



STATE OF MINNESOTA  
Energy Facility Permitting



March 15, 2012

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND  
AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the North Rochester to Chester 161 kV  
Transmission Line Project in Goodhue, Olmsted, and Wabasha counties, Minnesota**

**PUC Docket Number: E002/TL-11-800**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) will hold a public hearing on behalf of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on the route permit application by Xcel Energy for a new, approximately 30-mile long, 161 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line in Goodhue, Olmsted and Wabasha counties, Minnesota. The public hearing will be held at the time and location listed below. The hearing will run no later than 8:00 p.m. and may conclude earlier if all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been completed.

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

Thursday, March 29, 2012  
6:00 p.m.

Oronoco Community Center  
115 2nd Street NW  
Oronoco, MN 55960

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**Project Description.** On September 19, 2011, Xcel Energy (applicant) filed a route permit application under the alternative permitting process for the construction of 29 to 30 miles of 161 kV transmission line between the proposed North Rochester Substation, located between Pine Island and Zumbrota, Minn., in Goodhue County, and the existing Chester Substation, east of Rochester, Minn., in Olmsted County. The project would also include modifications to the Chester Substation. Xcel Energy has submitted this application on behalf of itself and other anticipated co-owners of the project, including Dairyland Power Cooperative, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and WPPI Energy.

The project consists of two segments: 1) An East-West segment, in which the applicant proposes to place the Chester 161kV line on the same poles as the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345kV line for a distance of 13 to 19 miles; and 2) A North-South segment that leaves the 345kV transmission right-of-way east of the Zumbro River and travels south for 11 to 16 miles to the

Chester Substation. The North-South segment would consist of portions of single-circuit 161 kV line and portions of double-circuited 161/69 kV transmission line.

The applicants are requesting a 600-foot route width for the North-South segment. The typical right-of-way for a 161 kV line is 80 feet, the typical span between poles is 400 to 700 feet, and poles range in height from 70 to 120 feet. For the East-West segment, the applicants are requesting the same route width (1000 feet) described in the route permit application for the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345kV project. The 345kV poles range from 130 to 175 feet in height, with spans of 600 to 1000 feet between the poles. The typical right-of-way for 345kV lines is 150 feet.

Modifications to the Chester Substation will consist of addition of a 161 kV circuit-breaker, switches, line termination and expanded box structure, electrical bus and associated equipment. The substation yard would be expanded by approximately one acre to accommodate the added equipment.

EFP held an open public scoping process from November 8, 2011 to December 8, 2011, and held a Public Information and Environmental Assessment Scoping meeting on November 29, 2011. The purpose of the meeting and comment period was to solicit public comment on the issues and route alternatives that should be evaluated in the environmental assessment. The Department of Commerce issued its scoping decision on December 21, 2011, which included one route segment alternative (see attached figure.)

**Environmental Assessment.** EFP staff has completed an environmental assessment (EA) on the proposed project. The EA addresses the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project. Electronic versions of the EA, maps of the proposed project, and other documents relevant to this matter are available for viewing and download on the Commission's Energy Facility Permitting website or the eDockets website at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=32260>

or

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (Search "11" Year and "800" Number).

The Environmental Assessment can also be viewed at the following public libraries in the project area:

**Zumbrota Public Library**  
100 West Ave.  
Zumbrota, MN 55992

**Van Horn Public Library**  
115 3rd Street SE  
Pine Island, MN 55963

**Rochester Public Library**  
101 2nd Street SE  
Rochester, MN 55904

**Conduct of Hearing.** The public hearing will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statute 216E.04, subdivision 6, and Minnesota Rule 7850.3800. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of EFP staff and Xcel Energy representatives 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., Thursday, April 12, 2012**, 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  
Fax: (651) 361-7900  
[routecomments@state.mn.us](mailto:routecomments@state.mn.us)

