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PUBLIC COMMENTS - PLAINVIEW - 1:30 - MAY 4, 2010

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

May 4, 2010

American Legion
215 3rd Street SW
Plainview, Minnesota

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1 MR. LANGAN: So, with that, I'd like to
2 turn it over to you, if you have any questions
3 and/or comments that you want to share.

4 What I'll ask that you do is come up to
5 the microphone here and present those comments.
6 When you do, state your name and spell it for the
7 court reporter. And if anybody does have a question
8 or comment and they're not able to come up to the
9 microphone, that's fine, we also can send somebody
10 back to you with the cordless mic here.

11 Ray, did we have anyone sign up as a
12 speaker?

13 MR. KIRSCH: No.

14 MR. LANGAN: Okay. In that case, we also
15 can just take a show of hands, you know, just raise
16 your hand and we can pick you up.

17 Okay. In the back of the room.

18 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Carol Overland.
19 Address, P.O. Box 176, Red Wing, Minnesota 55066,
20 representing No CapX 2020 and United Citizens Action
21 Network.

22 What I want to encourage you to do this
23 time is before the DEIS and before scoping, check,
24 before a scoping decision, check out if FAA rules
25 prohibit sites that are proposed or routing that's

1 proposed. Check out whether DOT criteria prohibits
2 that. Check out if there are scenic easements that
3 make a route infeasible. Do that ahead of time.
4 Check out the Fish and Wildlife comments, make sure
5 that that is considered before scoping and the DEIS
6 so that nonfeasible routes are not considered.

7 And everyone, I urge you to get your
8 comments in. And I've got some little handouts in
9 the back that can tell you, give you some ideas for
10 the criteria listed so you can make your comments
11 that will be considered here.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Other questions
14 or comments? Please.

15 MR. ROLAND WOOD: My name is Roland Wood,
16 R-O-L-A-N-D, W-O-O-D. I live just east of Plainview
17 here, by the substation that goes through northeast
18 of Plainview.

19 And it will not -- or it does presently
20 go right through my property, about a mile and a
21 half of it, and I was wondering, if the substation,
22 if you go a quarter of a mile north and then go east
23 on the property line between me and my neighbor, or
24 go diagonally across from the substation to the
25 northeast, it would get it farther away from my

1 building site where I presently have a dairy and I
2 think that would help it.

3 I guess probably one better than that is
4 if it would take the alternative route to the north,
5 it looks straighter to me and less problems with
6 that one to me. So...

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. That brought up
8 a good point. As people are either sharing comments
9 today or sharing them in writing, be as specific as
10 possible. If you're suggesting an alternate route
11 segment or an alternate route, you were great about
12 that, thanks, to be as specific as possible, use
13 road names or section lines or help us orient where
14 your comments are located. And especially in the
15 case where you're suggesting a route segment, it
16 helps us out in our review of the scoping comments.

17 Yes, sir.

18 MR. HERBERT WURST: Can I speak?

19 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

20 MR. HERBERT WURST: I'm Herb Wurst, and
21 my son and I have property northwest of Plainview in
22 Elgin Township, Section 2.

23 COURT REPORTER: Spell your name, please.

24 MR. HERBERT WURST: H-E-R-B-E-R-T,
25 W-U-R-S-T. And my son's name is Kraig, with a K,

1 K-R-A-I-G.

2 And we have two problems there on the
3 main line that you're planning. One is I have an
4 airport runway within a quarter of a mile and it'll
5 interfere with landing and takeoff patterns. And
6 I'm sure the FAA will make us close the airport if
7 this goes through. And I would be willing to do
8 that if I'm compensated properly.

9 And my other property, and son's
10 property, the line goes right through within 100
11 feet of the well and building site and we were
12 planning a new house there in the next couple years,
13 so that'll have to be changed. And we could change
14 it if, like I say, we're compensated for it.

15 Otherwise, we're okay with it.

16 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

17 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: Well, my name is
18 Steve Hackman, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, Hackman,
19 H-A-C-K-M-A-N. And, like I said, I live in Mazeppa
20 Township.

21 And I guess why I'm here today is to
22 bring up some of the concerns about the alternate
23 route. And I'm just looking through the factors
24 here, and I don't even know where to start, there's
25 so many.

1 However, what I would like to touch on
2 first is the linear features. I live, I guess if
3 you have a map in front of you, that little bulge
4 that goes to the north just south of Mazeppa, if it
5 helps you at all. Yeah, it would be the northern
6 alternative route and you can see just that little
7 bulge as it gets in to Wabasha.

8 And my concern, one of the first
9 concerns, because it would have to do with so many
10 factors, aesthetics, product reliability, that
11 particular half mile -- and I'm only going to speak
12 on that half mile because that's what I know, that's
13 where I've lived for 20 years. That particular
14 section is extremely high ground. In fact, my wife
15 and I watch fireworks from there and we can see
16 Red Wing, Kenyon, Wanamingo, so it is not -- I just
17 don't think it is conducive for an electrical line
18 of this magnitude.

19 Plus, that entire area is the Zumbro
20 River flowage. And I brought with me today, from
21 the Department of Agriculture, my land is all
22 considered highly erodible land, so if you want to
23 look at this, that would be great.

24 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

25 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: This is my home.

1 Basically, you're on the river flowage. We're right
2 on the edge of where the flat land drops into the
3 Zumbro River flowage. So, again, we're bringing in
4 water quality issues. And I know there's other
5 people that are going to speak on this route, so
6 just listen to them, because otherwise I could talk
7 all day, too, I guess, even though I don't want to.

8 My other point. Sinkholes. We did a
9 native prairie planting approximately 100 yards
10 north of where the line was to cross my driveway.
11 We went out two years later and there was a sinkhole
12 the size that you could drive a tractor into. So,
13 my question or comment would be what if there was a
14 superstructure in that area? Because the entire
15 area is moving towards the Zumbro River. And I
16 just -- I guess my point today, that I don't think
17 this is the best route to go.

18 And prior to living on this farm I worked
19 for Northwest in their avionics department, and one
20 thing we learned -- prior to that I was in the Air
21 Force. One thing we did, everything we did, we
22 followed the manufacturer's procedure. Boeing, Air
23 Bus, Lockheed, whoever. And I think this has been
24 produced and a lot of time has been put into it and
25 I think they've probably looked at these factors,

1 and I know they did, so I'm hoping maybe common
2 sense would say to follow their recommendations.
3 'Cause they look for the most practical, most
4 economic for us ratepayers, stockholders, whatever
5 the deal is, to do this project right.

6 I guess if somebody else wants to talk
7 they can certainly kick me out of here but, like I
8 said, I can go on and on.

9 Aesthetics, I would urge you when you go
10 home to take Highway 60, go through Mazeppa, get off
11 the main road and see exactly what we're dealing
12 with here. It's very rolling, scenic property
13 that'll be lost forever. It's a natural resource
14 that I don't think we should just throw away.

15 So, that's a good start. I'll probably
16 talk to you again.

17 MR. LANGAN: Thanks for that. And if
18 there is more that you want to share, you can
19 certainly write it down and send it in to us as
20 well, if there was more that you wanted to comment
21 on, but you're being courteous to the other folks,
22 too, I understand. Thank you.

23 Okay. Other comments? Are there any
24 questions that folks have? And, again, it can
25 either be a question about the project proposal

1 itself or our review process, either the point we're
2 at now or where we're going with it, it's all fair
3 game.

4 MR. HERBERT WURST: How come there was
5 this 1,000-foot wide thing put on the map if you're
6 only going to use 150 feet or so?

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that question.
8 And it's something that I'm going to remember to
9 include in my presentation tonight.

10 The route, we're talking about a route
11 permit, okay, the route has a specific definition
12 and it's a specific term. And a route has a width
13 to it, okay, a route doesn't just mean here's where
14 we're going to route the line, it has a width. That
15 width actually can be up to a mile and a quarter by
16 state law.

17 In this case, the Applicant has requested
18 a route width of 1,000 feet, as you were indicating.
19 The reason that they -- why there is a route width
20 is that that is actually what the Public Utilities
21 Commission in the end would approve, if it stood as
22 it was today, that 1,000-foot route would be
23 approved. Within that, within that 1,000-foot
24 route, a 150-foot -- Tom, is that correct, is it
25 basically 150 feet for most of the route?

1 MR. HILLSTROM: Yep.

2 MR. LANGAN: A 150-foot right-of-way
3 would be necessary for the utility to construct and
4 maintain that transmission line route. So when the
5 towers go up and the line is strung, there would be
6 a 150-foot right-of-way somewhere within that 1,000
7 foot route.

8 Now, it's intentional that that has a
9 specific width to it. And the reason for that is is
10 that after we get done with our permitting process
11 or the Public Utilities Commission gets done with
12 their permitting process, there's a whole host of
13 other permitting, what we sometimes call downstream
14 permitting. But whether there are other state lands
15 out there and state permits that the utility will
16 need to apply for, there are local county permits
17 that they need to apply. What the 1,000-foot route
18 width allows them to do is work with those other
19 permitting agencies, as well as the landowners, to
20 establish where within that 1,000-foot route, where
21 within that should that 150-foot right-of-way go.
22 So there's flexibility built into what ends up
23 getting approved in the end.

24 Does that answer your question? Thank
25 you for asking that.

1 In the back of the room we had someone?
2 That's you, Suzanne.

3 MS. SUZANNE ROHLFING: Okay. My name is
4 Suzanne Rohlfing, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, R-O-H-L-F-I-N-G. I
5 live in Rochester, Minnesota, 2310 15th Avenue
6 Northwest.

7 I have a question with regard to the
8 routing process and MnDOT. And my question is, with
9 the two years of preparation that's been going on by
10 itself on the routes that are proposed now, both the
11 preferred and the alternate, is MnDOT -- has it been
12 a coordinated effort where there are no surprises,
13 or will this be public record showing us that
14 Minnesota Department of Transportation is in
15 agreement with easements, et cetera, for the
16 proposed routes?

17 MR. LANGAN: I can answer that from the
18 state's point of view and how we involve MnDOT and
19 other state agencies in our review process. I don't
20 know if there's any background information that
21 would be worth sharing, Tom, I'll give you a crack
22 at that, too.

23 But in our permitting process we work
24 closely with the other state agencies and so that
25 would include MnDOT, it would include DNR, it would

1 include Department of Agriculture, the whole suite
2 of other state agencies. And, actually, they are
3 required to participate in our process and at the
4 end of the process be able to say that the project
5 as proposed is permitable, based on the permits that
6 they hold, they're all permit holders, certainly
7 MnDOT, DNR is another one, and so they need to be
8 able to have the information in that environmental
9 document such that they can understand whether the
10 proposed project is a permitable one.

11 So we intend -- we have been working with
12 MnDOT up till now, and they are involved in this
13 very scoping process that we're -- that is open
14 right now, that we're out here talking to you folks
15 today, they too will send in their comments by
16 May 20th. So if MnDOT has an issue with what
17 ultimately was proposed here, we're going to hear
18 from them, and they will be suggesting issues for us
19 to consider in our examination. They could suggest
20 alternate routes or alternate route segments, and if
21 there is a specific issue they're on board and will
22 share that in their written comments.

23 Tom, anything to add to that?

24 MR. HILLSTROM: A little bit, yeah.

25 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

1 MR. HILLSTROM: And I can just share a
2 little bit about what we've heard from MnDOT up to
3 this point. We have met with them a few times. And
4 their primary concern on our project is Highway 52.
5 The MnDOT vision of Highway 52 between Rochester and
6 the Twin Cities is one more of a freeway than a
7 highway, and that means that all the intersections
8 where -- or driveways that currently meet Highway 52
9 at grade, they see those as being converted to more
10 interchanges. And it's a safety concern. The
11 traffic is high enough that they would like to see
12 that stretch of highway turned into a freeway. And
13 that's kind of a long-term vision and they have
14 various projects lined up to get to that vision.
15 Some of them are near term, some of them are very
16 far out.

17 We've identified the project that they
18 know most about in our permit application. The two
19 interchange projects that they have, that were --
20 that are most near term for them, there's one
21 interchange at Elk Run just south of Pine Island,
22 there's another interchange in Cannon Falls, and we
23 actually have a pretty good idea of where the roads
24 will be built. So those are two examples of where
25 we can design the route that accommodates their

1 projects.

2 In other cases there are interchanges
3 that, you know, maybe someday, and there's no design
4 done for them, in those cases we will design our
5 route to best avoid the future interchange just
6 based on the existing information. But always, in
7 working with MnDOT, it's one of adjusting the
8 alignment to accommodate MnDOT's future plans.

9 We've not heard from them that they would
10 be -- that they would have an opinion that a route
11 going parallel to the highway would not be
12 permissible. It's always working with them to best
13 accommodate their future plans. So there's more
14 coordination to do, but they've not said that any of
15 our route segments are not feasible or not
16 permissible.

17 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

18 MS. KIA HACKMAN: I'm a little shorter.
19 My name is Kia Hackman K-I-A, H-A-C-K-M-A-N.

20 I have a question -- well, kind of a
21 question, statement, on erosion, I have an erosion
22 issue. There's a lot of farmland, agriculture
23 around where we live, we got 90-some acres, and I
24 have a neighbor right next to us and you guys want
25 to go right across that, we're on the alternate

1 route in Mazeppa. And he tore out some trees to put
2 three more rows of corn and we had a natural
3 disaster, we had six-foot ruts. I mean, 6 foot. We
4 walked along there and if somebody would have fell
5 in there you would have probably killed yourself.

6 So, if you're going to go through these
7 hills, we adjoin a ski hill, and you're going to
8 take out a 150 swath acre, and you say for the
9 hillside you do the short squatty ones, so that
10 would be 300 feet. I mean, if you're going to take
11 out all those trees, 'cause it's one great big huge
12 woodland, and what's going to happen to all that? I
13 mean, do you plant something there so the stuff
14 doesn't erode? How is that going to be fixed?

15 MR. LANGAN: Do you want to talk about
16 that, the engineering aspects?

17 MR. HILLSTROM: Sure. That is a very
18 good point. And in cases where a route would be
19 built along steep lands, erosion is a very big
20 concern.

21 MS. KIA HACKMAN: It's huge, we've seen
22 it firsthand.

23 MR. HILLSTROM: And, you know, it's
24 probably inevitable on a project like this that
25 there will be some steep slopes that would be

1 crossed and trees will be removed from those steep
2 slopes. Before we can start construction we need to
3 apply for like what Matt said, downstream permits.
4 One of those downstream permits is what they call a
5 stormwater protection, pollution protection plan,
6 SWPPP. And that plan has to lay out all of the
7 measures that we use to control erosion. And those
8 measures can be, for instance, prompt reseeding of
9 areas that are disturbed, there's straw fabric,
10 reinforced straw fabric that's laid down on steep
11 slopes over the seed to hold the soil in place,
12 there's hay bales and erosion control fabric that
13 can be placed in areas where the flow tends to
14 concentrate. So we have a lot of measures available
15 to us to control the erosion, but that is a very
16 good comment, that's a big concern of ours as we
17 move into construction.

18 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Mr. Hackman again.
19 What we'll do is we'll go here and then we'll go to
20 Suzanne and then go forward. Go ahead.

21 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: Me?

22 MR. LANGAN: Yeah, please.

23 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: You can tell I like
24 being here so much. But a little bit on my wife's
25 point. I guess, as I showed you, the majority of

1 the alternate route is flowing into the Zumbro
2 River. So I think what you'll find -- and I was
3 just at the ag office today in Wabasha -- I think
4 what you'll find is the majority of that line is
5 highly erodible, and that's what the HEL stands for.

6 So, I guess my point is, instead of
7 mitigation, maybe avoidance would be the best
8 option. As looked at on a whole. Because there are
9 so many other issues, and I think I'll just let them
10 come up, but I want to go back a little bit on the
11 linear feature as far as the wind.

12 In, let's see, 1994, NSP at the time, I
13 believe it was, built a three-phase line down the
14 exact right-of-way on this road that I live on. And
15 in May of '96 the winds came and it blew it down.
16 And I just brought pictures of that because I feel,
17 if I was a movie director I would call it
18 foreshadowing, I am not, I just call it good common
19 sense.

20 And I spoke with Grant on this the other
21 day and he said there is mitigation, and I believe
22 him, he's a trained professional, this is what they
23 do, but I was also a trained professional and I know
24 it's always easier to avoid it than to mitigate it.
25 So I'd like that considered, too. And if you want

1 to look at these, they're pretty good pictures.

2 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Okay. We're
3 going to go to Suzanne. Please.

4 MS. SUZANNE ROHLFING: Suzanne Rohlfing
5 again.

6 Please help me. Excuse me for not
7 understanding clearly. But can you just tell me
8 then that MnDOT's comments are not made yet, but by
9 May 20th something will be submitted and that will
10 be available to the public for review during the
11 DEIS phase?

12 MR. LANGAN: Yes. We anticipate that
13 we'll receive comments from MnDOT, although it may
14 be that they don't, they're not forced to provide
15 comments. But, yeah, we anticipate that MnDOT, we
16 sent all of the materials to their environmental
17 review staff and all of their staff that review
18 these projects. They're very frequent participants
19 in route permitting processes and they have the same
20 review parameters that you all have and we're asking
21 for comments by May 20th, they got notice on the
22 same day that you did.

23 And they -- we work closely with their
24 technical representatives to the Environmental
25 Quality Board and they have a team of people that

1 review these proposals and provide their comments to
2 us. And, again, we're just at the scoping phase
3 now, but where that's going to be, should there be
4 other routes considered or should there be issues
5 and impacts, what are their issues and impacts that
6 they'd like us to study in the environmental review
7 document.

8 Your other question was whether that
9 would be public information. It is public
10 information. What we'll do is prepare a summary of
11 comments through the scoping process, and that will
12 be available, so you will see MnDOT's comments on
13 the transportation issues, on the road rights-of-way
14 issues available, we'll have that on our website,
15 we'll have that on the eDockets site. And so, yes,
16 that will be available. And then those comments
17 will be responded to -- those comments will be
18 addressed in that draft environmental impact
19 statement.

20 Thanks for being patient.

21 MS. SHERONNE MULRY: My name is Sheronne,
22 that's S-H-E-R-O-N-N-E, if you call me Sheronne you
23 owe me a buck. The last name is Mulry, M-U-L-R-Y.

24 The hat I'm wearing today is for the
25 Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission. For

1 those of you that are maybe aware, not aware,
2 there's a National Scenic Byway that consists of the
3 road from -- the roads from Itasca all the way down
4 to the Gulf of Mexico. But I have a little cheat
5 sheet here 'cause I get nervous talking in front of
6 microphones.

7 So, the mission of the Mississippi River
8 Parkway Commission of Minnesota is to promote,
9 preserve and enhance the resources of the
10 Mississippi River Valley and to develop the highways
11 and amenities of the Great River Road. Most of you
12 should be familiar, if you've driven Highway 61 on
13 the Minnesota side, the green pilots wheel signs,
14 and on the Wisconsin, on 35, the green pilots wheel
15 signs, that's the Great River Road and the Parkway
16 Commission.

17 The Commission in Minnesota includes two
18 members of the house of representatives, Sheldon
19 Johnson, Senator -- or, you know, Sheldon Johnson
20 and Sandy Pappas. It also includes two members of
21 the senate, Senator Senjem is a member. One member
22 appointed by each of the following state agencies,
23 the DNR, the DOT, the Department of Ag, Tourism and
24 the Minnesota Historical Society. And I'm one of
25 the members established in statute that was elected

1 at large that consists of the other 14.

2 The Minnesota MRPC is part of the larger
3 10-state national group. One of the only and the
4 oldest organizations whose work focuses on the
5 Mississippi River states on the well-being of the
6 river, its amenities and byway travelers. So I
7 represent the stakeholders from Hastings to the Iowa
8 border. And those stakeholders are government
9 entities, nonprofits and citizens along the river.

10 So, as a person that lives -- I'm a
11 prairie dog between Kellogg and Wabasha, my concerns
12 are three of my favorite rivers are in the watershed
13 that's involved in this project. First of all, our
14 big, beautiful, third largest river in the world,
15 then the Zumbro and then the Whitewater.

16 So, thank you.

17 MR. LANGAN: Thank you, Sheronne.

18 MS. SHERONNE MULRY: Told you. It works
19 every time.

20 MR. LANGAN: Other comments or questions?

21 Yes, sir.

22 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: Well, my name is
23 Steve Hackman still, and I was wondering, all of the
24 study that went into the Alma River crossing, how
25 much study has gone into the Zumbro River study as

1 far as crossing? Because what we have here is
2 basically happening at an existing crossing that I
3 believe it's been dubbed White Bridge Road; is that
4 right? And the northern route or alternative does
5 not have an existing river crossing, so what
6 procedures would you go through to even study the
7 impact? Because we have designated trout streams in
8 that area, we have a small mouth bass catch and
9 release area for the power dam flowing north
10 downstream on that river.

11 So as much as I love the Mississippi, I
12 happen to live closer to the Zumbro and I know the
13 Zumbro a little bit better. I would just hope that
14 we at the Zumbro have as much consideration, or I
15 understand one is federal and there's a lot of other
16 issues, but I guess I'm kind of concerned about the
17 fact that there is no existing crossing on the north
18 route. So would there be any studies on the impact
19 of crossing that river at that point?

20 MR. LANGAN: Yeah, I can answer that
21 portion of the question. Again, if there's some
22 background on how the studies came up by Xcel I'll
23 turn it over to Tom.

24 But in terms of what we'll study on the
25 Zumbro River, we'll study impacts to the surface

1 water, to the fishery, to the recreational use on
2 that river. Expand that back to the riparian area
3 and the forested areas along there, what is the
4 environmental impact there. And likely how this
5 will turn out, we'll probably look at this as a
6 side-by-side comparison. If you're looking at those
7 three proposed crossings, what's the -- what's
8 the -- you know, in the riparian area there's going
9 to be wetland impacts, likely, so we'll look at the
10 wetland impacts, we'll look at the forested
11 vegetation impacts around there, of the three
12 proposed crossings. Same with the fisheries, same
13 with the actual surface water. Can the river be
14 spanned or not in each of the three crossings and
15 what type of impacts associated there.

16 And then after we're done looking at
17 those impacts, what are the mitigation measures for
18 those impacts, are there mitigation measures and are
19 there measures to avoid those impacts altogether.
20 So, certainly, just maybe intuitively, it seems that
21 a brand new corridor may have more impact than where
22 there's an existing crossing of the river. That's
23 not always the case, sometimes it's really a
24 case-by-case basis, depending on the span and the
25 resources in each area. But those, all three of

1 those crossings are something we'll look very
2 closely at in our environmental document.

3 And once we have looked at that, you
4 folks will have a chance to see, to take a look at
5 our study, if there are items in there that we
6 haven't considered or think, you know, we should add
7 to that to supplement the information, that's
8 something we can turn around and supply you with in
9 the final environmental impact statement.

10 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: Yeah. My concern
11 is with the northern crossing for the simple reason
12 I live in that area and I've been through there.
13 And another thing to consider with that, the fact
14 that there is no crossing, on both sides east and
15 west there is large tracks of contiguous woodland.
16 And I guess my concern would be, also, in
17 conjunction with the erosion issue, the
18 fragmentation of that woods itself.

19 Because if you look at the map, and these
20 maps do a pretty good job of showing that, you can
21 see there is multiple farms that come together, of
22 land that was not farmable, that is woods and it's
23 all continuous acreage. And, in fact, it's kind of
24 a joke around Mazeppa, is the bear stories, and I
25 can stand here and say I've seen a bear in Mazeppa

1 like to thank you for attending. Second, I'd like
2 to remind you that you can submit comments in
3 written format, and if you have, while you've been
4 here today, you can actually drop them off in a
5 little comment box we have back there. Or by May
6 20th, by the end of the day, submit those written
7 comments to me either via e-mail, via fax, via
8 postal mail. And in between now and then, if you
9 have any questions, if you're wrestling with how to
10 word something or something pops into your mind that
11 didn't occur to you while you were here this
12 afternoon, just give me a call. Again, my
13 information is on most of the documents back there,
14 my business card is back there, and just feel free
15 and give me a call with any questions that you have
16 as we go along.

17 But, again, thanks everybody for showing
18 up, and I'm sorry we didn't hold this in the park
19 outside, it would have been a better venue.
20 Although, this is very nice, I'm sorry. But it's
21 such a nice day. Anyway, thank you very much.

22 (Meeting concluded at 3:10 p.m.)
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PUBLIC COMMENTS - PLAINVIEW - 6:30 - MAY 4, 2010

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

May 4, 2010

American Legion
215 3rd Street SW
Plainview, Minnesota

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I N D E X - PLAINVIEW - 6:30 - MAY 4, 2010

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1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. So we're prepared to
2 take some comments and questions now. The way we'll
3 do this is we'll ask you to come up and, sorry to
4 put you right on the spot here, and speak right at
5 the microphone. We'll ask you to state your name
6 and spell it for the court reporter.

7 And, again, you know, we're happy to
8 answer questions either on the state review process
9 or the project itself and then we're also happy to
10 receive any comments that you may have this evening.

11 The way we'll run it, we have a few
12 people that have signed up on the speaker
13 registration cards so we'll take those names first.
14 Then we'll open it up to the group and we can just
15 go by a show of hand or raise your hand and we'll
16 call you up to ask your question or provide your
17 comment.

18 But I will ask, I notice that some of the
19 folks here were here earlier today and were able to
20 provide some questions and comments, I'll place the
21 priority on the folks that are here for their first
22 meeting tonight so they can have their questions and
23 comments heard, but we'll certainly get to everybody
24 tonight. And so I'll ask that maybe some of those
25 folks that were able to contribute today to let some

1 new folks get a crack at it, but I promise that
2 we'll get to everybody tonight.

3 Okay. And the first name is Dale
4 Rohlfing.

5 MR. DALE ROHLFING: Thank you,
6 Mr. Langan. I'm Dale Rohlfing, D-A-L-E,
7 R-O-H-L-F-I-N-G.

8 I'd like to read a statement and then
9 present some pictures and the statement after I
10 finish. And I'll hang around for some questions
11 later.

12 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

13 MR. DALE ROHLFING: Okay. I'm here this
14 evening with my wife, Suzanne Rohlfing. And we are
15 writing and speaking tonight about the CapX 2020
16 project and the proposed alternate north route
17 crossing the Zumbro River. So I guess we'll have
18 issues and impacts to present.

19 Our property is called the Rohlfing Raj,
20 which means paradise in Czech. It's a beautiful,
21 50-acre piece of land, which we were able to
22 purchase in 2002. It is our investment for our
23 children and generations to come.

24 It is rural, forested, full of wildlife
25 and located just east of the Zumbro River in Wabasha

1 County, in Section -- or Township 109, Brown Earth,
2 R14W, Section 15. We are planning a residence to
3 enable us to better steward this property and help
4 ensure its natural integrity for generations to
5 come. Those plans are now on hold and will be
6 unattainable if the CapX alternate route is chosen
7 at the Zumbro River crossing.

8 Although we have general concerns about
9 the CapX 2020 transmission line project, we now have
10 more obvious and immediate worries. We will briefly
11 list our concerns and areas that we wish to be
12 studied by the draft environmental impact statement.

13 First, we'd like to address the natural
14 resource concerns in our -- on our property. Our
15 50-acre tree farm lies in the Richard Dorer Memorial
16 Hardwood State Forest. We have a current DNR
17 forestry management plan in place, which started
18 with our previous owner back in the 1970s and it was
19 hence revised in 2002.

