



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: April 19, 2010

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV Transmission Line Project

PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-09-1448

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 locations listed below on the route permit application by Xcel Energy to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for the proposed Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV Transmission Line Project (Project). The purpose of the meetings is to provide project information and to identify issues and route alternatives to study in an EIS that will be prepared by OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

Meetings are at **1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.** at each venue.
Each meeting will present the same information and opportunity for public discussion, so you need attend only one meeting.

<p>May 4, 2010 Plainview American Legion 215 3rd Street SW</p>	<p>May 5, 2010 Pine Island American Legion 108 1st Avenue SE</p>	<p>May 6, 2010 Cannon Falls Grandpa's Event Center 31846 65th Avenue</p>
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During the meetings, EFP staff will give a presentation about the state's high voltage transmission line permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public may be involved. 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 route alternatives to be studied in the EIS.

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

The OES will accept written comments on the scope of the EIS until May 20, 2010. Please include PUC Docket No. TL-09-1448 on your comments. Comments should be mailed, emailed, or faxed to:

Matthew Langan
State Permit Manager
Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101-2198
Fax: 651-297-7891
matthew.langan@state.mn.us

Comments may also be submitted on the Commission's energy facility permitting website:
<http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us>.

Project Description. Xcel Energy, on behalf of itself and regional utilities that are part of the CapX2020 initiative, is proposing to construct and operate a new 345 kV high voltage transmission line (HVTL), approximately 90 miles in length in Minnesota, connecting an existing substation near Hampton, Minn. to a proposed North Rochester Substation between Zumbrota and Pine Island, Minn., and continuing eastward to cross the Mississippi River near Kellogg, Minn. The line would continue in Wisconsin an additional 50 miles to a new substation in the La Crosse, Wis. area. In addition, the project includes a new 161 kV line, approximately 15 miles in length, between the proposed North Rochester Substation and the existing North Hills Substation in northwest Rochester.

The applicant proposes using single-pole, double-circuit capable, self-weathering steel structures that will range in height between 130 and 175 feet. The span length between structures will range between 600 and 1,000 feet depending on site-specific considerations. The proposed line will be built using double-circuit capable poles per the Commission's Certificate of Need (CN) order for this project. Only one 345 kV circuit will be installed for this project; the second position will be left available for a future additional circuit. The right-of-way for the proposed 345 kV line will generally be 150 feet.

Project construction is expected to begin in 2012; the project is expected to be completed and in service by the third quarter of 2015.

Minnesota Review. Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. 216E), a route permit from the Commission is required to build a high voltage transmission line. A route permit application for the project was filed by Xcel Energy on January 19, 2010. The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on March 9, 2010.

HVTL route permit applications are subject to environmental review, which is conducted by EFP staff on behalf of the Commission (Minn. Rules 7850). For this project, EFP staff will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). The EIS contains information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and examines mitigating measures for anticipated impacts. To focus the content or "scope" of the EIS, EFP staff conducts public meetings to gather comments and suggestions on the proposed project.

Upon completion of the draft EIS, it will be issued for public review and comment, including public meetings. Substantive comments on the draft EIS will be responded to and included in a final EIS. Concurrent with development of the final EIS, public hearings will be held, presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ). Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak at the hearings, present evidence, ask questions and submit comments. The ALJ will submit a report to the Commission containing findings, conclusions, and a recommendation on the route permit for the proposed transmission line. A decision on routing will be issued by the Commission in early- to mid-2011.

Notice of the public meetings and public hearings will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the OES project mailing list. Additional information on the route permitting process is available on the Commission's energy facility permitting website: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>.

Wisconsin and Federal Review. That portion of the proposed 345 kV transmission line in Wisconsin (from approximately Alma, Wis. to La Crosse, Wis.) will be reviewed by the Wisconsin Public Services Commission (WPSC). Xcel Energy will submit a permit application to the WPSC in late-summer 2010, initiating the State of Wisconsin's review process. In addition to state review, the proposed 345 kV transmission line is subject to federal environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is serving as the lead agency for this review. RUS, in cooperation with other federal agencies, is preparing a federal EIS for the entire project as proposed in both states (Minnesota and Wisconsin). The federal EIS will guide federal agencies in making determinations on permits and approvals necessary for the project. RUS conducted scoping meetings for the federal EIS June 16-25, 2009, in the project area.

Though the Wisconsin and federal review of the proposed 345 kV transmission are independent of Minnesota's review of the project, state and federal agencies are coordinating timelines and sharing information as appropriate to aid public participation and development of a thorough record for decision-making entities.

Eminent Domain. If issued a route permit by the Commission, the applicant may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minnesota Statute 216E.12.

Project Contacts. If you have questions or if you would like further information about this project please contact:

Matt Langan, State Permit Manager
(651) 296-2096
Toll free: 800-657-3794
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Raymond Kirsch, Public Advisor
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raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us

Persons interested in adding their names to the project mailing list should contact the OES state permit manager or public advisor, or register online at: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/#MailingLists>.

Project Documents. A more detailed explanation of the proposed project is contained in the Xcel Energy route permit application. An electronic version of the application and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the Commission website at: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25731>, and on the Department of Commerce’s eDockets website at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year “09” and the number “1448”).

Printed copies of the route permit application are available for public review at:

Cannon Falls Library

306 West Mill Street
Cannon Falls, MN 55009
507-263-2804

La Crescent Public Library

321 Main Street
La Crescent, MN 55947
507-895-4047

St. Charles Public Library

125 West 11th Street
St. Charles, MN 55927
507-932-3227

Zumbrota Public Library

100 West Avenue
Zumbrota, MN 55992
507-732-5211

Blair-Preston Library

122 Urberg Street
Blair, WI 54616
608-989-2502

Shirley M. Wright Memorial Library

11455 Fremont Street
Trempealeau, WI 54650
608-534-6197

Hokah Public Library

57 Main Street
Hokah, MN 55941
507-894-266

Plainview Public Library

115 SE 3rd Street
Pine Island, MN 55963
507-534-3425

Van Horn Public Library

115 SE 3rd Street
Pine Island, MN 55963
507-356-8558

Alma Public Library

312 North Main Street
Alma, WI 54610
608-685-3823

Campbell Library

2219 Bainbridge Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
608-783-0052

La Crosse Public Library

800 Main Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-789-7109

Kenyon Public Library

709 2nd Street
Kenyon, MN 55946
507-789-6821

Rochester Public Library

101 2nd Street SE
Rochester, MN 55963
507-328-2309

Winona Public Library

151 West 5th Street
Winona, MN 55987
507-452-4582

Arcadia Public Library

406 East Main Street
Arcadia, WI 54612
608-323-7505

Galesville Public Library

16787 South Main Street
Galesville, WI 54630
608-582-2552

Onalaska Public Library

741 Oak Avenue South
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-781-9568

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).

