



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: March 21, 2011

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

**In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for the
Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV and 161 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) has released the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV and 161 kV transmission line project. OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff will hold public information meetings to provide opportunities for public comment on the DEIS.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS

Meetings will be held at **1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.** at each venue. Each meeting will offer the same information and opportunity to comment, so interested persons need attend only one of the meetings.

<p>April 12, 2011 Plainview American Legion 215 3rd Street SW</p>	<p>April 13, 2011 Pine Island American Legion 108 1st Avenue SE</p>	<p>April 14, 2011 Cannon Falls High School Auditorium 820 E Minnesota Street</p>
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OES staff will make a brief presentation at each meeting. Following the presentation, members of the public will have opportunity to provide comments on the DEIS.

The OES will accept written comments on the DEIS through **Friday, April 29, 2011**. 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 – Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500 | St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101
Fax: 651-297-7891 | matthew.langan@state.mn.us

Comments can also be submitted electronically at: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us>

OES EFP will respond to the timely, substantive comments received on the DEIS and prepare a final EIS for the project.

DEIS Availability. Review copies of the DEIS, as well as a limited number of electronic copies (on CD), will be available at the public information meetings.

The DEIS may be viewed at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission’s energy facility permitting website: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25731>, and on eDockets at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year “09” and number “1448”).

Print copies of the DEIS are available for viewing at these public libraries:

Cannon Falls Library 306 West Mill Street Cannon Falls, MN 55009 507-263-2804	Northfield Public Library 210 Washington Street Northfield, MN 55057 507-645-6606	Kenyon Public Library 709 2nd Street Kenyon, MN 55946 507-789-6821
Zumbrota Public Library 100 West Avenue Zumbrota, MN 55992 507-732-5211	Plainview Public Library 115 SE 3rd Street Plainview, MN 55963 507-534-3425	Rochester Public Library 101 2nd Street SE Rochester, MN 55963 507-328-2309
Van Horn Public Library 115 SE 3rd Street Pine Island, MN 55963 507-356-8558	Dakota County Library 508 3rd Street Farmington, MN 55024 651-438-0250	Alma Public Library 312 N Main St Alma, WI 54610 608-685-3823
Wabasha City Library 168 Allegheny Avenue Wabasha, MN 55981 651-565-3927		

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 proposed 345 kV transmission line would be constructed primarily with single-pole steel structures, ranging in height from 130 to 175 feet, with an average span of 1,000 feet between poles. The structures would be “double circuit capable,” meaning that a second 345 kV circuit could be placed on the structures in the future if warranted. The typical right-of-way (ROW) for the 345 kV transmission line would be 150 feet.

The proposed 161 kV transmission line would be constructed primarily with single-pole steel structures, ranging in height from 70 to 105 feet, with an average span of 400 to 700 feet between poles. The typical ROW for the 161 kV transmission line would be 80 feet.

The proposed project includes construction of a new substation, in an area between Zumbrota and Pine Island, Minnesota, and modifications at two existing substations. The new “North Rochester Substation” would require the acquisition and development of 40 acres for substation infrastructure. Project construction is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2012 and be completed and in service by the fourth quarter of 2015.

Environmental Review. To construct and operate the proposed project, Xcel Energy must obtain a route permit from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission). As part of the route permitting process, OES EFP staff prepares an environmental impact statement. Because this project spans the Minnesota-Wisconsin border, it is important to note that this DEIS evaluates only that portion of the project within the state of Minnesota.

Prior to beginning work on the DEIS, EFP staff sought comments from the public on the issues and route alternatives that should be evaluated in the EIS and, ultimately, considered by the Commission in their route permitting decision. EFP staff sought comments through two approaches: a public scoping comment period and two advisory task forces. Based on the comments received, the Director of OES finalized the scope of this EIS in a scoping decision dated August 6, 2010. Included in the scoping decision were 62 alternative route segments to be evaluated in the EIS in addition to the routes and options proposed by the applicant. Each of these route alternatives is evaluated in the DEIS using the same criteria and level of detail, and is available for Commission permitting consideration.

An EIS does not advocate or state a preference for a specific route or route segment. An EIS characterizes, analyzes, and compares routes and route segments such that citizens, governmental units, agencies, and the Commission can work from a common set of facts and, where the facts are in dispute, uncertainties.

Public Hearings. Due to the length and capacity of the proposed project, the state permitting process includes a contested case hearing. Contested case hearings are presided over by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. The final EIS, once published, will be entered into the hearing record. Hearings will be held in locations along the proposed routes in June 2011. Interested persons will have an opportunity at the hearings to ask questions about the proposed project, provide comments, submit evidence, and advocate for the routes and route segments that they believe are most appropriate for the project. Notice of the public hearings will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who have registered their names on the project mailing list with EFP. Evidentiary hearings will be held in St. Paul in June 2011. After the hearings, the ALJ will submit a report to the Commission containing findings of fact, conclusions, and a recommendation on a route permit for the proposed project.