20 In addition to the trees we farm, we have
21 a blend of native soft and hardwood throughout our
22 property. It's a peaceful habitat for many deer,
23 pheasant in the field and Cedars in the northwest
24 section, wild turkey, ruffed grouse nestings and
25 fox. Implementation of prairie and also savanna

1 restoration and reintroduction of native plant
2 species is underway. We have a sedge wetland, which
3 not only assists with native amphibian and reptile
4 habitat, but includes our attempts to restore the
5 wood duck population in this area. There is a bald
6 eagle nest just northwest of our property on the
7 Zumbro River. There is a class one special
8 regulation small mouth bass section at the proposed
9 route over the Zumbro River. This alternate route
10 would fragment the sustainability of the
11 above-mentioned natural resources and place great
12 pressure on the forest ecosystem.

13 As I mentioned, we are actively tree
14 farming, so we have some economic concerns as well,
15 which include the following: We feel that there
16 will be a decrease in property value. Secondly, we
17 are actively -- our tree farming, as I mentioned, we
18 have approximately 30 acres of planted white and red
19 pine and black walnut, which was done by the DNR
20 back in the '70s. The proposed alternate route
21 would wipe out the majority of our 30-year-old pine
22 and walnut on our north property line where that
23 planting was done. We would never be allowed to
24 plant those trees again. Thirdly, our land and its
25 utilization is a piece for recreation and aesthetic

1 value in the region will be lost forever. We would
2 lose hunting habitat and revenue associated with it.

3 The clearing and continued maintenance of
4 the 150-foot swath would increase proliferation of
5 undesirable plants and invasives such as buck thorn.
6 This would threaten our forests and prairie savanna
7 restoration efforts on a permanent basis.

8 We are also concerned about the erosion
9 effects on our property and impact on the Zumbro
10 River where there is no bridge crossing and water
11 quality in that area. We are concerned about the
12 methods of maintenance utilized considering the
13 sensitivity of this area. To be very upfront, this
14 route would place a terrible scar through the woods.

15 The majority of the proposed alternate
16 north route uses no existing transmission line, road
17 or property lines, and as I mentioned, there is no
18 existing bridge crossing the Zumbro River. The
19 costs would be enormous.

20 Other routes would avoid destruction of
21 our native natural ecosystem and habitat. We
22 encourage use of existing corridors along roads and
23 transmission lines, easements that are already in
24 place, where maintenance would be much more easily
25 attainable and there would be less wild and natural

1 habitat destruction, less proliferation as well as
2 less residential impact.

3 My wife and I appreciate your review and
4 careful assessment pursuant to Minnesota state law,
5 rules and guidelines. We would like it to be noted
6 that we will also be forwarding some more detailed
7 information before May 20th.

8 With respect, Dale and Suzanne Rohlfing.
9 Thank you.

10 Who do I present this to?

11 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

12 Joanie, do I have that right?

13 MS. JEANNIE SCHREADER: Jeannie, maybe?

14 MR. LANGAN: I'm sorry, Jeannie. It's
15 kind of dark up here, I apologize. Please come on
16 up.

17 MS. JEANNIE SCHREADER: Hi. I'm Jeannie
18 Schreader, J-E-A-N-N-I-E, S-C-H-R-E-A-D-E-R. And
19 I'm from the northern route, the alternative route.

20 And you're proposing to cut our farm in
21 half with the power lines, and they'll run close to
22 the milking site and our land is very susceptible to
23 sinkholes. We've had one which will be within the
24 corridor, the route, that you have proposed. And
25 these spontaneously fall in. There's three

1 different types of sinkholes that we have on our
2 property. They're the ones that drain directly into
3 the groundwater, which we've had repaired by Wabasha
4 County. We also had one that was a sinkhole that
5 started just as an area about this round
6 (indicating) and it sank about, oh, six inches, a
7 foot, then the next year it got bigger and shallower
8 and it just grew. So we had them excavate that also
9 while they did the sinkhole with the drainage, the
10 water, and went down 15 feet, found no rock, no
11 bedrock, and couldn't figure out why it was sinking.
12 So apparently there's very deep sinkholes in this
13 area. And I don't know how you would test for them.

14 Also, to me that would affect the
15 integrity of the power lines, placing them on this
16 ground. The farm west of us also has sinkholes and
17 the farms east of us have also had sinkholes. It
18 may be something you want to really look at and
19 consider.

20 And, also, our farming operation. We do
21 hay bales, we do bales that weigh between 40, 50
22 pounds, they're 45 feet long. We make multiple
23 trips over the field each harvest and there's three
24 harvests, four harvests per season. First we go and
25 cut the hay, then we take the hay cutter to take the

1 hay off the ground to help it dry more quickly, and
2 then we go and we rake the hay, bale the hay, and we
3 have a wagon that comes and picks up the hay. So
4 we're making multiple trips.

5 And we have health concerns because of
6 all the dust and everything that goes up in the air,
7 the hay particles, and you will be inhaling those.
8 And I don't think that being in the magnetic field
9 would be particularly helpful. And also our
10 equipment is making a lot of passes over this area,
11 which lends to a possibility of having damage to our
12 equipment.

13 And I just wanted to reiterate the fact
14 that our route has not got as many existing
15 features, right-of-ways, easements, to come across
16 the land.

17 And that's primarily what I have to say
18 at this point. Thank you.

19 MR. LANGAN: Okay, thank you.

20 Okay. Those are the two folks that
21 signed up to speak. And we'll just go by a show of
22 hands, or just raise your hand if you've got a
23 question, or a question you'd like to ask or a
24 comment you'd like to make, we'll open it up to the
25 whole group.

1 Yes, please.

2 MS. JULIE DEVICK: How do we find out who
3 is involved in the advisory task force? You said
4 local governments and townships and so forth are
5 involved, and I guess I'm wondering which townships
6 are involved in it.

7 MR. LANGAN: The information is available
8 on our website. We do have a list of -- it's both
9 the structure and charge of the task force, so what
10 the task force is charged with, and then there's a
11 list of the names and who they represent on those.
12 If you go to -- are you familiar with our website,
13 or have you been to our website?

14 MS. JULIE DEVICK: I didn't know it
15 existed.

16 MR. LANGAN: Let me go back. Okay. So
17 our website is energyfacilities, that's one word,
18 dot, PUC, dot, state, dot, mn, dot, us. One second.
19 And I'll just explain where you go. When you get
20 onto that website you'll see -- you'll be able to
21 select from different types of developments, where
22 there's power lines, power plants, transmission
23 plants or wind power. If you select on transmission
24 lines, a list of all of the transmission line
25 projects that we're reviewing right now will pop up,

1 scroll down and find the Hampton to Rochester to
2 LaCrosse.

3 And if you -- and when you click on that
4 project page, or that docket page, the route permit
5 application, there will be a link for the route
6 permit application and all the maps, there will be
7 an advisory task force link that you can click on.
8 In fact, do we have one or two -- do we have one for
9 each or it's two? Yeah, so we have one link for
10 each task force.

11 Again, the one that's focusing on the
12 area from Hampton to Rochester and the one that
13 would focus on, basically, Pine Island to Kellogg.
14 It's going to be listed as North Rochester to
15 Mississippi River. That's the name of the task
16 force. And there you'll find information on the
17 task force, who's involved and its proceedings. And
18 when there's a task force report at the end of their
19 work, that will also be available for review. That
20 was more than you asked for, but --

21 MR. WES DEVICK: Wes Devick, D-E-V-I-C-K.

22 My big question is we had a double line
23 pole on my folks' property growing up. And they did
24 have an accident once where the line burned through
25 due to trees arcing back and forth. The line came

1 down and it was carrying power clear out to Colorado
2 and so they had a hard time shutting it off. I
3 guess my question is, as far as how close can the
4 line be to a house? You know, I mean, what's the
5 minimum distance we're looking at for clearance?

6 MR. LANGAN: Sure. Tom, do you want to
7 talk a little bit about the right-of-way and how
8 it's constructed and what's allowed in or outside
9 that right-of-way?

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Sure. The right-of-way
11 for this kind of a line is 150-foot wide in general,
12 and that's 75 feet on either side of the pole. And
13 what that means is that no structures or
14 tall-growing trees can be allowed in there. And the
15 reason for that is trees, as you mentioned, trees
16 tend to sway in the wind and we need to keep the
17 branches away from the power, the energized power
18 lines to prevent that arcing and to prevent safety
19 hazards. And the same holds true, that clearance
20 needs to be maintained for structures as well.

21 So if we -- and there are rules, National
22 Electric Safety Code rules that prescribe those
23 clearance zones and that's what we go by. We even
24 add another safety margin onto those National
25 Electric Safety Codes for an extra margin of safety.

1 So that 150-foot wide right-of-way gives us all we
2 need to make sure that structures or tree branches
3 stay far enough away from those lines.

4 MR. WES DEVICK: I guess the other thing,
5 though, as far as regulation, we talked to someone
6 at -- what was it, nuclear medicine at Mayo, and
7 their suggestion was 400 feet minimum from the wires
8 for any people. Is that doable? You know, what are
9 we looking at here? What I'm trying to get at is
10 how far from people, too.

11 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, there is a concern
12 about EMF, electromagnetic fields. Now, that's
13 something that has been studied for the past 30
14 years. About 30 years ago people began to get
15 suspicious that these electric fields might have
16 some health concern. And it's been studied over and
17 over again over the past 30 years. And what they
18 found is that, you know, if they do a statistical
19 analysis they get some kind of suspicion that, okay,
20 proximity of somebody to a power line may have some
21 connection to health impact, but when they take
22 these studies to the next level, doing laboratory
23 studies, doing dose studies and doing more of the
24 controlled kind of studies that they do to determine
25 if there is a health impact, they found no

1 got any that are that close.

2 MR. WES DEVICK: I sure hope not. Would
3 you want to live there? I don't think you would.
4 Point's made.

5 MS. ANNE FICK: My name is an Anne,
6 A-N-N-E, Fick, F-I-C-K.

7 And I have some questions. Why is the
8 line being built?

9 MR. LANGAN: Okay. There will be a
10 two-part answer to this. I'll let Tom talk about
11 the electrical engineering portions of this.

12 One is for reliability of the electrical
13 system, to -- maybe I should fully let Tom answer
14 this one. But it is the reliability of the electric
15 system.

16 And one of the -- we talked about the
17 Public Utilities Commission approval of this
18 project, of a route permit, they also have another
19 approval that a utility needs to seek and that's
20 called a certificate of need. So the utility needs
21 to prove to the Public Utilities Commission that
22 there's a need within the electric system, given the
23 demand that's out there, given the reliability of
24 the system. And that is something that the Public
25 Utilities Commission approved last May, about a year

1 ago.

2 And so they have met that first
3 requirement, or that requirement, and now, since
4 they've established a need for it, now we're talking
5 about, okay, if there is a need, where should it be
6 routed to get to those end points.

7 Tom, would you like to talk more about
8 reliability of the system? Thanks.

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Sure. Yeah, I can
10 address it in general, and then we do have some of
11 our engineers here who can talk to you, again, after
12 the meeting. Like Matt said, this is a routing
13 proceeding.

14 But, in general, the needs are basically
15 in three categories. The first category is that the
16 city of Rochester and the area around Rochester is a
17 growing area and that area needs more electrical
18 supply. So there's a focus, a local need area in
19 Rochester. The same thing is going on in the city
20 of LaCrosse and the area around it, including
21 Le Crescent and Winona. So there are these focused
22 areas that are growing that need more power supply
23 to maintain a reliable electric supply.

24 Another element of that need is a general
25 regional electric transmission reliability concern.

1 As these local areas have grown, so has the entire
2 country. And as the entire country grows, the
3 entire regional transmission system is getting
4 strained, so in order to maintain that reliable
5 regional supply of electricity, the regional
6 electric transmission system needs to be upgraded.

7 And then the third element is renewable
8 energy. We're seeing more and more requirements of
9 the state on a policy level telling utilities that
10 they need to get up to 25, 30 percent of renewable
11 power in their supplies, and that renewable energy
12 is coming primarily from wind power. And wind power
13 is an intermittent supply, so at times you get a
14 whole bunch of wind power on the system when the
15 wind is blowing fast and at times you don't get very
16 much wind power at all on the system. And those
17 windy times don't necessarily correspond to your
18 peak use time, so you get more of a variable flow on
19 the system and that is another factor that requires
20 the transmission system to be beefed up.

21 So those are the three elements of the
22 need.

23 MS. ANNE FICK: Okay.

24 MR. LANGAN: Do you have more questions?

25 MS. ANNE FICK: On this flow chart it

1 talks about the contested case hearing. And I just
2 wondered what entity contests anything? I mean, is
3 it individual landowners or is it a government
4 entity or, I mean, who does the contesting?

5 MR. LANGAN: Sure. Well, for the
6 contested case hearing, one, there's a public
7 hearing component that goes into that. So the
8 administrative law judge will sit at a table in much
9 like this format and ask people to come up and
10 provide information and materials and comments on
11 the various routes that are under review. So there
12 is a public component to that. Then there is a
13 provision for intervenors, formal intervenors in the
14 process that follow through and have a formal role
15 in the contested case hearings. So there are a few
16 different elements, in terms of how participation is
17 handled during that administrative law judge
18 hearing.

19 MS. ANNE FICK: What is a formal
20 intervenor?

21 MR. LANGAN: Where are my lawyers in the
22 room? Who can explain that?

23 MS. ANNE FICK: Is it a legal -- it would
24 be someone with a legal background, probably a
25 lawyer?

1 MR. LANGAN: Yeah. It could be, I guess,
2 usually that's the case, but it is, you know,
3 there's a process to apply for that early on in the
4 process. And, yeah, I guess that's it.

5 MS. ANNE FICK: That's all right, I'm
6 just learning.

7 And then the last question I have, at
8 least so far, is when the landowner gets
9 compensation, do they get compensation for the
10 route, the 1,000-foot route, or do they get
11 compensation for the 150-foot right-of-way.

12 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. And, Tom, I'm
13 going to call you back up here to answer that
14 question.

15 MR. HILLSTROM: The compensation would be
16 for the easement and that would correspond to that
17 150-foot wide area.

18 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Yes, sir.

19 MR. MIKE STEFFES: Mike Steffes,
20 S-T-E-F-F-E-S.

21 One question, getting back to his
22 question, how close can you be to that thing, not
23 just walking under it once, I'm talking living next
24 to it. They won't tell you that answer because
25 they're scared if they give you an answer here, you

1 know, you got something to go on in court that's why
2 they don't give you an answer. And we're not going
3 to get that answer tonight so I'll move on.

4 Okay. What's the height of that tower?
5 I heard somewhere it could be a 300-foot tower.
6 True or false?

7 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Can I back up to the
8 first question, if I can expand on that answer? It
9 is difficult to give you an answer about where that
10 line is going to go at this phase of the project.
11 What's been proposed and what we're reviewing at
12 this time is a 1,000 foot right-of-way -- or excuse
13 me, a 1,000-foot route, and within that a 150-foot
14 right-of-way.

15 So I can appreciate that completely, I
16 understand that folks would like to know where it's
17 planned to go right now, but we're far from that
18 type of a determination and that's --

19 MR. MIKE STEFFES: I didn't ask exactly
20 where it was going to go, I said how close can you
21 live next to it.

22 MR. LANGAN: And the answer would be, if
23 there's a 150-foot right-of-way with 75 feet on
24 either side, then 75 would be the closest.

25 MR. MIKE STEFFES: That's not good health

1 wise, I can tell you that.

2 MR. LANGAN: And right now there's no
3 homes within 75 feet of that.

4 It is something that we do study in our
5 environmental impact statement. We look at reports
6 by the World Health Organization, by the Minnesota
7 Department of Health, by the states that surround us
8 here in the region that have done studies on any
9 potential health effects, and that's information
10 that we're going to include in our environmental
11 impact statement. So that's what I can tell you
12 now.

13 MR. MIKE STEFFES: Another point I want
14 to clarify here is, from what I'm getting here from
15 these other meetings and stuff, if you're not within
16 that 150-foot swath, you'll never get compensated
17 anything. True or false?

18 MR. LANGAN: The easement -- and here I'm
19 talking a little bit out of school, maybe Tom, if
20 you want to answer this -- but the easement would be
21 to the landowners along that -- that host that
22 150-foot right-of-way.

23 MR. MIKE STEFFES: Right. And another
24 question. Could you have a 300-foot tower?
25 According to some of your information --

1 MR. LANGAN: Thank you, that was your
2 other question.

3 MR. MIKE STEFFES: Now, I got a 300-foot
4 tower, that's 300 feet, that's not 75 feet from the
5 center, that's 300 feet, simple math. And in this
6 area over here, it might fall on his house and he
7 don't get anything, until his house blows up, then
8 you might get the checkbook out.

9 MR. LANGAN: If I may, the towers are not
10 300 feet tall, they are 150 to 170 feet tall for the
11 345 kilovolt line.

12 MR. MIKE STEFFES: 75 feet each way ain't
13 enough. The tower that falls over, that's 150 feet
14 that way. You need twice as wide.

15 So what I'm getting at here, put me down
16 as I'm against the north route, from wherever, the
17 Rochester substation heading towards Kellogg, I'm
18 against the north alternate one. So what I'm
19 getting at is that thing could be 75 feet right up
20 to my line. I'm not going to get compensated
21 anything, but it might fall on my house. It
22 might -- the family would have to get the lawyer to
23 get your checkbook out then. That's what I'm
24 getting at. The 75 feet, my friend, ain't enough.
25 Now, if the tower is 150 feet, Mother Nature, you

1 can't outguess her, she'll put that tower down in
2 big storms, it happens. And the guy next to it
3 isn't going to get nothing till he's hurt. I'm
4 done.

5 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

6 MR. ROY TERRY: I've got a comment I'd
7 like to make. My name is Roy Terry, R-O-Y,
8 T-E-R-R-Y.

9 First of all, I want to thank you guys
10 for holding these scoping meetings, and we hope that
11 you, unlike the Wabasha County Board with our recent
12 jail issue, that you seriously consider the comments
13 made by the residents that are affected by this
14 project.

15 I want to urge you to use the preferred
16 route in the existing Dairyland 230 line corridor, I
17 feel that that would have the smallest impact on the
18 environment, on land use, and on the residences.

19 The alternative 345 kilovolt route passes
20 between 150 and 300 feet of the proposed center line
21 of my neighbor, Tom Files (phonetic). He's in
22 Section 30 of Watopa Township and it also passes
23 within 550 feet of my home in Section 25 of Highland
24 Township. This alternative route goes directly
25 across the center of my property and across the area

1 where we regularly work and train our horses. We
2 also raise hay for those horses, and as the woman
3 described haying previously, there's a lot of trips
4 across that hay field to gather that crop.

5 The wooded area that would cross on my
6 property, we have trails in that area, hiking, we
7 use them for hiking, ATVs, hunting. My neighbors
8 hunt coon down there, the neighborhood boys ride
9 their ATVs, I gather firewood. So it's a heavily
10 used area on my property.

11 I should have brought my reading glasses.

12 MR. DALE ROHLFING: You can borrow mine.

13 MR. ROY TERRY: You are always supposed
14 to bring them. Thank you.

15 I was supposed to bring an alternate
16 solution, and so I'd like to propose a couple
17 substitute routes that would reduce the impact on at
18 least these two farm sites.

19 The first one would be to break away from
20 the existing corridor west at County Highway 14.
21 That would better implement Minnesota's policy on
22 nonproliferation and utilize existing right-of-way.
23 If that's not possible, the second would be to break
24 away from the existing corridor at the south line of
25 Section 30 in Watopa Township and follow it west

1 along the south line of Section 25 in Highland
2 Township.

3 These -- yeah, I guess that's it. I've
4 already dropped my comments off in your box and I've
5 got a map attached actually showing my property
6 boundaries. Again, thanks for giving us the
7 opportunity to express these concerns.

8 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

9 MR. CHUCK FICK: Hello. My name is Chuck
10 Fick, F as in Frank, I-C-K. I appreciate you having
11 this meeting here. I certainly don't envy your
12 positions, to some degree, so I've got some
13 questions, too.

14 We talked a lot about the effects on
15 humans. What about us livestock farmers, especially
16 with cattle, they are notorious for being extremely
17 sensitive to electricity, and so I was just
18 wondering if that's going to be included in your
19 table of contents on your EIS.

20 MR. LANGAN: It is now. But, actually,
21 it would be, yeah, that's something that we look at,
22 in terms of any health effects to cattle and to farm
23 operations along the routes. So, yes, that is
24 something we intend to look at and to provide
25 information in the environmental impact statement.

1 MR. CHUCK FICK: Another question is, as
2 you route out the line, you use existing
3 right-of-ways or corridors, there are none, others
4 that you could use? I mean, you talk about going on
5 247 or something else. I mean, you know, the
6 northern alternative route would affect us, the
7 southern route, those will affect all my friends.
8 I'd just as soon not have it. So, I mean, is that
9 really studied really hard as far as routing it
10 someplace where there is lines already running or
11 something like that?

12 MR. LANGAN: I can answer that and maybe
13 Tom wants to jump in, too, with, you know, he kind
14 of described how they came about the two routes that
15 they proposed as they did. And I think Tom has said
16 that, you know, they come by those routes humbly,
17 recognizing that the folks that live every day in
18 the area may have yet another route that may work
19 and may, in fact, make more sense.

20 So, we certainly, our office would
21 certainly welcome a suggestion, as you're saying, if
22 it's 247 or another route, and if you can provide
23 some justification for why we ought to study that
24 route, it's something we'll consider including in
25 the scope and study it out along with the one that

1 is proposed here by the utility, so in addition to
2 what is proposed by the utility.

3 MR. CHUCK FICK: A person signing that
4 easement, what are they agreeing to?

5 MR. LANGAN: Very good question. And the
6 easement process really happens outside of our
7 review, it's after we've done our environmental
8 review, so I will let Tom or a representative of
9 Xcel address that question.

10 MR. HILLSTROM: I can tell you just in
11 general, I'm not the real estate agent or the lawyer
12 that writes these things. But what the easement
13 says is that the utility can build the line on your
14 property and it can access that line and it can
15 maintain that easement free of obstructions to the
16 line. And the obstructions are trees and
17 structures, basically. What it allows landowners to
18 do is anything else. It keeps the interference from
19 the line out of that 150-foot area, it keeps the
20 safe clearance. It doesn't prevent you from using
21 the land as you always have, particularly in a
22 agricultural area, you continue to farm the land
23 under the line and the easement just as you always
24 have, the only thing is trees and obstructions from
25 being put in there and it allows the utility to

1 access and maintain that line.

2 MR. CHUCK FICK: Final question. What if
3 a person refuses to sign the easement?

4 MR. HILLSTROM: The process that we're
5 going through here will result in a permit from the
6 state specifying where the route would be approved.
7 And with that permit, the utilities are allowed to
8 use the process of eminent domain. So if the
9 landowner and the utility can't agree on an
10 acquisition, then it can go to the eminent domain
11 process.

12 And that can happen not only if the
13 landowner just says no way, but it can happen if
14 there's not an agreement in the price. For
15 instance, if you think the utility is not offering
16 you a fair price you can say, no, I don't agree with
17 this. So then what that does is it brings it to
18 this eminent domain process, and what that does is
19 it allows three independent and local commissioners,
20 a panel of three local appraisers, to be convened
21 and they hear the landowner's side and they hear the
22 utility's side and what they do is they sort of
23 mediate, they come up with a price that the utility
24 has to pay and that the landowner has to accept.

25 MR. CHUCK FICK: Thank you.

1 MR. LANGAN: Yes, you're next. I'll get
2 to the back of the room.

3 MS. JULIE DEVICK: Julie Devick again.

4 You talk about the route width as 1,000
5 feet wide. Where does that start? When all these
6 meetings started we would come in and meet with the
7 guys and the laptops in the back and try to figure
8 out how close our house was to the proposed route.
9 And the first time we came in it was like 700 feet.
10 Well, what they did was they took our property and
11 put a dot in the middle of it and that's what they
12 measured from. Well, our house was 200 feet closer
13 to that route. If the width is 1,000 feet, we are
14 in that width, we are not -- the property -- so we
15 are one of the property owners that that crosses.

16 So I guess my question is where are you
17 starting those lines? It's like when you're on the
18 highway and it says X miles to Rochester, where is
19 that point in Rochester where you're hitting that
20 mile marker?

21 MR. LANGAN: Okay. I'm going to answer
22 the question and then if I misunderstood it you just
23 help me along here . But in terms of where it
24 starts, we do request that at the time that they
25 submit their application that they specify a route

1 width. So, in terms of where it starts, that's
2 where they come up with a 1,000 foot corridor, we
3 ask that as part of their application that they
4 specify how wide that route is. So from a time
5 stamp, that's when that 1,000 foot corridor, you
6 know, anything from the right-of-way up to a mile
7 and a quarter, anything in between, in this case
8 1,000, that's where that starts, that's a temporal
9 thing, a time thing.

10 What we've been asking the utilities to
11 do is, in addition to supplying us with that
12 corridor, that 1,000-foot route, is to show where,
13 at this point, at this very early point in the
14 process, where they think that transmission line
15 might go within that -- within that route corridor.

16 So, I think it's represented on the maps
17 back there, and it is certainly in the application
18 as well, you'll see sort of a shaded area and that's
19 the route, that's the 1,000-foot route, and then
20 there is either a purple solid line or sort of a
21 purple dashed line, and I think it's represented on
22 the maps back here, too, where they think at this
23 early point in the process where that transmission
24 line, where that center line might be.

25 But, again -- but, again, this is early

1 on in the process, we've got a lot of information to
2 gather so that's certainly not a final. But we do
3 ask that the utilities provide that as a starting
4 point for discussion and review amongst folks.

5 MS. JULIE DEVICK: So is that
6 something -- we've got like three lots that are very
7 narrow with homes on them, and we would all be in
8 that 1,000 feet zone. Is that something we can get
9 together and say this is where we want it? I mean,
10 'cause you get the person in the middle saying,
11 well, I'm going to show it in so and so's yard, and
12 then it could go back and forth for a long time. Is
13 that something we have any control on, where that
14 goes within that 1,000 feet?

15 MR. LANGAN: Within the 1,000 feet is
16 meant to provide some of that flexibility that I
17 think you're talking about.

18 MS. JULIE DEVICK: Some wiggle room?

19 MR. LANGAN: Some wiggle room. If
20 there's an advantageous right-of-way within that
21 1,000-foot corridor, that 1,000-foot route, the idea
22 is is that it provides the flexibility for the
23 utility and the landowner to look at where best to
24 place that 150-foot right-of-way.

25 So, yes, if I'm understanding your

1 question, that's the purpose of looking at first a
2 corridor and then down the road the landowner and
3 the utility can sort of work out where best to place
4 that 150-foot right-of-way.

5 MS. JULIE DEVICK: So you could put it on
6 the far edge of that 1,000 feet?

7 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

8 MS. JULIE DEVICK: Thank you.

9 MR. LANGAN: Sir.

10 MR. DENNIS KREOFSKY: Dennis Kreofsky,
11 D-E-N-N-I-S, K-R-E-O-F-S-K-Y.

12 Matt, you said earlier that when you
13 applied for this permit, or during the permitting
14 process, there was a requirement that you had to
15 have a preferred and an alternate route. Okay. I
16 live along the 165 kilovolt line in Watopa Township,
17 your preferred route and your alternate route are
18 exactly the same. It's like going to a restaurant
19 and there's two options, hot dogs and hot dogs.
20 It's the same thing, it's not an alternate. So how
21 does that meet the requirement?

