



STATE OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

March 10, 2014

Mr. Bert Ahern
Palmer Lake Association
23527 County 109
Menahga, MN 56464

Re: Docket No. PL-6668/PPL-13-474

Mr. Ahern,

Thank you for the correspondence of March 4, 2014, regarding the resolution of the board of directors of the Palmer Lake Association requesting an extension of the current comment period for proposing additional route alternatives or segments, and requesting the scheduling of additional public meetings on the Sandpiper pipeline project. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) review process for pipeline projects is governed by both statute and rule. These laws include procedural and timing requirements under which the Commission must operate. The Commission is required by law to make a final decision on a route permit within 12 months after an application is accepted. The laws governing the review process include several opportunities for citizen input throughout the process, including public meetings, public hearings and written public comment periods.

The first opportunity for participation is during the public information meetings and the related public comment period. For the Sandpiper pipeline project, the Commission has scheduled seven public meetings in communities along the proposed pipeline route. These meetings have been scheduled for March 2014 and generally serve three purposes:

1. To provide information about the review process;
2. To offer the public an opportunity to provide information and submit comments about the environmental impacts of constructing the proposed pipeline; and
3. To offer an opportunity for the public to submit alternative routes or route segments for consideration.

Please note there are additional opportunities for public participation as the review process moves along.

The presentation provided to the public at the information meetings is available online: www.puc.state.mn.us, select *Comment on An Issue*, under *North Dakota Pipeline Company, LLC*, select *Presentation*.

Interested persons unable to attend one of the meetings are still able to submit written comments on the project and to propose alternative routes or route segments. These initial remarks on the pipeline, alternatives and their impacts should be directed to:

Larry Hartman, Environmental Review Manager
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101
Email: larry.hartman@state.mn.us
Fax: 651-539-0109
Online: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>

Note that the deadline for submitting alternative routes or segments is April 4, 2014.

After proposed alternatives are collected, the Commission will determine which ones should be considered in the comparative environmental analysis and at hearings. The Commission will decide on what alternatives should be considered in May 2014, and the Department of Commerce will conduct a comparative environmental analysis of the alternatives, which is anticipated to be issued in September 2014.

Once the comparative environmental analysis is issued, an Administrative Law Judge will hold public and evidentiary hearings in communities along the various route alternatives. These hearings are currently expected to be held in October 2014.

Public hearings provide the public with the opportunity to learn about the proposed project, offer direct testimony, question witnesses, and offer comments or other material at or following the hearings.

After public and evidentiary hearings, the Administrative Law Judge will use the information in the record to write a report for the Commission. The report will include findings, conclusions, and recommendations on the project and the route permit. After receiving the Judge's report, the Commission will schedule a meeting to make a final decision on this project. The current estimate is for this meeting to be scheduled in January 2015.

For these reasons, the Commission will decline to extend the current comment period for proposing additional route alternatives or segments, and will decline to schedule additional public information meetings on the Sandpiper pipeline project.

Thank you for contacting the Commission with your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bret Eknes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Bret Eknes
Supervisor, Energy Facilities Permitting Unit
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Bret.eknes@state.mn.us
651-201-2236