



Issued: August 15, 2012

NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPING DECISION

**In the Matter of the Applications for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Scott County-Westgate 69 kV-115 kV Transmission Upgrade Project
PUC Docket Nos. E002/CN-11-332, E002/TL-11-948**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Department of Commerce Deputy Commissioner has issued the Environmental Assessment (EA) Scoping Decision for the Scott County-Westgate 115 kV transmission project in Scott, Carver and Hennepin counties. The EA is being prepared by the Department's Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) unit and will address potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project. Copies of the EA Scoping Decision and other relevant documents are accessible at:

<http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=32547>

Additional documents can be obtained at <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> via the "eDockets" website by searching for **year: 11** and **number: 332** or **year: 11** and **number: 948**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project is a 69 kilovolt (kV) to 115 kV transmission 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 kV/115 kV, but currently permitted to operate at 69 kV/115 kV. No construction is required for this segment. The remainder of the project is proposed to replace an existing 69 kV line with a 115 kV line along the existing alignment. The replacement section of the project is approximately 15 miles.

REGULATORY 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, 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.

A public hearing on the Route Permit will be held in the Project area shortly after EFP completes preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

SCHEDULE

The Environmental Assessment is scheduled to be completed by November 2012.

PROJECT CONTACT AND INFORMATION

For more information about the process, the project or to place your name on the project mailing list, contact State Permit Manager David Birkholz (651-296-2878, david.birkholz@state.mn.us) Energy Facility Permitting, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198, or Public Advisor Tricia DeBleeckere (651-201-2254, tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us) 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651-296-0391 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1-800-627-3529 or by dialing 711.