22 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. I heard the hot
23 dog to hot dog requirement, that's excellent, thank
24 you. Yes, you're exactly right. There is a shared
25 segment that's about a seven-, eight-mile segment of

1 the 106-mile overall proposal here. And, frankly,
2 that is common, that there are shared segments
3 within proposals where there's a predominant --
4 where there's a predominant feature. And in this
5 case those preferred and alternate lines follow that
6 existing line there. And I think with that
7 landscape and terrain in there, it's sort of one
8 that sticks out as an existing corridor in that area
9 in order to get to the river.

10 So, again, it's common that, you know, if
11 the utility comes in and 95 percent of the route is
12 the same, that that would be one thing, but it is
13 common for shared segments to show up in these.

14 Now, that said, that does not prevent you
15 or anyone from suggesting another way to get to that
16 Minnesota end point, that Minnesota terminus point.
17 So if you know of another route in the area where
18 you can get to that area near Kellogg or Alma on the
19 other side of the river, that's something that we
20 would certainly take a look at and consider
21 including in the EIS.

22 MR. DENNIS KREOFISKY: Okay. In the
23 right-of-way, or the -- I guess, is it easement?
24 Yeah, okay. The easement agreement, in the event
25 that these lines are no longer used or required, is

1 there language in there for the removal and
2 restoration of property?

3 MR. LANGAN: Removal and restoration
4 of -- okay. So removal of the line and restoration
5 of the property where the line was built. That's an
6 excellent question and I stand here and I don't know
7 the answer to that right now. That is -- that's a
8 good comment and one that I'm glad that we have
9 down, that's something I'd like to look into.

10 I think it's frankly rare that utility
11 lines of this capacity and this length and for this
12 purpose get removed, but -- and so that's why it's
13 typically not something that we would have in an
14 EIS. But thank you for the comment. Let me think
15 about that and we'll consider that for inclusion.

16 MR. DENNIS KREOFISKY: And you gave -- or
17 you had something on the screen that showed us what
18 some of the criteria were for determining the
19 settlement, you know, for the easement or the
20 right-of-way, but how is that determined? Is this
21 on a per lineal foot basis, a square foot, an acre,
22 or how do they do it? And then you must have some
23 dollar value associated with some of these different
24 things, such as, oh, like your limitation of
25 potential buyers or, you know, devaluation of your

1 property, so how do you determine that exactly?

2 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Again, I'll ask Tom
3 to address that question.

4 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, those kind of
5 factors are considered, and I can tell you that it's
6 not a unit cost, there's not a standard formula, I
7 can't tell you it's this much per square foot or
8 this much per acre because each parcel is analyzed
9 individually. And it's analyzed based on, you know,
10 how can this line affect the value of the property.
11 And it takes into account all of the things you
12 mentioned and in the end, like I said earlier, the
13 utility arrives at that and if the landowner doesn't
14 agree with what the utility is proposing, again, the
15 landowner has that option of saying, you know, I'll
16 take this to the commission, I'll take it to the
17 eminent domain process, and that brings in those
18 three local assessors who can moderate and decide
19 what the value really should be.

20 So, because the utilities know that the
21 landowner has that option, the utilities have to
22 give a fair price to begin with. And we do. And
23 we've got a long record of working with landowners,
24 we do pay a fair price, but I can't tell you what
25 that price is per unit because it varies so much and

1 it all depends on the individual characteristics of
2 your property.

3 MR. DENNIS KREOFSKY: Well, I guess my
4 concern is, you know, if this easement, you know,
5 just clips a corner of somebody's property, it
6 probably doesn't have the same potential as it does
7 mine where it goes diagonally. I have 160 acres, it
8 goes diagonally from corner to corner. Right now I
9 have five sets of poles on my property, and based on
10 the terrain, I've talked to the engineers and
11 they've looked at it and they don't think I'm going
12 to end up with any less, maybe even an extra one.

13 So, you know, my concern is, you know, is
14 it affecting me because -- more because I've got
15 this kitty-corner across my property versus somebody
16 where it just catches the corner of the property.
17 Is the settlement different in that situation?

18 MR. HILLSTROM: Again, this is not what I
19 do for a living. We have agents that do this. So I
20 can't answer it specifically, but just thinking
21 about it logically, I would say yes. I mean, a
22 person whose property just is nicked on the corner
23 by a line would not get nearly as much as you would
24 where the line goes through diagonally right through
25 your property.

1 MR. DENNIS KREOFSKY: That's all I have.
2 Thank you.

3 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

4 Yes, please, right here.

5 MS. LAURA KREOFSKY: Laura Kreofsky,
6 K-R-E-O-F-S-K-Y. We spoke earlier. My question is,
7 you talked about the Alma crossing being the
8 easiest, the best, as far as entrance and crossing
9 the river and the exit. What happens when you get
10 to Wisconsin, you're on the Wisconsin side in Alma,
11 Winona, LaCrosse, what makes the route any better
12 going south crossing at Alma?

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay. In terms of the
14 portion of the project that goes into the state of
15 Wisconsin, the state of Wisconsin has a process
16 that's -- it's not exactly similar to ours, but they
17 have a Public Service Commission there that will
18 review the application for that portion of the
19 route. And, you know, for my part, I have no
20 jurisdiction in the state of Wisconsin. But the
21 utility will need to submit an application there for
22 a review of that proposed route where they would go
23 from Alma down to northern LaCrosse.

24 And, Tom, I don't know if you want to add
25 anything, Tom, to that process on that side of the

1 river.

2 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, it's a very good
3 question and I'll answer it directly. From Alma, on
4 the Wisconsin side you have multiple route options.
5 Because what we have in Wisconsin is existing
6 transmission lines. There are two 161 transmission
7 lines that come to Alma from the Wisconsin side.
8 One of them goes down the river, parallel with the
9 river, directly to LaCrosse. Another one goes east
10 to the Wisconsin town of Arcadia and then from there
11 there's other transmission lines that go to the
12 south. So there are two good route options that
13 follow transmission lines like they talked about
14 earlier, those are good opportunities to minimize
15 the impacts. They can be removed and replaced with
16 that double circuit configuration like we talked
17 about. So Alma has options.

18 Crossing at Winona on the Wisconsin side
19 brings us to Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge. And what
20 we heard from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is
21 that that is such a sensitive area that they oppose
22 that route, they wouldn't permit it. So that
23 questions even the feasibility of building that
24 route.

25 What we get if we cross at Le Crescent

1 into LaCrosse, is that route brings us into the
2 middle of the city of LaCrosse, and we've looked at
3 end points for that route and what we find is the
4 existing substation is surrounded by wetlands, and
5 that substation would need to be expanded to the
6 tune of about five acres of new fill in a wetland,
7 and what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tells us
8 is that's not permitable either.

9 So we've looked at other potential end
10 points in the city of LaCrosse and identified them,
11 and the best one that we found would require the
12 removal of a warehouse and a trucking facility and a
13 purchase of a parcel of land that is valued by the
14 city of LaCrosse, because they are very hemmed in
15 and their industrial land is highly valued and we
16 would need to purchase that parcel from that
17 existing business and it's valued at something like
18 \$15 million to buy that property. And it's opposed
19 by the city of LaCrosse because they have very
20 limited industrial space because they are hemmed in
21 by the bluffs on one side, the river on the other
22 side, and they're just kind of pinched in a
23 north-south direction along the river there.

24 So what we find with Winona and Le
25 Crescent, as far as route options in Wisconsin,

1 they're pretty bleak. And that's one of the big
2 reasons why those two route options were not
3 favored.

4 Now, adding onto that, there are features
5 of the river itself, the river is wider at Winona
6 and LaCrosse so there would be more impact to the
7 floodplain wetlands, and existing right-of-ways for
8 the existing power line is narrower, so the Fish and
9 Wildlife Service would have a difficult time
10 allowing us to widen that easement and for us to get
11 the right kind of structures in there.

12 You add on top of that, the routes in
13 Minnesota leading to Le Crescent or Winona go
14 through that area we talked about earlier, a very
15 hilly, wooded valley and bluff land terrain where
16 there is no existing linear feature that we can
17 follow for 10 to 15 miles on the Minnesota side. So
18 all those factors kind of stack up very highly
19 against the Le Crescent and the Winona crossing,
20 even to the point where we consider them to be
21 marginally even feasible to permit and to build.

22 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: So, basically, this
23 line that is going to be going up is not for us,
24 it's for other areas of this country. We're not
25 getting any power off of this. It's not going to

1 any of our substations. My substation's in
2 Whitewater coming from Dairyland. So this is going
3 to Chicago or out west somewhere, right?

4 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, it does benefit
5 this whole area. Because the power that feeds in
6 from these bulk lines gets fed into these
7 substations and from these substations it radiates
8 out on the lower voltage system, and that lower
9 voltage system is again radiated out on the
10 distribution circuits.

11 An analogy might be to say, well, because
12 I-90, you know, people are going to Wisconsin, it
13 doesn't benefit Minnesota. I mean, it's the same
14 kind of deal. An interstate highway is like these
15 high voltage transmission lines. It does benefit
16 other regions, you know, on I-90 people travel from
17 Minnesota to Wisconsin on the east or west to the
18 Dakotas, but it does provide benefit here locally,
19 too. It's the same kind of a system.

20 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: Okay. My other
21 question. You stated that when you do come across
22 at the Alma crossing, on our property right now, as
23 my husband said, we have five sets of poles, two
24 doubles, one triple, that you would set up one pole,
25 move Dairyland's two lines onto it, you would take

1 one line, some of this paperwork states that there's
2 a potential for a future line. So are we back at
3 this in 30 years for that future line or are we SOL
4 because we made this agreement now?

5 MR. HILLSTROM: No, the proposal would be
6 to remove that existing line and to replace it with
7 the new structures that would hold the new line and
8 the old line. The thing that I think you're getting
9 at is in the certificate of need proceeding that
10 Matt mentioned earlier, there was a condition in
11 there that, you know, we started out with this
12 proposal as a single circuit of 345 kilovolts, and
13 through that certificate of need proceeding, people
14 intervened in it, and there was some environmental
15 groups, there was some wind groups that wanted that
16 line upgraded to a higher voltage.

17 And in the end what the PUC decided was
18 that these lines should be built to be
19 double-circuit capable. And what that means is that
20 the structures should be built stout enough to hold
21 two circuits of 345. So what our proposal would be
22 in your area is to build this double-circuit line
23 holding the new line and the existing line, but the
24 structures themselves would be stout enough so that
25 in the future, that if a second 345 line needed to

1 be built on that circuit, the existing 161 could be
2 taken off the other side and a 345 replacing it.
3 And if that were to happen, that 161 line would be
4 completely replaced by that 345 line. We wouldn't
5 need to build another line next to it.

6 So our proposal is to remove the existing
7 structures and to replace them with the new
8 structures that are capable of holding two circuits.

9 Is that confusing?

10 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: Well, for a minute I
11 thought you were sticking another pole on there.

12 MR. HILLSTROM: No, no.

13 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: Okay. Back to her
14 question about the route width, the 1,000 feet.
15 Okay. It's directly over our house and halfway into
16 the Buffalo corral and they're not happy about it
17 and we're not happy about it. And I'm wondering,
18 you know, where you see this 1,000 coming, the poles
19 are sitting way over here (indicating). Why was the
20 1,000 feet chosen to go into the homestead instead
21 of out into the field where you can tear out more
22 trees when you come through, which wouldn't make
23 people happy either.

24 MR. HILLSTROM: That's a good question.
25 And I sense that there is some concern about the

1 1,000-foot corridor. That's kind of an arbitrary
2 width that we came up with just to define a corridor
3 to study within.

4 The important drawing on the map is the
5 center line that we show on the map. And that's
6 where we would intend to build that route. And in
7 your particular case that existing power line is the
8 center line. There would be no reason for us to go
9 to a far edge of that 1,000-foot route corridor.
10 While it's technically possible, I can't think of a
11 single instance where it would be something that we
12 would propose, to go to an outer limit of that
13 1,000-foot corridor.

14 We put enough work into these routes to
15 know the feature that we're following, whether it's
16 a property boundary or a road or existing
17 transmission line, we would not propose to go
18 significantly off of that center line unless there
19 were good reason to do that. And that may be, a
20 landowner decides that it would be better or for a
21 good reason to deviate from the existing center
22 line, that might be a possibility where we could
23 tweak that alignment. There may be in some cases
24 buried utilities that have to be avoided that would
25 require a bit of a change in alignment. So the

1 reason for that 1,000-foot corridor is to provide
2 flexibility to accommodate landowner wishes and
3 unforeseen engineering issues. But we would not
4 propose to deviate unless there were really good
5 reasons to do that.

6 Another thing I should mention is that
7 while the permit would give us the -- would allow us
8 to build within that 1,000-foot route corridor,
9 after we do our engineering we need to submit our
10 plan back to Matt, he has a chance to review that
11 final engineering plan, and he has a chance to ask
12 us why in the world would we go on the edge of that
13 route. So it doesn't give us carte blanche to go
14 anywhere that we want to, if we deviate from that
15 center line we have to have a good reason.

16 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: So any of us
17 homeowners here, real estate people, when we get our
18 easement it'll be defined that it's this section, I
19 mean, it's going to be clear cut?

20 MR. HILLSTROM: Absolutely. That's one
21 thing that I do know about is easements, is they
22 have to be defined and they have to be defined
23 exactly what they cover on the landscape.

24 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: Okay. And so the
25 accessibility to the other 1,000 feet disappears,

1 you've got your 150 and that's it?

2 MR. HILLSTROM: Right. Right.

3 MS. LAURA KREOFISKY: Thank you.

4 MR. LANGAN: Okay. For the patient
5 gentleman back here. Thank you.

6 We do have a fairness in court reporter's
7 act around here, and so we will take a bit of a
8 break so Janet can rest up after you're done. Thank
9 you.

10 MR. BRUCE BAKER: My name is Bruce Baker,
11 B-A-K-E-R. I guess my question probably is for Tom.

12 I live down where it comes across the
13 Alma across the Mississippi, I'm the first farm
14 there, homestead there that goes by, and you talked
15 about all the other routes except for the McCarthy
16 Lake alternate route, and I don't know why you
17 didn't talk about that one.

18 MR. HILLSTROM: That was an oversight.
19 That is on the map, that is proposed on our permit
20 application as an alternate route. And what that
21 does is it goes around the McCarthy Lake wildlife
22 management area and it avoids that state homeland.
23 You're exactly right, that is still in play, that is
24 in the route application, me not mentioning it was
25 just an oversight.

1 MR. BRUCE BAKER: Do you have to get a
2 permit the same as like the landowners do through
3 the state where it goes through McCarthy Lake? My
4 land adjoins McCarthy Lake.

5 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, the difference
6 would be, instead of us buying an easement from the
7 State of Minnesota, we would buy it -- we would
8 apply for a license, so it's a little different
9 piece of paper that we'd have to get from them.

10 MR. BRUCE BAKER: Why wouldn't they look
11 at an alternate route that would just go south into
12 McCarthy Lake a little bit farther, it wouldn't have
13 to go, you know, up 300 feet, 500 feet, or even
14 1,000 feet, it would be farther away from my
15 property, you know, and it wouldn't be no closer to
16 anybody's property whatever.

17 MR. HILLSTROM: We struggled with that
18 bypass a little bit. The idea was that, you know,
19 this is a wildlife management area and there would
20 probably be some people who are concerned with the
21 route going through there, but on the other hand,
22 there's an existing transmission line going through
23 there and the idea of that would be that, you know,
24 the impact would be measured, you know, what's the
25 condition now versus what's the condition after we

1 build this line.

2 And in our mind it was, you know, there
3 was not much difference because it's an existing
4 corridor, but it is a state wildlife management area
5 so we provided that route that would go around it.
6 And here again, we did our best job looking at
7 property lines trying to find a way around that, and
8 that may not be the best alternate route, and if you
9 have a better idea I think that's something that you
10 could certainly draw on a map and give to Matt as an
11 alternate route there.

12 MR. BRUCE BAKER: I was hoping somebody
13 from McCarthy Lake or wildlife would be here just
14 because it does go through the wildlife refuge down
15 there. And especially getting back to the
16 gentleman's question there, if anybody wanted to
17 look at what it looks like when you do your 150-foot
18 clearing or whatever, drive down County Road 84, my
19 property's got bigger shoulders, just drive in and
20 I'll show you, or drive all the way down to the
21 other end and it's a mess, a real mess. Dairyland
22 says they're going to come back and fix it, but they
23 did it in the wintertime when the ground was froze
24 and now it's wet and swampy, my ground is pretty
25 swampy, and they will make a worse mess if they come

1 back now and it's a disaster. Thank you.

2 MR. LANGAN: Okay. What we'll do is
3 we'll take a 15-minute break. Do people still have
4 questions and comments? I figured that's the case,
5 so let's take a 15-minute break and we'll reconvene
6 then.

7 (Break taken from 8:44 to 9:10.)

8 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Folks, we're set to
9 begin again here. And I'll ask that you take your
10 seats and we'll take other comments or questions.

11 Okay, so Dale, is that still the score?

12 MR. DALE ROHLFING: 3/2 Twins, I think.

13 MR. LANGAN: That's important public
14 information that we're sharing.

15 Okay. Again, just raise your hand if you
16 have a question or comment. Okay. Yes, sir.

17 MR. CURTIS KUECKER: Curtis Kuecker,
18 that's Curtis with a C, K-U-E-C-K-E-R.

19 I have a question about what you do with
20 all the fill when you dig this 10- to 40-foot hole.
21 And then how many yards of cement, how many trucks
22 will be going across your property to get back there
23 to put in all these poles.

24 And for woodland you have a perpetual
25 loss of income on that swath that you're going to

1 take on my farmland where you can actually get
2 income or raise crops off of it, you have loss of
3 woodland, you're losing like corridors that wildlife
4 use and things like that.

5 And when you have farmland you have soil
6 compaction and that and who fixes that soil
7 compaction, is it the farmer's responsibility or is
8 it you guys come and fix it and you put a subsoil in
9 there, or how do you bring that soil back to life
10 when you have all these trucks going across your
11 property?

12 And then what do you do with fences? Do
13 you replace the fences or is that my responsibility?
14 I've got cattle in there, do I have to, out of my
15 goodness, put a temporary fence up to keep my cows
16 out of where you're going to be working on?

17 And then another concern is EMF from the
18 power line getting into like an electric fence,
19 'cause that can cause problems.

20 Is that a lot?

21 MR. LANGAN: That was an eight-part
22 question. Thank you. And for most of it I'm going
23 to turn it over to Tom just because a lot of that
24 had to do with construction of the line and some of
25 the considerations for wooded land and fences and

1 operations.

2 We will, in our environmental impact
3 statement, talk about construction activities and
4 how that is staged and the equipment that's used, so
5 that is something that when we get to that phase
6 will be part of that draft EIS.

7 But Tom, or anyone from Xcel, if you want
8 to describe the construction process.

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, I'll try to
10 remember all those, but I probably won't.

11 The first one that I remember was what do
12 you do with the fill after the crews drill a hole.
13 The way it usually works is that the crews that come
14 out there and work on that hole and drill it, first
15 of all, they're in communication with you as a
16 landowner to get access to tell you what they're up
17 to, and through that communication they give you the
18 option.

19 And normally what happens is that the
20 landowner says, okay, I would like to keep that fill
21 and I'd like you to put it over here in this one
22 certain spot. And our crews do that, they scrape it
23 up, they put it in a truck or a skid steer or
24 something and move it to the place that you want it,
25 as long as that's not a wetland we'll put it

1 anywhere you want it. Or if you don't want the
2 fill, our crews will carry it off site and dispose
3 of it in an appropriate place, a gravel pit or
4 someplace else where soil can be disposed of.

5 And your questions about soil compaction
6 kind of go back to the need to bring concrete out to
7 each one of these foundation areas, and it is true
8 that it requires multiple passes with concrete
9 trucks to build these structures. They're built on
10 concrete foundations that are drilled deep into the
11 ground, so a hole is drilled and a rebar cage is
12 inserted into that hole and then the hole is filled
13 with concrete and that does require multiple passes
14 with concrete trucks. The good part of that is that
15 the poles and the structures end up being very, very
16 strong. And there was some questions earlier about
17 whether the pole tips over. And because of the way
18 these poles are constructed is that they don't tip
19 over. I mean, we've got pictures of these kind of
20 poles in areas where tornados have gone through,
21 everything else is gone except the poles, the poles
22 are still standing, these are very, very strong
23 structures, they don't fall over.

24 But getting back to your questions about
25 construction. If the soil gets compacted by that

1 repeated driving over, those concrete trucks, and
2 it's not really an if, it will get compacted, but
3 the fix for that is a deep chisel plowing to take
4 that compaction out, and sometimes it takes a few
5 years of the freeze-thaw cycle to get it completely
6 out. And, you know, in the case of that happening,
7 the chisel plowing is done at the utility's expense
8 and there even is a provision to give you a crop
9 damage allowance for that few years of reduced yield
10 on that area where it was compacted.

11 So, again, this is another example of the
12 landowner having to be made whole from any damage
13 that's done by our process. We've done this enough
14 to know what the damages are and how to fix them and
15 what the appropriate compensation is for the
16 landowner.

17 And another part of your question was
18 about electric fences, and that's a really good
19 question, too, because if you have an electric fence
20 that's an insulated wire and it runs parallel with
21 the new transmission line for long enough, a current
22 can be induced on that electric fence and equipment
23 may need to be placed on that electric fence to
24 filter out that induced current. So that's
25 something that our engineers are able to look at and

1 identify beforehand and to fix it. If we come in
2 and we cause a problem with your electric fence or
3 your wiring, we fix it. That's the absolute policy
4 of the utility, if we come in and we break
5 something, we fix it.

6 MR. CURTIS KUECKER: If you tear a fence
7 down, do you replace it?

8 MR. HILLSTROM: Oh, yeah, good reminder.
9 While we're working it's very frequent that we have
10 to remove a fence to get access, and if a temporary
11 fence needs to be built, we build that. We
12 understand the need to keep your livestock in where
13 they belong. And that means that our crews have
14 done this enough to know that if they take a fence
15 down, they fix it in as good or better condition
16 when they're done. And while they're working,
17 temporary fences are established to keep the
18 livestock where they belong.

19 Was there another part that we missed?

20 MR. CURTIS KUECKER: How do you
21 compensate for woodland, where you lose the income
22 forever off that piece of property and you still pay
23 taxes on it?

24 MR. HILLSTROM: Right, and that's part of
25 the easement payment. If there is a loss in the

1 value of, say, timber, that would be reimbursed.
2 That's part of the easement compensation.

3 MR. CURTIS KUECKER: 'Cause that's gone
4 forever, you can't use that land, but you're paying
5 tax on it.

6 MR. HILLSTROM: Exactly, and that would
7 be part of the valuation.

8 MR. LANGAN: Great. Anyone else? Yes,
9 sir. I'm sorry, I'll go right behind and then back.
10 Yes, I'm sorry, you, please come on up.

11 MR. JIM SCHREADER: Me?

12 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

13 MR. JIM SCHREADER: Jim Schreader,
14 S-C-H-R-E-A-D-E-R. I have a farm just south of
15 Mazeppa, it's a century farm. The north route would
16 cut it in half and go in a couple hundred feet of
17 the house building site.

18 For Tom I question the need a little bit.
19 Last winter was the first -- for Rochester last
20 winter was the first year that Silver Lake froze
21 over, where they weren't running the power plant,
22 they didn't need the electricity.

23 And somebody else mentioned removal of
24 the poles, if they came to where they did not need
25 them. Alternative energy is very real, fuel cells

1 are a real possibility, they could replace power
2 plants completely.

3 And also I think you mentioned the PUC is
4 appointed by the governor, so could their decisions
5 be tied into politics?

6 That's it. Thanks.

7 MR. LANGAN: I think there are two parts
8 as an answer to that question. One, with the need,
9 this is a route docket here that we're looking at,
10 so we are not looking at the need of the lines.
11 That has been looked at in the certificate of need
12 process, so various alternatives for delivering the
13 energy and things like that that you suggested,
14 those have been dealt with and are not a part of
15 this -- not a part of this proceeding that we're
16 talking about tonight.

17 With your second part about the Public
18 Utilities Commission, what I can say about the
19 Public Utilities Commission is that there are
20 specific state law and rule that they use to make
21 their decision and that's what governs their
22 decision in this process. Those can be found in
23 statutes. For those of you that like to read state
24 statute, it's in 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter
25 7850, and those are the guiding regulations by which

1 the Public Utilities Commission makes these
2 determinations.

3 Okay. Sir.

4 MR. DAVID FICK: David Fick, F-I-C-K. I
5 have a lot of questions.

6 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

7 MR. DAVID FICK: So at what point in the
8 process does the landowner receive notification of
9 what kind of compensation they're going to get? Is
10 that after the thing is established?

11 MR. LANGAN: Okay. And let me understand
12 your question. At what point comments are sought
13 and how does the landowner get notified?

14 MR. DAVID FICK: No. When does the
15 landowner know how much his compensation is going to
16 be?

17 MR. LANGAN: Oh, okay. It would be after
18 our route permitting process is complete and it
19 would be after -- well, again, it would be after our
20 process is complete and then at what stage -- Tom,
21 how would you characterize the when of that
22 question?

23 MR. HILLSTROM: After the permit is
24 issued, probably pretty soon after the permit is
25 issued that easement acquisition would begin.

1 MR. DAVID FICK: How many substations
2 would there be on this route from LaCrosse up to --

3 MR. LANGAN: There would be -- there's
4 one substation near the city of Hampton, that's in
5 the --

6 MR. DAVID FICK: Yeah.

7 MR. LANGAN: Okay. And that actually is
8 a new substation that would get built as part of a
9 different project. So there's that. Then as part
10 of this one there would be another substation
11 somewhere in the area between Pine Island and
12 Zumbrota, and then from there, the 345 kilovolt line
13 would go east into the, you know, across the
14 Mississippi and into the state of Wisconsin. From
15 that new substation between Pine Island and Zumbrota
16 the 161 kilovolt line would go south to what is
17 basically northwest of Rochester to an existing
18 substation there.

19 MR. DAVID FICK: So will that substation
20 be the Plainview area?

21 MR. LANGAN: Well, okay, an electrical
22 engineer question.

23 MR. DAVID FICK: I'm wondering, I had
24 heard earlier we're going to get power from this
25 somehow. Is that through the substations; is that

1 right?

2 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, and I'm not an
3 electrical engineer, but I think the guy who could
4 answer this question best is in the back of the
5 room, his name is Grant Stevenson, but he's not
6 listening. But --

7 MR. STEVENSON: Yes, sir.

8 MR. HILLSTROM: Grant, there's a question
9 here about the idea of power, local need for power
10 like in the Plainview area here, is it served by our
11 project.

12 MR. STEVENSON: All right. I'm Grant
13 Stevenson, I'm the project manager from Xcel Energy.

14 There are five partners in the project,
15 Xcel Energy, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern
16 Minnesota Municipal Power, Wisconsin Public Power
17 and Dairyland Power Cooperative. So in this area
18 are you served by Peoples Co-op?

19 MR. DAVID FICK: Yeah.

20 MR. STEVENSON: Peoples Co-op gets their
21 power from Dairyland, who is one of the partners in
22 this project. So the benefit area for this project
23 are Rochester Public Utilities customers, Peoples
24 Co-op customers, and those are the two biggest, and
25 to some extent Xcel Energy customers because Xcel

1 Energy has territory in the Pine Island area, and
2 some of the Goodhue County Cooperative, which I
3 think borders, maybe serves into Wabasha County. So
4 for this immediate area, even though the power line
5 doesn't directly connect here, the Peoples Co-op
6 power lines come out of Rochester, generally. Our
7 power line connects into Rochester, it's transformed
8 and used in the city and it's also shipped out on
9 the Peoples Co-op lines. Does that answer your
10 question?

