01, 2010 5:10 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: transmission line near Evansville, MN

Dear David Birkholz,

I am a resident of Evansville, MN. The preferred route for the 345 kV power line runs along our home property. I am regretful that I missed the public meetings in Alexandria and Elbow Lake on Sept 28. My husband and I are new owners of this property and the public meetings information is being forwarded to the previous owners. Anyways, I have some questions and I would like to speak to someone, in person please. I have e-mailed and called already, I have recieved written information and looked over your website. Specifically, I would like to know exactly where the transmission lines will go in relation to the township road and our home. I would also like to know some specifics of the powerline, such as height and configuration. Our farm is surrounded by trees on 3 sides and open to the East. According to the permit and mapped route, the transmission line would run alone the open, East side. Without having seen our property, I am sure you can guess what this would do to the aesthetics of our farm. My husband and I continue to have concerns about the potential health hazards of such high, continuous currents so near our home. We have read the information provided by CapX2020 about EMF's and done research on our own. We continue to feel there is too much conflicting information on both sides of the issue to make a decision either way. If the experts can't come together on this issue, how could we? Additionally, with 345kV running through the transmission line, will there be noise? I sincerely apologize for not getting to the meetings in Alexandria or Elbow Lake as I am sure this information was probably covered.

There is a secondary route proposed in the permit that would send the transmission line south of I-94 instead of by our house. Is this still an option? Could this be a better option?

I am looking forward to speaking to you. I can be reached on my cell phone at 218-779-3494.

Sincerely yours,

Laurie Lee

406-408

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056

Name: SCOTT McLUCKLAN
Address: 904 North Hamlet DR
City: ARON State: MN ZIP: 56310

Please share your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including any further information to be addressed in a Final EIS for the proposed Fargo to St. Cloud 345 Kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line Project.

Turn this form in today or mail to the address provided on the back (use additional sheets as necessary). You may also email comments to David Birkholz, Site Permit Manager at david.birkholz@state.mn.us with TL-09-1056 in the subject line. Faxed comments can be sent to 651.297.7891. Comments must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, October 18, 2010.

I am writing in opposition to Route D because of the following reasons. 1) Destruction of an entire community. The Route D would remove many homes from our community. Other routes would take farm land mainly not homes. 2) The business development in our community would end. 3) The wildlife that use the lakes ie loons, geese, eagles, fish would be negatively affected. 4) Stray Voltage - Many houses and residents with children would be too close to the lines to be safe. 5) Other routes will have less impact on the total number of people. 6) The cost to go underground is too high.

Signature: Scott McLucklanDate: 10-12-10

Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056

409-411

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: jerry marschke [jerry0303@embarqmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, October 10, 2010 7:08 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Cc: jeane marschke
Subject: CAPX2020

We are against Option 3 of the CAPX2020 Fargo-St Cloud power line.

We are residents of Lake Mary just SW of the city of Alexandria, MN. Our concerns are related to Option 3 of the route for the new transmission line. Option 3 would be take the transmission lines away from the I-94 corridor and put them through a residential area on the North side of Lake Mary where our property is located. We feel that this option is more costly and creates additional safety concerns for people living by Lake Mary.

We want to encourage that everything be done to keep these power lines on the main I-94 corridor and away from as many residential areas as possible including ours. A power transmission line such as the one proposed will have a very significant negative impact on this area and its value. Health reasons are also a concern for us.

We understood that the I-94 corridor was designated for this type of industrial/commercial development and we feel that is the appropriate location for high voltage transmission lines. Lake Mary is a family vacation and resort area and these lines would create a negative impact. Please put these power lines in the I-94 right-of-way.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns and thank you considering them.

Jerome & Jeane Marschke
5980 N. Lake Mary Dr. SW
Alexandria, MN 56308
320-846-0808

412-416



MINNESOTA MILK PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

108 Marty Drive, Suite 2 – Buffalo, MN 55313

Phone: 763-355-9697 ★ Fax: 763-355-9686

E-Mail: mmpa@mnmilk.org ★ Web: www.mnmilk.org

October 18, 2010

State Permit Manager
David Birkholz
Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place E., Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198

Re: DEIS Fargo to St. Cloud 345kV transmission line comments

Dear Mr. Birkholz,

On behalf of the nearly 1,500 dairy farmer members of the Minnesota Milk Producers Association (MMPA), I appreciate the opportunity to comment specifically on the Sauk Centre to St. Cloud portion of the Fargo to St. Cloud 345kV transmission line. It is our conclusion that the best route, based on the information provided in the DEIS, is "Route D" from Sauk Centre to St. Cloud. As a result, we ask that the project proposers and the OES to utilize Route D and not the existing Preferred Option outlined in the DEIS.

Economically, it makes more sense from a project perspective to go with Route D versus the applicants "Preferred Route" or Option A. Neither, Route D nor the Underground Option for Route D are the most expensive as pointed out in the DEIS. In fact, three options are more expensive or relatively the same as the Underground option for Route D. Furthermore, eight options are more expensive than Route D.

The Preferred Option has the potential for presenting another major challenge versus Option D. The presence of stray voltage poses devastating health effects for dairy cows. Milk production declines with a resulting decline in on-farm income. Each dairy cow in the state contributes over \$15,000 annual economic activity, according to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. This economic activity is vitally important to communities throughout the state and to the state as a whole. Placing the transmission lines along the Preferred Route could present significant economic challenges for dairy farmers and the surrounding communities.

The DEIS does state that transmission lines can induce stray voltage on a distribution circuit. Regardless, much is unknown about stray voltage and the DEIS does not completely capture the potential negative economic impact to dairy farmers and the local communities. This is especially important since Stearns County is the state's largest dairy county and it is a top ten dairy county in the United States of America.

More specific data on these impacts related to stray voltage and other factors must be gathered and analyzed prior to making a safe, final assessment of these options. The DEIS mainly treats all agriculture as a single category and fails to take into account the total number of dairy cows

417-420

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Lee Newhall [newhall@us.ibm.com]
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2010 11:07 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Cc: Kirsch, Raymond (COMM)
Subject: Fargo-St Cloud 345 KV Transmission Line Project

and dairy farmers in the immediate vicinity of the transmissions lines and the resulting impact to the communities. In addition, what are the ramifications on crop production as a result of transmission lines? The DEIS must take this into account when analyzing the current Preferred Option.

Furthermore, proposed mitigation measures for agricultural activity and prime farmland are incomplete. Again, the DEIS only discusses farmland in a broad sense. No, or very little mitigation is identified regarding dairy cows and the farmers who care for and milk the cows.

There are other reasons why the Underground Option D should become the choice of the project proposers. Trails are minimally impacted as are WPAs, WMAs and SNAs as stated in the DEIS.

