



**Energy Facility Permitting**  
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[mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities](http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities)

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November 2, 2012

Dear Landowner,

You are receiving this letter because your property may be directly or indirectly affected by a route alternative for the proposed Scott County-Westgate 69 kilovolt (kV) to 115 kV transmission line upgrade project. The route alternative is being evaluated in an Environmental Assessment (EA) that is being prepared by the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Commerce) Energy Facilities Permitting (EFP) staff.

This letter provides you with information on the transmission line project, the permitting process and future opportunities to participate in the process. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the proposed project, sign up for the project mailing list and participate in the permitting process.

***Project***

The Project is a 69 kV to 115 kV transmission line upgrade project located in Carver, Hennepin and Scott counties. Approximately five miles of the line is a double-circuit line built to operate at 115/115 kV, but currently permitted to operate at 69/115 kV, running north from Scott County Substation. No construction is required for this segment. The remainder of the project is proposed to replace an existing 69 kV line that runs through the Excelsior, Deephaven and Westgate substations with a 115 kV line along the existing alignment. The replacement section of the project is approximately 15 miles.

***Process***

Xcel Energy, Inc. (Xcel Energy) filed a route permit application on April 12, 2012, under the alternative process that was accepted as complete by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on May 24, 2012. Xcel Energy also filed a certificate of need application on March 9, 2012, that was accepted as complete on June 8, 2012.

Minnesota Rule 7849.1900, subpart 1, provides that in the event an applicant for a certificate of need for a high voltage transmission line (HVTL) applies to the Commission for an HVTL route permit prior to completion of the Environmental Report (ER), the Department may elect to prepare an Environmental Assessment in lieu of the required Environmental Report. In that case, EFP must include in the EA the analysis of alternatives required by part 7849.1500, but is not required to prepare an ER under 7849.1200. The Department concluded that preparing a single environmental review document is warranted in this case.

EFP staff held a public information and environmental assessment scoping meeting on July 18, 2012, at Minnetonka High School in Minnetonka, Minnesota, to discuss the project with the public and gather public input on the scope of the EA to be prepared. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting over two sessions. Additionally, the public was given until August 1, 2012, to submit written comments. A number of route alternates came out of this process. The Commerce Deputy Commissioner (Deputy) issued a Scoping Decision on August 14, 2012, and landowners along the alternative routes were noticed on September 10, 2012.

Subsequently, Xcel Energy has analyzed the viability of a Highway 5 Alternative as well. On October 25, 2012, Xcel Energy filed a request to amend the Scoping Decision to include an evaluation of the Highway 5 Route Alternative in the EA. The Deputy determined the alternative request meets the requirements to amend the Scoping Decision as laid out in Minn. Rule 7850, 3700, subp. 3, implying "...substantial changes have been made in the project or substantial new information has arisen significantly affecting the potential environmental effects of the project or the availability of reasonable alternatives." On October 30, 2012, the Deputy issued an amendment to the Scoping Decision that includes a route alternative along Highway 5 for review in the EA.

Property records indicate you are located near or own property near this alternative. The new route alternative is described in the Scoping Decision Amendment, which is viewable at <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/resource.html?Id=32971>. A map of the alternative is attached to this mailing. Maps of Xcel Energy's originally proposed route and the other route alternatives under consideration in the EA are contained in the original Scoping Decision, which is viewable at [http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/documents/32547/Signed Scoping Decision.pdf](http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/documents/32547/Signed%20Scoping%20Decision.pdf).

### ***Participation***

An EA is currently being prepared by EFP; it will evaluate the potential environmental, economic, social, and human impacts for the proposed route and all of the route alternatives. The EA is scheduled to be issued in November 2012. Once issued, there will be a public hearing conducted in the area. This hearing will be conducted by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. Anyone may speak at the public hearings, present evidence, ask questions of the Applicant and EFP staff, and submit comments on the proposed project. The ALJ will make a recommendation on a certificate of need and a route permit to the Commission. A decision by the Commission is expected in early 2013.

Information about this project and the permitting process is available on our website at <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=32547>, and on the eDockets website at <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the docket year "11" and number "948" for routing documents or "11" and "332" for certificate of need documents).

Notice of the public hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the EFP project mailing list. To add your name to the mailing list for this project, contact the permit manager or public advisor, or register at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#mailing>.

