Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Peisenschenk@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2010 10:44 AM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Subject: Fwd: CapX2020 Route

From: Peisenschenk@aol.com
To: rep.larry.hosch@house.mn
Sent: 1/31/2010 10:42:56 A.M. Central Standard Time
Subj: CapX2020 Route

Hi Larry,

After more than a year and a half of navigating through the Albany Township and Stearns County ordinances we finally received Final Plat approval for a rural, 7 lot "Cluster Development" named Trestle Ridge Two. Trestle Ridge Two is located in Albany Township on the Northeast quarter of Section 3, just south of 380th Street and just west of Stearns County Road 10. This was a joint project with myself serving as the developer for the landowners, Joseph and Janel Schiffler. The Schiffler's spent upwards of $200,000 on platting and improving this property. The improvements were completed at the end of this last work season. There is a good likelihood of adding 7 more lots to the development pending the final rulings of the transfer of development rights for landowners by Stearns County Environmental Services and the Stearns County Commission.

Last fall, I had received notice of a proposed utility infrastructure project, a 345 kV "transmission line" spearheaded by XCel Energy, named CapX 2020. The "preferred route" of the line running from Fargo to St. Stephen deviates from Interstate 94 in the Freeport area and runs **along 380th Street and Stearns County Road 10.** This places the stray voltage leaching, unsightly transmission line within 1/2 mile to the north and 1/4 mile to the east of our new development.

We oppose the plan to place overhead transmission lines along 380th Street and Stearns County Road 10. We are concerned about the financial impact this project would have on our development. Collectively we have invested a lot of time, effort and money into developing Trestle Ridge Two. We are also with the health risks posed to humans and to the Joe Schiffler families' dairy cattle by the potenial stray voltage. Joe and his family have a large dairy just north of 380th Street.

A recent article titled **"High voltage power lines like CapX2020 pose health risks"** appeared in the St. Joseph Newsleader. It was written by David O. Carpenter, MD, Director of the Institute for Health and the Environment University of Albany, State University of New York. In the article Dr. Carpenter states "There is **definitive scientific evidence** that exposure to magnetic fields from power lines greater than four millegauss (a level *significantly less than what is expected to occur near this proposed (CapX2020) power line)* **is associated with an elevated risk of childhood leukemia**. Some scientific research indicates an elevated risk at levels of two millegaus. A home **not near** a power line will usually have a level of less than one millegaus."

"Scientific evidence also links magnetic field exposure to **cancer in adults** adults as well, particularly **leukemia and brain cancer.** There's strong evidence that lifetime exposure to magnetic fields above 2 mellegaus is associated with an **increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases in adults, including Alzheimer's disease and ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease)."**

The article concludes "Based on this scientific evidence, I would make these public health recommendations."

"Information should be publicly available regarding the calculated magnetic field strength from a power line at various distances. In many locations along the route, magnetic fields from the CapX2020 power lines will exceed levels that create health risks, particularly over time as more electric power is used." It is important to point out that the 345 kv transmission line is being designed to double it's initial capacity in the future, bringing the amount of electricity flowing thru these lines upwards of 700 kV.

Dr. Carpenter goes on to recommend, "High-voltage lines should be routed to prevent power-power line magnetic fields in homes from exceeding four millegauss. Every effort should also be made to avoid long-term exposure to magnetic fields above two millegauss."

"Public health precaution also suggests high-voltage lines be located as far as possible from homes, schools, playgrounds and child-care facilities. In areas of dense population where routing away from homes and other sensitive uses is not possible, power lines should be placed **underground** in such a way as to reduce human health impacts."

In summary, there is strong **scientific evidence** that exposure to magnetic fields exceeding four millegaus is associated with increased risks of **childhood leukemia, adult brain cancer, adult leukemia, Alzheimer's disease and ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease.**

As a real estate developer, I have first-hand knowledge of how any proposed project is affected by it's potential impact to the environment. I have seen projects halted because of the presence of endangered butterflies and small plants. I also understand that effort was made to route the CapX2020 line around the unique "St. Wendell Bog."

