# Minnesota to Iowa 345 kV Transmission Line
# Advisory Task Force
## Second Meeting – July 9, 2013

# *Draft* Meeting Notes

## Welcome and Agenda Review

The facilitator for the second meeting of the task force, Kris Van Amber, State of Minnesota, Management Analysis & Development, welcomed task force members and all present. Task force members were asked to introduce themselves and indicate who they represent (e.g., township, city, county).

Kris reviewed the task force's charge and the agenda for the second meeting. She emphasized that the work of this meeting was to further clarify and prioritize issues and impacts and to develop alternative routes and route segments.

## Review and Approval of Meeting Notes

Task force members were asked to review the draft meeting notes from the first meeting and respond with any questions, edits, changes, etc. No changes were made to the meeting notes and the task force approved the meeting notes as written.

## Review and Prioritization of Impacts and Issues

Task force members discussed the "impacts and issues" categories identified at the first meeting.

Mr. Terry Savidge, a task force member, commented on how the impacts and issues identified by the task force at the first meeting seem to be well represented in the applicant's route permit application and questioned the need to further clarify and prioritize. Mr. Steve Flohrs, a task force member, concurred and wondered if the task force could somehow end up shouldering the blame for a specific route alternative if it was developed by the task force. Ray Kirsch, Minnesota Department of Commerce, reassured task force members that their role is to suggest areas for further study rather than to decide on final transmission line routing. Ray also noted that though the route permit application appears to be fairly inclusive, the environmental impact statement (EIS) will review the information in the application, and it is important to get guidance from the task force and citizens as to the impacts and issues that they believe are important such that these areas can be developed fully in the EIS.

Kris led the task force through the impacts and issues to re-familiarize the task force with its work from meeting #1. Mr. Tom Warmka, a task force member, noted that communications between landowners and state agencies and the applicant are important. Ray described the state's permitting process and communications with landowners about the process. Lori Broghammer, ITC Midwest area manager, described ITC's outreach during the preparation of the route permit application for the project.

The task force further discussed and clarified the intended meaning of the column entitled *Communication. Communication* was used at the first meeting to describe potential impacts to electronic communication devices due to the project, e.g., impacts to radio, television, internet services, GPS. The task force then discussed the importance of communicating to property owners regarding the proposed transmission line route and any changes to the route. Ms. Roxane Wedel, a task force member, noted that routes being examined by ITC in 2012 appeared to have changed after the open houses in September 2012. Dick Coeur, ITC Midwest senior engineer, discussed the route development process and the fact that as the process unfolded the routes were modified somewhat based on feedback – resulting, ultimately, in the routes proposed in the route permit application.

The task force amended the impacts and issues table to include communications under the *Property Owner Concerns* column to reinforce the importance of timely communications with property owners about the project (see Appendix A).

Mr. Tom Warmka, a task force member, noted that there can be property damage on easements after a project is constructed. For example, if a wind storm causes damage to a transmission line, crews will have to get to the line to repair it. Or, if construction causes damage to drain tiles that is not immediately apparent, crews will have to come in for repairs. He noted that any damages associated with these repairs should be the responsibility of the utility. Ray noted the Commission's route permit can place conditions on the utility's construction and operation of the line; however, the Commission does not address responsibilities and conditions that are included in individual easement agreements with landowners. The task force discussed the meaning of the C*onstruction* column and amended the column to include perpetual easement repair (see Appendix A). The task force noted that easement repair should be the responsibility of the utility and should be included in easement agreements between property owners and the utility.

Kris led members through a "dot exercise" to prioritize impacts and issues identified by the task force. Task force members were asked to vote for their three most important impact and issue categories. The results of this voting are shown in the Minnesota to Iowa ATF prioritization grid (see Appendix A).

The task force discussed the results of their vote. *Property Owner Concerns* received the highest number of votes and represent the task force's concern for individual property owners. The members remarked that even though *Communication* received zero votes, good communications are important for addressing property owner concerns. Another member stated that good communications are, broadly speaking, part of all of the identified issues and impacts.

## Identification of Alternative Routes, Route Segments and Substation Locations

Task force members were asked to work in small groups to identify possible alternative routes and route segments. Each group was provided with a set of maps representing the Minnesota to Iowa transmission line project area.

Task force members were asked to use markers and tape to indicate route alternatives and to describe the alternative(s), explain what impacts they were trying to avoid, and suggest what new impacts might be created. Questions by task force members were discussed and addressed. The small groups reported back and discussed their ideas. Alternative routes and reasons for the routes were shared with all present. Maps depicting the alternative routes identified will be sent out to task force members approximately one week prior to the July 23, 2013, meeting of the task force.

## Next Steps

Kris reminded task force members that their homework for the next meeting was to review the route alternatives generated by the task force. Ray reminded the task force that the public information and scoping meetings for the project would be held July 16, 17, and 18, in Fairmont, Jackson, and Blue Earth. Ray encouraged task force members to attend a meeting, as their schedules allowed.

The third meeting of the task force will be held on Tuesday, July 23, 2013, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Fairmont City Hall.

**Appendix A**

# Minnesota to Iowa Advisory Task Force

**July 9, 2013**

**Identification of Impacts and Issues** – *What impacts and issues should be analyzed by the Department of Commerce when it prepares the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Minnesota to Iowa transmission line project?*

| | Communication | Planning for the future | Environmental | Health Issues – Human & Animal | Economic Drivers | Property Owner Concerns | Construction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of Votes** | **0** | **4** | **2** | **5** | **2** | **10** | **4** |
| | ▪ Communication issues<br>▪ Interruption of communication and GPS from power lines | ▪ Correct size of transmission line to address future needs, wind energy and other energy sources<br>▪ Needed for added wind power<br>▪ Possibility of future expansion, needs<br>▪ Needed for rural growth and development | ▪ Make sure to investigate impact on endangered vegetation<br>▪ Lake impacts: too close to lakes on the routes proposed (e.g., Kiester Lake)<br>▪ Destruction of wooded areas with easements<br>▪ Route proximity to wetlands | ▪ Stray voltage for residents<br>▪ Health issues from stray voltage for both people and animals | ▪ Cost factor of project<br>▪ Location or colocation possibilities | ▪ Least impact to adjacent land and land owner<br>▪ Impact on land owner-operator<br>▪ Least disruption for farmers/owners; drainage issues from pole placement, crop spraying aerial<br>▪ Follow property lines – do not go through middle of farmer's fields, consider family owned farm acres<br>▪ Route proximity to: homes, wetlands, farmland, visual<br>▪ Residence proximity: play areas, front yards<br>▪ Communication | ▪ Agreements with local governments for road use and repair of any damage<br>▪ Construction: damage and repair<br>▪ Perpetual easement repair |