Ann Marie Stock & David J. Campagna
32097 Mapleview Rd. Albany, MN 56307

February 11, 2010

Mr. David Birkholz
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Office of Energy Security/ Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
Saint Paul, MN 55101
VIA email david.birkholz@state.mn.us with TL-09-1056 in subject line

RE: TL-09-1056
CAPX2020 Fargo to St Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Comment –Pre- EIS Scoping Decision

Dear Mr. Birkholz:

We own 80 acres in Farming Township, Stearns County. We bought this property in part to remain connected to this area as Ann Marie was born and raised in St. Joseph and has numerous family members in the area. And David, being a professional geologist, recognizes the unique beauty that this land offers. The property is located on the western boundary of Superior Lobe, the St Croix Moraine, deposited by the glaciers 10,000 years ago, forming the ridge and behind it to the east a series of wet depressions, pot holes and lakes. Today, we consider the ecosystem caused by the glacial patterns very similar to and indeed just the western extension of the Avon Hills that contains large tracts of forest, forested swamp, marsh, and sedge meadow native plant communities. Unique to this area are a series of springs and seeps that emanate from the moraine's unconfined aquifer system offering habitat and fresh water to the wildlife in the area. The natural ecosystems together with the springs, lakes, streams, combine to create beautiful scenery and diverse wildlife habitat for which the area is known.

Parallel to our property on the eastern border runs Mapleview Rd, a dirt road that extends south one mile from County Road 40, turns west one-fourth mile (as 300th Street). It is a narrow road, with marshes, brush and Jopp Lake right up to its edges. What concerns us is the possibility that your transmission lines would run along this section of Mapleview Road (the Preferred Route Segment Alternative 1 on the Fargo to St Cloud Transmission Line Project or "PRSA 1"). It would significantly proliferate man-made structures through a large, significantly undisturbed area, both along a dead-end dirt road and then cross country where no roads or even driveways exist.

Much of PRSA-1 route along Mapleview Rd and the open country to the south includes marshes, spring-fed ponds, meadows and woods. The lines would require clearance of the vegetative cover that runs right up to the narrow road, it would disturb the wetlands that hold so much wildlife, it would impede or harm the pelicans, trumpeter swans, herons, and other birds that frequent the environs of Jopp Lake, nesting sandhill cranes and northern harrier hawks along the ridge and the bald eagle that frequently perches by Henry Lake. The tops of the transmission lines, only slightly higher than the ridge, may be problematic to local bird flight patterns and increase the risk of bird collisions with the lines.