The Minnesota Milk Producers Association and our nearly 1,500 dairy farmer members respectfully request Option D be considered as the Preferred Option. If the responsible government agency chooses to continue with the current preferred option, more research must be conducted as to the negative economic, social and environmental impacts directly and indirectly related to the loss of dairy cows, dairy operations and the surrounding communities that rely on the economic activity produced by Minnesota's dairies.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



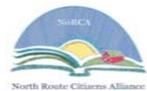
Bob Lefebvre
Executive Director

Mr Birkholz,

Regarding the Fargo-St Cloud 345 KV Transmission Line Project, we recently had a discussion with Raymond Kirsch and he suggested sending you our concerns. Specifically our concerns relate to the possibility of the OPTION 3 route being selected for the area just west of Alexandria instead of staying on the I94 corridor. OPTION 3 would take the transmission lines right through the north Lake Mary residential area which is where our property is. **With this letter, it is our intent to strongly encourage that everything be done to keep these power transmission lines on the main 94 corridor and out of this Lake Mary residential area.** First, property owners in this area have paid a significant premium for these properties and there is no doubt that this kind of power transmission line will have significant negative impact on these property values. We understand that on projects like these, financial accommodations are provided to property owners when the project right of way impacts them. For lake residences like these, premium financial accommodations would be required due to high property values. Secondly, for health reasons, keeping this kind of current and the resulting EMF away from residential areas makes sense. For obvious reasons, residential growth along the I94 corridor will be less and therefore less of a risk in the future. In addition, this Lake Mary area is a heavy vacation/resort area and this type of power transmission line significantly impacts the natural beauty and sight lines in the area, clearly affecting the attractiveness of this area for vacationers.

We appreciate you carrying our concerns forward as this project proceeds to the Public Hearing stage.

Sincerely,
Lee & Kari Newhall
6020 N. Lake Mary Dr SW
Alexandria, MN 56308
Cell phone: 507-951-3727



October 18, 2010

Scott J. Hylla
Chairman, North Route Citizen's Alliance
12385 County Road 5
Holdingford, MN 56340
(320)363-8138

Mr. David Birkholz
OES Permitting Staff Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud Transmission Route; DEIS Analysis and Comments

Docket #: E002/TL-09-1056

Dear Mr. Birkholz,

Enclosed is the official North Route Citizens Alliance (NoRCA) DEIS Analysis and Comments pertaining to the DEIS for the CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud HVTL project.

The NoRCA DEIS Analysis and Comments is a comprehensive review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the currently proposed CAPX2020 routes the southern section from the Sauk Center to South St. Cloud portion of the overall Fargo to St. Cloud CAPX2020 project.

For clarity's sake, the NoRCA CAPX2020 "North Routes" addressed in this Analysis are defined as the Preferred, Alternate A and Alternate B Routes of the project segment from Sauk Center to St. Cloud. This report is comprised of two sections:

- 1) A Comparative Analysis of the significant impacts pertaining to the "North Routes" vs. other alternative routes in the Fargo to St. Cloud DEIS.
- 2) A Commentary of the "North Routes" in the DEIS, including imperative items lacking in the DEIS, clarifications and suggestions.

We request that the NoRCA DEIS Analysis and Comment be included in the OES DEIS Public Comments for the Fargo to St. Cloud CAPX2020 Route.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Scott J. Hylla
Chairman

Cc: NoRCA Executive Committee

Introduction

The North Route Citizen's Alliance, NoRCA, is a community-based coalition of over 300 directly-impacted stakeholders affected by the proposed 345kV High Voltage Transmission Line from Fargo to St. Cloud. Segments which will traverse Central and Northern Stearns County, are known as the Preferred, Alternate A and Alternate B "North" Routes. NoRCA has been extensively involved in this proceeding thus far, and has researched, analyzed and identified several important issues pertaining to the proposed Preferred and Alternate A North Routes and has advocated for the study and consideration of Interstate 94 and other newly ATF designed routes as alternatives to the currently proposed "North Routes".

The Sauk Center to St. Cloud portion of the Fargo to St. Cloud CAPX2020 HVTL project has been a controversial, and often contentious, issue in Central Minnesota and Stearns County for over 1 year. At issue has been the Preferred and Alternate A (and recently added Alternate B) route's divergence from the I-94 corridor in the Melrose to Freeport area and the reckless and gross proliferation of new Transmission Corridors through Central and Northern Stearns County. In its wake, the needless traversing and potential destruction and fragmentation of sensitive wetlands, forested areas and prime agricultural farmland. The proliferation of New Transmission Corridors is inconsistent with Minnesota's longstanding policy of Non-proliferation established by People for Environmental Enlightenment & Responsibility (PEER), Inc. v. Minnesota Environmental Quality Council, 266 N.W. 2d 858 (Minn. 1978). PEER provides guidance when weighing proliferating routes, such as the North Routes, with non-proliferation routes.

As interpreted by this court, the prudent and feasible alternative standard is analogous to the principle of nonproliferation in land use planning. In *County of Freeborn v. Bryson*, 309 Minn. 178, 188, 243 N.W.2d 316, 321, we noted that although the state's past encouragement of highway construction resulted in the elimination or impairment of natural resources, "remaining resources will not be destroyed so indiscriminately because the law has been drastically changed by (MERA)." Similarly, in *Reserve Mining Co. v. Herbst*, Minn., 256 N.W.2d 808, 827 (1977), we recognized the state's "strongly held commitment * * * to protecting the air, water, wildlife, and forests

from further impairment and encroachment," which supported our choice of Mile Post 7 over Mile Post 20, (256 N.W.2d 832). The court had no trouble deciding that the Department of Natural Resources, which, like the MEQC, had a statutory duty to protect the environment, had failed to comply with this policy of nonproliferation in choosing between the alternative sites. See, also, *No Power Line, Inc. v. Minnesota EQC*, Minn., 262 N.W.2d 312, 331 (Yetka, J., concurring specially).

This policy of nonproliferation is also supported by legislative enactments. Minn.Reg. MEQC 74(d)(3)(ee), adopted pursuant to authority granted to the MEQC under the PPSA, requires the decisionmaker to consider as one factor in the selection process whether the proposed route will "maximize utilization of existing and proposed rights-of-way." The legislature explicitly expressed its commitment to the principle of nonproliferation in its 1977 revision of the PPSA. The MEQC is now required to consider the utilization of existing railroad and highway rights-of-way and the construction of structures capable of expansion in capacity through multiple circuiting in making its selection from among alternative HVTL routes. L.1977, c. 439, s 10.

[14] We therefore conclude that in order to make the route-selection process comport with Minnesota's commitment to the principle of nonproliferation, the MEQC must, as a matter of law, choose a pre-existing route unless there are extremely strong reasons not to do so. We reach this conclusion partly because the utilization of a pre-existing route minimizes the impact of the new intrusion by limiting its effects to those who are already accustomed to living with an existing route. More importantly, however, the establishment of a new route today means that in the future, when the principle of nonproliferation is properly applied, residents living along this newly established route may have to suffer the burden of additional powerline easements.

CAPX2020 Fargo to St. Cloud DEIS Analysis

Section 1

Equally important is the newly enacted laws pertaining to Minnesota Statute 216.03 subdivision 7e, establishing siting criteria based on use of existing highway right-of-way:

(e) The commission must make specific findings that it has considered locating a route for a high-voltage transmission line on an existing high-voltage transmission route and the use of parallel existing highway right-of-way and, to the extent those are not used for the route, the commission must state the reasons.
EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment and applies to route applications filed on and after that date.