11 MR. DAVID FICK: Yep.

12 MR. STEVENSON: Okay.

13 MR. DAVID FICK: There was talk of a
14 second line or how it is built with the capacity for
15 a second line. Would there be additional
16 compensation at that time or is it done, you can
17 hang as many lines as you want at that point?

18 MR. HILLSTROM: The easement that we
19 would buy would be wide enough -- and I'm
20 overreaching my knowledge here a little bit -- but I
21 think that the easement we would buy, and Grant, you
22 can come in and correct me if I'm wrong here, but
23 the question is, if that second circuit were to be
24 installed one day, would there be additional
25 compensation. And my thought would be that

1 initially what we would buy would be that 150-foot
2 width that would be wide enough for us to install
3 the current project and if in the future we needed
4 to string that second 345 line, that the existing
5 easement would probably be sufficient for that, so I
6 would think that there would not be additional
7 compensation for that second 345 line.

8 MR. DAVID FICK: With the environmental
9 studies, are those considering both lines in place
10 or are the environmental studies with the single
11 line?

12 MR. LANGAN: Well, the environmental
13 studies are going to focus on this line, but
14 understanding that there will be a 150-foot
15 right-of-way. We're looking at a 1,000-foot route
16 and the environmental considerations are within
17 that. If and when -- I'm sorry. If and when a
18 second line would be proposed along here, it would
19 also require a review of that proposal as well.

20 MR. DAVID FICK: All right. Does the
21 state get any revenue from the new lines? Is it
22 taxed? I guess, I don't know, I probably should
23 have -- is power being brought into -- the power
24 comes in from Wisconsin, correct? Is that taxed or
25 anything like that? Or how does -- what's the

1 state's take on it?

2 MR. LANGAN: I don't know.

3 MR. DAVID FICK: Does it just grant
4 permission and stands back?

5 MR. LANGAN: I would certainly open it up
6 to any of my colleagues in the room that may be able
7 to answer that question. I'm sorry, I don't know
8 the answer. I can look into that for you and try to
9 provide an answer, but I just don't know.

10 MR. DAVID FICK: And I apologize again.
11 I'm new in this process, I just purchased my land
12 almost a year ago today, so I wasn't around when the
13 first assessments were done and it sounds like this
14 is a routing thing, a meeting.

15 Who can I talk to that can tell me about
16 when the assessments were done how nontransmission
17 line solutions were eliminated? Is that in a report
18 somewhere?

19 MR. LANGAN: It is. As part of the
20 certificate of need process, there is an
21 application, just somewhat similar to what is
22 submitted here when a route proposal comes up.
23 There's an application that gets processed, it goes
24 through a PUC review and approval process and is
25 ultimately granted or denied based on that review.

1 There is a link, if you go to our docket
2 page for the routing, if I'm not mistaken we have a
3 link to that docket, so you can actually just click
4 on that link on our project page and it would bring
5 you to that site and all of the materials that were
6 submitted through that process so you could look
7 through and understand that process and how the
8 decisions were made.

9 MR. DAVID FICK: Okay. Then my final
10 question is along the same lines. Who initiated
11 this whole project two years ago? Does the state
12 say, hey, I think we've got some problems here, or
13 does the utility company approach the state and say,
14 hey, you guys are deficient?

15 MR. LANGAN: It originates with the
16 utility submitting that application to us, and
17 before that application is submitted to us there's
18 studies and planning before that.

19 MR. DAVID FICK: On the utility's end?

20 MR. LANGAN: Yeah. And I think Tom will
21 be able to give you a better answer on that.

22 MR. HILLSTROM: Again, two of the people
23 here tonight did work on that certificate of need
24 effort, it's Amanda and Warren in the back of the
25 room, and of anybody, they are the two people with

1 the most knowledge of that process and they're here
2 to talk to you. So it would be a good opportunity
3 for you, after you're done with your questions here,
4 to get more details from them.

5 MR. DAVID FICK: All right. I guess
6 that's all I have then.

7 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

8 MR. STEVEN WALKER: My name is
9 Steven Walker, Zumbro Falls. I'm on the second
10 alternate route across the power dam.

11 But first I'd like to say that all the
12 routes in my area, I have lived there for 57 years,
13 and all of the neighbors really would rather not
14 have it, but we don't have a choice. But it is very
15 hard from the north group to the south group to the
16 middle group, it takes all of us. What I'm trying
17 to say is it's putting us all at odds. Because one
18 group don't want it, the other group wants it, and
19 it's making it very unfair and it makes the whole
20 neighborhood edgy. But I did -- I would like to see
21 it on the preferred route, but all the routes would
22 be impacted that it may run.

23 One of my questions is, the line that it
24 runs on, you're getting a 150-foot swipe, or 75
25 foot, that should come off of your taxes. We

1 shouldn't as farmers, or whoever, have to pay taxes
2 on it. I mean, this thing, if it would go down
3 mine, it would go a mile and a half down my fence
4 line. I'm paying taxes on that. I mean, if you
5 guys are going to have the right-of-way, why
6 shouldn't that come off of my taxes, that portion of
7 it, you know?

8 And, also, there are a lot of sinkholes.
9 And we've had terraces and waterways and ponds put
10 on that farm in 1961, that's what my dad started,
11 that project, contour strips and all that. And it
12 will jump across footsteps of my farm. And that's
13 hard, you know. I mean, you're saying in Winona
14 there's a business that is a \$15 million business
15 that's a trucking business. Okay, I would like to
16 go to that business and say has that business been
17 in business for 57 years? That's how long we've
18 owned our farm, or longer. And so why can't I put a
19 price on my farmland like they are on their
20 business? And say, hey, my property is worth this,
21 just like their business. I don't want it on my
22 property and they're saying they don't want it on
23 their property and it's going to cost too much money
24 for you guys to buy that. Why isn't the person that
25 has had the land for many years, why don't they get

1 the same rights? You know what I'm saying?

2 MR. LANGAN: I do.

3 MR. STEVEN WALKER: Because I know this
4 route at one time was going to go down 52 and
5 through Rochester and go down to 90. At one time
6 they talked about that. But it was too expensive
7 for you guys to buy property to go through Rochester
8 and nobody in Rochester wanted it.

9 Well, you're out here and you can get the
10 farmland cheaper, you don't have to put up with
11 buying homes in town and they don't have to put
12 up -- it would cost you a fortune to go through
13 town, but you can come out and buy our farmland for
14 little or nothing and put it up there. Which, is
15 that right? Is that fair?

16 And tell all of the people with the tree
17 farms and everybody here, you know, it's been -- the
18 land has been taken care of, and a lot of the people
19 here have not let houses and everything else be
20 built on their farm because they're proud of what
21 they've got and what their people before them, their
22 grandfathers and great grandfathers have owned the
23 land and have not taken the quick money and let
24 people build houses on it.

25 There's people that got a lot of pride

1 out there and still care about the land, other than
2 to just say, oh, let's put a fixture on here and the
3 next generation can put up with it. They still want
4 to look after their land and have it there for the
5 next generation. There are a few people out there
6 that are that way yet. Thank you.

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Can you answer his
9 questions about the taxes?

10 MR. STEVEN WALKER: Can you answer my
11 question on the taxes?

12 MR. HILLSTROM: I don't think I can. I
13 don't know the answer to that. But I think because
14 you still own title to the land that you would still
15 pay the taxes.

16 MR. STEVEN WALKER: But that's something
17 that as the people putting the line through, you
18 guys could look at that and say, okay, that acre of
19 land that's under that power line, we've got the
20 right-of-way, you guys could talk to the Wabasha
21 County or whatever county you're going through and
22 say this part of the land is devalued because of the
23 lines going under it, so let's see if we can get
24 that piece of land to a zero tax base for that one
25 mile or one acre or whatever, because there's a lot

1 of -- you know, it is devalued.

2 MR. HILLSTROM: That's a fair question
3 and I really don't have a solid answer to it right
4 now.

5 MR. STEVEN WALKER: Well, it could be
6 something that maybe your lawyers or something could
7 look into to see if there's something that could be
8 done about that.

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Um-hum.

10 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Sir.

11 MR. JOHN MANLEY: John Manley,
12 M-A-N-L-E-Y.

13 My question about these easements and
14 stuff is, like, I've got easements across my farm,
15 they were put in there in 1934, and they valued it
16 at that price and, like I'm saying, the taxes keep
17 going up. We should be compensated for whatever
18 your taxes go up from the time they are there. I
19 mean, it just ain't fair to the landowners that we
20 got to keep paying increase in taxes and the power
21 company keeps getting more money for the power and
22 we're getting no more compensation.

23 I mean, maybe every 10 years maybe we
24 should renegotiate for the value of the property.
25 My property, in 1934, it was probably renting for

1 maybe 3 to 10 bucks an acre. I'm getting 275 bucks
2 an acre now. So, I mean, there's a big indiscretion
3 there. They've got to think of another better way
4 for how to compensate for this farmland. It's
5 something you got to think about.

6 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Yes, sir.

7 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: My name is Steve
8 Hackman, H-A-C-K-M-A-N.

9 And I guess I'm kind of running the risk
10 of getting out of the scope of the scoping meeting,
11 but we're drifting that way anyway. So in an effort
12 to bring it back in, earlier on your slide that you
13 had a lot of topics on that you couldn't read
14 because there was so many, and one of them was
15 cultural economics, cultural -- I forget your exact
16 word.

17 And I guess what I'm seeing here is the
18 farther you get north into the country, into the
19 alternate route where I live, and it sounds like a
20 lot of these people, too, which is people have more
21 value to their land, or should I say their home,
22 than what the dollar value is, so what encourages me
23 through this whole process, I'm becoming a little
24 less worried and I'm hoping that common sense will
25 prevail. However, being a good German that looks at

1 every possible thing, I've lost sleep over the what
2 ifs, so I'd like to address the what ifs.

3 And I'd like to encourage everybody that
4 is in the what if category like myself to look into
5 what is called Buy the Farm. It's a state statute
6 under the eminent domain -- and I'm no lawyer so
7 please don't take my advice -- but basically you can
8 force them to buy the entire farm if they piece
9 chunks off.

10 Another important thing, there is
11 legislation now that in talking to my representative
12 that I understand is putting more teeth for the
13 landowner on the eminent domain law. So I would
14 encourage you to call your rep and keep it pushing
15 along. Because from what I understand, it's on the
16 governor's desk.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: It got signed today.

18 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: Excellent.
19 Perfect. All right. Well, see, somebody is looking
20 out for us, it's coming together. So, anyway,
21 that's my whole comment.

22 MR. LANGAN: It was -- well, it was
23 cultural resources, that may have been what it was,
24 but understood. Understood.

25 MR. STEPHEN HACKMAN: We're back in the

1 scope.

2 MR. LANGAN: Yes, sir.

3 MR. STEVEN WALKER: Steve Walker. And
4 with the cost of this going through, with all this,
5 everything that has to be, is this going to raise
6 the cost of our electricity? That's a good question
7 because, you know, somebody's got to pay for it.

8 MR. LANGAN: Sure.

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Tim Carlsgaard is the guy
10 in the back of the room, he knows how to answer this
11 question.

12 MR. CARLSGAARD: The answer is yes, we'll
13 all pay for it. I can only tell you that we've run
14 the numbers for Xcel Energy customers, and
15 transmission is about 7 to 10 percent of your
16 electricity bill. For these lines, now that the
17 certificate of need has been approved, we can start
18 charging back customers for the costs as we move
19 forward. And this, in 2010, for an Xcel Energy
20 customer, it's about 25 cents per month I think
21 starting in May. And at the height of construction,
22 when we're spending the most money, it'll be about a
23 \$3 per month increase.

24 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you. Other
25 comments or questions?

1 Okay. I want to thank everybody for
2 being here tonight. We appreciate the fact that
3 this is emotional for a lot of you and that a lot of
4 you have already invested a lot of time in tracking
5 this project. We've had a 12-month review that
6 we're in the middle of and I'd encourage you and ask
7 you to keep up with the project, keep participating.
8 I know that's a lot to ask, everyone is busy, have
9 their own day jobs and their own lives, but we
10 appreciate you coming out and being civil and
11 measured in your comments despite it being an
12 emotional issue.

13 So thank you very much for your
14 participation. I'll remind you that May 20th is the
15 deadline for scoping comments, so please get in any
16 comments on issues or impacts or additional
17 alternative route segments to us at that time. The
18 comments are sent to me. In the meantime, you have
19 my contact information, you have Ray's contact
20 information, so please feel free and give us a call
21 should you have any questions in the meantime.

22 Thanks again.

23 (Meeting concluded at 9:44 p.m.)

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PUBLIC COMMENTS - PINE ISLAND - 1:30 - MAY 5, 2010

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

May 5, 2010

American Legion
108 1st Avenue SE
Pine Island, Minnesota

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1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Now is the part of
2 the meeting that we want to turn it over to you for
3 your comments or your questions on the project.

4 A couple things. We'll ask that you come
5 up to the microphone to ask your question, give your
6 comment. If you're unable to come up to the mic,
7 just let us know and we can bring back a cordless,
8 but we'd like you to come up.

9 We do have a court reporter here today
10 and something that I like to mention at these
11 meetings is that some people feel, when they hear a
12 court reporter, it makes it seem real formal and
13 that's not the image we want to portray. It just --
14 it makes it easier for me to answer your question
15 without trying to also scribble down notes about
16 what your presentation was and Janet can accurately
17 get your comments down so that it's not my
18 interpretation of what your question or comment was.
19 And it helps us in the scoping process, again, you
20 know, getting an accurate read of what your question
21 or your comment was and so we can consider that in
22 the scope.

23 With that, we ask that you state and
24 spell your name when you come up for your question
25 or comment. We do ask that one person speaks at a

1 time so the court reporter can accurately get your
2 comments or questions down, and it is a real help to
3 come up and walk to the mic, walk up to the mic for
4 Janet. Thanks.

5 Okay. Chuck Dewitz.

6 MR. CHARLES DEWITZ: That's me.

7 MR. LANGAN: Yes, sir. Please.

8 MR. CHARLES DEWITZ: My name is Charles,
9 C-H-A-R-L-E-S, Dewitz, D-E-W-I-T-Z. I live at 57161
10 351st Avenue in Rochester, 55906.

11 And I know I've had Tom and I think Grant
12 both that came out and looked at my property, so I
13 think they know where I'm at, but I'm on the
14 alternative route, the alternate route, I'm not on
15 the preferred route, I guess is how it came out.

16 And I just have a few questions or I
17 guess a few concerns. I don't know when this all
18 started, you know, I just built a new house and I
19 spent close to a year trying to find a perfect spot,
20 and now I have a route that is an alternate route
21 but it comes right across the back of my place
22 across my driveway. I've got 400-some acres, so it
23 doesn't go on our property line, it just goes pretty
24 much willy nilly across the middle of my property.
25 I would rather it go on a property line. I realize

1 it's going to go through someplace, I don't want to
2 just shove it off on a neighbor, I just want to see
3 it put in in the correct spot, the right spot.

4 And I have the concerns of where it's
5 going now, with being in the middle of the property,
6 it cuts across some of my ag fields, it comes across
7 my pasture right behind my house, right over the top
8 of the pond, it crosses a trout stream, the Hammond
9 Creek trout stream, it's a designated trout stream
10 right off of County Road 11 right out of Hammond. I
11 don't know if that's ever been looked at before by
12 the DNR.

13 I guess I'd just really like to see it at
14 least put on a property line if it's going to be a
15 routed on my property, you know. I couldn't tell
16 you where I'd like it to go, I don't want to say it
17 should go this way or that way, I guess. I don't
18 know. So that's about it.

19 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Thank you for
20 that comment. And it did bring to mind one thing,
21 so I appreciate that.

22 We talk about the public review of this
23 project, and in that review it's not only just
24 individual landowners that we're asking for
25 questions, it is public wide, it is federal

1 agencies, it's state agencies, county governments,
2 and we work very closely with our other state
3 agencies, including the Department of Natural
4 Resources, MnDOT, the Pollution Control Agency, and
5 they all participate very closely in this. So
6 they're in the scoping process as well and we
7 anticipate getting their comments on issues such as
8 trout streams and the like. So I just wanted to
9 clarify that, that we do -- it is sort of a public
10 wide scoping process, a public wide review process,
11 and those agencies and governments do participate in
12 the review of these projects. Thank you for your
13 comments.

14 That was the only speaker that
15 registered, but we will make sure that we get to
16 everyone today. What I'll ask, and we'll see how
17 this goes, but what I'll ask is that you just raise
18 your hand and we'll call you up to the microphone if
19 you have a question or comment.

20 So I've got to taker right back there.
21 Please, sir.

22 MR. ERNIE BAKKE: I'm Ernie Bakke,
23 B-A-K-K-E. I live at 3694 White Bridge Road
24 Northwest in Oronoco.

25 Our home is in Section 9 in the southeast

1 corridor and we're right along County Road 12. And
2 the preferred route at this time comes around, it
3 zigzags around and comes from the north and it goes
4 right down the east side of the property line, the
5 full length of the property line. Now, the property
6 is only 40 rods wide, which is 660 feet. And it
7 ends up, then, that it'll only be a couple hundred
8 feet from my buildings, the home and buildings.

9 And the question is, when you consider
10 homes, what is the distance that you've set back
11 from the line, for a 345 kV line? Because I
12 personally don't know what the number is, but it
13 certainly seems like it's way too close to my
14 property. And I certainly am concerned because of
15 the adverse effect on the resale and the value. And
16 that's really my comments.

17 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you. And I
18 detected there were a couple questions in there,
19 too.

20 MR. ERNIE BAKKE: The one question was
21 when, you know, you zigzag the routes around, what
22 distance do you try to keep from homes? And there
23 must be an impact that's both environmental wise and
24 property value wise, depending on the distance. And
25 I've never heard of a distance.

1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. I'll answer the
2 portion about property values to begin with and
3 then, Tom, if you want to talk about the
4 right-of-way and the distance from homes.

5 Property values is something that we will
6 look at in our environmental document. There are
7 some studies out there that have been conducted, a
8 recent one by the University of California at
9 Berkley that we use, but a host of others that we
10 use to look at the effects on property value, of a
11 transmission line being routed through.

12 And that most recent study that I talked
13 about looks at it from a variety of angles. It's
14 the value of the property, it's the resale ability
15 of the property, you know, whether the line was
16 existing when someone bought a house or whether it
17 was planned when somebody was considering buying a
18 house.

19 And so that's one key study amongst many
20 of them that we take a look at to assess that in our
21 environmental document. Some from our office's --
22 for our work, we will look at that in the
23 environmental document and provide information for
24 you to review in that draft document.

25 And, again, when that draft document

1 comes out, if there's more information you're
2 looking for, you can provide us comments and we can
3 try to do some more digging if there's more you'd
4 like to know about that issue. And in terms of the
5 proximity to homes and the right-of-way required for
6 this, I'll turn it over to Tom to answer that
7 question.

8 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, I can answer the
9 question directly, as far as the minimum distance
10 that the line can be adjacent to a home. And that's
11 75 feet. And that's the distance that we need for
12 safety clearances from the electric wires. And our
13 345 line needs a 150-foot corridor and we buy that
14 easement that covers that 150-foot width. And that
15 easement requires a removal of any tall-growing
16 trees and it also can't have any structures in
17 there, just to maintain that electrical clearance.
18 So that's the minimum distance.

19 But when we developed these routes, we
20 really did our best to minimize the number of homes
21 that we go by and to maximize the distance between
22 the homes and the lines. And it was a very
23 important criteria for us as we developed these
24 routes. In fact, if you look in the permit
25 application, the tables that we used to show the

1 data that's associated with each one of these
2 routes, there's a column in each of those tables
3 that shows the number of homes adjacent to each
4 route for the various couple of different distance
5 intervals. So it's an important criteria and we did
6 our best when we developed these routes to minimize
7 the number of homes that are near the routes.

8 MR. LANGAN: And I'll just add to that,
9 too. From the Public Utilities Commission
10 standpoint, that is one of the factors they consider
11 when they're approving a particular route, is the
12 distance, the distance to homes and the number of
13 homes within various distances of the line. So that
14 is an important consideration in determining which
15 route gets selected at the end of the review
16 process.

17 Okay. Other -- yes, please.

18 MS. MARLENE DEBOEF: Marlene Deboef,
19 D-E-B-O-E-F. I live in Roscoe Township, Section 16.
20 We're probably a mile and a half from any of the
21 proposed route or the alternate route. But I have a
22 couple general questions.

23 One is, what is it going to look like?
24 Some of the ones, like the one that crosses County
25 Road 11 now, is a very big structure that, you know,

1 it's like almost a U-shape. There's this picture on
2 your mailing. So I would like to know what it's
3 going to look like.

4 MR. LANGAN: Would you like me to answer
5 that and then you can ask your other questions?

6 MS. MARLENE DEBOEF: Yes.

7 MR. LANGAN: I'll take a crack at it, and
8 if there's anything Tom wants to add to it. But it
9 is the picture that you see there, and the picture
10 she's holding up is of a single pole tower. You've
11 probably seen multiple configurations on the
12 landscape of transmission lines and some have an H
13 frame with wooden poles to it, others look like an
14 erector set type, almost a lattice type of a tower.
15 In this case it's single pole and so that picture
16 you have there is accurate, a single pole. And for
17 the 345 line, the height, the maximum height would
18 be 170 feet tall, for the 161 line the maximum
19 height is 110 feet tall.

20 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, with an average of
21 about 80 feet tall.

22 MR. LANGAN: But more on average of an
23 80-foot tall pole. And those, again, would be the
24 single pole structure.

25 MR. HILLSTROM: That's right.

1 MS. MARLENE DEBOEF: The other question I
2 had is about wetlands. You know, I assume you work
3 with the DNR if there are wetlands that need to be
4 crossed or poles put in?

5 MR. LANGAN: We do. And there are, in
6 addition to DNR, there's the Board of Water and Soil
7 Resources, there's the local county governments that
8 review those, and the Army Corps of Engineers as
9 well.

10 So based on the type of wetland, a
11 certain body may have -- a certain agency may have
12 jurisdiction over approval authority for any effects
13 or any crossings of those wetlands.

14 For the DNR specifically, if it's a
15 public water wetland, they have permitting authority
16 over anything that would cross that water or
17 basically affect the basin of that water. I know in
18 this application, and typically utilities try to
19 span wetland complexes, or individual wetland so
20 that the poles are not placed within the wetland.
21 In some cases it is necessary to put a pole in the
22 wetland and there is certain procedures to reduce
23 the impact there. But a utility would need a permit
24 from DNR in this case, if we use that example, they
25 would need a permit even to cross that public water.

1 Part of the review by other state
2 agencies that work with us on this overall review is
3 to state whether or not a project is permissible.
4 And so part of that information that we put together
5 in the environmental document helps them understand
6 the project and see whether that's a permissible
7 project for their own individual permits, rather
8 than just the overall route permit, they each have
9 their own approval authorities, and so wetlands is
10 something that we look at very closely in our
11 document.

12 MS. MARLENE DEBOEF: One more question.
13 There's a preferred route and an alternate route and
14 you said that they had to present two. But is the
15 preferred route the really preferred route and the
16 alternate is just because you have to have a second?

17 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for asking that
18 question. Minnesota law asks the utility to name
19 one route a preferred route. But that they need to
20 also establish an alternate to that route so they
21 need to propose the two routes.

22 Each route, you know, one is called the
23 preferred, one is called the alternative; however,
24 both are reviewed using the same criteria. So in
25 the Public Utilities Commission's eyes, there's not

1 necessarily a preferred route in their eyes, they
2 don't give special preference to that. They're
3 using the same criteria as they review each proposed
4 route.

5 And that would include, if other route
6 segments or route alternatives are suggested and
7 included in the scope, they would review those under
8 the exact same criteria, looking for how many houses
9 does it pass and within what distance, what are the
10 natural resource affects associated with that, what
11 percentage of the line follows existing corridors.
12 So all of the routes that we end up studying in our
13 environmental document are reviewed by the same
14 criteria.

15 MS. MARLENE DEBOEF: Thank you.

16 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

17 Please.

18 MS. SUE HINRICHS: Sue Hinrichs,
19 H-I-N-R-I-C-H-S. I know you mentioned this earlier
20 in the meeting about the wind companies. Now, the
21 wind company, Horizon, that's going in, that's
22 supposedly going in, can they hook up into your
23 substation?

24 MR. LANGAN: Tom, do we have -- do you
25 have somebody that can answer that?

1 MR. HILLSTROM: Grant, do you want to
2 take that one?

3 MR. STEVENSON: Sure. Can you repeat the
4 question?

5 MS. SUE HINRICHS: The question is, can
6 the wind development company tap into your
7 substations that you have proposed, the two
8 substations?

9 MR. STEVENSON: I'm Grant Stevenson, I
10 work for Xcel Energy and I'm the project manager.

11 And the answer is yes. There's a process
12 by which a wind company, large or small, need to
13 make an application to a utility oversight group
14 called the Midwest Independent System Operator and
15 go through several study steps. And that is the
16 process by which they determine where they would
17 connect. So, yes, they could propose to connect
18 into any of the transmission lines that you see in
19 the area.

20 MS. SUE HINRICHS: Thank you.

21 MR. LANGAN: Sir.

22 MR. BOB BIRD: My name is Bob Bird,
23 B-I-R-D. I'm on 52 and I'm one of the eight houses
24 where you're looking at taking the whole thing if
25 they pass within that 75 foot, so I'm kind of

1 wondering how we're going to get compensated and who
2 all has to get involved in this.

3 MR. LANGAN: One second.

4 Okay. I guess we have to get pretty
5 close to the microphone so everyone can hear.

6 MR. BOB BIRD: I'm one of the eight
7 houses that you guys are looking at transitioning on
8 52 there. And we want to know what's going on, how
9 are we going to be compensated, what are you going
10 to replace, what are you taking? If you want 75
11 foot that denotes the whole home place, so we want
12 to have somebody tell us what's going on with that.

13 MR. LANGAN: Sure. Tom, if you want to
14 take that question.

15 MR. HILLSTROM: The routes that we've
16 shown on our maps have been looked at by our
17 engineers and they've done a preliminary engineering
18 design on those. Based on that preliminary
19 engineering design, we would not need to take any
20 houses out of the way. In other words, the houses
21 are more than 75 feet from where we would propose to
22 put the lines. So, the line will fit there, but in
23 some cases there are houses pretty close to the line
24 and there's tree clearing associated with the route.
25 And in most cases we were able to go to the other

1 side of the road to avoid those kind of situations,
2 but there may be some situations where we can't do
3 that.

4 In the case where we can't do that, the
5 line would fit through there, and then you would
6 have to be compensated for that easement purchase.
7 And there is a provision in the law, it's called the
8 Buy the Farm provision, where if you're not happy
9 with how that line sits on your property, you can
10 ask the utility to purchase your entire parcel. So
11 that is an option for a landowner.

12 MR. BOB BIRD: Okay. How are we
13 compensated for crop loss? Is that through a local
14 elevator or what?

15 MR. HILLSTROM: I'm not exactly sure how
16 they calculate the dollar value for crop loss, but
17 it's done based on some sort of an agricultural
18 estimate, it's commonly used estimate, it's a fair
19 payment. If you're interested in exactly how it's
20 calculated, our right-of-way agent is in the back of
21 the room and she can describe the details of that.