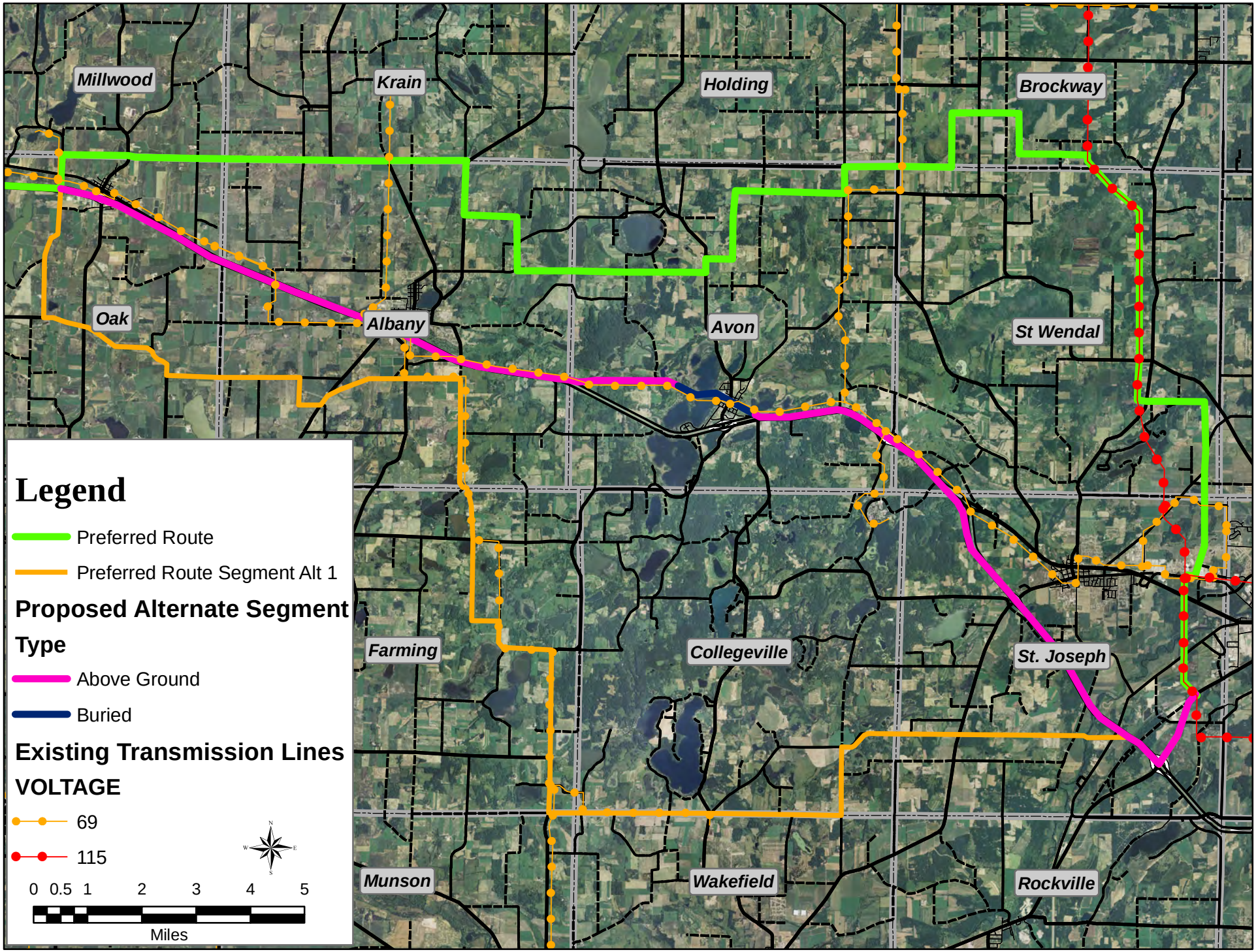
With these concerns in mind, I request that the following be considered in the Environmental Study:

1. Alternate Route along Interstate 94:
   The transmission line route should be sited along the I-94 Corridor as this minimizes impacts to pristine areas both north and south of the freeway (see attached map). To this end, the environmental study should include a proposed route that would include above ground and buried lines and may entail three major segments:
   1. A 12.13 mile above ground segment beginning from the western diversion of the preferred route from the interstate to Hwy 54 to the eastern region of Avon.
   2. A 1.57 mile buried segment through the City of Avon to the interstate
   3. A 12.06 mile above ground segment from Avon along the interstate to the Quarry substation south of St Joseph via route 23

   The advantages of this proposed route include cost savings over the Preferred and PRSA-1 routes due to a significantly shorter distance required to reach the substation. Even if burying the line through Avon were to cost 10 times the equivalent of above ground installation, the shorter distance would yield cost savings: the buried segment is equivalent to 15.7 mile above ground installation cost and adding the other two above ground segments, the proposed route along the interstate would total 39.88 mile equivalent above ground installation cost. This is significantly less than the northern Preferred route (47 miles) or the southern PRSA-1 (45 miles).

2. Environmental Study
   The area we have described along Mapleview Road is part of the same ecosystem, geomorphology and hydrology of the Avon Hills to the east. Yet its environment appears not to have been extensively studied and therefore should be given extra careful consideration during the EIA. The lands and waters adjacent to Mapleview Road provide a diverse ecosystem that offers significant habitat for native flora and fauna. PRSA 1 traverses nearly 5 miles of continuous lakes and wetlands, from southern Albany Township through the center of Farming Township. Accordingly, the Environmental Impact Study should carefully consider the environmental effects of transmission lines on the birds and waterfowl that inhabit this area. Finally, in light of the reality that once a utility route is established, the policy of nonproliferation encourages further development along the same corridor, the Environmental Impact Study should consider the cumulative effect of a proliferation of utility infrastructure on this fragile and important ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Stock & David J. Campagna

CAPX2020 Proposed Alternate Segment for Preferred Route