Please re-read the last two paragraphs.

It seems we are giving plants and small animals more protection than we are receiving as human beings. I am not advocating we give plants and animals less protection, I am advocating we give human beings more protection.

On January 20 I attended a CapX2020 informational meeting in Melrose. David Birkholz who is an impartial agent gathering information, both for and against the project that will be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and Darren Lahr, XCel Energy representative were at the meeting. I believe I have identified there roles correctly, but apologize if I'm off a little bit.

At that meeting I stated that I think XCel Energy and the other utilities that are part of this project have a social responsibility of protecting, at least not harming, human beings and animals along the project route. When asked what the barrier was to putting the transmission line underground, Mr. Lahr stated that the cost is roughly seven to ten times that of going overhead. I then asked Mr. Birkholz and Mr. Lahr if XCel Energy had applied for any of the Federal Stimulus Funds that are being made available to help upgrade our countries infractures. My suggestion is to route the CapX2020 overhead along Interstate 94, and in areas where barriers to going overhead exist, use some of the Federal Stimulus money to off-set the cost of going underground in the highway corridor, or underground when the route deviates from the highway corridor. Mr. Lahr responded that **no effort was made to obtain Stimulus Funds.** I went on to say the say the added costs associated with underground installation should be assigned to the benefiting parties. This is how improvement costs are allocated when I improve real estate. We, the people of Stearns County should not be allocated the costs in increased health risks for a project that provides us with absolutely no benefit. This is a line used to "transmit energy" from North Dakota to Minneapolis, and beyond.

It was explained to us at the meeting that if the power lines are put underground, there would be significant trenching. Also, the power lines would have to be installed in a concrete conduit filled with a fluid to "cool" the lines as significant heat is generated from transmission. I stated that I thought this would be a wonderful economic project for the area. I know of many local excavating contractors whose business has slowed considerably as a result of the housing slow-down. I am sure they would love to have the trenching work. I also think that the new Well's Concrete plant in Albany would be capable of producing the necessary concrete conduits. This would be another positive economic impact on the area, just what the Stimulus Funds are designed for.

In summary, placing the utilities underground when not possible to go overhead in the I-94 corridor would:

1. Minimize the health risk to human beings and farm animals,

2. Created jobs for local contractors and businesses,-

3. With the use of Federal Stimulus dollars, reduce the costs to XCel and other participating utilities, and

4. Assign any increased costs to the benefiting parties through higher rates.

Larry, I believe XCel Energy has the responsibility to cause no harm to the citizens and farm animals in Stearns County. I don't believe cost should be a factor in compromising our safety. I know from experience that costs are allocated to the "benefiting parties". In this case, since this is a transmission line, the benefiting parties are those consumers in Minneapolis and beyond. If putting the lines underground results in higher costs, so be it. What is the potential cost of increased incidents of leukemia, cancer, Alzheimer's and Lou Gehrig's disease to Stearns County residents. I argue, that if it is your family that is affected, no amount of money can off-set the loss off a child or loved one. Besides, the costs associated with underground installation could result in an economic boom for the area.

I also feel sometimes that the government, large corporations and large metropolitan areas treat rural areas as "uninhabited". There are many good people that live,work, and farm in these rural areas. We are real people. We must afforded, at minimum, the same level of protection that certain plants and animals receive in considering the CapX2020 route. What is particularly disturbing is that the initial 345 kV transmission is only half of the potential power these lines will be designed to carry. It is safe to assume there will be exposure to twice the levels of millegauss' in the magnetic fields created when operating at full capacity.

The proposed overhead routes between Freeport and St. Stephen, no matter which one should be chosen, are worse than an environmental hazard in the making. This is a human hazard in the making and should be stopped before the effects of long term exposure are realized. By then, it will be too late.

You can reach David Burkholz at: davidberkholz@state.mn.

Please share this with as many state representatives and senators as possible. Maybe you can even forward it to Governor Pawlenty. Comments from the public will only be taken until Feb. 12 so time is of the essence.

Thank you,

Paul Eisenschenk