22 MR. BOB BIRD: Okay. And how much room
23 are they going to be taking up to erect this stuff?

24 MR. HILLSTROM: For construction?

25 MR. BOB BIRD: You got six poles on the

1 land already and if you're taking all of those out
2 and hanging these new ones up, you know, it's --

3 MR. HILLSTROM: Okay.

4 MR. BOB BIRD: It's not going to be done
5 in the driveway, so I was kind of wondering.

6 MR. HILLSTROM: So your question is
7 during the construction how much room is going to be
8 taken up?

9 MR. BOB BIRD: Yeah.

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, that 150-foot
11 easement that we build the line in is enough space
12 for us to work within, so it's very rare that we'd
13 need to use land outside of that easement area.

14 MR. BOB BIRD: Yeah, you got to come
15 look, 'cause that's not how the numbers are. 'Cause
16 the poles are already on the 75-foot and 80-foot
17 line there. 'Cause you said MnDOT gave you guys
18 five foot back towards the highway in the document,
19 and we're inside of that easily.

20 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, there are cases
21 where there are some site-specific concerns, and
22 maybe what we can do is after the formal part of
23 this meeting you can show me exactly where you live
24 and we can talk about that.

25 MR. BOB BIRD: Okay. Thanks.

1 MR. LANGAN: Yes, sir.

2 MR. DAVID ARNDT: David Arndt, A-R-N-D-T.

3 I have the sheet map that was given a
4 long time ago and on sheet map 17 is where my
5 property is. And I was wondering if the larger
6 kilovolt line would be able to go further north to
7 get it away from Pine Island, the city of Pine
8 Island, and it would just so happen that it would
9 remove it from my land too. But if that could not
10 be done, they do head south on the east perimeter of
11 one of our properties, and it's a quarter of a mile
12 that they go south and then they go right through
13 the middle of my other property, and I was wondering
14 if they could go to 500th Street and Number 11, at
15 least they could follow the property lines. And
16 I've talked to my neighbor, Norm Miller, and he said
17 it would be all right with him to follow the north
18 line on his 80 that's next to mine, because it would
19 have to go through his other land on the other side
20 of 220th Avenue and it would go through his land no
21 matter which way it went through. So those are my
22 comments.

23 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you very much.
24 There's some scuttling around, I think we're going
25 to try and fix the mic a little bit here.

1 MR. HILLSTROM: I'm going to see if this
2 mic works a little better.

3 MR. LANGAN: I think we just need to get
4 up as close to the microphone as we can, but it
5 sounds like this is working better.

6 Okay. Yes, sir.

7 MR. NORM MILLER: Norm Miller,
8 M-I-L-L-E-R. And I live in Section 26 of Pine
9 Island Township. I am Mr. Arndt's neighbor and
10 actually I had another question too. Can I farm
11 right up to the base of the tower if it's on my
12 property?

13 MR. HILLSTROM: (Nods yes.)

14 MR. NORM MILLER: And in reference to
15 what Dave said, I would like to see that line moved
16 some so that it follows the half section line
17 instead of going on a quarter section line, so maybe
18 you could take a look at that sometime and see if
19 that would be feasible.

20 MR. HILLSTROM: (Nods yes.)

21 MR. NORM MILLER: And if I have any
22 neighbors that would rather have it on their
23 property, you can have it. Thank you.

24 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Just to clarify,
25 we got a nod to the answer, but yes, the answer was

1 interference -- this thing is cutting out -- if
2 there is interference, will the power company
3 mitigate the problem in some way?

4 MR. LANGAN: I'm going to turn that over
5 to Tom because there are ways to mitigate or avoid
6 those types of issues.

7 MR. HILLSTROM: Grant.

8 MR. STEVENSON: Okay. Our general train
9 of thought is if we break it, we fix it. So if we
10 cause interference, it's our obligation to fix it.

11 Now, we can look later, you know, some of
12 you who have suggested alternate routes, we can
13 print out maps and help you mark them out, and in
14 your case, try to look in the proximity.

15 The only instance I've heard of any
16 radio, telephone, cell phone type interference is in
17 the direct shadow of a pole. And then that's even
18 very rare. We've had other instances where a gas
19 station was concerned about satellite reception, all
20 their credit card transactions go over the satellite
21 system. They had their antennas on the ground, I'm
22 used to seeing them on the roof. Today, down in
23 Jackson, Minnesota, their satellite antennas are
24 looking right through the wires and they've not
25 reported any problems. So theoretically it's

1 possible, but very unlikely. And if there is a
2 problem, we feel like we're obligated to remedy the
3 situation.

4 And on the microphone, it may be -- these
5 things are very directional, so when you turn to the
6 side it might not pick you guys up very well, so
7 that will help.

8 MR. QUINN FEUERSTEIN: That's what I was
9 doing.

10 MR. STEVENSON: So eat the microphone, is
11 what I was always told.

12 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Other comments or
13 questions?

14 Okay. Yes, please, down here.

15 MR. TOM WYASKE: Tom Wytaske,
16 W-Y-T-A-S-K-E. I'm on the 161 K alternate route.
17 Right now I have a 345 and a 69 K on my property. I
18 live in the city limits of Pine Island, which is 810
19 Fifth Street Southwest.

20 A couple of questions. What is the
21 easement width for the 161 and what distance does it
22 have to be from an existing line? And if that land
23 is development land for single-family housing, can a
24 street be built under the power lines, parallel,
25 directly under, or do they have to be out of the

1 150?

2 Let's see. If it does come that way, can
3 the 161 be added to the 345? Can it follow the 69 K
4 route instead of along the 345? And if you do come
5 out there, can it be on the west side, at least?

6 Now, my comments. I'm a customer, a
7 shareholder, I'm a birder and I ride bike, cycles.
8 Of course, this involves the Douglas Trail. As a
9 customer and shareholder, with the alternate route
10 there's extra costs which comes out of my pocket,
11 either way, as a customer and shareholder. As a
12 birder and a bicyclist, the preferred route is the
13 shorter distance touching the Douglas Trail. I
14 would definitely prefer having it go to the third.
15 And besides, I already have two lines on my
16 property, I don't want another one. Thanks.

17 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for those
18 comments. And I think, Tom, that's a 10-part
19 question to you.

20 MR. TOM WYTASKE: Go one by one.

21 MR. HILLSTROM: I'll do my best to
22 remember all the parts.

23 The first question was what's the
24 right-of-way on a 161 line. And we talked about the
25 345 being 150 feet, a 161 line would be an 80-foot

1 right-of-way width. And another thing that you
2 asked about is if that 161 line were built next to
3 an existing transmission line, how close could it
4 get to that existing transmission line. And in this
5 case I think you're talking about an area where
6 there's already a 345 line, so I'm just going to
7 talk in generalities here, I'm not the engineer, and
8 even if I was an engineer I'd have to do some
9 calculations to really answer that question. But
10 assuming you have a 150-foot right-of-way for an
11 existing transmission line and you wanted to build a
12 new line next to it on an 80-foot easement, then if
13 you add those two together it would give you 150
14 plus 80 feet, which would be a 230-foot wide
15 easement.

16 Now, some of that easement can be
17 overlapped. So what I'm saying is that there is an
18 amount of that easement that can be overlapped so
19 that the 161 line can be built a bit closer to the
20 345 line if it were built right next to it. And I'm
21 not exactly sure of just how much closer it can be
22 built. Maybe 30 feet, maybe that 230 feet could be
23 narrowed down to 200 feet. But, again, that would
24 be a question that an engineer would have to
25 calculate.

1 In the area that you asked about, you
2 asked if a new 161 line could be built onto the
3 existing 345 line. And it could, but we did not
4 propose that because it's very expensive to do that.
5 In a case where we're building a new 345 line and we
6 want to build a smaller line onto the structures
7 that we're building the new line on, well, then,
8 that just involves removing some smaller structures
9 and putting it on the big structure that we're
10 building there anyways.

11 In this case, where we're building a
12 smaller line and adding a bigger line to it, that
13 would mean that we'd have to build very much bigger
14 structures than we would if we just built the small
15 line. So it adds a whole lot of costs. And we had
16 this question last night, too, and Grant gave me
17 this calculation about how much more it would cost.
18 And the 161 kilovolt lines generally cost \$600,000
19 per mile. The 345/161 double circuit would cost
20 about a million and a half dollars per mile. So
21 what that tells me is that the idea of consolidating
22 a smaller line with an existing bigger line adds
23 about \$900,000 per mile. So that's the reason we
24 didn't propose it, just because it does have that
25 extra cost. And in our judgment, that cost wasn't

1 the line.

2 MR. HILLSTROM: And the last question was
3 can streets be built, or can these lines be built
4 next to streets. And the answer is yes.

5 In the case of a 161 line, the 80-foot
6 easement that would be needed, up to half of that
7 easement can be shared with a road right-of-way. So
8 there obviously has to be some safety clearance
9 between the travel lane and an obstruction, but just
10 whatever is needed outside of that safety clearance,
11 the pole could be built so that the base of the pole
12 is right on that property boundary between the road
13 right-of-way and the private property, so about half
14 of that easement would share with the road
15 right-of-way.

16 MR. TOM WYTASKE: I have one more
17 question. The last question is the Douglas Trail.
18 If it follows the Douglas Trail, are trees going to
19 have to be removed or how far away will it be from
20 the trail?

21 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, in some cases trees
22 would have to be removed. Where we did parallel
23 that trail with the route, we did our best to -- in
24 some places there are roads that are parallel with
25 the trail and there's a gap between the roads and

1 the tree line, and then there are other places where
2 the line could be built away from the trail. And
3 it's sort of a tradeoff. The pole bases would be
4 farther in the agricultural field to save the trees,
5 and it's something that still has not been
6 determined. It's sort of one of those tradeoffs.
7 You could clear the trees or you could end up with a
8 pole more in the middle of somebody's field, so
9 that's something that would have to be determined
10 still.

11 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

12 Other questions? Yes, sir.

13 MR. DAVID ARNDT: Dave Arndt, A-R-N-D-T.
14 I'm representing the township this time.

15 And there are several -- well, actually,
16 500th Street and 210th Avenue that the 161 kilovolt
17 line will go on, and I was wondering, you kind of
18 touched on it, that you can take half the
19 right-of-way. Which side of the road do you go on
20 then for the other half of the right-of-way you
21 need? I just so happen to have land where that is,
22 too.

23 MR. HILLSTROM: What we show on the maps
24 back there, in the middle of our routes is the
25 center line. And in a case where there's a house on

1 one side of the road and there's no house on the
2 other side of the road, it's just logical for us to
3 be on the opposite side of the road.

4 Now, there are some places where it costs
5 a lot of money and it's not acceptable to the road
6 authority to make a lot of those zigzags, but on
7 these 161 lines and on these smaller roads, the
8 township roads and the county roads, it is -- it's
9 quite easy to cross over the road. Where you go
10 down one side of the road and there's a house with
11 some trees around it, we understand the value of
12 those shelter belts and you don't want the trees
13 removed around your house, and so in that case we
14 understand that it's best to go on the other side of
15 the road. So where there is that opportunity to go
16 on the other side of the road, well, that's where
17 we'll go.

18 MR. LANGAN: Other questions or comments?

19 MR. ZACK GROVE: Can I have the cordless?

20 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

21 MR. ZACK GROVE: My name is Zack Grove.
22 I live at 16016 445th Street, Section 26, Minneola
23 Township.

24 MR. LANGAN: Can you spell your name?

25 MR. ZACK GROVE: G-R-O-V-E. And I guess

1 where the line's coming out of Hampton, it crosses
2 the Zumbro River and then it turns and heads south
3 going -- not going through Zumbrota. And I guess
4 the impact of that, I don't understand what the --
5 with the easement already being there with 52, why
6 they're not taking that. It's going across an
7 active gravel pit, going by the preferred route, so
8 what are the impacts of that, too?

9 MR. LANGAN: Thanks. Tom, do you want to
10 talk about that?

11 MR. HILLSTROM: Sure. And the area that
12 you're talking about is coming down 52 just north of
13 Zumbrota where our preferred route goes off of 52
14 and goes straight south just west of Zumbrota. We
15 looked at the idea of continuing on 52 through
16 Zumbrota, and that's a fair comment, because of our
17 emphasis on following roads and those existing
18 corridors, but we found -- or in our analysis it
19 seemed better to follow that property boundary route
20 that does deviate from Highway 52 to the south, and
21 for a couple of reasons.

22 One of the reasons is in our substation
23 siting area it works best to come into a substation
24 from the west and you exit from the east, instead
25 of, if we had stayed on 52 all the way down to the

1 substation siting area, we would have a line that
2 would have to come from 52 into the substation and
3 back out on that same path. And so just from a
4 routing standpoint and a substation configuration
5 standpoint, it was better to us to come into that
6 substation from the west and that meant having to
7 get off of 52 at some point and come into that
8 substation siting area from the west. So that was
9 one consideration.

10 The other consideration was that there
11 are some obstructions and some buildings through
12 Zumbrota, we found that property boundary to be
13 fairly clear of houses and buildings, not completely
14 clear, but in our analysis and, like I said, we go
15 by kind of a systematic, scientific analysis, that
16 oftentimes doesn't take into account local knowledge
17 and local values. But in our systematic analysis we
18 made the judgment that that route on property
19 boundaries west of Zumbrota was better than
20 continuing on Highway 52.

21 MR. ZACK GROVE: I guess you're following
22 it through Cannon Falls, which is a much heavily
23 populated area than going through Zumbrota. And
24 also touch on and going across a gravel pit. Is it
25 a pole you're going to move as they're mining

1 material out, or where are you at with that?

2 MR. HILLSTROM: That's a fair question
3 and that would have to be worked out with the owner
4 of the gravel pit. We have not talked to them yet.
5 What we would have to do is every 1,000 feet or so
6 we would have to place a structure. And so that
7 gives us some pretty good flexibility to span areas
8 that are being worked in the gravel pit, but we want
9 to be staying away from unstable soils or things
10 like that, so that still has to be worked out.

11 And your question about Cannon Falls.
12 You're right about that, we do stay on Highway 52
13 through Cannon Falls, and the main reason for that
14 is the Cannon River and the Little Cannon River go
15 near Cannon Falls and we need to get across the
16 Cannon River as well. And when we come to a river
17 crossing, the best place to cross that river to
18 minimize the impact of the river and Lake Byllesby
19 would be to stay on an existing crossing of that
20 river. And the existing crossing that was there,
21 that we saw as an opportunity, is Highway 52. And
22 if you follow Highway 52 across the Cannon River,
23 that puts you kind of right in the middle of Cannon
24 Falls. And so that's why we made the judgment that
25 staying on Highway 52 through Cannon Falls was the

1 best route there.

2 MR. LANGAN: Sir.

3 MR. DAN RUDE: Hi. Dan Rude, I'm Zack's
4 father-in-law. R-U-D-E.

5 And what about induction? They're going
6 to have a baby here in a month and the line is 75
7 feet from their house. That kid will not be able to
8 play out there.

9 MR. LANGAN: For my part, we do evaluate
10 any potential human health effects associated with
11 the line.

12 MR. DAN RUDE: Have you ever been
13 underneath a transmission line?

14 MR. LANGAN: I have. I have.

15 MR. DAN RUDE: You know what I'm talking
16 about then.

17 MR. LANGAN: This is an issue that's been
18 studied extensively and it's been studied for about
19 30 years. The information that we use in studying
20 it is studies from the World Health Organization,
21 from the Minnesota Department of Health, also in
22 sort of the five state region, those states have
23 studied it as well. And so we draw from those
24 studies and that information in our environmental
25 document that we'll put together in draft form.

1 If there's more information that's out
2 there that we miss, we'd like to hear from folks and
3 we can incorporate that, we can review that and
4 include that information, respond to those questions
5 in the final environmental impact statement. So
6 that is an issue that we look real closely at.

7 MR. DAN RUDE: Okay. And what impact
8 does it have, like, if you've got a certified
9 organic farm?

10 MR. LANGAN: That's an issue we can
11 study. And we've got that down as a comment. If
12 there are certified organic farms along the route,
13 certainly ones that you know of or that other folks
14 know of, we'd like to know about them. And we can
15 look at that and see how -- if that's compatible
16 with that land use and what potential effects there
17 are there and ways to avoid or mitigate those
18 impacts.

19 MR. DAN RUDE: And you talk about tree
20 trimming. If it is a certified organic farm, you
21 can't be spraying, because now you're taking -- I
22 mean, there's a lot of land that's involved with
23 that then. Do they do that? Do they not spray?

24 MR. LANGAN: Tom, if you will, you can
25 talk about the operations.

1 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah. And I, myself,
2 have not run across a project that had to go across
3 an organic farm, but I have heard of others that
4 have, so my knowledge is kind of secondhand.

5 But we can't jeopardize your organic farm
6 standing. And that would mean that, you know,
7 during construction, you know, if we pass from one
8 farm that's not organic to a farm that is organic,
9 we would have to comply with anything that was
10 required to make sure that we didn't track any
11 chemicals onto that organic farm. And the same with
12 the spraying, I mean, if you have an organic farm,
13 it just makes sense that we wouldn't go spraying
14 pesticides through that area, so we would not do
15 that.

16 MR. DAN RUDE: Okay. And then who
17 decides the fair market value when you do these
18 assessments and pay for easements?

19 MR. HILLSTROM: The utilities, once they
20 get a permit, they can't build the line unless we
21 get an easement. So what happens after we get a
22 permit, a right-of-way agent will go out and
23 approach the landowners and discuss an offer with
24 them. And the utility will make an offer to the
25 landowner and the landowner can look at the offer

1 and discuss that with the utilities. And in the
2 end, if the land-owning utility can't arrive at an
3 agreed on price -- and normally we can, I mean, this
4 is usually -- we do this a lot and it's very rare
5 that a price isn't negotiated, and we have a very
6 strong track record of giving fair easement
7 payments.

8 MR. DAN RUDE: You haven't met my wife.

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, in the case that
10 the utility and the landowner can't agree on a
11 price, then the landowner has the option of bringing
12 the process to the eminent domain proceeding. And
13 that's a proceeding where an independent commission
14 is convened, where you get three local appraisers
15 from your neighborhood and they hear both sides of
16 the story and in the end they are the one that will
17 agree on the price.

18 MR. DAN RUDE: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Other questions or
20 comments?

21 MR. CHARLES DEWITZ: Yeah, I got another
22 issue, I guess, on the smaller line. I'm Charles
23 Dewitz again.

24 And I've got a platted subdivision and I
25 have an almost 400-acre general development plan

1 done on 60th Avenue in Rochester. And I was kind of
2 wondering, I know there's the 161 volt line that is
3 going to come up through there, what side of 60th
4 Avenue that that line might be on?

5 We have some commercial districts on that
6 property that have gone through the general
7 development stage, and it's a special zoning, it's
8 called a special district that we have down there
9 that requires some closer setbacks, closer to the
10 property lines than farther away. And that would
11 really impact. We could have a five-story building
12 in that commercial area right up to the property
13 line, and I don't want anybody reaching out the
14 window and touching a high voltage line either.

15 So just kind of wondering maybe if that
16 could be taken into account when they're looking at
17 what side of 60th Avenue to place that line. And I
18 know I've talked to people before on it, and yet you
19 can move them, but I also heard, you know, it's
20 probably \$75,000 each time you want to jog one for
21 another pole there, keep winding it back and forth
22 across the road. So it's a money issue also, but it
23 would have a big impact on us, where we've already
24 given the right-of-ways, dedicated them, they're
25 drawn out, it would make a big impact on our

1 commercial development there. Thanks.

2 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Other questions
3 or comments?

4 Okay. If no one has any more questions
5 or comments, we will be around if you want to have
6 conversations with us individually. We've still got
7 the maps set up in the back of the room, we've got
8 the computer set up for individual maps if that
9 would help with the comments that you provide in
10 writing, we're happy to print you out some maps.

11 But a couple things. One, remember that
12 written comments are due to us by May 20th at this
13 stage, and to encourage you, if you want to continue
14 to track the review process, to sign up on our
15 project mailing list so we can get you materials as
16 you go through.

17 With that, thank you very much for
18 attending today, we appreciate it. Thank you.

19 (Meeting concluded at 3:26 p.m.)
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PUBLIC COMMENTS - PINE ISLAND - 6:30 - MAY 5, 2010

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

May 5, 2010

American Legion
108 1st Avenue Southeast
Pine Island, Minnesota

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1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. So we'll open it up
2 for comments and/or questions. And again, what I'll
3 ask that you do is just come up to the microphone in
4 front. It makes it easier for the court reporter to
5 get your information down. What we ask is that you
6 state your name when you come up and then spell your
7 name as well, so we can jot that down and not mangle
8 the spelling of the name. And we'll ask that folks
9 speak one at a time up here. And what else?
10 Anything else? Okay.

11 And the way we'll handle this is I do
12 have some speakers who have registered on the
13 speaker cards. I'll call out those folks first.
14 And then after that we'll just go by a show of hands
15 and make sure that everybody gets their comments in
16 and their questions answered.

17 Also, if you're not able to come up to
18 the front to speak at the mic, you can just let us
19 know that. We can bring a cordless mic, if you're
20 not able to come up.

21 Connie. Connie Rude.

22 MS. RUDE: Connie Rude. R-U-D-E.

23 MR. LANGAN: One second. Is that not on?

24 MS. RUDE: Connie Rude. R-U-D-E.

25 My question is -- and it pertains to a

1 lot of what you said when you started off. I live
2 in that little section, that little jog coming down
3 off from 52. And we're talking about aesthetics and
4 we're talking about crossing the river. Now, when
5 we talked about coming down from Cannon Falls,
6 you're talking about a linear line, and then you get
7 to Zumbrota and you jog off from that line. And you
8 said the reason that you're not doing it in Cannon
9 Falls is -- crossing the river, but you're also
10 making another river crossing right there on the
11 Zumbro, coming to the west side of Highway 52.

12 Where we live, we worked really hard to
13 become certified organic. So the land you're
14 crossing is certified organic. My son -- son-in-law
15 and daughter built a house and you're only going to
16 be a very few feet because they're not far from that
17 half section line.

18 The hill that you're going to cross is
19 one that we use for sledding. There's been no
20 farming on that hill for as long as we've owned the
21 farm, which is over 20 years. We like to call it
22 our nature preserve. It's really going to be not
23 very pleasant to look at a gigantic utility pole on
24 the top of that hill.

25 The other thing is there's rimland down

1 below. So you're also crossing rim property. It
2 just makes no sense that for that little jog you're
3 going to cross farmland. Plus, there are -- it's
4 zoned A3, so there are three 35-acre building sites
5 still available. Not that we're going to sell it,
6 but that really impacts the saleability of that
7 property. We also already have a transmission line
8 going on Highway 60 to the south of us. And one to
9 the west of us would be way too much.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

12 I believe it's Don Heller.

13 MS. HELLER: Hi, my name is Don Heller,
14 H-E-L-L-E-R. I have, actually, five points I would
15 like to touch on.

16 Thank you for your explanation of the
17 costing models and so on. I was a little confused
18 by one of the maps. It appeared when you leave Pine
19 Island, that you kind of wander on the alternative
20 route south, you kind of wander around out in the
21 middle of -- I'm not sure why you do that, but kind
22 of takes some jogs to the west and south, kind of a
23 box shaped line there, as opposed to just following
24 the trail directly. So I just -- a question about
25 that.

1 The other major one is -- and I
2 understand that if somehow the proposed route was to
3 move from in front of my home to the front of
4 somebody else's home, I would be happier, they would
5 be sadder, I understand that part. But I'm on the
6 intersection of 90th Street and 60th Avenue. And
7 there are two old buildings there. The home I live
8 in is 112 years old, probably one of the oldest
9 homes in that area. Across the street, about 110
10 feet away, is a schoolhouse that was converted to a
11 home. That's about 90 years old. And right now
12 the -- there's an existing power line that goes
13 through, there but it jogs across the road from my
14 place and above the schoolhouse.

15 I'm a little concerned about an 80-foot
16 easement in there somewhere. You take the road out
17 of the way, there's no 80 feet in there. You're
18 going to have to move one or both of those homes.
19 They are historic, as I mentioned earlier.

20 The other comment I would like to make is
21 at some point have we ever considered something like
22 they do in building? Where you create a wiring
23 closets where you put your stuff. We all know that
24 transmission lines have to exist. We all know that
25 they're necessary. I use electricity. Everyone in

1 this room uses electricity. We don't begrudge that
2 idea at all. But is there any way that you could
3 come up with a -- instead of this project-by-project
4 attack, come up with a way to say, look, we're going
5 to have -- this is the area. Perhaps following
6 something like Highway 52, perhaps following
7 something like the Douglas Trail.

8 The -- it's a bit of a pipe dream, but
9 there's going to be a high speed rail discussed.
10 There's a right-of-way for that. There's things
11 that could be combined very easily. And instead of
12 having unfortunate changes for people multiple
13 times, you're kind of cutting the dog's tail off an
14 inch at a time.

15 The other thing I would like to know is
16 who are on the advisory task force? Who are the
17 members for the advisory task force for this area?
18 That's my last comment. So if you can provide that,
19 that would be fantastic.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Okay. Thank you for
22 the comments. To answer the last question there,
23 the advisory task force members, we do have the
24 structure in charge of that task force, what they're
25 charged with doing and how that task force is

1 structured, along with the names and their
2 affiliations on our web site. So again, if we look
3 at our web site and go to this project page, there
4 will be a listing of each of those individuals that
5 has committed their time to participate on the task
6 force. So we do have that available for folks'
7 review.

8 MS. HELLER: Thank you.

9 MR. LANGAN: Okay. And it's either Beau
10 or Kate Kennedy.

11 MR. KENNEDY: I'm not Katie. Beau
12 Kennedy, K-E-N-N-E-D-Y.

13 We -- my wife and I and two kids own ten
14 acres on the alternate route in Mazeppa Township on
15 Route 16. We're currently building our first home
16 on that ten acres. And it just so happens the
17 garage we put up last week is within 30 feet of the
18 proposed centerline and our house is within 200
19 feet. I just wanted to point out that those
20 structure are not on that original scoping document
21 that was submitted previously, as well as a few
22 other of our neighbors' homes.

23 Now, we also -- just have a couple
24 comments here. We'd also appreciate, during the
25 environmental review process of the alternate route

1 line, that a complete -- like a native vegetation
2 survey be completed on our property and the
3 properties adjacent to the proposed north route
4 crossing of the river. We are aware of a few rare
5 and unique plant communities that do exist on that
6 route.

7 We would also like to mention that a new
8 utility crossing across the north Zumbro River would
9 have a negative effect on wildlife and eco tourism
10 in the area. In November of 2008 the citizens of
11 Minnesota voted yes for a sales tax, taxing
12 themselves to help protect our water and wildlife
13 habitat in Minnesota. I would bet that if we put
14 this route up to a plan -- or put this routing plan
15 up for a vote, the majority of our taxpayers in
16 Minnesota would vote for this land to follow
17 existing utility corridors and disturb as little
18 virgin ground as possible.

19 That is what we request: Use existing
20 road and utility corridors and not put scars across
21 our wooded bluff lands and valleys forever.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you for your
24 comments. And that raises a good point. If -- if
25 folks are looking at maps either here tonight or

1 they're looking at maps on our web site or in the
2 permit application at the libraries and you see that
3 your home or certain structures are not represented
4 on there, that is information that we need, that --
5 if that's been missed.

