ITCM Minnesota - Iowa
345 kV Transmission Line Project
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Minnesota Department of Commerce

July 2014

PUC Docket Nos.
ET6675/CN-12-1053 and ET6675/TL-12-1337

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Abstract

ITC Midwest LLC (ITCM) has proposed to construct and operate approximately 73 miles of new 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the Lakefield Junction substation near Lakefield, Minnesota, eastward to a new Huntley substation near Winnebago, Minnesota, and then southward to the Iowa border. The project includes expansion of the Lakefield Junction substation, construction of the new Huntley substation, and the relocation of several segments of existing 161 kV and 69 kV transmission lines such that they terminate at the new Huntley substation upon completion of the project.

ITCM's proposed project requires two separate approvals from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) – a certificate of need (CN) and a route permit. The Commission's docket numbers for these approvals are ET6675/CN 12 1053 and ET6675/TL 12 1337.

Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is responsible for conducting environmental review for CN and route permit applications submitted to the Commission. As two concurrent environmental reviews are required – one for the CN application and one for the route permit application – the Department has elected to combine the environmental review for the two applications. This environmental impact statement (EIS) has been prepared to meet the requirements of both review processes.

This EIS addresses the issues identified in the Department's scoping decision of October 14, 2013. It evaluates the potential impacts of ITCM's proposed project and possible mitigation measures for these impacts. Additionally, the EIS discusses system alternatives (i.e., alternatives other than a 345 kV transmission line) that may meet the stated need for the project. The EIS evaluates only that portion of ITCM's proposed project that is within the State of Minnesota.

This EIS was issued in draft form on March 21, 2014. Comments on the draft EIS were accepted through May 9, 2014. All comments received on the draft EIS and responses to these comments are included in this final EIS (Appendix M). Changes made to the text as a result of comments received are printed in **bold** in this final EIS. Headings in summary sections of the EIS are bolded but do not indicate changes in the text. Figure, tables, and maps have also been modified as a result of comment received on the draft EIS.

This final EIS was released on July 11, 2014. The EIS will be entered into the record for this matter and used by the administrative law judge in making recommendations on ITCM's CN and route permit applications and by the Commission in making decisions on these applications. Commission decisions on the applications are expected in the fall of 2014.

Additional materials related to this project and its permitting proceedings are available on the Department's website: http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33080 and on the State of Minnesota's eDockets system: https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp (enter the year "12" and the number "1053" or "1337").

Persons interested in this project can place their names on the project mailing list by registering online at: http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33080 or by contacting Ray Kirsch, Environmental Review Manager.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651 539 1530 (voice).

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