“Significant Impacts” pertaining to the Preferred, Alternate A & Alternate B Routes: The NoRCA DEIS analysis provides an overview of the relative impacts of the North Routes (Preferred, Alternate A & Alternate B) vs. other Alternate Routes.

1. “North” Routes would have higher “aesthetic impact than several routes (C & E)

Table 7.3-4. Aesthetic Impact Evaluation for Routes

Route/Option	Homes	
	Within 500' of Alignment	Within 150' of Alignment
Route Alternatives		
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	83	0
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	82	0
Route A	116	0
Route B	191	0
Route C	77	1
Route D	179	9
Route E	76	0
Route F	206	1
Route G	88	0
Route H	96	0

2. “North” Routes contain highest impacts to “Prime Farmland”: “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses”. Avoidance of these areas would be consistent with the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan and Minn. Stat. §17.80.

Table 7.7-4. Acreage of Prime Farmland within Route and Option Alternatives

Route/Option	Prime Farmland in Route (Acres)
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred Route	3,068
Route A	3,539
Route B	2,490
Route C	1,592
Route D	1,107
Route E	1,866
Route F	1,586
Route G	1,716
Route H	1,157

Overall, the area that comprises the North Routes, as defined above, varies greatly. The eastern portion is a combination of Upland Deciduous Forest, including Marschner’s “Big Woods” and Aspen-Birch, and unique Coniferous Bogs. The Western portions of the North Routes consist of Brush Prairie and Prairie, interspersed with Wet Prairies. The Proposed Preferred and Alternate A North Routes contain areas of Outstanding, High and Moderate Value biologic and native plant communities, primarily located in Brockway and St. Wendel Townships, as well as along County Road 17 in the Birch Lake State Forest area.

Native Plant Communities consist of significant Tamarack Swamp Minerotrophic and Seepage Subtypes, Fen Complexes (including Calcareous Fen), Willow Swamp and Open Wetlands. Water Resources include significant and unique concentrations of NWI Palustrine wetlands, important in the diffusion and filtration of water, floodshed and its unique biological diversity. The area also contains several Recreational and Environmental Lakes. The North Routes directly impact a large and significant complex known as the St. Wendel Bog. The St. Wendel Bog is a top biodiversity site and contains one of the largest remaining blocks of native vegetation in Stearns County. The St. Wendel Bog Complex is a Natural Resource that has been documented as having local, state, national and even international importance.

Finally, the CAPX2020 North Routes contain 43 documented Century Farms. The CAPX2020 HVTL would violate the spirit and letter of Minnesota’s policy of agricultural preservation and conservation. Minn. Stat. §17.80. It would compromise the heritage and preservation of the family farm, particularly the Century Farms that hold historical and cultural significance in Stearns County and Minnesota. The proposal of 175 foot, 345 KV High Voltage Transmission lines threatens the integrity of the family farms and the natural character of the property.

3. “North Routes contain highest acreage of Prime Farmland in ROW vs. other routes. Avoidance of these areas would be consistent with the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan and Minn. Stat. §17.80.

Table 7.7-10. Acreage of Prime Farmland within Route and Option ROW

Route/Option	Prime Farmland in ROW (Acres)
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	270
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	272
Route A	354
Route B	389
Route C	226
Route D	179
Route E	263
Route F	338
Route G	246
Route H	162

4.



5. “North” Routes contain highest impacts to Forestry and Forested areas.

Table 7.7-5. Wooded Lands by Route (Sauk Centre to St. Cloud)

Route/Option	Wooded Lands in Route (Acres)
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred Route	1,920
Route A	1,870
Route B	819
Route C	810
Route D	640
Route E	759
Route F	669
Route G	721
Route H	743

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Table 7.7-12. Wooded Lands in Proposed ROW for Routes

Route/Option	Wooded Lands in ROW (Acres)*
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	132
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	131
Route A	125
Route B	113
Route C	110
Route D	83
Route D Undergrounding Footprint	0.3
Route D Undergrounding Albany	0.4
Route D Undergrounding Avon	11
Route E	72
Route F	80
Route G	79
Route H	79

6. “North” Routes contain the highest number of water wells vs. other routes*

Table 7.8-3. Water Wells contained within the Proposed Routes and Route Options

Route/Option	Water Wells
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred Route	140
Route A	127
Route B	76
Route C	44
Route D	90
Route E	70
Route F	129
Route G	71
Route H	61
Route Options	
Option 8	1
Option 9	3
Option 10	1
Option 11	4
Option 12B	5
Option 12E	3
Amended Scope Options	
Option AS-4	2
Option AS-5	1

8

7. "North" Routes contain significantly higher number of Total NWI Wetlands impacted vs. other routes.

Table 7.8-4. Wetland Type and Acreage within the Proposed Routes and Route Options

Route/Option	NWI Wetland Type					
	Total NWI Wetland Acreage	Freshwater Emergent	Freshwater Forested/Shrub	Freshwater Pond	Lake	Riverine
Route Alternatives						
Applicant Preferred	2267	1561	592	85	6	24
Route A	2037	1321	635	51	5	19
Route B	699	503	162	25	5	4
Route C	873	716	88	49	13	8
Route D	789	661	65	29	16	8
Route E	1229	1015	128	55	22	8
Route F	967	766	125	31	14	25
Route G	967	808	112	39	0	8
Route H	927	751	118	36	7	8

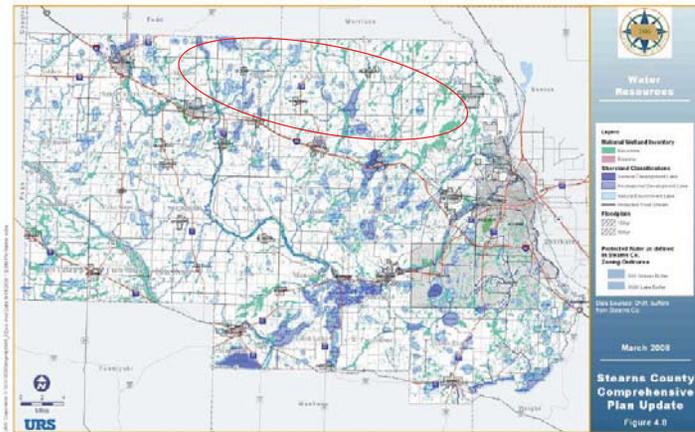


Table 7.8-8. Potential Wetland Impacts Evaluation

Alignment	Wetlands ¹									
	Total Wetlands Within the ROW (Acres)	Number of Wetlands, the ROW Crosses ¹ (Acres)	Forested Wetlands in ROW (Acres)	Number of Forested Wetlands ROW Crosses	Number of Poles in Wetlands ²	Permanent Wetland Impacts (Acres) ²	Temporary Wetland Impacts (Acres) ²	Number of Poles in PWI Wetlands within ROW	Number of Poles in PWI Wetlands by Alignment	Permanent Wetland Impacts (Acres) ²
Route Alternatives										
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	135	141	33	26	30	03	17	4	0	0
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	142	141	36	26	20	03	18	4	0	0
Route A	111	121	37	26	23	023	13	1	0	0
Route B	78	87	17	15	16	016	10	3	4	.004
Route C	104	119	14	13	24	024	13	6	4	.004
Route D ³	94	87	12	14	21	021	13	4	4	.004
Route E	104	129	9	16	20	02	13	5	0	0
Route F	106	105	18	13	27	027	15	4	4	.004
Route G	91	102	9	16	18	018	12	2	0	0
Route H	86	90	7	17	18	018	11	1	0	0

8. "North" Routes contain significantly higher number of Floodplains impacted vs. other routes. Highly regulated by State & Federal offices, such as FEMA.