6 So I appreciate you raising that point.
7 And that's one part of the thing that we're out here
8 for tonight, if there's anything that's inaccurate
9 about the maps that are out there, please let us
10 know so that we can consider that in our review.

11 That was it for the registered speakers.
12 But we'll make sure that everyone gets an
13 opportunity to speak. This is a good size group
14 here. So I'm going to start by just going for a
15 raise your hand and we'll call you up. And I'll do
16 my best to call on you in order. Please be patient
17 with me.

18 Yes, sir.

19 MR. MACK: My name is Tim Mack, M-A-C-K.
20 I would like to speak to the part on one of your
21 slides where you talked about right-of-way
22 requirements.

23 I guess I would like to see a requirement
24 for liability waivers and an indemnity clause in the
25 easements. When we negotiated an easement with

1 Goodhue County Electric recently for the new
2 industrial park in Zumbrota, those were included. I
3 think they should be automatic. Landowners
4 shouldn't have to come out and ask for them.

5 We do have a large Xcel line that crosses
6 our current property and some of their maintenance
7 contractors have done things which would leave us
8 exposed to potential financial liability. And since
9 most property owners will receive no direct benefit
10 from a new line, they shouldn't be exposed to any
11 liability issues from it either.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Yes, please.

14 MS. ZINK: My name is Therese Zink
15 Z-I-N-K, and I own 20 acres on the alternative
16 route. I live on 195 between 480 and 490. And I
17 have a farmhouse that's 117 years old and also put
18 in three acres of prairie, so that's probably not on
19 your assessment.

20 I'm also a physician and one of the
21 things that I was concerned about was in reviewing
22 this there was no mention of any health assessment.
23 And when you look at the evidence as far as impact
24 on human health and animal health, there's no clear
25 evidence one way or the other, but there's much

1 anecdotal evidence about childhood cancer concerns
2 and also potential health issues for animals, as
3 well. And so there's no discussion of that and I
4 feel like that really needs to be addressed.

5 Secondly, the -- our world is different
6 now. And with this kind of electronic current I
7 have concern about what this is going to do to cell
8 phone service and internet lines and also GPS for
9 farmers who are planting via that, and there's
10 really no discussion of that. Because once the
11 problem is there and the line is up, families have
12 no opportunity to deal with that problem or have any
13 claim.

14 So I also represent a number of the other
15 landowners in my area who signed a petition which I
16 can leave with you.

17 But also, really encouraging you to
18 consider going along the 52. I'm in that part that
19 jogs off 52 and then cuts in, actually goes through
20 my property to head over to Mazeppa. And so would
21 ask that you follow existing power lines or existing
22 highways there.

23 MR. LANGAN: Thank you very much for your
24 comments. In the page of impacts that we propose to
25 study, I probably should read each and every one of

1 those. But public health effects are one thing that
2 we do look at in there, and I realize it wasn't one
3 that I said out loud. So I apologize for that. But
4 that is something we will look at.

5 This is an issue that, as you indicated,
6 has been studied quite a bit. And so we're going to
7 put that information in as part of that
8 environmental impact statement. So thank you for
9 your comment.

10 Okay. Other comments or questions?

11 Yes, please.

12 MR. BJORK: My name is Tim Bjork,
13 B-J-O-R-K.

14 MR. STEVENSON: You have to step really
15 close to the microphone, unfortunately.

16 MR. BJORK: I've heard this talk about
17 the preferred line and the alternate line. And I
18 would like to know what the priorities is -- you
19 know, you choose which way you're going to go, if
20 you know, if you can tell me it's 75 percent the
21 preferred way and 25 percent the other way, that's a
22 number I would kind of like to know.

23 If you can't give me that number, then
24 can you give me some kind of history? Because I'm
25 sure this is not your first project, that you've had

1 these proposals before. In the history of those
2 proposals, can you tell me, you know, it went 75
3 percent on the proposed and 25 percent on the
4 alternate.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that question.
7 And I'll field that one.

8 By state rule the utility is required to
9 provide us with two routes. And they ask -- and the
10 state rule asks that the utility identify one as a
11 preferred route. From that point on those two
12 routes--or in the case around the Zumbro River three
13 routes--are evaluated using the exact same criteria.
14 The same criteria that the Public Utilities
15 Commission uses on evaluating one route is the same
16 criteria they use evaluating another. So from our
17 review perspective there is not a preferred route at
18 that point.

19 Your question that you asked I get a lot.
20 People obviously would like to know, is there a
21 greater chance that one or the other gets approved?
22 And at this point no, there's not. There's not a --
23 it's a 50-50 -- it's a 50-50 chance right now. And
24 the reason for that is because we haven't developed
25 our record in the review yet. We need to go in and

1 verify the information that the utility has
2 provided. We need to look at available studies and
3 information that's out there to review. We need to
4 gather input from you as to what's important; was a
5 house missed along the way, was a building missed
6 along the way. And until that record is fully
7 developed, we place no value judgment on which route
8 is superior. We're going to evaluate those equally.

9 And so some people get frustrated by that
10 answer. They like me to be able to give a more
11 specific answer. But that's the very reason why I
12 can't. We need to develop that record, we need to
13 study these routes. And while one is called
14 preferred and one is called alternate, in our review
15 and in the Public Utility Commission's review -- or
16 view, right now they are equal. They're going to be
17 evaluated under the same criteria.

18 So thank you for asking that question.
19 It gave me an opportunity to say that.

20 MR. BJORK: What about the history,
21 though, of other proposed?

22 MR. LANGAN: The history of these
23 projects, I can't give you a percent on whether, you
24 know, like you were suggesting, 75 percent of the
25 time a preferred route gets approved. Frankly, by

1 the end of this process it may not be that those are
2 the only -- those two routes might not look exactly
3 like that. There may be additional route segments
4 we're going to look at, there may be longer
5 stretches of routes that are.

6 So while, yes, sometimes a preferred
7 route is ultimately selected because it reduces the
8 impacts, you know, more so than other routes, there
9 can be -- you know, the alternate routes sometimes
10 reduces the impact. Modified versions of either the
11 preferred or the alternate could be what is
12 ultimately -- what is ultimately approved.

13 So by the time that the Public Utility
14 Commission -- Utilities Commission is making that
15 determination, it might look slightly or quite
16 different from what's proposed right now.

17 In the back.

18 MR. THEDENS: I'm Mike Thedens. I have a
19 farm, 160 acres of century farm in Farmington
20 township, in section 9.

21 MR. LANGAN: I'm sorry to interrupt you.
22 I didn't --

23 MR. STEVENSON: You have to step really
24 close to the microphone.

25 MR. THEDENS: Okay. I live in

1 Farmington, Section 9, and with a 160-acre farm
2 there. And it's a century farm so it's been in my
3 family for 150 years. And some of the concerns that
4 I have is that my parents, they weren't able to make
5 it tonight, but they live -- they have an 80-acre
6 farm directly north of mine and the power lines
7 that -- for the preferred route in that spot is
8 where you're looking at making the jog going from
9 east to west and north and south.

10 And for my parents, they're 80 years old
11 and they're going to be looking at possibly retiring
12 soon here in the near -- I mean, possibly selling it
13 to me, being somebody in their family, or maybe even
14 selling it, if they decide to move to town or
15 something. Land values are a pretty important piece
16 of that because they're getting affected on two
17 sides of their property, which is 50 percent of the
18 perimeter of their land. Can't believe that doesn't
19 have a big impact on the property value of that 80
20 acres, especially when in the township there 80
21 acres is what you have to have for a building site.

22 That's one concern. The other concern
23 with the property values and how it affects that
24 would be also there's a good chance that I would
25 probably retain ownership of that, possibly, in the

1 future, or maybe one of my children. So that impact
2 on that property value is going to have an impact,
3 even if it isn't for my folks, it could be for my
4 family, whether it's myself or my kids.

5 Another question, thing I had here, too.
6 I noticed tonight you handed out the flowchart here
7 showing the process. But the one you had in the
8 PowerPoint presentation, it was slightly different.
9 Curious if that PowerPoint presentation is available
10 online so a person can see all the breakdown of that
11 flowchart?

12 The other thing, too, on advisory board,
13 how do they work? Besides getting the listing of
14 those people, what is their role? And as far as us
15 contacting them, sharing our concerns or whatever,
16 what is their role in the process of that?

17 MR. LANGAN: Okay. The answer to one of
18 the questions is: Is the process diagram that was
19 shown on the screen tonight available on our web
20 site? And yes, it is, it's available. If you go to
21 our main page, which we had the web link up before
22 and it's on your documentation here, if you go to
23 that page and you click on transmission lines, there
24 will be a full process diagram and an alternate
25 process diagram.

1 Click on the full review process diagram.
2 That's the process that we use to evaluate a line of
3 this length and this capacity. That's the 12-month
4 review. And so that process diagram is there, along
5 with all sorts of other information that's helpful.

6 I can't stump for the web site enough, if
7 you do have web access. And so that is available.
8 But again, make sure you're clicking on the full
9 process diagram, as opposed to the alternative
10 process.

11 In terms of the advisory task force, your
12 question about that, first of all, I can explain how
13 we -- how we go about assembling that advisory task
14 force and then talk about the involvement and
15 their -- how they're involved with their
16 constituents, if you will. Every township, city, or
17 county that either the preferred or alternate line
18 of either the 345 or the 161 kilovolt line--so every
19 local unit of government--received a solicitation
20 letter asking for their participation, explaining
21 the structure and charge of the task force and what
22 the time commitment would be along with that.

23 We also followed that up with e-mails,
24 e-mail communications to all those government units.
25 And we followed that up, in fact, with phone calls

1 afterwards. So we -- so any township or county or
2 city that any of these proposals pass through
3 receive that information.

4 Also, in addition to the local government
5 units, we go out and solicit membership from
6 non-governmental organizations. So this could be
7 environmental groups, this could be chambers of
8 commerce, a whole host, I guess, of non-governmental
9 organizations. So -- and those same folks receive
10 the solicitation letters and e-mails and phone
11 calls.

12 It is a time commitment. We do ask
13 for -- for this group to attend meetings, we ask for
14 this group to do homework, we ask for this group to
15 put together and review their report that ultimately
16 comes out and gets considered in the scoping
17 process. So it's a time commitment.

18 Understandably, some folks weren't able
19 to make that time commitment. Other folks chose, I
20 guess, maybe to participate in the process another
21 way, and then the members that are on the task force
22 chose to make that time commitment and participate.

23 At our first meeting -- at our first
24 meeting we talked about issues and impacts, just
25 like we're talking about tonight. At our second

1 meeting we talked about route alternatives and route
2 segment alternatives. And at the third meeting we
3 tied that all together and the group, with the help
4 of a facilitator, puts together a final report to us
5 on what those issues are and what those alternatives
6 are of priority to the group.

7 We do talk to the group at that first
8 meeting about that we encourage them -- and by
9 nature when it's local government folks they realize
10 they have a constituency and they're representing a
11 large group of people, same thing with the
12 non-governmental organizations. So we encourage
13 them to go out and seek input from their
14 constituencies and to bring that to the table, to
15 make contacts with the people in their area,
16 understand what their priorities and interests are
17 and to really bring those to the table and have
18 that -- have that broad view, have that broad view
19 within, whether it's the township, whether it's the
20 city, whether it's the countywide view, or whether
21 it's the representation for their organization, and
22 really to bring that to the table. They are to
23 represent -- represent their constituency at the
24 table.

25 Does that answer your question, sir?

1 MR. THEDENS: Thank you.

2 MR. LANGAN: Sorry. Looking to the back
3 of the room. Please.

4 MR. WALTERS: My name is Steve Walters,
5 W-A-L-T-E-R-S. I live in New Haven Township,
6 Section 11. I believe the biggest environmental
7 impact is the proximity, closeness to our homes and
8 dwellings, bar everything else. We spend 89 percent
9 of our time there, and I think that should be
10 avoided at all costs putting in this power line.

11 That's all I got to say.

12 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

13 Other comments or questions? Sir.

14 MR. LYSTROM: My name is Wayne Lystrom,
15 L-Y-S-T-R-O-M. I am -- I live in the Roscoe
16 Township, in Section 5. I have several items. I
17 don't know if I can get them answered right away or
18 whatever. I know Tom knows some of this because
19 he's answered it.

20 The towers, how tall are they that you're
21 proposing? Do you want to answer them now or should
22 I just get them all down?

23 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, if I answer them as
24 you go, I don't have to remember the questions.

25 MR. LYSTROM: Exactly.

1 MR. HILLSTROM: The towers can range in
2 height from 130 to 170 feet. On average they would
3 be about 150 feet tall.

4 MR. LYSTROM: Okay. How far between each
5 one?

6 MR. HILLSTROM: The distance between one
7 tower and the next would be in the neighborhood of
8 1,000 feet.

9 MR. LYSTROM: Next: Format. If I check
10 yes on the -- to get information, will you not send
11 me paper copies? Or do you -- I want the paper
12 copy, but I want the electronic copy also.

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

14 MR. LYSTROM: So if I check yes, does
15 that eliminate paper?

16 MR. LANGAN: If you -- if you check yes,
17 we'll -- it will eliminate paper. We won't send you
18 a full hard copy of the draft environmental impact
19 statement. And I should point that out. It would
20 not be our intent to send that full document in hard
21 copy to everyone on our mailing list. Our first
22 priority is to have that available online and
23 paperless, if we can. We will have paper hard
24 copies at libraries and upon special requests. But
25 we have -- we have quite the mailing list for this

1 and the expense, both in cost and to the paper
2 printing of that is -- we hope we can do paperless
3 copies, if possible.

4 MR. LYSTROM: Okay. The next one is for
5 Tom. Can you tell me the cost difference generally
6 between alternative and the preferred? Just rough.

7 MR. HILLSTROM: I'm going to -- I'm going
8 to -- I can't answer that question because I have a
9 real hard time remembering numbers.

10 Grant, did you hear the question?

11 MR. STEVENSON: Which?

12 MR. LYSTROM: The cost difference between
13 the preferred -- or the cost difference between
14 option one and option two.

15 MR. STEVENSON: Of which line?

16 MR. LYSTROM: The 345.

17 MR. STEVENSON: From?

18 MR. LYSTROM: Hampton to the substation.

19 MR. STEVENSON: I'll get that for you.

20 MR. LYSTROM: Okay. The next thing is
21 for -- and I'm sorry it's going back and forth, but
22 just a suggestion: Just in the naming, maybe they
23 should have option one and option two instead of
24 preferred because what happens for us is when we see
25 a preferred or alternate, it changes our mindset.

1 So probably one of the most important
2 things I forgot was there is a missing structure on
3 your diagram on the southwest corner of my property,
4 47628 135th Avenue, Zumbrota.

5 MR. LANGAN: Did you get that?

6 MR. LYSTROM: She's good.

7 Can you tell me how many members on the
8 task force?

9 MR. LANGAN: I can. On the -- the task
10 force that's focusing on the area from Hampton to
11 northern Rochester, if you will, there are nine
12 members on that task force. On the task force that
13 focuses on the substation and the Pine Island,
14 Zumbrota area out to the Mississippi River, there's
15 seven members on that task force.

16 And I appreciate you bringing that up.
17 And this was the other part that I forgot to include
18 in the other question: Every local government unit
19 and non-governmental organization that applied to be
20 on the task force is on the task force.

21 MR. LYSTROM: Thank you. Now, for Grant,
22 I'm wondering if you can tell me the numerical
23 rating between the preferred and the alternate
24 route? Because you guys, Xcel, do a different way
25 of deciding. So I guess I'm trying to figure out,

1 can you give me the number that you came up with, I
2 guess.

3 MR. STEVENSON: I'm not sure what you
4 mean by numerical ratings. Maybe you can explain it
5 a different way?

6 MR. LYSTROM: What they said earlier in
7 the conversation or in the presentation is you gave
8 them -- determining the route, there's a scientific
9 way of determining it. And without knowing the
10 scientificness -- scientific -- yeah, I guess, I
11 don't know, whatever the word is, write the right
12 one in there. Can you tell me the difference
13 between them?

14 MR. STEVENSON: Tom is going to explain
15 that. Your previous question, from Hampton to north
16 Rochester, the preferred route we estimate to be
17 \$88 million, the alternate 101.

18 MR. HILLSTROM: Answer the question about
19 the scientificness.

20 MR. LYSTROM: That's the word.

21 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, in our permit
22 application, we have lots of tables. And those
23 tables compare the different routes with numerical
24 values for the different criteria. So there's not a
25 single number that gets summarized for each route,

1 but instead there are various criteria, categories
2 that get summed up. So the best answer is to take a
3 look at the permit application and look at the
4 tables.

5 MR. LYSTROM: Thank you. For Matt: Do
6 you guys use that same grading period or numerical
7 rating when you guys look at it, or do you guys use
8 something else?

9 MR. LANGAN: Yeah. We -- you know, in
10 terms of -- you know, and Tom is talking about the
11 different factors, so let's take one factor:
12 Wetlands. What are the impacts to wetlands along
13 each route? There can be an acreage figure
14 associated with that. And so one route may have X
15 number of wetland acres affected, another might have
16 Y number of acres affected.

17 So, yes, as part of our review, as part
18 of the environmental impact statement we'll reverify
19 all of the data that Xcel has provided to us so,
20 yeah, hopefully that example is illustrative of what
21 we'll do in terms of that. What we're also looking
22 at, you know, policy and local land use and zoning
23 and zoning compatibility, things like this. So it's
24 not all numerical, if you will. But we do look
25 at -- we do look at numbers, yes.

1 MR. LYSTROM: Okay. The last question is
2 on people who have property that is affected, what
3 I've been told--and you already answered that you
4 don't know the answer--but I guess I wanted to get
5 it on the record, is I was told that if the
6 landowner and the utility could not come up with
7 a -- an agreement, the utility would have to -- or
8 there's -- there is a possibility of it being
9 bought. Do you know anything about that?

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Yes, indeed. And that is
11 right. If the landowner chooses to do so, the
12 landowner can ask the utility to buy the entire
13 parcel. If you're not happy with the project, if
14 you're not happy with the line or the compensation
15 that you get, that is an option. It's known as a
16 buy-the-farm law or the buy-the-farm provision.

17 And as long as I have the microphone
18 here, I wanted to go back to your first question
19 about the structure heights. I just wanted to
20 clarify that the numbers that I gave you are for the
21 345 line. And now for the 161 line the towers would
22 be shorter, they would be about 80 feet tall with a
23 span of near 500 feet between them. So the lower
24 voltage lines have smaller structures.

25

1 MR. LYSTROM: And the last thing I would
2 like to do is make adjust a statement. I bought
3 this property to -- as an investment to possibly
4 retire to, a relaxation location, and I think that
5 the viewing of 100-plus-foot structure at the back
6 of the property would drastically reduce the value,
7 especially in my eyes. Thank you.

8 MR. LANGAN: Okay, thank you.

9 Okay. Yeah, please come up. I thought I
10 saw a hand in the back of the room.

11 MS. HELLER: Betsy Heller, H-E-L-L-E-R.
12 Is there any -- are there any reports yet on
13 medical? If this goes on our route, it's going to
14 be basically on our porch. And are there any
15 medical reports saying how far you need to be away
16 from this?

17 MR. LANGAN: That is something that we
18 will study and provide information for in our
19 environmental document. Any potential public health
20 effects associated with that, with the transmission
21 line. The World Health Organization has done
22 studies on this, the Minnesota Department of Health
23 has done studies on this. There are studies within
24 the five-state region that we draw information from.
25 It is something that's been studied over a number of

1 years, and some of those studies have been completed
2 recently, as well. So it's not 30- and 40-year-old
3 studies that we're looking at.

4 But what we do is we look for the
5 available information that's out there, reputable
6 organizations that put together this information,
7 and then we supply that documentation in the
8 environmental impact statement.

9 MS. HELLER: And if our house is deemed
10 to be moved, is that part of the compensation? I
11 think you referenced it in your part of the
12 presentation.

13 MR. LANGAN: Tom, would you take that?

14 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, as the project has
15 been developed, we've done enough preliminary
16 engineering to know that the routes can be built as
17 they're shown on maps without having to remove any
18 homes. So we don't plan on removing any homes.

19 MR. HELLER: There's not 80 feet between
20 those two buildings.

21 MS. HELLER: I'll make you dinner. Come
22 on over. Actually, you made my day. I want to move
23 to California, but he's not shooting for that.

24 I just -- really, we are right on the
25 road. Literally ten steps to the road.

1 MR. HILLSTROM: Maybe afterwards you can
2 show me exactly where you live. But in some of
3 those cases there is a house very near the road, and
4 if the other side of the road is less --

5 MR. HELLER: Not there, you picked the
6 wrong spot.

7 MS. HELLER: Across the street is five
8 steps to the road and we have ten and I think we're
9 the preferred.

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Maybe after the formal
11 part of the meeting here you can show me on the map
12 exactly where you're talking about.

13 MR. LANGAN: Yes. Please, right here.

14 I'm sorry, you in the back, you'll get to
15 go next. I'm sorry I missed you.

16 MS. LOGAN: I'm short.

17 MR. LANGAN: Me too.

18 MS. MANCILMAN: Can you hear me now?
19 Okay. I'm Vicki Mancilman, M-A-N-C-I-L-M-A-N. And
20 it's probably going to be kind of what Betsy was
21 talking about. When we were talking with you, you
22 said that the voltage could affect our electric
23 fences. And if it affects your electric fences how
24 far away do our homes have to be not to affect us?
25 And also, if there was humming from them also, which

1 is okay, but how far away -- how far away is the
2 humming going to be?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you.

4 MS. MANCILMAN: Can't hear me?

5 MR. LANGAN: We can. The answer to that
6 is we will take any noise affects, we will talk
7 about the noise that is associated with these
8 transmission projects, we will talk about -- we will
9 look into various -- how far the line comes from
10 homes -- comes from homes and at what distances. So
11 how many homes are within 100 feet, how many homes
12 within 200 feet. And so we'll analyze that and then
13 we'll suit the review, and based on the reports and
14 the information that's out, there we'll be able to
15 talk about the anticipated effects at certain
16 distances from the line. If that's answering your
17 question?

18 MS. MANCILMAN: Yep. So then will we get
19 copies of all this also --

20 MR. LANGAN: Yes.

21 MS. MANCILMAN: -- so that we know?

22 MR. LANGAN: Yes. Thank you. Excellent.
23 As part of the environmental impact statement we'll
24 have a bibliography that will cite all of the
25 studies that we use in our valuation, all of the

1 available information that's out there. We
2 aren't -- we don't intend to take the entire World
3 Health Organization study and put it into our
4 document. We will take the pertinent information
5 and include it in the main document. But we will
6 have a bibliography and a reference so that you can
7 go out and read that information for yourself,
8 access that at the library or online and take a look
9 at those studies that we use to develop our
10 information on the project.

11
12 MS. MANCILMAN: Okay.

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

14 MS. MANCILMAN: Thank you.

15 MR. LANGAN: Thank you.

16 And please. Thank you for being patient.

17 MS. LOGAN: Thank you. My name is Erin
18 Logan. E-R-I-N, L-O-G-A-N. I apologize for my
19 elementary questions, but this is my first meeting.
20 And it sounds like it's a public information
21 meeting. So I'm just kind of looking for some
22 information.

23 I read through the packet and it explains
24 that the purpose of the project is to improve
25 reliability, help meet increased demand, and then

1 tap into the vast wind resources in the area. So I
2 have two questions. My first is: Of those three
3 things, which is actually the higher priority that's
4 driving the project? Because it appears that we
5 have other major corridors in place between the
6 Twin Cities and La Crosse and they're not being
7 used. So I'm just kind of curious about that.

8 And then the second question: Are your
9 substations sized specifically to accommodate all
10 the wind projects that are in the MISO queue? Or
11 when these wind projects come forward will you need
12 to increase the size of the substations?

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Tom.

14 MR. HILLSTROM: The first question about
15 the priorities for the need, the number one priority
16 for the need is load serving to the city and the
17 area around Rochester and, again, the city and the
18 area around La Crosse and Winona. Those two areas
19 have been growing over the last 20 to 30 years. The
20 population and electrical demand in those cities
21 have grown. And in order to reliably serve that
22 electric need, there needs to be more supply to
23 those areas. And that's the number one priority for
24 this project.

25 The other elements of the need, regional

1 reliability of the overall transmission system is
2 there, and you're right about that. And also, the
3 need to incorporate more renewable energy onto the
4 grid is the third reason.

5 I started off this evening talking about
6 the wind developments and how we don't really have a
7 direct connection with those wind developments. And
8 again, this project was designed without any
9 specific wind development in mind. Our substation
10 is sized in a manner to handle our project. And we
11 usually buy a piece of land that is suited to expand
12 that substation. And I don't know of any plans to
13 expand the substation beyond what we're designing it
14 for.

15 But like everything else, things change
16 and, you know, more things happen that we can't
17 foresee. And you know, the area in the substation
18 and around it may be expanded, but I don't have any
19 information on imminent projects that would do that.

20 But that's not to say that these wind
21 developments won't tap into the substation that we
22 build because that -- that is likely what they would
23 have to do. If you build a big new wind farm, you
24 have to connect that wind farm into the system
25 through a substation. So the substations that we

1 build may be used to connect the wind development
2 into the system.

3 Yes, please, in the back.

4 MS. WHEATLEY: Chris Wheatley,
5 W-H-E-A-T-L-E-Y. My question has to do with the
6 question that was just asked. Who in the State of
7 Minnesota is responsible for figuring out, when
8 somebody puts in an alternative energy like wind
9 energy or like when a grid comes through, who
10 decides the overall plan of where energy is needed
11 and how do they go about allocating that? Do the
12 corporations come to us and say we think you need
13 power here? Or does the Department of Energy say,
14 well, we think we need power there, so let's
15 contract it out?

16 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Okay. Tom, do you
17 have anyone here that can speak about MISO?

18 MR. HILLSTROM: Hum.

19 MR. LANGAN: It's --

20 MR. HILLSTROM: Let me take a little
21 survey of somebody who might, see if I can find
22 something.

23 MR. LANGAN: We're going to do our best
24 to get you an answer to that. And once we locate
25 somebody, we'll address that question.

1 Just real quickly, MISO is the Midwest
2 Independent System Operators and it is an
3 organization that oversees just what the question
4 was about here.

5 MR. HILLSTROM: Grant is willing to take
6 a stab at that.

7 MR. STEVENSON: Okay. I was helping
8 somebody at a map on the back, so could you repeat
9 the question? Sorry to make you walk all this way.
10 I'll meet you -- I'll be Phil Donahue.

11 MS. WHEATLEY: All right.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You look like
13 Phil.

14 MS. WHEATLEY: In a nutshell, I want to
15 know, for the State of Minnesota, the Department of
16 Energy, who looks out for who? Like does the power
17 company come to the State of Minnesota and say, you
18 know, we think that you might need power at A, B,
19 and C location and we would like to put that up, and
20 then the wind energy from who knows where comes and
21 says we would like to put wind energy up because we
22 think you could benefit for this.

23 But I think -- you know, I feel like
24 there's no overall plan about how to connect all
25 these grids together. And I would just think that

1 the State of Minnesota, or any state, would have an
2 overall energy plan to decide what the state needs
3 where and how they're going to do it and who they're
4 going to allocate it to. Just like, you know, like
5 the federal government puts out bids and we get bids
6 in. So does the state do that, too? That's what I
7 want to know.

8 MR. STEVENSON: So you ask -- we're going
9 to have to tag team this one. It's a very
10 complicated issue. If someone wants to develop wind
11 energy, who's managing that? Well, part of the
12 answer is the legislature mandated our no binary
13 standard. And the renewable -- the type of
14 generation that is proven to be most viable is wind.

