Birkholz, David (COMM)

From: Brent Schmitt [bschmitt@bernicks.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 12:49 PM
To: Birkholz, David (COMM)
Cc: jandbschmitt@clearwire.net
Subject: Public Comment

Dear Mr. Birkholz,

We are writing to express our concern with regard to the Preferred Route for the CAPX2020 High Voltage Transmission Line project. Our property, located approximately 5 miles north of Avon, MN would be directly affected by the proposed "Preferred" route. Our 20 acre parcel would be impacted by the power lines on two of our borders coming to a point just 400 feet from our home. According to the information we have been given, the power lines would come within 150 or our home at its closest boundary. With the addition of the power lines, much of the habitat that we have created for wildlife will be either destroyed or severely compromised.

Since our acquisition of our land, we have made it a priority to enrich its natural beauty and build upon its resources.

TREES: We have planted approximately 2500 trees, 500 of which are nurtured by own irrigation system. These hand-planted trees provide a natural boundary of our property as well as refuge for a variety of wildlife including pheasant and deer. Half of these are now at risk of being destroyed.

POND: Created in collaboration with the DNR to provide habitat for spring nesting birds.

NATIVE GRASSES: As part of the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) for the State of MN, native grasses were planted and maintained by us to provide natural habitat and nesting for pheasants, wild turkeys, as well as other various species. This is especially significant in light of recent trends to turn CRP land into tillable acres.

Concern for the preservation of natural resources is not a new concept for us. My wife grew up with her parent's acres bordering the St. Wendel Bog, an environmentally sensitive natural resource. We built a home on our property hoping to provide our children with the same values that were instilled in us. As we listen to roosters and watch deer walking through our back yard, we can't help but wonder how this route aligns with Minnesota's Policy on Non-Proliferation which states that new routes should make extensive use of existing corridors and, ideally, should maximize their usage in an effort not to create new corridors and rights of way, which is what would be happening on our property as there is no road or easement. Certainly we did not make the financial, emotional, and physically demanding commitment to this land under the impression that we were located in a desirable location for such a project. Arguably, the owners of over 40 Century Farms located in this same corridor could have ever imagined such a possibility either.

In the CAPX2020 area from Freeport/Melrose to South St. Cloud, please consider the inclusion of Interstate 94 as an alternate route, with slight detours and possible short-distance undergrounding in high-population density or problematic areas.

Thank you for your time,

Brent and Jill Schmitt
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