Table 7.8-5. Floodplains within the Proposed Routes

Route	Floodplain	Acres
Route Alternatives		
Applicant Preferred Route	100-Year	363
Route A	100-Year	358
Route B	100-Year	97
Route C	100-Year	101
Route D	100-Year	101
Route E	100-Year	94
Route F	100-Year	245
Route G	100-Year	108
Route H	100-Year	174

9. "North" Routes contain higher number of Perennial Stream crossings vs. other routes.

Table 7.8-6. Potential Surface Water Impacts Route Alternatives Evaluation

Alignment	Perennial Stream Crossings	Intermittent Stream Crossings	PWI Stream Crossings
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	16	19	13
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	16	19	13
Route A	17	18	16
Route B	16	22	13
Route C	13	20	11
Route D ¹	12	20	8
Route E	14	28	9
Route F	10	26	10
Route G	12	33	12
Route H	12	43	13

¹ Impacts calculated for Route D present impacts as though all of Route D is constructed above ground, subsequent sections of table 7.8-7 present impacts associated with the underground sections of Route D.

10. "North" Routes contain highest concentration of non-agricultural vegetation impacted vs. other routes.

Table 7.9-2. Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Non-Agricultural Vegetation (Sauk Centre to St. Cloud)

Vegetation by Route/Option	Estimated Number of Poles in Vegetated Corer	Temporary Impacts (I Acre Per Pole) Acres	Permanent Impacts (55 SF Per Pole) SF	Permanent Impacts (55 SF Per Pole) Acres
Route Alternatives				
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	89	89	4,879	0.11
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	89	89	4,875	0.11
Route A	76	76	4,184	0.11
Route B	13	13	4,023	0.09
Route C	74	74	4,090	0.08
Route D	41	41	3,343	0.06
Route E	58	58	3,216	0.07
Route F	62	62	3,404	0.07
Route G	85	85	3,005	0.06
Route H	87	87	3,125	0.07

11. "North" Routes contain the highest concentration of High to Outstanding MCBS, Sites of Biodiversity Significance vs. other routes, rare and unique Natural Resources.

The DEIS page 7-114 notes "Areas with high biodiversity significance contain sites with high quality occurrences of the rarest plant communities and/or important functional landscapes. Areas with outstanding biodiversity significance contain the best occurrence of the rarest species; the most outstanding example of the rarest native plant communities and/or the largest, most intact functional landscapes present in Minnesota. MCBS sites are present in the area between Sauk Centre and St. Cloud but most are concentrated in the eastern area of Stearns County". In addition, "The MCBS sites of biodiversity significance are ranked and organized into three classifications; moderate, high, and outstanding. Areas with moderate biodiversity significance contain significant occurrences of rare species and/or moderately disturbed native plant communities and landscapes that have a strong potential for recovery. The Preferred, Alternate A & B routes primarily possess MCBS Sites of Biodiversity that is high and outstanding.

Table 7.9-4. Route Impact Evaluation

Habitat Classification	Applicant Preferred Route ROW Occupancy		Applicant Preferred Route No ROW Occupancy		Route A		Route B		Route C	
	Route (Acres)	ROW (Acres)	Route (Acres)	ROW (Acres)	Route (Acres)	ROW (Acres)	Route (Acres)	ROW (Acres)	Route (Acres)	ROW (Acres)
WPAAs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WLAAs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USFWS Assessments										
Wetlands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grasslands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer Home Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	80.7	0	80.7	0	0	0	29.4	6.5	80.7	0
MCBS, Sites of Biodiversity Significance										
Moderate	0	0	0	0	0.3	0	33	1	0	0
High	356	20	356	20	356	20	0	0	0	0
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	3	0	0
MCBS, Native Plant Communities	82	7	82	7	92	7	48	0	29	0
MCBS, Railroad Right-of-Way Primitives										
Fair	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SNAs	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.02	0	0
Minnesota Land Trust Conservation Easements	0	0	0	0	1	0	30	6.5	0	0
BWSR, Re-Invent in Minnesota (RIM) Easements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calcaneous Ferns										
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 7.9-5. Route Impact Evaluation (Sauk Centre to St. Cloud) Continued

Habitat Classification	Route D		Route E		Route F		Route G		Route H	
	Route	ROW	Route	ROW	Route	ROW	Route	ROW	Route	ROW
WPAAs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WLAAs	0	0	17	0.04	0	0	0	0	26	1
USFWS Assessments										
Wetlands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grasslands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmer Home Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	80.7	0	80.7	0	80.7	0	80.7	0	80.7	0
MCBS, Sites of Biodiversity Significance										
Moderate	15	3	42	6	55	10	60	6	60	6
High	1	0	20	2	42	3	51	8	51	8
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MCBS, Native Plant Communities	15	3	37	3	9	1	26	7	26	7
MCBS, Railroad Right-of-Way Primitives										
Fair	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very Good	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SNAs	0	0	0	0	13	0.4	0	0	0	0
Minnesota Land Trust Conservation Easements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BWSR, Re-Invent in Minnesota (RIM) Easements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calcaneous Ferns										
Outstanding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Section 2

Imperative Items lacking, needed corrections & clarifications and “suggestions” pertaining to the Preferred, Alternate A & B Routes:

1. DEIS lacks specific Physical route comparisons for Sauk Center to St. Cloud, such as total length, complete cost estimates and Total and % Proliferation of new transmission corridors. Without this information, a comparative analysis is not possible. These comparisons were completed by the Applicant for the ATF and must also be included in the DEIS/FEIS. The comparisons demonstrate the Preferred and Alternate A Routes possess significantly higher Proliferation of New Transmission Corridors, contrary to MN’s Policy on Non-Proliferation and the recently passed legislation adding Subdivision 7e to siting criteria. See Minn Stat. 216.03, subdivision 7e.

