



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: March 8, 2010

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

In the Matter of the Xcel Energy Applications for a 161 kV High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) Route Permit and a Certificate of Need (CN) for the Pleasant Valley to Byron Transmission Line Project in Dodge, Olmsted and Mower Counties.

PUC Docket Numbers: E002/TL-09-1315 and CN-08-992

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security (OES) will conduct public information and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping meetings, at the times and location listed below, on the route permit and certificate of need applications by Xcel Energy to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for the proposed Pleasant Valley to Byron 161 kV Transmission Project (Project) in Dodge, Olmsted and Mower counties. The Commission has accepted these applications as complete. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the project and to identify issues and route alternatives to study in an EIS that will be prepared by the OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

Thursday, March 25, 2010 – 2:30 p.m.* and 6:30 p.m.**

**American Legion - Byron
505 Frontage Road
Byron, MN 55920-1275**

* An open house will begin at 2:00 p.m.: the information meeting begins at 2:30 p.m.

** An open house will begin at 6:00 p.m.: the information meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

The public information meetings will follow an open house format until the stated time, when EFP staff will give a presentation about the state's high voltage transmission line full permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public can participate. The applicant will have representatives at the public meetings who can answer general questions about the proposed project. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, present comments, and propose issues, impacts and alternatives to be studied in the EIS.

Review copies of the route permit application, a flow chart depicting the full permitting process, and comment forms will be available at the public information meeting. Each meeting will offer the same process and information, so interested persons need attend only one of the meetings.

Project Description

Xcel Energy is submitting this Application to construct and operate a new 161 kV high voltage transmission line (HVTL) between an existing substation in Pleasant Valley township, Mower County, to an existing substation in the city of Byron, Olmsted County. The applicant's preferred route would be located primarily in Mower and Dodge counties, and the alternative route would be located in Mower and Olmsted counties.

The proposed 18-mile line will be constructed on single-pole, weathering steel, brace-post type structures. The height of the poles will range from 70 to 90 feet, with the spans between poles ranging from 400 to 650 feet. The typical right-of-way width for the transmission line is 80 feet.

Construction of the Project is proposed to begin in the first quarter of 2011 and be completed and the line in-service by fourth quarter 2011.

Review Process

Two separate Commission approvals are required to build the Pleasant Valley to Byron 161 kV Transmission Line Project. First, the Applicant must obtain a Certificate of Need under Minnesota Statute 216B.243. Second, a Route Permit for a high voltage transmission line under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E is also required. The two applications were filed by Xcel Energy on December 3, 2009. The route permit application was accepted as complete by the Commission on February 9, 2010. The certificate of need application was accepted as complete on February 18, 2010.

OES EFP Review

The OES EFP unit is responsible for conducting public meetings and environmental review for the CN Application under Minnesota Rule 7849.1200. OES EFP normally prepares an Environmental Report (ER) prior to the Commission's determination of need for an HVTL Project. An ER considers size, type, timing, voltage and system configurations and general environmental impacts of a project.

The OES EFP unit is also responsible for conducting the public participation process for the Route Permit Application. Environmental review for an HVTL project of the size of this Project requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In this Project, the Director of the Office of Energy Security has elected to combine environmental review for the two applications. An EIS (in lieu of an ER) will be prepared as provided for under Minn. Rule 7849.1900, supd. 2. The EIS will still include an analysis of alternatives as required Minn. Rule 7849.1200.

Public Hearing

After completion of the EIS, a public hearing on the Applications will be held; it will be presided over by an Administrative Law Judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings. At least part of the hearing will be a contested case hearing on the Route Application. Notice of the public hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list with OES. Persons interested in adding their names to this mailing list should contact the OES EFP project manager or register on the Commission webpage cited below.

Upon completion of the public participation and hearing process, the records compiled in each proceeding will be presented to the Commission for final decisions on the Applications.

Minnesota Statutes and Rules governing the process are available on the following website:

<http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>

Eminent Domain

If issued a site permit by the Commission, Xcel Energy may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minnesota Stat. 216E.12.

Project Documents

A more detailed explanation of the proposed project is contained in the Xcel Energy certificate of need and route permit applications. An electronic version of the route permit application and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the PUC website at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25695>

or on eDockets by entering “09” and “1315” (Route) or “08” and “992” (CN) at:

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>

The Route Permit and CN application are also available at public libraries in the cities listed below:

Rochester Public Library 101 2 nd Street Southeast Rochester, MN 55904-3776	Kasson Public Library 16 1 st Avenue Northwest Kasson, MN 55944-1471
Stewartville Public Library 110 2 nd Street SE Stewartville, MN 55976	

Persons interested in adding their names to the project mailing list should contact the OES project manager or public advisor, or register online at the above PUC site.

