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12-1163 SCOPING MEETING - ROSEAU
FEBRUARY 11, 2014 - 6:00 P.M.
BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Request of Minnesota Power for a
Certificate of Need for the Great Northern Transmission
Line Project

PUC DOCKET NO. E-015/CN-12-1163
OAH DOCKET NO. 2500-31196

Roseau Civic Center
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COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

I N D E X

1		
2	SPEAKER	PAGE
3	Eric Douglas	28
4	Mary Langaas	34
5	Douglas Erickson	41
6	Carol Overland	43
7	Tom Johnson	47
8	Carol Overland	49
9	Douglas Erickson	51
10	Robert Bentow	52
11	Eric Douglas	53
12	Carol Overland	55
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Good evening,
2 everyone, and thank you for coming. As you see on
3 the screen, this is the Public Information and
4 Scoping Meeting for the Great Northern Transmission
5 Line Project.

6 My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm with the
7 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and I'm going
8 to get this show on the road for you.

9 As I said, I'm with the Public Utilities
10 Commission. We're going to talk a little bit about
11 the certificate of need roles and process. I'm
12 going to invite Minnesota Power to talk about the
13 project a little bit. And we're going to wrap up
14 with the Department of Commerce talking about the
15 environmental review for this project. And, of
16 course, the main event is your comments and
17 questions.

18 So who is the Public Utilities
19 Commission? We're a state agency and we're
20 responsible for regulating and permitting for power
21 plants, pipelines and transmission lines, local and
22 interstate long-distance telephone companies, rates
23 and services for investor-owned electric and natural
24 gas utilities. And so that's why we're here,
25 because we regulate the permitting for this type of

1 project.

2 We have five commissioners appointed by
3 the governor. And they serve staggered terms, they
4 don't all come in when we get a new governor, so
5 some have been appointed by previous governors and
6 some have been appointed by our current governor.
7 It is full-time employment for the commissioners, so
8 it's not like small-town city council where they go
9 to a couple meetings a month and that's the extent,
10 it is a full-time job for those folks. And we also
11 have about 50 staff that help the Commission do
12 their work, learn about the issues, and make
13 recommendations for various projects.

14 A little bit more about who is who in
15 this process. As we go along with the certificate
16 of need project, you'll hear different terms, and I
17 always think it's helpful to give you a little
18 definition so if you hear them you'll have an idea
19 what we're talking about.

20 So first off is the applicant. That's
21 what we refer to is as the company asking for the
22 certificate of need. So in this case that's
23 Minnesota Power. And as I mentioned, we're going to
24 ask them to give a little presentation talking about
25 the project shortly.

1 There's also the Department of Commerce,
2 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis. You might
3 see that abbreviated as EERA. They're another state
4 agency and their job is to conduct the environmental
5 review for this project, and so Mr. Storm is going
6 to talk about that in a moment.

7 There's another arm of the Department of
8 Commerce called the Energy Regulation and Planning,
9 and they deal with representing the public interest
10 whenever the utilities ask to change their rates,
11 services, facilities, and so on. So they will also
12 be playing a role in this process.

13 Later on we'll be asking the Office of
14 Administrative Hearings, which you might see
15 abbreviated as OAH, to get involved as well.
16 They're another state agency. And what we'll be
17 doing is asking an administrative law judge, and
18 here we go with another abbreviation, an ALJ, who
19 will hold hearings later on in the process,
20 summarize the facts in the record, and ultimately
21 make some recommendations to the Public Utilities
22 Commission about this project.

23 And at the Public Utilities Commission
24 there's a couple different folks that you may
25 interact with throughout the course of this project.

1 The first is the public advisor, that's me. My job
2 is to help you understand the process, help you
3 participate in the certificate of need, and later on
4 the route permit process for this project. My job
5 is to be neutral. It's not my job to be on your
6 side or on the company's side or on anyone's side,
7 it's to help learn the process. I do not give legal
8 advice, and like I said, I'm not an advocate for any
9 one party.

10 We also have a staff analyst who works on
11 the project and their job is to assist in building
12 the record, informing commissioners on impacts of
13 different decisions. Again, the commission staff is
14 also a neutral party, does not give legal advice and
15 is not an advocate. And the analyst for this
16 project is with us this evening, Mike Kaluzniak. Do
17 you want to just stand up. So he is the staff
18 analyst for this particular project.