	Preferred Route	Alternate A Route	South Alternate Route	"I-94" Route	"Hwy. 23" Route
Route Length (miles)	38	42	35	27	30*
Length of Route Paralleling Existing Rights-of-Way (miles)	22	28	27	27	30
Percent of Route Paralleling Existing Rights-of-Way	58%	67%	77%	98%	99%*

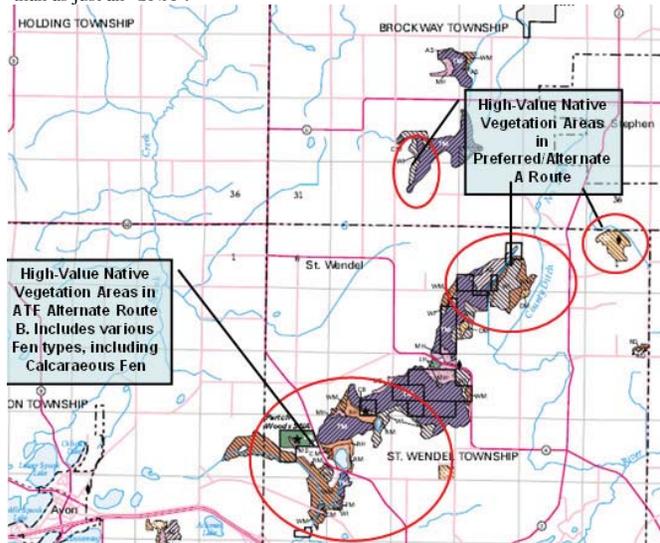
* ATF Route Comparisons, Freeport to St. Cloud

2. The DEIS lacks specific information regarding the number and locations of homes within 175 feet of centerline. This is important because with transmission structures as high as 175 feet on a 75 foot right-of-way, and with homes potentially within that 175 feet of centerline, these landowners and business owners have potentially significant impacts if the line should fall over. The FEIS must include comparative data of homes and businesses within 175 feet of the Right-of-Way.
3. The DEIS lacks specific information pertaining to important North Routes’ Natural Resources, including the St. Wendel Bog “Complex”, Shepards Lake, Birch Lake State Forest. On a number of occasions, the DEIS refers to the St. Wendel Bog in the context of an "SNA". The St. Wendel Bog SNA is a 170 acre site designated as a Scientific and Natural Area that is but a part of a much larger St. Wendel Bog Complex. The St. Wendel Bog Complex itself is over 700 acres and is one of the top two sites for biodiversity / (in the state? Country?) and contains one of the largest remaining blocks of native vegetation in Stearns County.

The Preferred and Alternate A Routes would cross and impact the St. Wendel Bog Complex on the northeast side of the complex, the Alternate B Routes would cross/impact the St. Wendel Bog/Complex at its southwest location. The St. Wendel Bog Complex is home to the best and largest example of Minerotrophic Tamarack Swamp in central Minnesota. In addition to the extensive tamarack stands, the area also

contains: rare Mixed Hardwood Seepage Swamp, and unique Calcareous Seepage Fen which supports a population of the State Threatened *Carex sterilis* (sterile sedge). Significant acreage of Rich Fen, Wet Meadow, Mixed Hardwood Swamp, and Shrub Swamp also occur.

The St. Wendel Bog Complex is a Natural Resource that has been documented as having local, state, national and even international importance. In an effort to ensure the integrity and character of this important Natural Resource is maintained, the St. Wendel Bog should be analyzed and referred to in the DEIS in it's entirety, rather than as just an "SNA".



Page 7-36 in the DEIS provides a "misleading" notation that the "St. Wendel SNA is located approx. 1 mile west of the Applicant Preferred Route and is not impacted by the alignment." This characterization of the St. Wendel Bog Complex, the relation of the transmission route to it, and the dismissal of significant impacts is irresponsible and must be corrected in the FEIS.



3. Zoning Impacts. Page 7-10 notes “Effects from either route on planned land uses as identified in the future land use plans for each affected jurisdiction would vary. According to the 2003 comprehensive plan for the city of St. Cloud, the Preferred Route would not affect areas identified as primary growth areas, secondary growth areas, or ultimate service areas.” The ATF Final Report noted the St. Joseph Township ATF member as stating “Future development area for City of St. Joseph and Waite Park; land has been identified in comprehensive plan for development; land has been purchased and some infrastructure (sewer and water) has been put in place”. This must receive clarification/correction as needed.

4. The maps are missing many homes impacted by the Preferred and Alternate A & B routes increasing the residential impact of the 75-500 foot corridor. Comments were made at the DEIS meetings, but efforts were not made consistently to glean information from commenter’s. Homes not included range from longstanding obvious residences to pole buildings converted into homes. This was noted by an ATF member in the ATF Final Report, yet it was not incorporated into the DEIS. As many as 115 homes in the Preferred route exist within the 500 foot alignments according to NoRCA analysis, indicating flawed inventory in the DEIS. Page 7-49 of DEIS states “There are fewer homes within 500 feet of the Applicant Preferred Route alignment than all of the other proposed routes except Route E, which suggests that fewer households would directly view the line.” Table 7.3-4, in the DEIS shows the opposite, that fewer homes in **Routes C and E** would be impacted w/in 500’. This glaring error must be corrected in the FEIS.

Table 7.3-4. Aesthetic Impact Evaluation for Routes

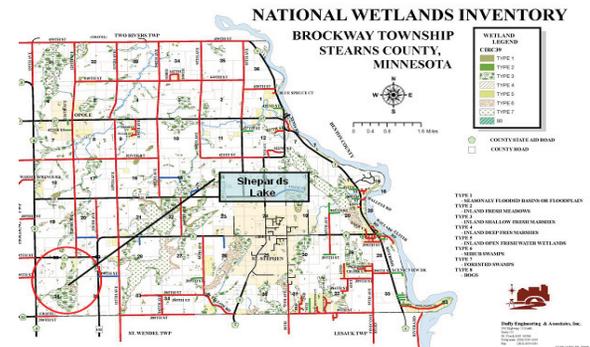
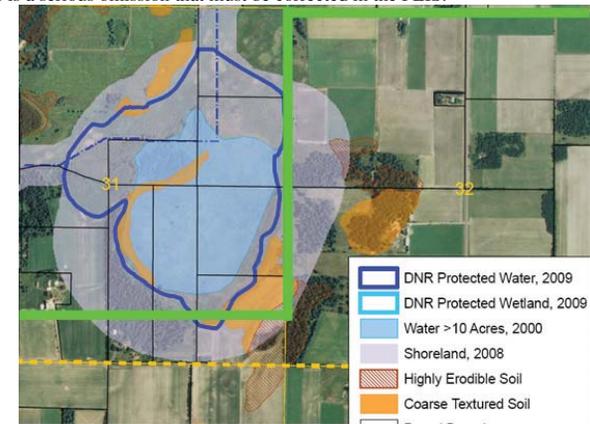
Route/Option	Homes	
	Within 500' of Alignment	Within 150' of Alignment
Route Alternatives		
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	83	0
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	82	0
Route A	116	0
Route B	191	0
Route C	77	1
Route D	179	9
Route E	76	0
Route F	206	1
Route G	88	0
Route H	96	0

5. The DEIS/FEIS should include more specificity pertaining to wetlands impact on Preferred, Alternate A & B, Specifically including Shepards Lake, which was commented on by the DNR, USFWS, and Ducks Unlimited, and St. Wendel Bog Complex. Avoidance of Shepards Lake was recommended in a DNR scoping letter to OES on Feb. 11, yet Shepards Lake was not avoided nor was the DNR’s avoidance recommendation mentioned. An Environmental Lake, Shepards Lake is classified as a DNR Protected Waters, with a 1,000 foot DNR shoreland buffer.