Public Comments

Comments on the scope of the EIS to be prepared on this project will be accepted until **4:30 p.m. on April 8, 2010**. Comments may be submitted by letter, email, fax, or directly on line at the PUC website (see above). Please include docket number “TL-09-1315” on your comments.

Project Contacts

To submit comments, ask questions or seek further information about this project please contact:

Matthew Langan, State Permit Manager
(651) 296-2096
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Deborah Pile, Public Advisor
(651) 297-2375
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Energy Facility Permitting
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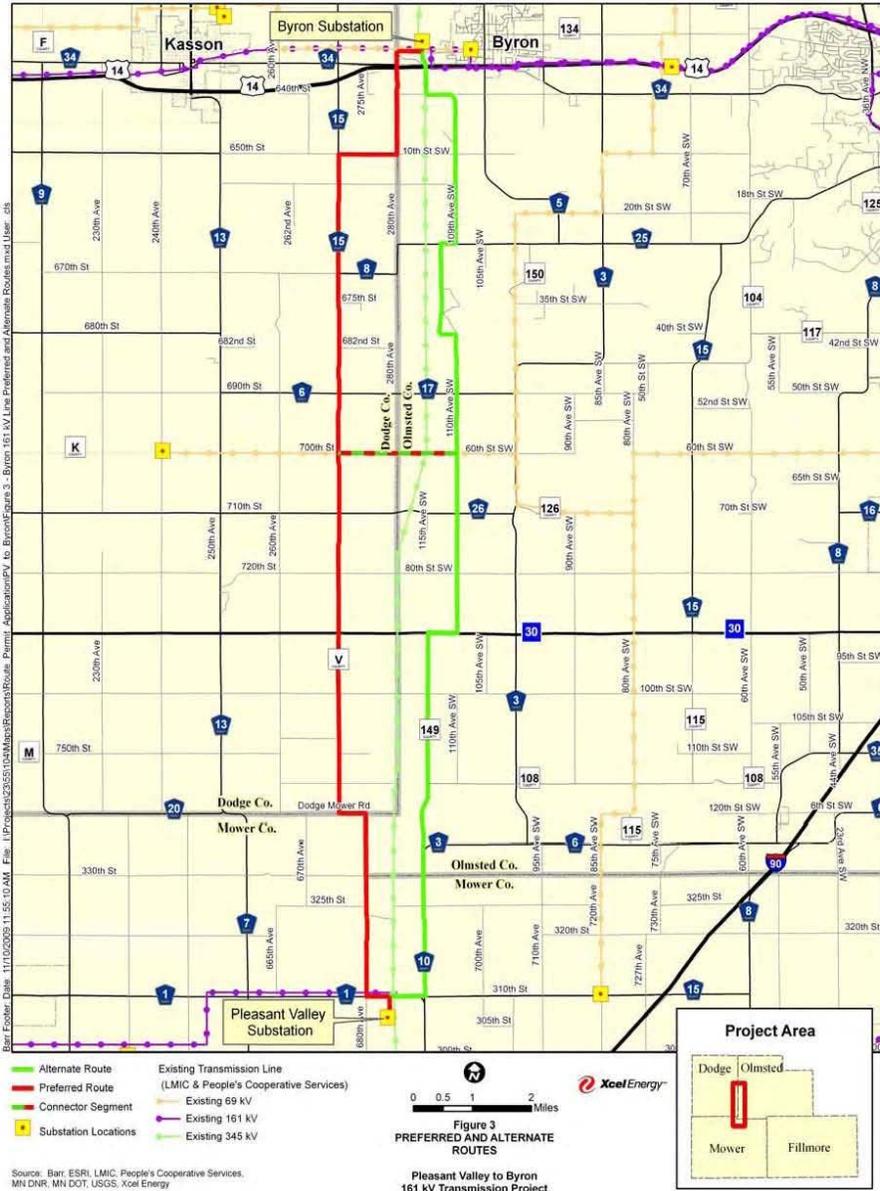
Commission Public Advisor
(Certificate of Need)
Bret Eknes
651-201-2236
bret.eknes@state.mn.us

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E., Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

Questions about the Pleasant Valley to Byron 161 kV Transmission Line Project can also be directed to the Applicant by contacting Mr. Tom Hillstrom at 1-800-238-7968.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio tape) by calling 651- 201-2202 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY relay service).

General View of the Proposed Project



December 3, 2009