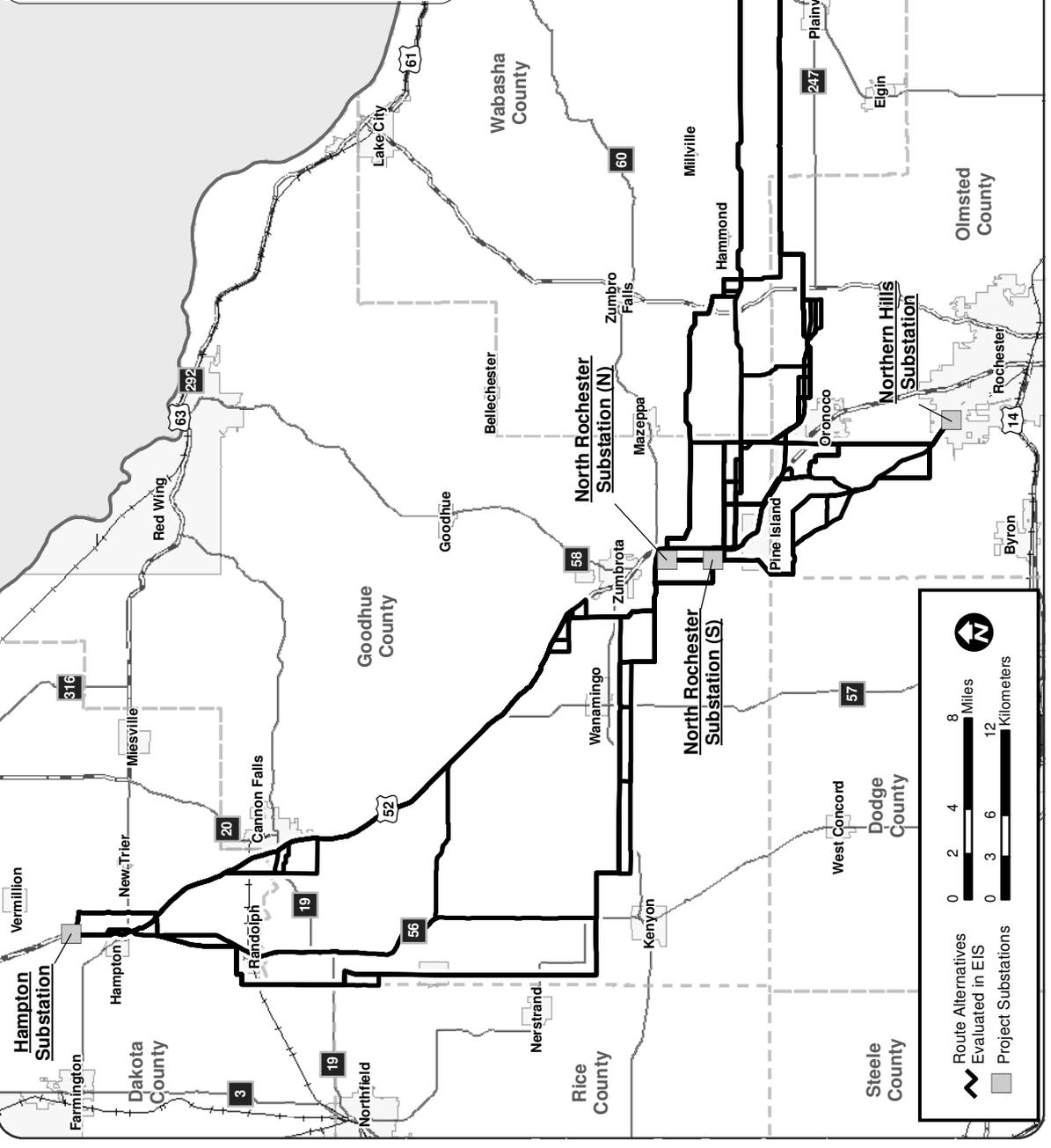
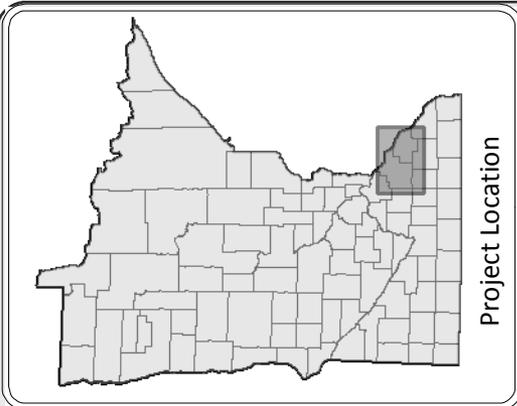
Project Contacts. If you have questions or if you would like further information about this project please contact:

State Permit Manager
Matthew Langan
651-296-2096
matthew.langan@state.mn.us

Public Advisor
Raymond Kirsch
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raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us

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

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651-296-0391 (voice.) Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1-800-627-3529 or by dialing 711.









 Route Alternatives Evaluated in EIS


 Project Substations