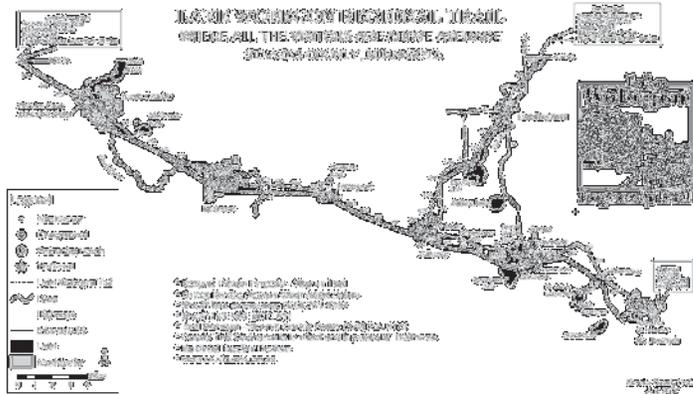
The Preferred route would skirt the periphery of Shepards Lake itself and would run within the shoreland buffer. In her February 11, 2020 scoping comment to the OES, Jamie Schrenzel, MN DNR, cited:

Page 7-40 to 7-41, Figure 7-22. The EIS should give the location of the lakes, as well as their public water inventory numbers, and examine alternative alignments for avoiding crossing the lakes wherever possible. For example, it may be possible to avoid Shepard’s Lake in Stearns County with a slight alignment shift.

This is a serious omission that must be corrected in the FEIS.



6. The DEIS should include more specifics related to the Lake Wobegon Trail (Clarify Exact Crossings, etc). According to the Lake Wobegon Maps, attached below for reference, the Alternate A crosses the Trail two times, and the Alternate B three times (DEIS Alt A=1, Alt B=1). Also, no reference is given to the impact and visual intrusion of the HVTL on the Trail's Covered Bridge at Holdingford.



9. Identification in narrative and on the maps, inclusion of important cultural and historic resources in DEIS, such as Century farm program, visual intrusion of farms natural character. Preferred=27 century farms, Alt A=24 Century farms.
10. Discussion of impacts on agricultural land in light of the state's policy of agricultural land preservation and conservation. See Minn. Stat. §17.80:

17.80 STATE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION POLICY.

Subdivision 1.Policy.

It is the policy of the state to preserve agricultural land and conserve its long-term use for the production of food and other agricultural products by:

- (a) Protection of agricultural land and certain parcels of open space land from conversion to other uses;
- (b) Conservation and enhancement of soil and water resources to ensure their long-term quality and productivity;

- (c) Encouragement of planned growth and development of urban and rural areas to ensure the most effective use of agricultural land, resources and capital; and
- (d) Fostering of ownership and operation of agricultural land by resident farmers.

Subd. 2.Methods.

The legislature finds that the policy in subdivision 1 will be best met by:

- (a) Defining and locating lands well suited for the production of agricultural and forest products, and the use of that information as part of any local planning and zoning decision;
- (b) Providing local units of government with coordinating guidelines, tools and incentives to prevent the unplanned and unscheduled conversion of agricultural and open space land to other uses;
- (c) Providing relief from escalating property taxes and special assessments and protection of normal farm operations in agricultural areas subject to development pressures;
- (d) Development of state policy to increase implementation of soil and water conservation by farmers;
- (e) Assuring that state agencies act to maximize the preservation and conservation of agricultural land and minimize the disruption of agricultural production, in accordance with local social, economic and environmental considerations of the agricultural community;
- (f) Assuring that public agencies employ and promote the use of management procedures which maintain or enhance the productivity of lands well suited to the production of food and other agricultural products;
- (g) Guiding the orderly development and maintenance of transportation systems in rural Minnesota while preserving agricultural land to the greatest possible extent;
- (h) Guiding the orderly construction and development of energy generation and transmission systems and enhancing the development of alternative energy to meet the needs of rural and urban communities and preserve agricultural land to the greatest possible extent by reducing energy costs and minimizing the use of agricultural land for energy production facilities; and
- (i) Guiding the orderly development of solid and hazardous waste management sites to meet the needs and safety of rural and urban communities and preserve agricultural land to the greatest possible extent by minimizing the use of agricultural land for waste management sites.

11. Identify and clarify additional Center-Pivot irrigation in Preferred and Alternate A & B routes. 2 additional Center-pivots have been identified in the Preferred and 2 additional of Alternate A in Brockway Township.



12. Address more completely impacts of extra-high voltage transmission lines on irrigation systems and irrigation farming practices. See attached

13. Pertaining to recreation, the DEIS fails to include reference to the Alternate A impact on the Birch Lake State Forest and the Preferred Routes impact on Shepards Lake See letter, MN DNR to OES on Feb. 11, 2010.

14. Pertaining to wooded lands impacted Page 7-93 notes “The Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy and No ROW Occupancy, and Route C impact the greatest amount of wooded lands”. According Table 7.7-12, the greatest impacts to wooded lands occurs in the Preferred, Alternate A & B routes.

Table 7.7-12. Wooded Lands in Proposed ROW for Routes

Route/Option	Wooded Lands in ROW (Acres)*
Route Alternatives	
Applicant Preferred ROW Occupancy	132
Applicant Preferred No ROW Occupancy	131
Route A	125
Route B	113
Route C	110
Route D	83
Route D Undergrounding Freeport	0.3
Route D Undergrounding Albany	0.4
Route D Undergrounding Avon	11
Route E	72
Route F	80
Route G	79
Route H	79

15. Pertaining to impacts on Flora, the DEIS page 7-117 notes “The majority of the Applicant Preferred Route occurs along existing rights-of-way, including roads, and is also often adjacent to cultivated row crops. Given that the vegetation communities that occur in these areas are regularly disturbed, impacts due to construction are not anticipated to substantially disrupt vegetative community quality or function”.

This statement is wrong, misleading and irresponsible given the relatively high impact on the routes wetlands and wooded lands, as well as the MCBS Sites of Biodiversity. Also, “Typically, vegetation is controlled mechanically or with herbicides on a regular maintenance schedule”. These errors of fact and characterization must be corrected in the FEIS.

16. Pertaining to Rare Unique Natural Resources/Critical Habitat the DEIS page 7-131 states “As discussed in previous sections, Applicants have routed the Applicant Preferred Route such that the majority is co-located with existing rights-of-way, therefore minimizing additional tree clearing that could increase fragmentation of sensitive habitats”. *This is false, misleading and irresponsible as the Preferred Route possesses the highest amount of Proliferation of new transmission corridors. These errors of fact and characterization must be corrected in the FEIS.*

17. Undergrounding

Underground costs must be fairly evaluated. The February 24, 2010 underground cost estimate prepared by Power Engineers, Inc. for this docket reflects the following cost estimates for a 2 mile stretch:

1.4 Cost Estimate Summary

The estimated installation costs (rounded) for the XLPE and HPFF pipe-type insulated cable systems for a 2.0 mile 345 kV underground line, excluding transition stations, are:

Description	Material (One Circuit)	Labor (One Circuit)	Total (One Circuit)	Total (Two Circuits)
345 kV XLPE 3500 kcmil Copper Conductor	\$28,000,000	\$11,800,000	\$39,800,000	\$79,600,000
345 kV HPFF 3500 kcmil Copper Conductor	\$29,900,000	\$14,000,000	\$43,900,000	\$87,800,000

Costs of undergrounding are not addressed or analyzed, except for a mention on page 1-40, with no selection of differing options, only 14miles of underground lumped together. There is no cost benefit analysis of impacts of transmission and mitigation by underground construction.

