How to Suggest an Alternative Pipeline Route

Early public meetings provide an opportunity to shape the environmental review for the project. This is your chance to propose alternative routes that should be studied in the environmental review. If you think there's a better route for a pipeline project, then propose your alternative.

Pipeline projects requiring a route permit can only be built on the route designated by the Commission, and a route can only be selected if it is considered at a public hearing. The permit applicant's proposed route is automatically accepted; however, an alternative can only be considered at the hearing if it is accepted by the Commission before the hearing is publicized. This insures that the public is informed of all route alternatives under consideration prior to the start of the hearing process.

Any person (meaning any individual, organization, government agency, and so on) can suggest an alternative route or route segment. An alternative route or route segment is a location other than the one proposed by the applicant. In this instance, an *alternative route* would completely replace the applicant's proposed route. An *alternative route segment* would leave the proposed route to avoid a specific impact and then return to it — substituting for only a portion of the proposed route.

Tip for Suggesting an Alternative

Information is provided on the back side of this sheet to help you propose an alternative route or route segment. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the Environmental Review Manager. Suggestions must be received by **Thursday, May 26, 2016**, and specifically identify the project.

The Life of Your Alternative: Step-by-Step

1. An applicant applies for a routing permit to construct a pipeline. This application includes a proposed route.

2. You suggest an alternative to all or a segment of the proposed route providing the required information within the appropriate timeframe.

3. The Commission determines if your alternative will be considered at the hearing.

4. The environmental impacts of your alternative — as well as the proposed route and other suggested alternatives — are analyzed and made publicly available prior to the hearing.

5. You can make a presentation at the hearing supporting your alternative.

6. The public, including the applicant, has the opportunity to comment on all alternatives.

7. An Administrative Law Judge prepares a report that includes recommendation on alternative routes.

8. If the routing permit is approved, the Commission's permit decision might include your suggested alternative.

9. If your alternative is included, the pipeline must be constructed in that location.

1. Provide a Map

Providing a map is very helpful to highlight an anticipated impact or propose a suggested alternative. To be useful maps must be of proper scale. At the wrong scale, a map will not provide enough detail to assist in pinpointing an impact or alternative. For example, the line created by a felt tip marker on a state highway map can cover entire cities and highways.

Use a county, township or city map depending on your alternative. You can also use free online mapping resources such as Google Maps, Google Earth, or similar websites. These maps can be zoomed and printed to provide appropriate levels of detail. If you are having trouble locating a map at the proper scale, contact the Environmental Review Manager.

2. Suggest an Alternative Route or Route Segment

Explain the reasons for suggesting an alternative. You do not need to provide the same level of detail or analysis in your explanation(s) as the applicant provided; however, your explanation(s) must be able to stand independently so others do not need to "fill in the blanks" to understand it.

Your alternative must be accompanied by a description of the environmental conditions along it, and its anticipated environmental and human impact. Do your best. Your explanation should discuss: 1) an anticipated impact created by the proposed route; 2) your alternative route or route segment and its impacts; and 3) how your alternative route or route segment mitigates the anticipated impact you identified.

These individual parts, taken as a whole, generally provide the information needed to fully understand your suggestion, determine if the alternative meets the required criteria, and, ultimately, if it will be accepted by the Commission for inclusion in the public hearing.

Remember, if accepted, you are expected to present your alternative at a public hearing.

3. Submit the Suggestion on Time

Alternatives must be post-marked or received electronically by **Thursday, May 26, 2016**.

For help submitting an alternative route or route segment, or to ask questions, don't hesitate to contact the EERA Environmental Review Manager. This is the staff person most familiar with a project.

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*The complete text of Minnesota Rules can be found at: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=7852