If you have questions or if you would like further information, please contact:

David Birkholz, EFP Permit Manager  
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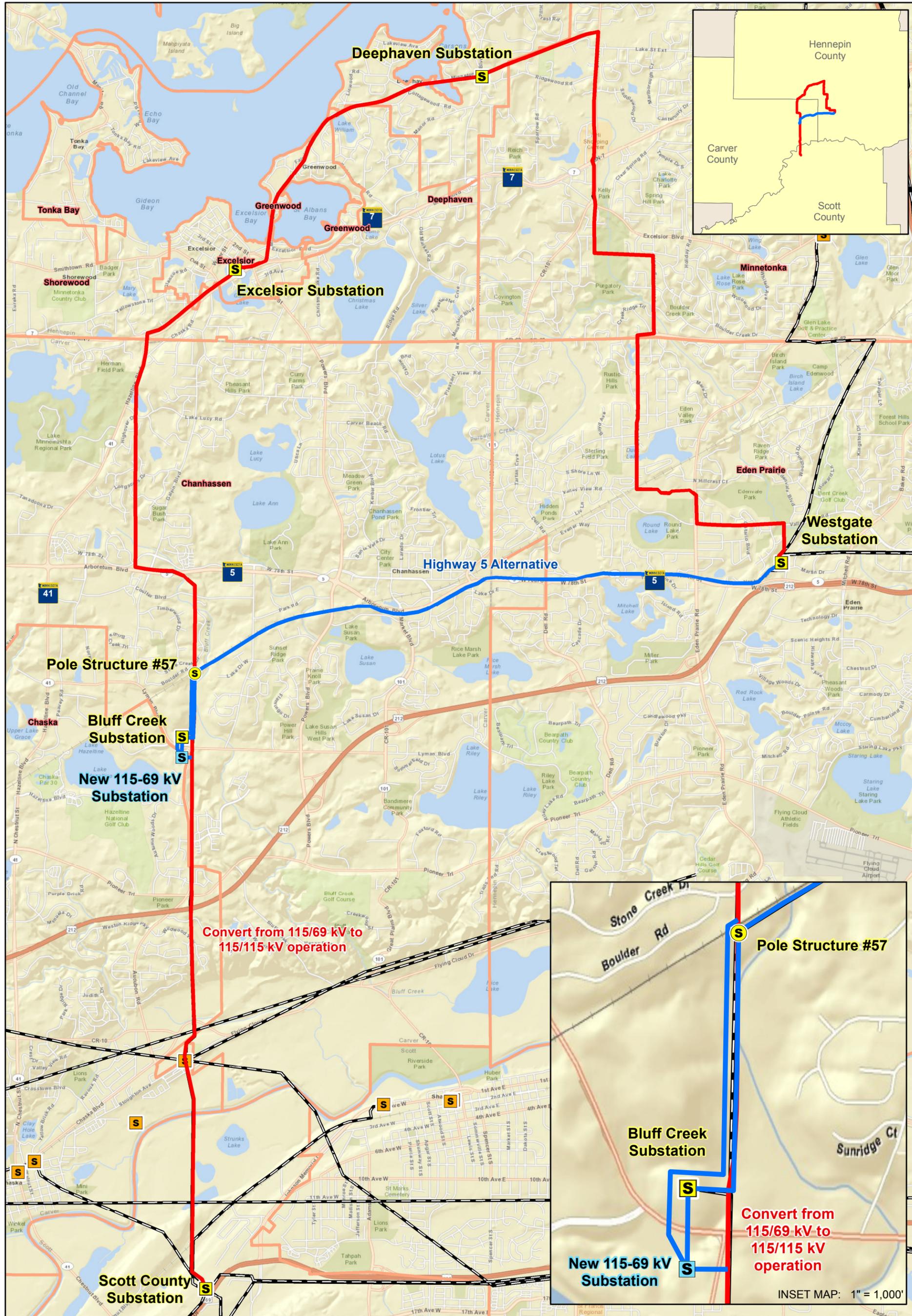
Tricia DeBleeckere, PUC Public Advisor  
(651) 201-2254  
tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Birkholz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "B".

cc: Affected Local Government Units

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Data Source: Westwood (2012); Xcel (2012); esri (2012)

- Legend**
- S Pole Structure #57
  - S Xcel Substations
  - S Proposed Substation Location
  - Highway 5 Alternative
  - Applicant's Proposed Route for the Scott County-Westgate Project
  - Approximate Existing Transmission Line
  - Municipal Boundary
  - World Street Map

# Scott County - Westgate 115kV Upgrade

Carver, Hennepin and Scott Counties, Minnesota



Highway 5 Alternative

INSET MAP: 1" = 1,000'