18. EMF levels are in error because the amperage levels used are not consistent with Certificate of Need and undergrounding estimate statements of capacity and loading.

Magnetic fields are based on current/amps, and Table 5.2.6 shows amps at 158 and 264. These levels are unreasonably low. And the amperage levels of 264 for peak and 158 for average are not consistent with either Certificate of Need testimony (06-1115) or the undergrounding estimates, which are consistent with Certificate of Need testimony, which show a potential range of amperage to 3,795 and 3,348 (Table 1-1, p.2); a “large load transfer capacity requirement of 2,000MVA per circuit” (p.4); and 3347 amps and 2000MVA at 75% loading = 2510 amps and 1500 MVA (§2.3.1, p.6:

- Ampacity
Normal (Continuous) 3347 Amps (2000 MVA)
- Load Factor 75%

This is also reflected in the August 20, 2010 compliance filing in the “ Fargo Phase I” St. Cloud-Monticello docket (09-246):

Transmission Capacity

Thermal or design capacity. The CapX utilities have worked collaboratively to develop construction standards that will ensure uniformity in the design and capability of the all CapX projects. In line with these standards, the CapX Fargo Phase 1 345 kV transmission line will have a design capacity of 2,050 MVA. This indicates the maximum level of power associated with the current flow that the facility is designed to handle without damaging conductors. To save cost and avoid installing expensive new equipment, certain pieces of substation equipment will be limited to 1,800 MVA during substation maintenance or contingency conditions when a substation circuit breaker is out of service. While the equipment is physically capable of supporting these power levels there are other system conditions that will limit power levels as described below.

System Capacity. As current on a transmission line increases, its impedance or resistance to the flow of energy increases. At very high levels of current, the impedance of the line increases to such a level that energy will take other high voltage paths with lower impedance. For this reason, the entire Fargo – Monticello 345 kV line will not see flow as high as its design or thermal capacity.

It is expected that in the interim operating scenario, with only the Monticello-Quarry line added to the network, it will see flows as high as 200 MVA when all transmission facilities are in service. Should the limiting contingency of the existing St. Cloud-area transmission system occur (loss of the Benton County-Granite City double-circuit 115 kV line), flow on the Monticello-Quarry line could be as high as 240 MVA. This is more than enough power to supply the 180 MW of need forecasted for the area by the Applicants in the Certificate of Need proceeding.

Transmission studies indicate that once the entire length of the Fargo-Monticello line is in service, flow on the line could be as high as 600 MVA. As additional generation is integrated into the electric system, particularly in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Manitoba, the Fargo-Monticello line could experience current flow with associated power levels as high as 1200 to 1500 MVA. It is expected that these conditions would occur during periods when other transmission lines are out of service.

Because current flows could be “as high as 1200 to 1500 MVA” the magnetic field charts should reflect this potential exposure.

The FEIS should include a table of expected magnetic fields ranging from the 158-264 range provided in Table 5.2.6 to 2510 amps and 3347 amps as found in the capacity testimony in Certificate of Need and the Power Engineers estimate, as above.

1. Airports – Private airports are missing in the analysis, and were not present on the maps used by MOES at the hearings. For example, there is a private airport near I-94 85-86 mile marker that is not shown on the maps. The DEIS does not include a listing of all airports – a full table listing all airports in each affected county, highlighting the ones within a 2 mile proximity of any proposed route should be an Appendix in the FEIS. The FAA database is available online, and a county search is one available option: http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/airportdata_5010/
2. Substation Noise – information is provided in the DEIS about noise standards in Minnesota and anticipated noise from the transmission line. However, there is no information regarding substation noise.
3. Mitigation options – mitigation options are not clear. The FEIS should include as an example the Highway 75 Mitigation Plan proposed for the St. Cloud-Monticello route (Docket 09-246) which includes.

422-427

Conclusion

Though the Fargo to St. Cloud CAPX2020 Draft Environmental Impact Statement is far from complete or adequate, close analysis shows that even in its present state it does illustrate the tremendous negative impacts associated with the Preferred, Alternate A and Alternate B routes when compared with the other the alternatives.

The impacts of the North Route's Gross Proliferation of New Transmission Lines poses serious negative consequences to sensitive wetlands, forested areas and prime agricultural farmland.

In addition, the DEIS lacks detail --there are many undocumented homes and residences within the 1,000 foot transmission line corridor, it does not establish the numbers of homes within "fall down" distance of the centerline, it minimizes the negative effects on unique natural resources of Stearns County, trail impacts and zoning impacts and negative effects due to the fragmentation of the North Route's historical properties, Century Farms.

A "least harmful" alternative to the CAPX2020 North Routes would include the primary utilization of the Interstate 94 corridor or the utilization of more suitable routes to the south of Interstate 94 (Routes E, F, G or H).

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

**Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket No. E002, ET2/TL-09-1056**

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Please share your comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including any further information to be addressed in a Final EIS for the proposed Fargo to St. Cloud 345 Kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line Project.

Turn this form in today or mail to the address provided on the back (use additional sheets as necessary). You may also email comments to David Birkholz, Site Permit Manager at david.birkholz@state.mn.us with **TL-09-1056** in the subject line. Faxed comments can be sent to 651.297.7891. **Comments must be received no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, October 18, 2010.**

Signature: *Anna Olson* Date: 10/18/10

We would like to address the concerns about the possibilities of the 345 kV transmission line not going the applicants preferred route A, and instead using route E, going southwest out to the interstate 94 using the existing railroad track right of way.

The following are our concerns:

- 1) The environmental impact on the wildlife, and wetland area which is home to eagles, hawks, deer, fox, turkey, coyote, sand hill crane, a pair of returning trumpet swans and many migrating waterfowl. The clearing of the needed area for the line would take much of the areas woodland including 100 year oaks, large cotton wood (up to 18 ft. in circumference) and pines.
- 2) The county has plans of using this railroad right of way to extend/annex the Wobegon trail out to Rockville. This would have a much less impact on the environment, wildlife and most important, the residents in the immediate area.
- 3) Research shows that EMF's from high voltage lines this close to a dairy farm result in decreases of 5-16.5% milk yield and an increase of 4.75% in dry matter intake (Burchard, J.F., Monardes, H., Nguyen, D.H., Dec. 24 2003). Therefore if this alternate route is chosen it will put a family dairy farm out of business.
- 4) We would also like someone to do a house count along this route. The two properties 2583 86th ave. (Richert residence) and 8524 Indigo rd. (Bromenschenkel residence) were incorrectly identified on the route map, showing a yellow dot instead of a red dot.
- 5) If the applicants preferred route A is not chosen, we would like to see consideration of the applicants proposed new route area that uses CT rd 138 instead if the railroad right of way, which would have much less effect on environmental impact and affect fewer home owners.