15 So the utilities are obligated to buy the
16 energy. We're not obligated to build the wind power
17 plants. So what the utilities have mostly elected
18 to do is to buy the power from another corporation.
19 Now, very recently Xcel Energy, we bought our first
20 wind power plant. But most of the wind that is on
21 our system, we just purchase the energy.

22 So when there's developers, large
23 developers and small developers that are out trying
24 to find the best wind and put their business deal
25 together, and they'll negotiate with one or more

1 utilities to buy the power. But to connect to the
2 transmission system, that's when they have to apply
3 to MISO, the Midwest ISO, and they are an
4 organization that manages the multistate
5 transmission grids.

6 Does that start to get -- I can't answer
7 the state energy policy one.

8 MS. WHEATLEY: Right. And that's what I
9 mean. I mean, I understand the part where, you
10 know, Xcel Energy or something is to determine need
11 and -- but I don't understand where the Department
12 of Energy falls in this above -- above all of this.
13 Like -- seems like, to me, the Department of Energy,
14 they know they're growing communities already, they
15 know they need power. It seems like they should be
16 a little bit more in control of the situation.

17 MR. STEVENSON: There's multiple parts to
18 that question. The -- if you're asking about local
19 electric reliability, not what source is the power,
20 but the local reliability is the obligation of the
21 utility. And we have different reliability
22 requirements from governments to help judge that
23 part. But I --

24 MS. DEBLEECKERE: IRP.

25 MR. STEVENSON: Okay. I'm going to give

1 the microphone back to Matt.

2 MR. LANGAN: We also, in our office --
3 and this is just as Grant had put it, the question
4 you're asking is a complex one and there are many
5 different components to it. MISO plays a role, the
6 utility providers play a role of identifying where
7 that reliability needs to exist, where the demand is
8 increasing, or where that is. Okay?

9 When -- one other part of that is when an
10 independent wind farm is proposed, our office does
11 review that proposal. And they have to seek a
12 permit through our office to get approval for
13 that -- for that wind farm.

14 MS. WHEATLEY: They get approval just for
15 the wind farm? Does the Department of Energy also
16 say okay now?

17 MR. MATTOX: I'm very sorry. We'll have
18 to ask you to come up again. We can't hear.

19 MS WHEATLEY: So what I don't -- whether
20 it's electrical grids or wind energy or water power
21 or solar power, does the Department of Energy, when
22 they look at these different places around the state
23 of Minnesota, whether they're going to be
24 transmitted through Minnesota or go to a local, do
25 they look at the overall scheme of things, instead

1 of saying I'm going to grant this, you know, this X
2 amount of windmills here, this X amount? Like how
3 they're all going to be coordinated, how they're
4 going to contribute to the grid, like -- so you
5 build these things, now you have to get somebody
6 else to come in and transport the electricity.

7 I just think that the State of Minnesota,
8 or any state, or the U.S., as far as that goes,
9 should have a much more broader viewpoint than what
10 I feel like is happening. This little segment works
11 over here, this little segment works over here. I
12 just think it should be a lot more coordinated.
13 We're sophisticated enough to do that. We have
14 computers, we can do that.

15 MR. LANGAN: And thank you. Sorry to
16 make you ask that question three times in three
17 different ways. Thank you. And it is a complex
18 answer. We do have integrated resource plans where
19 utilities will give a forecast of the need and what,
20 you know, you're talking about, both the power
21 generating portions of it and then the transmission
22 and distribution of that power. And so we do
23 have -- they do submit long-range plans that are
24 reviewed by the state and the Public Utility
25 Commission. And so there is that type of thinking.

1 So there is that long-range thinking.
2 And the utilities do that, you know, on an
3 individual basis, I guess. So Xcel Energy would
4 submit one, Minnesota Power up north would submit
5 one. And so there is that long range, holistic
6 thinking out for a period of time in those -- in
7 those resource plans that we receive.

8 Let's bring you up, since we're having
9 this conversation here.

10 MS. WHEATLEY: Here I thought I had a
11 loud voice.

12 So when you do your long-range thinking,
13 do states talk to other states? Because power, you
14 know, is transient, I mean, it's kinetic, it doesn't
15 stay still. So at what point do you start talking
16 about the Dakotas or Wisconsin or any of those for
17 your long-range plan?

18 MR. LANGAN: We do -- we do consider
19 that. And here, I'll bring Tricia up.

20 But a lot of how we have structured
21 our -- boy, it is loud over here. Sorry you're in
22 the corner. How we have structured our -- our
23 approval process, it coincides with the work that's
24 done in the region. So, yes, there's a lot of
25 communication back and forth between states.

1 Tricia, anything you want to add?

2 MS. DEBLEECKERE: Pretty much like what I
3 said before. I'm sorry you're getting tossed around
4 to a few different people here, but you kind of hit
5 the routing group, when that's more of a policy and
6 planning question. But I -- there's people at my
7 agency that deal with this issue and the long-range
8 planning. And if you want additional -- you know,
9 there's lots of plans I can refer you to. So if you
10 want more information, I can get that to you, you
11 know, after the meeting. Or if anyone is
12 interested, you know, I can get some information to
13 Matt to provide to anybody.

14 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Yes, sir.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have to bring
16 the mic over here. He can't walk.

17 MR. TIEDEMAN: Gerald Tiedeman. Our
18 local township, Section 10. I got my
19 granddaughter's living with me and she has three
20 sons that love to hunt. And I know they're going to
21 be hunting along that line because that line runs
22 right along our north boundary. Besides that we
23 have a lot of cattle. Fence -- it's fenced up there
24 and the cattle graze along that line and on that
25 field.

1 So -- but I have another suggestion I
2 would like to make. And that is why don't you check
3 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and
4 whoever is heading up this high speed rail line
5 going down to La Crosse and from what is it?
6 Hampton?

7 MR. LANGAN: Um-hum.

8 MR. TIEDEMAN: From there over to the
9 Mississippi River wouldn't be very far. And, well,
10 when they get the right-of-way bought for a new line
11 or whatever they're going to put it on, go right
12 down that line with them. Get down to Alma,
13 Wisconsin, you hook on to the Northern States Power
14 line to run the electricity into Rochester. And I
15 think it would be a lot cheaper route than what
16 you're planning to go, through all this area.

17 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that comment.

18 Okay. Other questions or comments? Yes,
19 please.

20 MR. BREIE: My name is Ron Breie. And a
21 direct question that I haven't heard anything about
22 at all, and that's basically, like, cell phone
23 service and internet service. I've got -- my
24 internet service comes off a tower to my place and
25 it's going to run right, you know, perpendicular to

1 that line almost. And is that going to affect it?
2 And if so, do we get compensated for it, and how do
3 we get compensated for it?

4 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that question.
5 Any potential interference in association with the
6 line will be evaluated in their environmental
7 document. That is one of the pieces and -- one of
8 the pieces I didn't read off as I was kind of
9 checking through the list there. But that is --
10 that is an issue we will look at. If there is any
11 interference, any radio or TV interference along the
12 route, we would -- we would look at. And there
13 is -- there are regulations that oversee any
14 interference there. I think it's FCC will have
15 access to our document and can provide us that
16 information there, if there would be any
17 interference.

18 We did have that question, actually,
19 today. And, Tom, did you want to provide any
20 additional information on that?

21 MR. HILLSTROM: Sure. We, as the
22 utilities, have a lot of experience in this. We
23 have lots of power lines all over the state. And
24 there's very little chance of interference from --
25 in cell phone or any other kind of radio or

1 television or any kind of communication
2 interference. The -- the way that the line could
3 interfere is if the structure were placed directly
4 between the receiver and the transmitter.

5 So it's physical obstruction of the
6 tower. And being that these are single pole
7 structures for the most part, placed 1,000 feet
8 apart, the likelihood of any significant
9 interference is pretty small. And again, this is a
10 policy of the utilities that if our project results
11 in a problem in any respect on your land or your
12 reception, we'll fix it. The utility has a long
13 commitment of fixing any problems that it creates.
14 And you have our commitment that if our project
15 creates a problem, we'll fix it.

16 MR. LANGAN: Any other questions or
17 comments?

18 Okay. Seeing that there are none, we
19 will be available for awhile after the meeting. We
20 do have the maps in back. We do still have the
21 computer up back here, if you would like to print
22 out a map for use in your comments, or just for your
23 own use.

24 I -- I want to thank everybody for being
25 here tonight and asking your questions and providing

1 us your comments.

2 Again, we do accept written comments.
3 They are due to me by 4:30 p.m. on May 20th. So
4 couple weeks from now. I encourage you to send
5 those comments in, if you have them. And thank you
6 very much for being here tonight.

7 (Hearing adjourned at 8:42 p.m.)

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PUBLIC COMMENTS - CANNON FALLS - 1:30 - MAY 6, 2010

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

May 6, 2010

Grandpa's Event Center
31846 65th Avenue
Cannon Falls, Minnesota

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I N D E X - CANNON FALLS - 1:30 - MAY 6, 2010

SPEAKER	PAGE
Richard Busiahn	4
Mike Collins	5
Darrell Ista	9
Lori Endres	11
Mr. Lopez	15

1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. With that, what we'll
2 do now is turn it over to you and ask that you come
3 up and provide -- ask any questions that you had.
4 Again, it can be on any aspect of how we review the
5 project, it can be on any aspect of the project
6 itself, and it can be anywhere along the project, it
7 can be in this area or a completely different area
8 of the project, and we'll answer your questions as
9 best we can. And then you can also provide your
10 comments here today on the record.

11 What I'll ask that you do is come up and
12 speak into the microphone here. That allows the
13 court reporter to -- it's easier than shouting from
14 the back of the room, and we can accurately get your
15 comments and questions down.

16 When you come up, we'll ask you to state
17 and spell your name so that we have that for the
18 court reporter. We'll ask that one person speaks at
19 a time to make life easier on the court reporter.
20 All right. And if there's anybody that's unable to
21 come and speak at the mic, just let us know that, we
22 can bring the cordless microphone back. But we will
23 ask you, if you can, to come up and offer your
24 questions here.

25 Ray, did anyone sign up?

1 MR. KIRSCH: (Shakes head.)

2 MR. LANGAN: We didn't have anyone sign
3 up on the speaker registration card. So what we'll
4 try and do is just do this by a show of hands. So
5 if you would like to ask a question or provide a
6 comment, just raise your hand.

7 Sir, please.

8 MR. BUSIAHN: My name is Richard Busiahn,
9 B-U-S-I-A-H-N. I'm here representing St. Paul
10 Church and School across Highway 52. Your
11 planning -- when you submitted your plan to whoever
12 you submit to, you showed our church and school as a
13 residence. I contacted your people and you've
14 changed that, but anything you've submitted would
15 have shown our church and school as a residence and
16 would have been considered as a residence for your
17 planning up until now.

18 We have a church and we have an
19 elementary school of over 50 students. It's our
20 plan to grow that and we have construction -- well,
21 we have plans, we don't have an immediate schedule.
22 We don't have money today, but we do have a plan. I
23 am concerned that you didn't consider that properly
24 in your planning up until now.

25 I noticed that an administrative law

1 judge has requested -- or suggested that you move
2 your line for some residences and a Buddhist temple
3 west of Hampton. If in fact that is case, I would
4 think that an administrative law judge would also
5 request that you would for a school.

6 That's my comment.

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you very much.

8 Other questions or comments?

9 Yes, sir, please.

10 MR. COLLINS: My name's is Mike Collins,
11 C-O-L-L-I-N-S. I just represent myself. I live
12 down in Oronoco Township.

13 I noticed that your maps are a little bit
14 outdated and I know there's been quite a bit of work
15 done up to this point, so like this gentleman said,
16 anything submitted up to this date might be a little
17 outdated. I have some neighbors down around where I
18 live that I don't see here at this meeting, and they
19 may have attended other meetings, that are actually
20 in the easement outline within the 1,000 feet, as am
21 I.

22 And I was just wondering if the people
23 that you report to are going to get updated
24 information. I can think of two houses that have
25 gone up that lie within that -- those perimeters

1 that aren't shown on your maps.

2 The other question I have is, you are
3 building this high line and you're using a pretty
4 lengthy stretch of the Highway 52 easement from
5 Hampton down to just north of Zumbrota. My question
6 is, there are -- I guess my comment and question is
7 there's no two structures that have been completed
8 in southeastern Minnesota that have more greatly
9 affected the environment than Highway 52 and I-90
10 with the landscaping being altered such that it is
11 now. And the farm country that is cut up, why would
12 you not consider going all the way south on 52 down
13 to I-90 and directly into La Crosse with that path
14 already cut?

15 Thank you.

16 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. I want to
17 address your first comment slash question, if I
18 could, and this gets to your comment as well.

19 You know, sometimes when we're talking
20 about the scoping process it really is the impacts
21 on the route alternatives that we're looking for.
22 But this is a time if you're looking at a map and a
23 home is not shown on that map, if a business or
24 something is -- if anything is miscategorized on
25 that map, yes, this is a good time to let us know

1 that. And so I appreciate both of your comments,
2 it's a great time because it's before we have
3 evaluated all of the impacts. And if we get that
4 accurate information, then we can actually describe
5 the impacts or mitigation or avoidance measures
6 there are.

7 So if anyone else has been looking at a
8 map and there's incorrect information in one way or
9 another on there, this is a great time rather than,
10 you know, down the road in this review process to
11 discover that. It's one of the valuable -- very
12 valuable pieces of us asking for public input early
13 in the process so that we get our information
14 correct. So I appreciate both those comments.

15 Tom, is there anything you wanted to
16 address in his comments or questions?

17 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, I can address the
18 second part of your question about the 52/I-90
19 suggestion. Very early on in our development of our
20 project we did look at 52, and like you said, we are
21 following 52 for our preferred route in the north
22 part of our project.

23 As we looked at 52 going through the city
24 of Rochester, what we found through the city of
25 Rochester is that recent MnDOT projects have used up

1 just about every foot of their right-of-way. You
2 can see the retaining walls and the noise walls that
3 pretty much fill that area into Rochester. So
4 there's very little available space on 52 through
5 the city of Rochester.

6 So instead of going through Rochester, we
7 studied routes that go around Rochester on the north
8 side and then head down to I-90. And we did fully
9 study those routes along I-90, that route to
10 La Crosse.

11 And once you gets really close to
12 La Crosse, there're some engineering challenges that
13 prevented us from following I-90 all the way into
14 La Crescent. So instead of that, we did have a
15 segment of route that did go south of I-90 through
16 the area that I talked about before.

17 And that route that you described, except
18 for the part through Rochester, was studied by us
19 and it is presented in the permit application in the
20 appendix. And like I said before, the analysis that
21 we did showed that the route through La Crescent or
22 to Winona, they didn't stack up very well against
23 the one to Alma.

24 MR. LANGAN: Other questions or comments?

25 Yes, sir.

1 MR. ISTA: My name is Darrell Ista,
2 D-A-R-R-E-L-L, I-S-T-A. I live along 52, I'm just
3 south of Hampton.

4 And I see on this one map that we were
5 mailed a while ago that you're kind of zigzagging
6 across the highway to miss houses and stuff like
7 that. Now, do your poles set in the right-of-way,
8 the present right-of-way that the highway has or
9 outside of it or what?

10 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, the lines that you
11 see on the maps are preliminary alignments that we
12 use to study these routes. And the reason for going
13 across the street is to avoid pinch points where
14 maybe there's a house real close to the highway.

15 MR. ISTA: That's in my case.

16 MR. HILLSTROM: Right. So where we see
17 that, we try to go to the other side of the road.
18 What we like to do when we build lines is to place
19 those poles very close to the boundary of where the
20 private property ends and where the road
21 right-of-way begins. And that keeps it out of -- in
22 the case of agricultural land, it keeps it out of
23 the middle of the field and it keeps it as far away
24 from houses as we can get without obstructing the
25 use of the road right-of-way.

1 But that final alignment, where that line
2 actually would end up, would be determined after the
3 route would be approved by the state, assuming that
4 they approve it, down Highway 52. Then our
5 engineers would have to take a detailed look at
6 where the poles would actually would be.

7 We also have to meet with MnDOT, and if
8 our line overlaps with the highway right-of-way,
9 we'd have to get a permit from MnDOT. So there's
10 still a lot to be determined before we know exactly
11 where the poles would go.

12 MR. ISTA: Okay. Thank you.

13 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for your question.

14 Other comments or questions?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: I just have a question
16 about the size of the base of the towers.

17 MR. LANGAN: The base of the towers?

18 UNIDENTIFIED: The base of them.

19 MR. LANGAN: The 345 line?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: (Nods head.)

21 MR. HILLSTROM: Okay. The 345 line and
22 the 161 line, they both use a similar construction
23 methodology, and that consists of a concrete
24 foundation. And the way that's installed is a big
25 auger drill rig drills a big hole into the ground

1 and rebar is put into that hole and then it's filled
2 with concrete in a form. And the diameter of that
3 foundation is in the neighborhood of eight feet
4 diameter. And then the pole itself, the steel pole,
5 is bolted on the top of that concrete foundation,
6 and the diameter of the steel pole is, I'm guessing,
7 maybe four feet.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

9 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Other questions or
10 comments?

11 Yes, please.

12 MS. ENDRES: Lori, L-O-R-I, Endres,
13 E-N-D-R-E-S.

14 What's the cost of the project per mile?
15 And when you make a 90-degree bend versus a
16 180-degree bend, the cost of changing it from one
17 side of the highway to the other side of the
18 highway, for instance? And to get back to the
19 foundation, the concrete foundation of the poles,
20 how deep do they go?

21 So average cost per mile, and then
22 average cost per mile going across country on
23 section lines versus right-of-way.

24 MR. HILLSTROM: Those are really good
25 questions for our project manager, who is an

1 engineer, he's more qualified to answer those than I
2 am. I'm going to turn it over to Grant Stevenson.

3 MR. STEVENSON: If you give me a second,
4 I'm going to look in our application and get you a
5 good number. I can go into some more detail. The
6 cost per mile depends on the type of construction.
7 The single-circuit 345 -- Lori, you're talking about
8 the 345 because you live up on this end?

9 MS. ENDRES: (Nods head.)

10 MR. STEVENSON: Is in neighborhood of s
11 million and a half dollars per mile. When we go to
12 multiple circuits, it can get in the neighborhood of
13 \$2 million per mile. So there are some places in
14 the project where we're proposing just to install
15 one 345 circuit initially, there are other places
16 where we're proposing to double-circuit with other
17 existing lines. So that's a rough range.

18 And there was another question other than
19 the cost?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: How deep was the base?

21 MR. STEVENSON: Oh, how deep the
22 foundations are. It depends on the soil, but it's
23 not uncommon for them to be 30 to 50 feet deep.

24 MS. ENDRES: How about when you make a
25 turn, the corner post?

1 MR. STEVENSON: Oh, you asked about
2 crossing the road. At this voltage, crossing the
3 road can be quite expensive. It could add \$200,000,
4 a quarter million dollars when you cross the road
5 and come back.

6 And that also depends on some
7 circumstances, and I have some detailed examples
8 where I asked our engineers precisely that. And to
9 you and I, they probably look to be very similar.
10 Both of these examples were over in Wisconsin. One
11 of them, his answer -- this is the design
12 engineer -- was \$249,000 and another one was over
13 \$300,000, and it had to do with the styles of the
14 poles. So there's going to be a range there as
15 well.

16 Did I get to your answer?

17 MS. ENDRES: Does a 90-degree bend cost
18 more than a 180?

19 MR. STEVENSON: The 90-degree poles
20 definitely cost more. Tom gave an example of pole
21 diameters, those are the straight ones with no angle
22 on them. The 90-degree angles can be much larger,
23 they might be ten feet in diameter in some cases.

24 So the poles are quite bit a more money
25 when you -- the larger the angle you make. And the

1 reason is we're proposing to use no guy wires, since
2 most people tell us they don't like guy wires. They
3 are an obstacle, either they go into a farm field or
4 they go across a highway. So we're making the poles
5 self-supporting. So when you get to a 90-degree
6 corner, it has to be much stouter to stand with that
7 unbalanced load and no guy wires.

8 MS. ENDRES: Would the 90-degree bend
9 cost more than a 45 degree?

10 MR. STEVENSON: Yes.

11 MS. ENDRES: Do you know how much?

12 MR. STEVENSON: I don't have precise
13 numbers. If you want to sit with me afterwards, I
14 can try to -- I can see if I have some information
15 that will help inform you a little bit more about
16 that.

17 MS. ENDRES: And the right-of-way versus
18 section lines question.

19 MR. STEVENSON: What's the right-of-way
20 versus section lines --

21 MS. ENDRES: How much does it cost using
22 the right-of-way going down 52 versus not using the
23 right-of-way?

24 MR. STEVENSON: It depends on -- the
25 question is what's the right-of-way cost difference

1 going along Highway 52 where we share right-of-way
2 versus going down a section line.

3 It depends on how close we are to the
4 road right-of-way. If the poles can be set five
5 feet off the road right-of-way on the private side,
6 it's an 80-foot easement strip we need to purchase
7 compared to a cross-country it's 150. So you can
8 kind of use that 80- to 150-foot ratio as a guide.

9 MS. ENDRES: Thank you.

10 MR. STEVENSON: You're welcome.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Question, before he leaves,
12 I've got questions for him.

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Do you want to ask
14 them up in the front right now?

15 MR. LOPEZ: Not really. Matt, the last
16 name's Lopez, 5908 303rd Street Way.

17 I've looked at your map, how it goes.
18 I've talked to him a little bit, I've talked to a
19 little bit of everybody. The question I have is, I
20 see you're diverting on Highway 19, Highway 52,
21 you're taking a 30-degree angle, a sharp 30-degree
22 angle, because you've got the entrance ramp, the
23 exit ramp, so I'm guessing you can't be inside of
24 them, is that correct, the entrance ramp on 52 to go
25 south?

1 MR. STEVENSON: The Department of
2 Transportation's preference is that we go around
3 interchanges and not in them.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

5 MR. STEVENSON: They have a hardship
6 process where we can apply, if necessary, to put a
7 pole in the infield --

8 MR. LOPEZ: Right, of an entrance ramp.

9 MR. STEVENSON: Yeah. And in fact, I
10 talked to -- excuse me a second, I talked to a
11 landowner in the Zumbrota area yesterday and if the
12 route continued in Zumbrota, that's the place --
13 there's houses really close, we might have to have
14 poles in the infield. But it's -- it requires --
15 it's not automatic from the DOT, we would have to
16 apply and they to decide if they think there's a
17 valid enough reason.

18 MR. LOPEZ: Okay. Where I live on 52,
19 I'm the closest house to 52 --

20 MR. STEVENSON: At the interchange?

21 MR. LOPEZ: The 19 interchange. I'm not
22 the closest to 19 but I'm the closest to 52. Where
23 you turn your 30-degree angle would be right in my
24 property.

25 MR. STEVENSON: Okay. Now I know where

1 you live.

2 MR. LOPEZ: And I know the 52
3 right-of-way and the county right-of-way, you've got
4 about five feet of property that I own, that's my
5 property. I'm within 150 foot -- my house is, my
6 garage, within 150 foot where that would run. The
7 only way you'd be able to avoid it would be you
8 would have to have a pole turning right there. If
9 it's back further, then you're getting closer to my
10 house to avoid Highway 19.

11 The problem I have is, I'm right in the
12 middle -- I told them, I'm right of middle of an
13 addition, building on an addition to the house. I
14 don't want to complete it if I'm going to have a
15 buzzing and everything. I mean, this is a concern
16 to me and everybody in the neighborhood.

17 Number one is the buzzing, you've got
18 noise, you've got health and safety, you've got
19 recreation and property values, aesthetics,
20 right-of-way requirements, is all right on me. I
21 mean, I'm the closest house there, in sight.

22 I just want an answer, is my house going
23 to stay, are they going to take my house, what's
24 going on? I'm not going to wait a year to get an
25 answer.

1 MR. STEVENSON: I can answer some of
2 those -- a number of those that you mentioned.
3 Aesthetics and noise are things that the state and
4 Matt will study in the environmental impact
5 statement, he can address that better.

6 The first item, if the poles were in the
7 interchange it creates some distance to your house,
8 right?

9 MR. LOPEZ: Correct.

10 MR. STEVENSON: To me, and if I was you,
11 in your written comments, let's attach your own map
12 or have Mark help you in the back, and draw an
13 alignment that goes through that interchange. I
14 mean, one of the best ways to help demonstrate this
15 hardship -- or qualify this for the DOT is, rather
16 than just approaching the DOT individually, have it
17 happen as part of this public process.

18 Because the DOT needs to participate in
19 this process as well. And you could testify in
20 front of the judge and maybe convince he or she to
21 note that in her recommendation to the PUC. And
22 then the PUC can talk about -- get down to some of
23 those specifics, if they choose to as well.

24 As far as taking the house, in Minnesota
25 with a 345 line, if we need to get an easement from

1 you, you can elect at your option to require us to
2 buy the property. It's called Buy the Farm, that's
3 at your option. But that's for this voltage, 345.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Right.

5 MR. STEVENSON: I think the rest is more
6 environmental. I'll give the microphone back to
7 Matt. And after we're done here with the formal
8 part, let's look at a map together, I'd like to see
9 more detail.

10 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

11 MR. LANGAN: And we did get a chance to
12 talk before the meeting about some of those
13 concerns, and so I'm glad that you got those down.
14 And from the slide up here, those are exactly what
15 you should be including in your comments about what
16 those impacts -- what those issues are of concern to
17 you and what you want the Public Utilities
18 Commission to know about, okay.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

20 MR. LANGAN: Other questions or comments?

21 Well, we may have time to hold a wedding
22 yet. Actually, if there are no other questions or
23 comments, we'll be around here if you want to -- if
24 you want to approach us individually and ask some
25 questions, want to spend more time at the maps or

1 write down comments that you have and drop them off
2 or get a map printed off, we're going to be around.
3 So feel free to do that.

4 But, with that said, thanks everyone for
5 being here today. Again, I encourage you to sign up
6 for that project mailing list if you want to follow
7 along with the process. And, again, thanks for
8 being here.

9 (Public comment concluded.)

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PUBLIC COMMENTS - CANNON FALLS - 6:30 - MAY 6, 2010

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

May 6, 2010

Grandpa's Event Center
31846 65th Avenue
Cannon Falls, Minnesota

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I N D E X - PLAINVIEW - 6:30 - MAY 6, 2010

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1 MR. LANGAN: Okay. What we want to do
2 now is take your comments or questions. What we
3 will do is ask you to come up to the front of the
4 room and speak into the microphone. We'll ask you
5 to state your name and spell it. And then we'll ask
6 that folks speak one at a time so that the court
7 reporter can take down your questions or your
8 comments.

9 If you're unable to come up to the
10 microphone, just let me know and I can bring the
11 microphone back to you. But it does help us if
12 you're able to come up to the microphone, and it
13 helps the court reporter record your comments or
14 questions.

15 We'll start with those who registered.
16 And then -- but everybody will get a chance to ask a
17 question.

18 Okay. This is Michelle Sandstrom.

19 MR. SANDSTROM: She's too scared. Hi, my
20 name is Andy Sandstrom. I just think that it
21 crosses by our house and it's going to be on the
22 other side. But we've talked to the guys back there
23 and got some maps. So we're going to draw them and
24 send them in to you guys. So really we don't need
25 to talk.

1 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that. That's
2 great. The maps help. And you can either drop
3 those off with us tonight or send them in via
4 e-mail. And again, remember to include an
5 explanation and some rationale behind it. Thank
6 you.