19 Okay. So why does the Public Utilities
20 Commission get involved in these projects? As I
21 mentioned, we are a state agency and we regulate
22 various types of energy projects. This one is what
23 we call a large energy facility. I know that seems
24 pretty vague, and so the statutes and rules define
25 that for us. It's a transmission line with capacity

1 of 200 kilovolts -- which you might see abbreviated
2 as kV -- or more, and greater than 1500 feet in
3 length, or if it has a capacity of 100 kV or more
4 and more than 10 miles of its length in Minnesota,
5 or if it crosses a state line. So when a project
6 meets those criteria, then it rises to the level
7 where the Public Utilities Commission needs to be
8 involved in determining the need. And if you are
9 looking for some really interesting reading, I have
10 identified the appropriate section of statute and
11 rules that addresses this particular issue.

12 Now, the other part of this question is
13 the route. And so the certificate of need, like I
14 mentioned, would determine if this project is needed.
15 The other piece of that is if it's needed where is
16 it going to go. And in this particular project it's
17 two separate pieces of the puzzle. It needs a route
18 permit if it's going to operate at 100 kV or more
19 and at greater than 1500 feet in length. And,
20 again, I've identified the statutes and rules. And
21 in this particular case, as I mentioned, the route
22 is a separate animal. The Company hasn't yet
23 applied for the route. They have to submit an
24 application to begin the review process for the
25 route permit. So if your questions are about where

1 is it going to go, those aren't the questions that
2 we're going to be ready to talk about yet tonight.
3 That will come down the road after the Company
4 formally submits its application for the route.

5 So the factors that the Commission
6 considers when it's deciding on is this project
7 needed, we look at things like what if the project
8 isn't built. We want to look at the future of
9 adequate, reliable, and efficient service for
10 Minnesota and neighboring states. You know, when we
11 flip the switch we want the lights to go on, right,
12 so part of our job is to make sure that happens. Is
13 there a better solution? We want to look at things
14 like the size, the type, the timing, cost, and
15 reliability to find the best solution if there is
16 indeed a need.

17 Does this project fix the problem while
18 it protects the environment? We want to consider
19 the effects on wildlife, human health, other social
20 and economic factors. And I think when we get to
21 the Commerce presentation they'll talk some more
22 about that. And we also are concerned with whether
23 the project meets other government requirements.
24 We're going to work with other local, state, and
25 federal agencies to make sure it meets their

1 requirements. So, for example, there might be some
2 DNR requirements that the project has to meet and so
3 we're going to want to make certain that the Company
4 follows those, in addition to any requirements that
5 we might have.

6 So here's a chart that gives you an idea
7 at a high level of what the process looks like. So
8 first off we have application accepted up at the
9 top. I know it's a little hard to read since it
10 crosses the line on the wall there. And that's sort
11 of the first step in the process. The next box, the
12 public information and scoping meetings, that's
13 where we are today. So you can see we're very early
14 in the process. Decisions have not been made other
15 than to move forward with reviewing this project.
16 No one has answered the question yet, is it needed,
17 that comes down at the bottom, at the decision
18 point.

19 So you can see we have a ways to go yet
20 before we get to a final decision by the Commission
21 on this matter. And we would expect in this
22 particular case that the whole process from accepted
23 to decision to take in the ballpark of 15 to 18
24 months. So it's a very thorough review.

25 And for those of you who are list people

1 instead of picture people -- that would be me --
2 here's the list of the timeline when we expect
3 things to happen in this project. Keep in mind, as
4 I've noted, this is estimated. As the project moves
5 along, if there are obstacles that we couldn't
6 foresee or more information and we need extra time
7 to review it, we certainly could extend it. Or if
8 things are moving along faster, it could happen
9 faster as well.

10 So at this point this is the estimated
11 project timeline. And, again, you can see the
12 information and scoping meetings are where we're at
13 today, February 2014. We have a comment period
14 closing in March. And then the scope of the
15 environmental report. And move down along the line,
16 we will be back out here for some public hearings we
17 expect in October, and expecting a decision on the
18 question of is this project needed in May of 2015.

19 Now, you might be wondering how you can
20 get more information about this project and about
21 the process. And there are several ways to do that.