The following residents support the choice of the applicants preferred route A that heads north from the new Quarry sub station:

NAME	ADDRESS
1. Kenneth A. Erikmeier	8825 No Old Hwy Rd St. Cloud MN
2. Linda K. Erikmeier	8825 No. Old Hwy Rd. St. Cloud, MN 56301
3. Robt. Undersander	8497 Old Hwy Rd N, St. Cloud, MN 56301
4. Tammy Undersander	8497 Old Hwy Rd N, St. Cloud, MN 56301
5. John Undersander	8208 Old Hwy N St. Cloud MN 56301
6. Patricia Undersander	8905 Old Hwy N St. Cloud, MN 56301
7. John Undersander	8503 Old Hwy N, St. Cloud, MN 56301
8. Tim Weirld	8601 Old Hwy Rd. N. St. Cloud, MN 56301
9. Brenda Weirld	8601 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud MN 56301
10. L W W	8601 Old Hwy Rd N. St. Cloud MN 56301

NAME	ADDRESS
11. Rod Lange	8754 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
12. Bruce Hagby	8702 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
13. Vicki Hagberg	8703 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
14. Cindi Rowelev	8662 Old Hwy Rd. N. St. Cloud
15. John Brub	8614 OLD HWY RD N ST. CLOUD
16. Judd Hill	8500 OLD Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
17. Mary Held	8506 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
18. Brian Hill	8504 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
19. Kara Lange	8754 Old Hwy Rd N St. Cloud
20. Louise Brommschenkel	8524 Indigo Rd St. Cloud MN
21. David Brommschenkel JR	8524 Indigo Rd. St. Cloud MN
22. Perra O'Neil	2583 86 th ave. St. Cloud. MN
23. J. Rucht	2583 86 th ave St. Cloud, MN

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Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: apache@web.lmic.state.mn.us
Sent: Tuesday, September 28, 2010 9:36 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: Opatz Tue Sep 28 09:35:58 2010 ET2, E002/TL-09-1056

This public comment has been sent via the form at:
www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/publicComments.html

You are receiving it because you are listed as the contact for this project.

Project Name: Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Project

Docket number: ET2, E002/TL-09-1056

User Name: Mike Opatz

County: Hennepin County

City: Maple Grove

Email: mopatz@ci.maple-grove.mn.us

Phone: 763-494-6005

Impact: I am greatly dismayed that the DEIS is allowed to state that the preferred route would not affect property values in a significant manner. If they are going to make that statement you need to define significant. This appears to just be a strategic move to help the power companies skirt their responsibilities from paying their fair share to the affected property values. The preferred route would cut right through my father's (Claude Opatz) land dividing about 60 acres of woods/swamp from the 80 acres of farm land, buildings, and house. Which would greatly devalue the entire property for a future sale. What about the neighboring property owned by David Ebaugh, there is no way he is not greatly affected in terms of property values. I understand the need for ample and reliable power, and that the line has to go somewhere, but do the right thing and amend the DEIS regarding the statement on no significant affects on property values.

Mitigation:

Submission date: Tue Sep 28 09:35:58 2010

This information has also been entered into a centralized database for future analysis.

For questions about the database or the functioning of this tool, contact:

Andrew Koebrick
andrew.koebrick@state.mn.us

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Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Opitz, Maureen [MXOpitz@CSBSJU.EDU]
Sent: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM); Kirsch, Raymond (COMM)
Subject: powerline reaction -- Stearns County

Gentlemen,

I live in the southeast corner of St. Wendell Township of Stearns County, Minnesota. At this point, I cannot know whether the CAPx2020 project will affect me adversely or not because all of the available maps of the project show a very wide swath – at least a half a mile wide – through my area and I am at the far western side of it. Nobody wants a high voltage transmission power line near their home but everyone wants an effective grid in place for our power needs. It is only fair then that “everyone” pay the price of the project.

If the power line ends up being built anywhere near my property, I would like to be assured that I would be compensated for diminished property values. For me, that diminishment is primarily aesthetic and economic. If I can see an eyesore easily from anywhere in my yard, that would make it unlikely that I could sell my house for its current value. If quite a few neighborhood trees must be removed, that would also diminish the value of my property and it seems only fair that I should be recompensed.

Thank you,
Maureen Opitz
8792 Crestview drive
St. Joseph, MN 56374

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Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Julianne Restani [juliannerestani@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, October 16, 2010 7:54 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: TL-09-1056

Dear David,

I was at the 1pm El Paso meeting and I heard a lot of good people who are clearly frustrated and upset by this whole process.

My family and everyone who lives in Collegeville/Collegeville Road/Old Collegeville Road knows and can empathize with these feeling. We all watched the mighty force of 'public domain' in action when HWY 94 went through in the early 1970's and we felt exactly like those who are in the zones that have been chosen for today's line placement.

I believe that having to deal with this type of upset to land and lives should only be doled out once in a lifetime and not twice.

When 94 went in there was vast destruction of homes, property and wetlands. We also said goodbye to quiet living while the sound from vehicles is a near constant roar twenty four hours a day. But 94 went in and we all accepted it.

To ask the same people to accept, once again, a disruption our lives and property with a major public works is akin to double jeopardy. We have done all this before.

Out of complete and utter FAIRNESS to our community this route must not be considered a serious or viable route.

Thank you for your time.

Julianne Restani
320-292-9812

431-432

Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Janet Rothstein [jamjar126@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, October 08, 2010 10:31 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: Cap X 2020

Dear David,

My heart goes out to you, as there has to be an easier way to make a living. Well, I guess in all honesty maybe not. When compared to the residents that live on the preferred route of the Cap X 2020 project. They are certainly destined to even more stress and hardships as this progresses. Area families work very hard for a living with minimum pay back. Some banking on there property as a retirement fund. This community is filled with a number of self employed people that are barely getting by due to extreme health insurance cost. From the St Joseph meeting, it is clear that these lines will deteriorate our health. Which in turn will bleed any retirement savings to cover medical expenses. Not to mention, our homes, that we work very hard to keep up, will drop in value for a second time. I know you said they would buy our homes. At what price? Number one, we like our homes and don't want to move. Two, which really breaks my heart, is the fact that it would be sold to some unsuspecting third party. Probably a young family that would loss it after having their bank accounts taxed, due to having to stay home to care for their sick children.

I do not know what the solution is other than maybe burying the lines. I'm not certain that even that would be safe. I know that these power lines are not God's will for our lives. I will be praying that He gives each of you wisdom in dealing with this. Shame on them, whoever they are, with their hardened hearts and lots of money. That they could even entertain the thought of putting such hardship on the people of Central Minnesota. May they reap what they sow!

Sincerely,
Janet Rothstein
36585 County Road 2 St Joseph, MN 56374
320-252-9223