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Issued: July 26, 2011

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**In the Matter of the Applications for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit
for the 115 kV Glencoe – Waconia Transmission Line Project**

PUC Docket Numbers: E002/CN-09-1390 and E002/TL-10-249

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce will hold a public hearing on behalf of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on the route permit application submitted by Northern States Power (Xcel Energy) and the certificate of need application submitted by Xcel Energy and the city of Glencoe for the proposed 115 kV Glencoe – Waconia transmission line project.

This notice provides the date, starting time and location for public hearing for two matters over which the Commission has jurisdiction. In this consolidated proceeding, the hearing will address: (a) whether the proposed transmission line is needed and in the public interest, and (b) the costs, benefits and impacts of various alternative routes for the proposed transmission line.

This notice also provides additional detail about the public hearings and the procedural requirements of the Office of Administrative Hearings for public hearing on large energy facilities. If you have an interest in this project, please read this notice carefully. If you have questions about the project or upcoming hearings, please contact the appropriate person identified in this notice.

The hearing will run no later than 9:30 p.m. and may conclude earlier if all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been completed.

PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, August 24, 2011
6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Clay Community Building
327 Elm Street West
Norwood Young America, MN
952-467-1800

Project Description. The project is located in McLeod and Carver counties near the cities of Glencoe, Plato, Norwood Young America and Waconia located southwest of the Twin Cities metro area.

The certificate of need (CON) application submitted by Xcel Energy and the city of Glencoe Power and Light Commission (Applicants) seeks approval to construct two miles of new 69 kV transmission line, six miles of new 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, and to upgrade approximately 20 miles of 69 kV transmission line to 115 kV capacity, along with the construction of a new substation and certain substation modifications. The CON application includes approximately 28 miles of transmission line.

Xcel Energy's route permit application requests approval to construct approximately 0.9 miles of new 115 kV transmission line, 1.9 miles of new 69 kV transmission line that is capable of operating as 115/69 kV double circuit line and upgrade approximately 20 miles of 69 kV transmission line to 115 kV (double circuit 115/69 kV capacity). The route permit application covers approximately 23 miles of transmission line and certain substation modifications.

Project construction is expected to begin in 2011; the project is expected to be completed and in service late in 2012.

Regulatory Review Process. Two separate Commission approvals are required to build the Glencoe – Waconia 115 kV transmission line project – a certificate of need (Minnesota Statute § 216B.243, subd. 2) and a route permit (Minnesota Statute 216E.02, subd. 2). The Applicants submitted a CON application to the Commission on November 30, 2010. The CON application was accepted as complete by the Commission on January 27, 2011. Xcel Energy submitted a route permit application to the Commission on December 10, 2010. The route permit application was accepted as complete by the Commission on January 14, 2011.

The Commission is required to hold public hearings on such applications following the release of the environmental review document (Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243, subd. 4, and 216E.03, subd. 6).

The approximately 4.5 mile portion of new 115 kV transmission line from the existing Armstrong Substation to the site of the new 115 kV Diamond Substation, as well as the Diamond Substation, will be built and owned by the city of Glencoe Power and Light Commission; while this portion of the project is included in the certificate of need proceeding, the final route will be determined and permitted through the local review process of Minnesota Rules 7850.5300.

Environmental Assessment. Department staff is responsible for conducting the environmental review for both CON applications (Minn. Rules 7849.1200) and route permit applications (Minn. Rules 7850.3700) submitted to the Commission.

As two concurrent environmental reviews are required – one for the CON application and one for the route permit application – Department staff elected to combine the environmental review for the two applications (Minn. Rules 7849.1900). The environmental assessment (EA), which was prepared to meet the requirements of both review processes, is available.

Electronic versions of the EA and other documents relevant to this matter are available for viewing and download on the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission website or the eDockets website at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=30371>

or

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (Search “10” Year and “249” Number).

Conduct of Hearing. The public hearing will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Statute 216B.243, subd. 4, Minnesota Statute 216E.04, subdivision 6, and Minnesota Rule 7850.3800. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of Department staff and the Applicants, and to offer oral and written comments and submit material into the record. The Honorable Richard Luis, Administrative Law Judge, will preside over the hearing.

Comment period. The record will remain open until **4:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 7, 2011**, for interested persons to submit written comments to the Administrative Law Judge. Comments must be submitted directly to Judge Luis at:

The Honorable Richard Luis
Office of Administrative Hearings
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620
(651) 361-7900
Richard.luis@state.mn.us

The Administrative Law Judge will provide Department staff with a written summary of testimony given at the hearing along with comments received during the prescribed comment period. The Commission will make a final decision on the route permit application after receipt of the complete record.

Project Contacts. The Department has designated staff member Bill Storm (651-296-9535, bill.storm@state.mn.us) as State Permit Manager and Suzanne Steinhauer (651-296-2888, suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us) as Public Advisor. You may contact them at: Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198.

Public Utilities Commission. If you would like additional information about the CON process or Commission practice and procedure, please contact Commission staff member Michael Kaluzniak (651-201-2257, Fax: 651-297-7073, mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us). Mr. Kaluzniak may be contacted in writing at: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147.

Xcel Energy. Information about this project is available from Xcel Energy. You can direct questions to Timothy G. Rogers (612-330-1955, timothy.g.rogers@xcelenergy.com). Mr. Rogers may be contacted in writing at: Xcel Energy, 414 Nicollet Mall, (MP 8), Minneapolis, MN 55401.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.