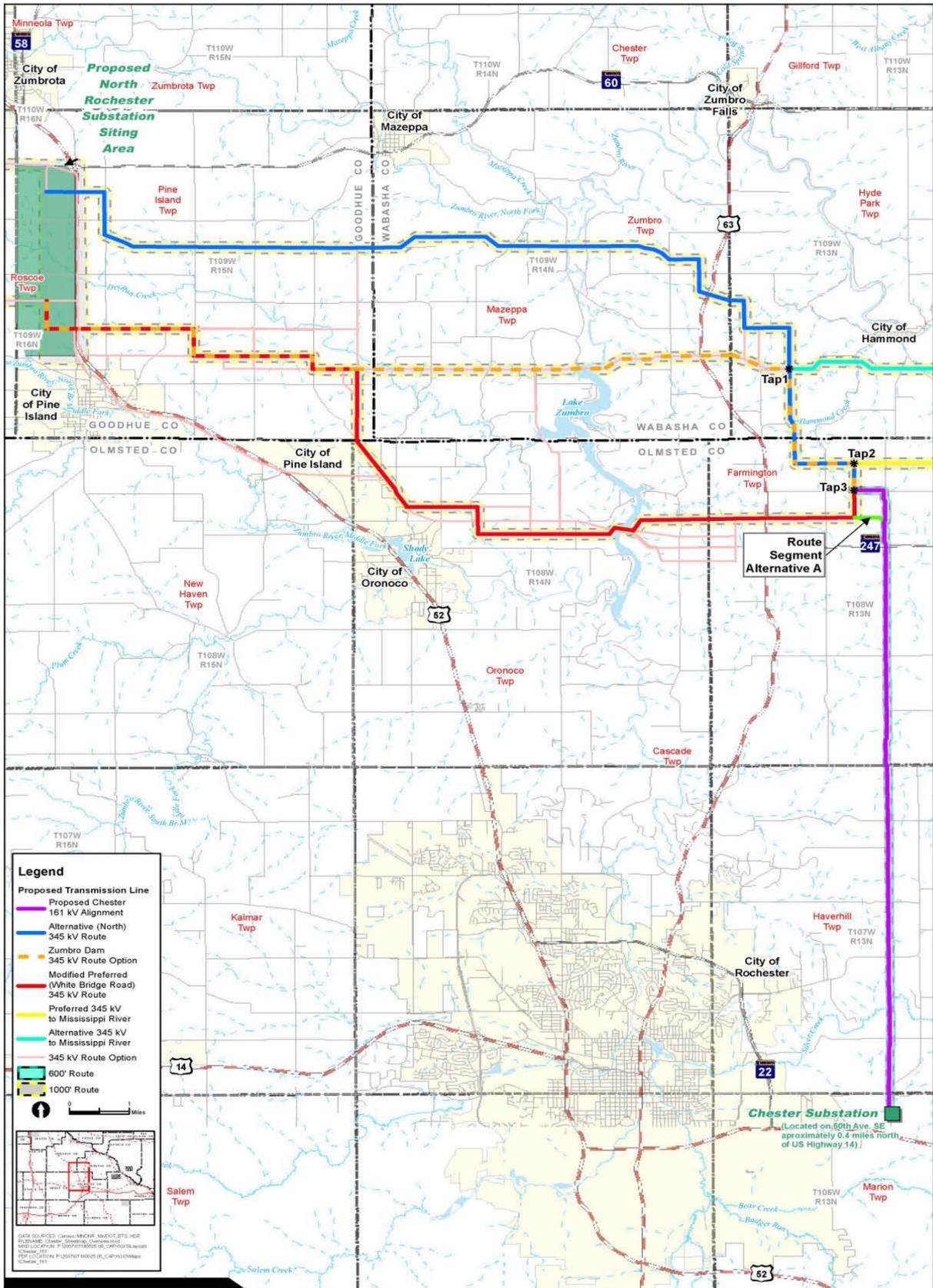
The Administrative Law Judge will provide EFP staff a written summary of testimony given at the hearing along with comments received during the prescribed comment period. The Commission will make a final decision on the route permit application after receipt of the complete record.

**Additional Information.** For more information about the process, the project, or to place your name on the project mailing list, please contact:

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Energy Facility Permitting  
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85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198  
(651) 296-2096 or 1-800-657-3794  
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Raymond Kirsch, Public Advisor  
Energy Facility Permitting  
Department of Commerce  
85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
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(651) 296-7588  
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**Mailing List.** Any person may add his or her name to the mailing list maintained by EFP staff for future mailings pertaining to this project. If you would like to receive notice of the Commission's final decision in this matter please add your name to the mailing list. Names can be added to the list by contacting the project manager or by registering on the Commission's Energy Facility Permitting website at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/#mailing>



**Legend**

- Proposed Transmission Line
- Proposed Chester 161 kV Alignment
- Alternative (North) 345 kV Route
- Zumbro Dam 345 kV Route Option
- Modified Preferred (White Bridge Road) 345 kV Route
- Preferred 345 kV to Mississippi River
- Alternative 345 kV to Mississippi River
- 345 kV Route Option
- 600' Route
- 1000' Route

0 1 Miles

DATA SOURCES: Census, MDCR, MNDOT, BTS, HDR, WISHAM, Chester, Stearns, Oronoco, etc.  
MND LOCATION: P:\2007\11-800\2011\_03\_15\_CHESTER\MapData\MapData.mxd  
PDF LOCATION: P:\2007\11-800\2011\_03\_15\_CHESTER\MapData\MapData.mxd



North Rochester - Chester 161 kV Transmission Project

Figure 2  
Transmission Line Route Map  
March 2012