7 Okay. That was the one speaker that we
8 had registered. And so what we'll try and do is
9 just do a show of hands. So if you want to raise
10 your hand to ask a question or provide a comment,
11 feel free, and we'll call you up to the front. Go
12 ahead. In the green, come on up.

13 MS. DOERR: Mairi Doerr, D-O-E-R-R.
14 Mairi is spelled M-A-I-R-I. I'm curious about, you
15 had spoken about the wind projects and saying that
16 that wasn't part of your project, I guess. And then
17 I'm understanding that these lines, these structures
18 that potentially could carry these lines could
19 accommodate carrying the transmission from wind
20 turbines.

21 So it strikes me as why wouldn't you know
22 about the wind projects and would you not be paying
23 attention to the potential of that transmission?
24 You know, if in fact these transmission lines are
25 necessary.

1 MR. LANGAN: Sure, sure. And I'll
2 have -- I'll have Tom re-explain that to you -- for
3 you. But for our part, actually, our office does
4 evaluate and does do a permitting process and an
5 environmental review process on those individual
6 wind farm projects. They -- but they aren't part of
7 this proposal tonight. The permitting for this
8 project and the environmental review is focusing on
9 the transmission project itself.

10 And maybe before I start going too far
11 down the road, Tom can explain a little bit more
12 about what the connection is ultimately between wind
13 and transmission.

14 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, I can take a stab
15 at this. We had a discussion about this last night,
16 too, and it gets into a very complicated answer.
17 But I'll start with the simple stuff that I know
18 about.

19 At some point during the development of a
20 wind project they do have to figure out where
21 they're going to connect into the transmission
22 system. And they can't just connect into the line,
23 they need to connect into a substation. So either
24 they build a new substation or they connect into an
25 existing substation.

1 Now, that act of them connecting into a
2 substation is managed by an organization called the
3 Midwest Independent System Operator. Some people
4 call it MISO. And that is the method that's used to
5 manage which wind developments gets allowed to come
6 on the transmission system.

7 Now, the planning for which wind farms
8 develop and where they develop is a very complicated
9 thing and there's not -- there's not, from what I
10 understand, there's not an overall, overarching
11 agency that plans for all that. It's a mixture of
12 various agencies and different ways that they're
13 regulated. So there's not -- there's not a real
14 simple answer that I can talk about. It's very
15 complicated.

16 But you're right, the wind developments
17 that do come about have to use a transmission system
18 and it's likely that they would aim for the areas
19 that we're developing substations in in order to
20 connect onto the line, if they're going to connect
21 onto the line that we build. Either a substation
22 that we build or an existing substation that's
23 already out there somewhere.

24 MS. DOERR: It seems like collaboration
25 would make a lot of sense, wouldn't it?

1 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, it does in the
2 since of managing where wind develops in the state.
3 But when we develop our projects, we do not take
4 into account any specific wind development. We
5 develop our projects to solve certain needs. And
6 this project was developed to solve needs in -- for
7 more power that's needed in the city of Rochester
8 and the area surrounding Rochester and to satisfy an
9 increasing need for power in the area around
10 La Crosse and Winona and outskirts of those cities.

11 So that was the main driver of the need
12 for this project. But this project also does help
13 the regional reliability of the transmission system
14 and it also allows more wind to come onto the
15 system. But it wasn't developed for any particular
16 wind development or any particular area that we
17 thought -- we thought it would be developing into
18 wind.

19 MS. DOERR: Could I just follow that up?
20 If -- are the existing 169 (sic) volt towers
21 sufficient to also transmit that power, if these
22 higher towers are not deemed necessary?

23 MR. HILLSTROM: The question was are the
24 161 lines going to be used for wind transmission?
25 And that's -- they weren't developed for that, but

1 some wind power may flow on those lines. The
2 purpose of the 161 lines was developed to move power
3 from that substation between Hampton -- or not
4 Hampton -- Zumbrota and Pine Island down into
5 Rochester. So it doesn't really matter where that
6 power is being generated, it's just to get it off
7 that big 345 system into the city of Rochester.

8 MS. DOERR: Thank you.

9 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you for the
10 question. And I will ask, it does make life a lot
11 easier for the court reporter if we can just ask the
12 questions on the microphone. If we can just try and
13 do that, I think that makes life easier.

14 Okay. I know I had a couple other hands
15 up before that question or comment, but you may have
16 to raise them again because I don't remember who.

17 Okay. I think just back here. You,
18 please, sir. I think you had your hand up first,
19 please. We'll get to the front row after.

20 MR. BETCHER: Yeah, I'm Bill Betcher.
21 B-E-T-C-H-E-R. And I'm representing St. Paul's
22 Church and School. And I've got -- you know, we're
23 right -- well, right next to Sandstrom's auto repair
24 also, right on the other side of the freeway there.
25 And I noticed in the *Beacon*, this last issue, that

1 they actually moved the line up by Hampton up there
2 because of the Buddhist temple and the residential
3 area, they moved it one mile to the north.

4 Now, I know that area. Not real well,
5 but I know it somewhat. I don't think that that is
6 any more populated than what that housing
7 development over there is. Now, we've got a school
8 there, which we've got 55 students in the school and
9 we're growing. I think that should come into
10 consideration in what you're looking at also.

11 And I also have one other comment, and I
12 know it really doesn't have anything to do with me,
13 but how high are these poles?

14 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. The -- there are
15 two different heights; one height for the 345 line,
16 one for the 161 kilovolt line. The 345 line, the
17 single pole structures can be as tall as 170 feet.
18 I think the majority of them are 150 feet, but
19 they'll be as tall at 170 feet in some locations
20 based on topography and other site considerations.
21 With the 161 line, the tallest is 110, but I think
22 it's more like 80 or 90 feet; 80 feet for the height
23 of the 161 structures.

24 MR. BETCHER: Okay. The reason that I'm
25 asking that is I don't know if it's been taken into

1 consideration, but the landing pad for that Mayo One
2 helicopter is right across the freeway from there.
3 Now, if I was a helicopter pilot and I was coming
4 into that landing site, I would not want -- there's
5 enough interference there. They do not need 180-
6 foot power line on the other side of the freeway to
7 go around. Because I'm close enough there, I see
8 them landing. When they come in, they come in from
9 the west just about all the time because they want
10 to stay, you know, away from the town, which is
11 understandable. I don't think they want that line
12 there. And I wish someone was here representing the
13 hospital. Maybe there is.

14 MR. LANGAN: Well, a comment has been
15 made on their behalf. So thank you. Thank you.

16 MR. BETCHER: Yep.

17 MR. LANGAN: Sir?

18 MR. ENEDY: My name is Robert Eneyd,
19 E-N-E-D-Y. If you could, could you pull the slide
20 that shows the overall routing?

21 MR. LANGAN: Sure.

22 MR. ENEDY: It's a two-part question in
23 terms of you have an alternate and a preferred
24 route. And it may say in there, in the written
25 dialogue, what the criteria would be in selecting

1 your alternate or preferred. I did not see a
2 explanation of is it an all or nothing for alternate
3 or preferred? And if it is not an all or nothing,
4 what are the segment lines that may be considered in
5 terms of alternate on one area, preferred on
6 another? Could you further describe that?

7 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Yeah, thanks a
8 lot for bringing that up. Somehow that did not make
9 it into my presentation tonight, and that's an
10 oversight on my part.

11 When a line of this capacity and this
12 length is proposed to our office and the Public
13 Utilities Commission, and under our full permitting
14 process procedures, the applicant needs to submit a
15 preferred route -- has to submit two routes and name
16 one of them a preferred route. So preferred route
17 and one alternate route. They can exceed that, in
18 the case of that area around the Zumbro River where
19 they propose three different ways to get across the
20 river there. But it has to be a preferred route and
21 an alternate route.

22 The preferred route -- again, state rule
23 requires them to name one preferred. Once it gets
24 into our permitting process each route is reviewed
25 using the same criteria. So there is not really a

1 preferred route from our review of the project and
2 from the Public Utilities Commission review of the
3 project. They are measuring it against the same --
4 they are measuring each route under the same
5 criteria. Each would be equal in their eyes until a
6 record is developed to show which reduces the impact
7 to the extent possible.

8 So it's a requirement for the utilities
9 that they name one of them the preferred. There are
10 certain criteria--maybe Tom could talk about that--
11 why one gets chosen as preferred over another at
12 that stage. But you all should know that they are
13 both reviewed equally under our state review
14 process. They are reviewed with the same criteria.

15 MR. HILLSTROM: And I'll just add to
16 Matt's comments, that when we express a preference,
17 when we identify one of those as a preferred route,
18 we do it based on that systematic analysis, that
19 very scientific analysis, using those tables and the
20 numerical analysis.

21 And the other thing that you might be
22 asking is if the preferred route is chosen in one
23 section, does that carry through to the preferred
24 route in the entire project? And the answer to that
25 is no. These can be mixed and matched. New

1 segments can be introduced. And so it's all open
2 for study, like Matt said.

3 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you.

4 Any other questions or comments? Back
5 here.

6 MS. BJORNGAARD: Karen Bjorngaard.
7 K-A-R-E-N. B-J-O-R-N-G-A-A-R-D. Kind of one of
8 those two-part questions.

9 Are there plans to relocate, buy out
10 people who are in that 150- or 300-foot realm?

11 MR. LANGAN: Okay.

12 MS. BJORNGAARD: And if you're in that
13 1,000-foot realm around a proposed route, how do you
14 find out exactly how far you are from the line? Has
15 that all been determined? Is that something if we
16 give you an address, you can know that?

17 MR. LANGAN: If you don't mind, I'll
18 answer the second part of the question and then turn
19 it over to Tom for the first part of your question.

20 And thank you for bringing that up. We
21 have been talking about a route permit tonight, and
22 a route actually has a specific width to it. Okay?
23 And that is a 1,000-foot route. It actually can be
24 up to a mile and a quarter by state rule. But the
25 applicant submits a route to us, and that is 1,000

1 feet. In order to construct it -- and we'll talk
2 about -- in order to construct the 345 kilovolt line
3 the utility will need a 150-foot right of way.

4 So it doesn't need 1,000 feet to
5 construct it, it would be to operate and maintain
6 that line, we'd need 150-foot right of way and
7 easement as it goes across the land. The route,
8 that 1,000 foot route is -- would allow -- it could
9 allow that -- it would allow the utility, if that
10 1,000-foot route were granted anywhere along the
11 preferred or the alternative, that the utility could
12 work with landowners to place that 150-foot route
13 right of way within that 1,000-foot route.

14 Now, what we've asked -- and actually,
15 and Xcel has done in this case, is they've put a lot
16 of work into that alignment that you see on the
17 maps, that you see -- well, that you see on the
18 maps. So you look at the shaded portion, which is
19 the 1,000-foot route on those back maps. Okay. And
20 then you've got the purple line going down pretty
21 much the middle of those, and that's the alignment.
22 And Xcel Energy has proposed that as a proposed
23 alignment.

24 If, at the end of all this process, if
25 that route were chosen, that -- based on the

1 information they have and their analysis over these
2 last two years, that's where they propose to put it.
3 Now, if there's a very good reason that that needs
4 to move somewhere within that route, that's a
5 possibility. But frankly, we encourage Xcel to
6 provide that alignment and put that work in leading
7 up to this process. It creates good discussion here
8 when you see where that line is intended to go.

9 But that route has a width to it to allow
10 some flexibility within there, so that they can work
11 with the landowners once a route is eventually
12 approved.

13 MS. BJORNGAARD: Right. The first part
14 then was if people are in that 150- to 300-foot from
15 the route or the line itself, is there re-location?
16 Is there buyout? Is there anything that happens?

17 MR. HILLSTROM: Well, like Matt said,
18 we've put enough work into these routes to know that
19 that will not be necessary. We've had engineers do
20 a preliminary design on these projects, and that
21 means they've figured out where these lines can be
22 built without removing any houses. And the answer
23 to that is yes, we can build this entire project
24 without having to remove any houses.

25 And what Matt mentioned about the

1 easement width, that's the area we're talking about
2 as far as not -- the easement -- the 150-foot
3 easement, which is 75 feet on either side of the
4 pole, has to be maintained clear of trees and
5 structures, just to make sure that there's enough
6 safety clearance from the wires to any different
7 structures.

8 So what I'm saying is that our engineers
9 tell us that they can build a line. There are no
10 homes that have to be removed. And when I say that,
11 that means there are no homes within 75 feet of that
12 centerline.

13 MS. BJORNGAARD: So in other words, the
14 safety feature is already built into that for those
15 people living right there?

16 MR. HILLSTROM: Right. If you're beyond
17 75 feet, the houses can be there.

18 MS. BJORNGAARD: All right.

19 MR. LANGAN: Thank you. Other questions
20 or comments? And/or comments? Please.

21 MS. DRISCOLL: All right. My name is
22 Melissa, M-E-L-I-S-S-A, Driscoll, D-R-I-S-C-O-L-L.

23 And I guess my main question is it feels
24 to me like you guys should be selling it to us. Why
25 is this even needed? And I guess I looked through

1 the beginning of the first book, the volume there,
2 to try to find a reason for -- and I understand the
3 three reasons given. But I still feel like Xcel
4 needs to sell us on how much energy savings have
5 they worked towards in these different communities.

6 I just feel like we need to use less
7 energy, use less energy in general. And I'm hoping
8 that Xcel, even though it's not in their interests
9 of making more money, that they're really out there
10 selling the idea of using less energy which, I don't
11 know if they'll ever do. But that's my question, I
12 guess.

13 MR. LANGAN: Okay. All right. Good.
14 Tom do you want to? Or --

15 MR. STEVENSON: Well, we can speak
16 sometime in more detail about the need. One reason
17 there's no sell in this document, it's a route
18 document. We already had a need proceeding with the
19 CapX projects; went through the certificate of need
20 process before the Public Utilities Commission, and
21 there's testimony. And the Public Utilities
22 Commission made their decision last May, I think it
23 was. That's where all that information about need
24 was. This document then now turns specifically to
25 the focus on routing. That's why you don't see the

1 sell.

2 MS. DRISCOLL: Okay.

3 MR. STEVENSON: Tom touched on the three
4 needs. There's a reliability need, and that's the
5 chief driver of this need. There's other CapX
6 projects that are -- one at Brookings, South Dakota
7 was more tied to generation. But this one has a
8 need component in Rochester and the rural areas
9 around it, and Winona and La Crosse and the rural
10 areas around there, there's a reliability need and
11 that's what was reviewed in the certificate of need
12 process some months ago.

13 MS. DRISCOLL: So during that process is
14 there a lot of talk about how to reduce energy use?

15 MR. STEVENSON: Yes, there were things
16 about conservation plans that had to be filed and
17 there were intervening parties, at least three, four
18 maybe, that testified their opinion in front of an
19 administrative law judge and she deliberated and
20 made a recommendation. And then the parties also
21 got to make their case to the Public Utilities
22 Commission.

23 MS. DRISCOLL: All right.

24 MS. OVERLAND: The Appellate Court.

25 MR. STEVENSON: What did she say?

1 MS. OVERLAND: The Appellate Court.

2 MR. LANGAN: Okay. I think what that is
3 is the -- we're talking about the certificate of
4 need. And that is it is one of two proceedings that
5 go through the Public Utilities Commission on these,
6 on these proposals. And so a need has to be
7 established. And they do talk about conservation
8 measures, alternatives to how to distribute that
9 energy and how to increase the reliability. And so
10 all those things do get considered. When a need has
11 been established, then if the project is needed,
12 then it is where should it go, and to reduce the
13 impacts to the extent possible.

14 The Public Utilities Commission approved
15 that certificate of need last May. There is a
16 challenge to that certificate of need ongoing right
17 now. And the decision has not been made yet on that
18 challenge.

19 Yes, back here.

20 MS. SANDSTROM: Michelle Sandstrom. We
21 were told tonight that there is a so-called buy the
22 farm option which, as it was explained to me, as I
23 understood it, if you were within 150 feet of that
24 pole, if any part of your land touched that, you had
25 the option to be bought out or -- but that's not the

1 answer that I heard Tom give when somebody else
2 asked. Could you explain that?

3 MR. LANGAN: Sure. Tom, do you want to
4 explain that?

5 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah. You're absolutely
6 right about that. What I explained is that the
7 easement width is 150 feet. And that means that
8 beyond 75 feet -- or inside of 75 feet of the
9 centerline of the project there can't be houses,
10 there can't be tall trees. But if we -- if we get
11 approved to build this project and the route goes
12 across your property and that means we have to buy
13 an easement from you, you do have that choice. That
14 buy the farm bill is right. If the utilities need
15 to buy an easement from you, you can say I don't
16 want this line on my property, I can't live here
17 anymore. The utility, therefore, has to buy my
18 entire property.

19 MS. SANDSTROM: Thank you.

20 MR. LANGAN: Okay. Thank you. Other
21 comments and/or questions?

22 MS. DOERR: Do you want me to come up?
23 Mairi Doerr. My second question was you had spoken
24 about existing transmission corridors, and it was
25 specifically heading over to Alma. I was just

1 wondering, you know, in some cases you are working
2 on existing transmission corridors, but not the
3 whole way. So why do you not just use it the whole
4 way? Existing transmission corridor.

5 MR. LANGAN: Existing transmission
6 corridors, why doesn't the line follow existing
7 transmission corridors.

8 MS. DOERR: Especially since you said the
9 poles could be replaced, because you said that in
10 that stretch we could double up and so --

11 MR. LANGAN: Yep.

12 MS. DOERR: So why don't you just take
13 down the old poles and then put up the new one and
14 put double lines, if you're going to do it?

15 MR. HILLSTROM: If we could do that, we
16 sure would. And I can point to some areas where we
17 are proposing to do that. I mentioned this area
18 leading to the river near Alma. There is also a
19 majority of the route that follows Highway 52,
20 follows an existing transmission line. And that
21 would be the proposal there. If you can think about
22 driving south from here, there's that smaller
23 transmission line, that 69 kilovolts. And our route
24 follows that transmission line and it would remove
25 the bulk of that transmission line and rebuild it,

1 like I talked about before, as a consolidated
2 structure.

3 So we are doing that on 52. We're doing
4 it leading to the river. And if we could find a
5 transmission line that connected those two areas, we
6 would use that too. But there's not one out there
7 that we could follow. And what we -- there are some
8 cases where we can't follow existing transmission
9 lines because, like we talked about, one of the big
10 reasons for this project is reliability. And the
11 way reliability is determined is our engineers look
12 at our system and try to figure out these computer
13 models and look at what would happen to the system
14 if any one element of the system was taken out of
15 service. And the system has to be reliable even
16 with any one of its elements taken out of service.

17 But when you combine two lines on the one
18 structure, those two lines suddenly become a single
19 element and if the reliability studies see that
20 taken out of service, it's both lines taken out of
21 service and, therefore, it's harder to maintain that
22 reliability, if you have two lines combined onto a
23 single circuit.

24 So that comes into play here only in --
25 it really didn't come into play at all in our route

1 selection. What -- that would come into play, say,
2 if we wanted to double circuit an existing 345 line
3 that runs north and south through here. And we
4 didn't propose that or we didn't study that.

5 So in a nutshell, if there were more
6 existing transmission lines that we could have
7 followed, we would have because we recognize that as
8 a really good opportunity to minimize the impacts.
9 Because it does make so much sense if we can, you
10 know, consolidate lines on a single corridor.

11 MR. LANGAN: Yes, sir.

12 MR. KALASS: Paul, P-A-U-L. Kalass,
13 K-A-L-A-S-S. This might be an elementary question,
14 I don't know. You say size of these lines, and it's
15 a number that doesn't mean anything to me. I worked
16 on survey crews for Soil/Water District and did a
17 lot of work for the Prairie Island here. And if I
18 was under a rod, a Fiberglas rod, up 15 feet, and I
19 walked underneath that line, I could always tell I
20 was under it because the hair on my arms would go
21 up.

22 Is the line that's coming by my house and
23 jut off 52 and bypass Zumbrota near my house, their
24 parcels of land are over-run. Is that the same
25 power line that's going to raise the hair on my arms

1 when I walk under it?

2 MR. LANGAN: Would you describe that as a
3 issue or impact that you would like to see us
4 evaluate in our document?

5 MS. DOERR: Say yes.

6 MR. KALASS: Yes. I don't know the
7 health reason, but it seems -- is this the thing I'm
8 going to have happen to me when I'm working in my
9 yard or whatever?

10 MR. LANGAN: Absolutely, in our
11 environmental document we're going to look at stray
12 voltage. You know, do -- let me start out by saying
13 there's lots of available studies out there right
14 now on these types of issues that you're raising
15 right now. And --

16 MR. KALASS: Do you know the size of the
17 line that comes out of Prairie Island?

18 MR. LANGAN: I think it's a 345 kilovolt
19 line.

20 MR. KALASS: Is that what we're talking
21 about here?

22 MR. LANGAN: Yeah, that's what we're
23 talking about here.

24 MR. KALASS: Okay. Thank you.

25 MR. LANGAN: Yes, sir.

1 Okay. Other questions and/or comments?

2 MR. ENEDY: Robert Eney again. Could
3 you elaborate a little bit further on that? When
4 you're saying there's a 75-foot right of way needed
5 for the utility line itself, that sounds like a
6 mechanical safety issue in terms of space that's not
7 going to interfere with the line. Can you right now
8 speak to what Xcel looks at as an acceptable
9 distance for housing area to be in, in terms of I
10 don't want my hair standing on the end of my arm 24
11 hours a day, seven days a week, if I decide not to
12 leave my house.

13 Obviously you need more than 75 feet from
14 your house to your line. What type of a buffer does
15 Xcel look to in routing these in terms of the buyout
16 or the easement or that sort of thing? Can you
17 elaborate on that any bit further?

18 MR. LANGAN: Tom, if you want to talk
19 about that. Again, that is something we will
20 provide information on in that document. We're
21 going to look at that. But I can have Tom give you
22 a direct answer here.

23 MR. HILLSTROM: Right. And 75 feet is
24 the minimum distance that houses can be to the line.
25 And you're right, that is based on that safety

1 clearance, the electrical clearance. In developing
2 our routes the proximity of homes was one of the
3 priority factors that we used. And what I'm saying
4 is that when we develop these routes we really do
5 our best to try to keep the lines away from houses
6 as much as possible. So that 75 feet is the
7 minimum. And in most cases the houses aren't that
8 close.

9 Now, if -- if a house was 75 feet away
10 from the line and there was no way to adjust that
11 line, that house could stay there. There's no --
12 there's no regulation or requirement that a house be
13 farther than 75 feet away. And the concerns that
14 have been raised here, that Matt has talked about,
15 the hair standing on your arms is probably an
16 example of a static electricity charge.

17 There are other issues that Matt had on
18 his board that will be studied as well. And that's
19 part of the analysis that Matt and I will do. But
20 in a nutshell, there is no other kind of standard,
21 other than that 75-foot minimum distance.

22 MR. KALASS: Can I further the question
23 then to ask: Does that unspecified area from the 75
24 feet come into play in terms of the buy-the-farm-out
25 then? Or who is the deciding person to say, you

1 know what? I feel 250 feet is okay or 500 feet.
2 And how -- how is the landowner going to be able to
3 turn around and represent themselves to Xcel or
4 whomever it is and say I don't feel that this is
5 safe that I'm within 300 feet of the centerline of
6 the power line. Or when does that come into play?
7 And particularly when does it come into play on the
8 flow diagram that you gave us earlier in terms of
9 when you decide the routes and when that
10 notification comes? Is it when the agent comes to
11 the door and says, hey, you have a power line coming
12 behind your house and it's less than 150 feet, or --
13 can you clarify that any more?

14 MR. HILLSTROM: Do you want me to address
15 that?

16 MR. LANGAN: Sure.

17 MR. HILLSTROM: The way the timeline
18 works is that we proposed our routes, and this is
19 the scoping process, maybe new routes will be added
20 to the ones we've proposed. The OES does their
21 environmental impact statement. In that document
22 they present the results of their studies, including
23 any kind of concerns that you may have, health
24 concerns, the static electricity concern. That
25 would be included in the EIS that they produce, and

1 you'll have a chance to study that.

2 Now, after that EIS is produced there
3 will be a couple of more public meetings you can
4 come to and get more information and ask more
5 questions, and then ultimately, after all that is
6 done, it's the Public Utility Commission that
7 decides which route is approved. And now if that
8 route is approved, that does happen across your
9 property, then the company does their engineering
10 and then only after that is approved, then the real
11 estate agent would come out and approach you and
12 tell you that the utility needed to buy an easement
13 from you.

14 And it would be at that point where you
15 would have access to all those documents that have
16 already been produced and you can do your own
17 research and you can -- the utility will tell you
18 where the line will go, how much easement they will
19 need to purchase from you, and then at that point
20 you can make your decision on, you know, whatever
21 you think is warranted.

22 MR. KALASS: Okay.

23 MR. LANGAN: I guess I get to ask a
24 question. Would you like us to review in the
25 document the effects that you're talking about at

1 varying distances away from the line?

2 MR. KALASS: That was going to be my next
3 question, was are you currently making a study or
4 are you going to use an already published study from
5 some source that says, hey, this is how far you can
6 stand from a power line all day and not be affected?

7 MR. LANGAN: We rely on existing studies,
8 yes. These studies are -- these have been
9 studied -- these issues have been studied for about
10 30 years or so. The -- but all of the studies that
11 we use, or maybe even done, are 30 years old. There
12 are relatively current studies, they're performed by
13 the World Health Organization, the Minnesota
14 Department of Health, as well as some information
15 we've gathered from the surrounding states, regions
16 that use that information there. We also have past
17 review documents that we can draw from as well.

18 And so, yes, we look at any existing
19 studies. If there are new studies available at the
20 time that we're conducting our review, we
21 incorporate that information as well.

22 And so that's how we conduct that review.
23 And I think what we can do is just look at varying
24 distances, you know, directly underneath the line to
25 outside the right of way to a little bit further and

1 we can describe that in the draft document and then
2 we would ask you to react to what you see there and
3 share information or comments at that point.

4 MR. KALASS: Can you tell us from
5 previous projects what that typical distance has
6 been in terms of we have come across and said this
7 is an area where you're no longer affected by this
8 power line?

9 MR. HILLSTROM: Yeah, as a matter of
10 fact, in our permit application there is a section
11 about electromagnetic fields, and I think that's
12 what we're talking about here. The electromagnetic
13 fields are the effect that people are most concerned
14 about when it comes down to health effects. In our
15 permit application we've included a chart of what we
16 predict those EMF levels to be at different distance
17 intervals. So you can look at that document and see
18 what the EMF levels would be at various distances
19 from the line.

20 MR. KALASS: Okay.

21 MR. LANGAN: Thank you for that. Other
22 questions or comments? Questions and comments? .
23 Okay. I'm not seeing anyone raise their hand. But,
24 what we will do is we'll stick around for a little
25 while. If you would like to come up and speak with

1 any of us individually, feel free to do so. If you
2 didn't get a chance to look at the maps in back, you
3 can do that. If you would like to print a map for
4 any comments that you continue to make, we have that
5 service available in back.

6 I'll just remind folks that you can leave
7 written comments with us tonight, you can mail them
8 in to me by 4:30 p.m. on May 20th. If you have any
9 questions before that comment period ends, just give
10 my a call, give Ray, the public advisor, a call and
11 we'll answer those questions for you. But I really
12 appreciate you being out here tonight. Thank you
13 for coming out and participating. And thanks very
14 much.

15 (Hearing adjourned at 8:20.)
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