



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Issued: May 24, 2012

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Hollydale 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Cities of Plymouth and Medina, Hennepin County

PUC Docket No. E002/TL-11-152

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that public information meetings will be held on behalf of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on the route permit application of Xcel Energy and Great River Energy, for the proposed Hollydale 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project. The purpose of the meetings is to provide information about the project and an opportunity for public comment on the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) that will be prepared by Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff. The meetings will be held at the times and location listed below. The meetings may conclude earlier if all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

Thursday, June 7, 2012 - 6 to 9 p.m.

Friday, June 8, 2012 - 1 to 4 p.m.

Wayzata High School
4955 Peony Lane North
Plymouth, Minnesota

Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), Eric L. Lipman will preside at the meetings. Any person who would like to comment on the project or the scope of the EIS may do so at the meetings or in writing to Judge Lipman. A comment period following the meetings will remain open until **4:30 p.m., Friday, June 22, 2012**, for the receipt of written comments. Comments should be submitted directly to Judge Lipman at:

The Honorable Eric L. Lipman
Office of Administrative Hearings
P.O. Box 64620, 600 North Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55164-0620
Fax: 651-361-7936
Eric.Lipman@state.mn.us

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The meetings will include a brief presentation of the state's permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public can participate in the permitting process. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and submit comments on the scope of the EIS that will be prepared by EFP staff. Because of the widespread interest in this matter and the number of persons who wish to offer testimony during the public meetings, those persons who have detailed comments are strongly encouraged to submit written comments into the record. Submission of detailed written comments permits many more persons to be recognized during the public meetings and to be granted the opportunity to provide some oral testimony.

Project Description. Xcel Energy and Great River Energy (GRE) propose removing approximately eight miles of an existing GRE-owned 69 kV overhead transmission line and constructing a new 115 kV overhead transmission line in its place, constructing an additional eight-tenths of a mile of new 115 kV overhead transmission line, constructing a new substation, and modifying associated transmission facilities in the cities of Medina and Plymouth. Because of its voltage and length, the project requires a route permit from the Commission.

Permitting Process. Xcel Energy and GRE (applicants) filed a route permit application with the Commission on June 30, 2011. The Commission accepted the application and authorized review under the alternative permitting process.

The environmental document created under the alternative permitting process is an environmental assessment (EA). EFP staff held a public information and scoping meeting on October 26, 2011, to gather public input on the proposed project and the scope of the EA, i.e., those issues and route alternatives which citizens and communities deem important to study in the EA. The Department of Commerce issued a scoping decision for the EA on December 7, 2011. Since this date, EFP staff have been drafting and developing the EA.

On February 7, 2012, the applicants requested that the Commission convert the permitting process for the project from the alternative process to the full process. On May 4, 2012, the Commission granted this request, and authorized review under the full permitting process, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E (Power Plant Siting Act) and Minnesota Rules 7850.1700 to 7850.2700. As a result, the environmental review document for the project will now be an EIS.

The Department of Commerce has prepared a draft scoping document based on the EA scoping decision of December 7, 2011, and concerns raised by citizens to date. This document can be found on the websites listed below. All issues and route alternatives included in the December 2011 Hollydale EA Scoping Decision are included in the draft scoping document and will be evaluated in the EIS. This public information meeting provides an opportunity for the public to comment on the scope of the EIS prior to Department of Commerce issuance of the EIS scoping decision.

Schedule. EFP staff anticipates that the EIS scoping decision will be issued in July, 2012, and that the draft EIS for the project will be released in late summer 2012. A public meeting and comment period on the draft EIS will be held after its release.

Upon issuance of the draft EIS, an ALJ will preside over a contested case process which includes both public hearings and an evidentiary hearing. Anyone may speak at the public hearing, present evidence, ask questions of the applicants and EFP staff, and submit comments on the proposed project. At the end of the process, the ALJ will recommend a route for permitting by the Commission. The Commission will make a final decision on a route permit.

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

Project Mailing List. Persons should contact the state permit manager or public advisor (noted below) or register online at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#mailing> to get their name on the project mailing list. Persons on the mailing list will receive notices of meetings and notices of document availability for this project. Project mailing list registration is voluntary and may be done at any time.

Project Documents. Information about this project, including a draft scoping document and the Commission's order granting the conversion to the full permitting process, is available on the Department's energy facility permitting website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=32121>. Documents are also available on the eDockets system: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year "11" and the number "152").

Project Contacts. For more information on the project, please contact:

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