DEEPHAVEN

June 5, 2012

David Birkholz
Minnesota Energy Facility Planning
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Xcel Energy's Proposed Upgrade of the Southwest Twin Cities (SWTC) Bluff Creek-Westgate 69 kV Transmission Line to 115 kV Capacity in the Cities of Chanhassen, Excelsior, Greenwood, Deephaven, Shorewood, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie

Dear Mr. David Birkholz:

The Deephaven City Council would respectfully request stronger consideration of an alternate route for the above referenced project on that portion of the route that is proposed to be constructed within the existing easements beginning at the Excelsior substation and extending through the cities of Excelsior, Greenwood, Deephaven, and ending at Hwy. 101 in Minnetonka. Although we have co-existed with the current 69 kV transmission line for many years, we question why the planned 115 kV upgrade needs to run through the community and impact our residents when its intent is to be a conduit for improved service to Xcel customers further down the line.

The current 69 kV transmission line is located in close proximity to dozens of residential properties in Deephaven as it extends through the southern half of our community. Over the course of many years, we have come to generally accept the 69 kV transmission line with the exception of the occasionally over-enthusiastic tree trimming that Xcel Energy conducts along its easement on the LRT Trail. We have even learned to accept the substation in Deephaven, which is located directly across from the Deephaven Elementary School. However, our specific concerns include:

1. We question whether or not there is sufficient land available in the area currently dedicated to the existing substation for this major expansion. That question has not been answered.
2. Will additional land easements need to be purchased, and from whom? The LRT Trail currently abuts the existing substation property to the north, which we have been told may be considered for future light rail possibilities, as an example.
3. We are currently in the process of replacing our City's bridge directly adjacent to the current substation and are concerned this work will need to be revisited immediately upon its completion if major expansion of the current substation is required.
4. Although we requested expense comparisons for moving the existing substation to a location on Highway 7 and running the entire project along that corridor from Highway 101 to Excelsior as a part of the route alternative examination process, we were never provided with that information, bringing into question whether or not that research was even performed per the requirements of this proposal.
5. Is it possible that future maintenance and inherent reconstruction could be more easily accessed and affordably performed along the traffic corridor of Hwy 7 than along the easements currently used by Xcel?

6. Given the current 69kv transmission line was undoubtedly positioned in its present location because it could parallel an existing, albeit it quaint, transportation line that has long since been abandoned for such purpose, could it not be argued the updated line could parallel the now available transportation corridor of Hwy 7?

Additionally, with the proposed upgrade and all that it entails, many residents are extremely concerned over the impact this project may have on our community. Their specific concerns include:

1. The significantly taller utility poles would adversely impact the aesthetics of a residential community and are much more appropriate within a commercial setting.
2. The clearance requirements for these taller transmission poles would substantially damage significant parts of our urban forest, particularly next to critical wetland areas and the natural woodland setting at Burton Park, both of which abut the proposed route through Deephaven.
3. The current substation would require a major expansion to accommodate the 115 kV conversion project. This expansion would have a significant impact in terms of excessive noise pollution and on the aesthetics of the surrounding properties.

In short, the current route has been sufficient to support the relatively less obtrusive 69 kV transmission line through a residential area. However, with all the significant changes brought about by the conversion to a 115 kV transmission line, it is our contention that it is no longer appropriate to continue to extend this transmission line through our neighborhoods when alternatives have not been fully vetted. It is our understanding that this 115 kV line is expected to address future loads for many years to come. It is our contention that a more appropriate route should be selected that is better situated to address all the issues relating to this new line. We respectfully request that a much more appropriate location for both the 115 kV transmission line and the Deephaven substation would be along Hwy 7, on a transportation corridor from Hwy 101 to Excelsior that is much more appropriate for this type of project and equipment.

Thank you in advance for providing us answers to the concerns above and for considering our request to explore an alternative route.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Skrede
Mayor, City of Deephaven