22 The first is the Department of Commerce
23 project website. This presentation is also on the
24 Commission's website, and so it might be easier for
25 folks if they're looking for this to go to the

1 presentation there and simply click on this link
2 rather than trying to type all of this in on their
3 computer at home. We also have an eDocket system,
4 we call it, where all of the documents that are
5 filed in this particular process are online, and
6 those are available for folks to look at. And you
7 can get to that from our website under the search
8 eDockets, I won't read through all of the details
9 here, but you can follow the step-by-step
10 instructions. The docket number for the certificate
11 of need is the first one listed there, where it says
12 12 is the year and 1163 is the number.

13 Because I know that folks who are
14 interested in the need are also likely to be
15 interested in the route, I've included the docket
16 number for the route permit. At this point I don't
17 believe there are any documents listed in that
18 docket because the Company hasn't submitted the
19 application yet, but we reserved that docket number
20 so that people can become familiar with that.

21 We also have a project mailing list.
22 Many of you saw and completed the orange cards when
23 you came in. That's to receive information on
24 upcoming meetings, when the environmental report is
25 done, when other decisions are made throughout the

1 course of the project and so forth. And you can
2 fill that card out and hand it to me tonight. If
3 you think about it later you can contact me by
4 e-mail or by telephone as well.

5 Now, if you're a person that doesn't want
6 to miss a thing and you like e-mail, we have a
7 feature where you can subscribe to receive an e-mail
8 notice whenever anything new comes in. So for some
9 folks it ends up being more information than they
10 want, but for some folks they say, yes, I want to
11 receive everything. So if you're an e-mail kind of
12 person and this seems like it would work for you,
13 these are the instructions to subscribe to receive
14 an e-mail notice when anything comes in. And,
15 again, this could result in a large number of
16 e-mails so it's not for everyone, but if you don't
17 want to miss anything, that's the way to go.

18 The Department of Commerce has an energy
19 facilities page that talks about this particular
20 project and also some other information about the
21 process and ways to get involved. If you really
22 want to read the statutes and rules you can find
23 them on that website. And then the Commission's
24 website is listed there as well.

25 As I mentioned, the Public Utilities

1 Commission has two different project contacts. The
2 first is me, Tracy, the public advisor. And the
3 other is Mr. Kaluzniak, our staff analyst. Our
4 contact information is there as well. We're
5 certainly happy to talk with you or correspond with
6 you by e-mail, if that's your preference, to help
7 answer any questions that you may have about the
8 project and the process.

9 And, with that, I'm going to turn it over
10 to Mr. Jim Atkinson with Minnesota Power.

11 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Thank you. My name is
12 Jim Atkinson and I'm Minnesota Power's environmental
13 siting and permitting manager.

14 I have been here over the last 18 months
15 about four times, mostly dealing with our public
16 open houses and trying to develop routes. Like
17 Tracy mentioned, tonight is not about routes, it's
18 about the need. But I would like everyone to know
19 that if you do have specific questions about
20 routing, you can contact me any time. I'll be
21 around after this meeting is done to answer
22 questions about that as well.

23 Okay. Sorry about that. We're here to
24 talk about a 500 kV line, that is Minnesota Power's
25 proposal. And it's a circuit that would run from

1 the Canadian border down to a substation east of
2 Grand Rapids called the Blackberry Sub.

3 We're estimating that the total length
4 will be somewhere between 200 and 250 miles. The
5 line will have a capacity for about 750 megawatts of
6 energy. They'll need a 200-foot wide right-of-way
7 and the spans will be likely between about 1000 to
8 1450 feet, to give you some idea of the scale. It
9 will be very similar in scale to the line that Xcel
10 owns that crosses just west of Warroad on Highway
11 11.

12 The project is needed, first and
13 foremost, to satisfy a Power Purchase Agreement that
14 has already been approved by the Minnesota Public
15 Utilities Commission for 250 megawatts of energy.
16 And that is -- has an in-service date of June 1st,
17 2020. So we need to have this built and in service
18 to meet that need. And we also have a second Power
19 Purchase Agreement with Manitoba Hydro that's not
20 yet approved by the Commission for another 133
21 megawatts of energy.

22 There's a few reasons why we're proposing
23 this. The first one is we want to diversify the way
24 we get energy. And many of you have probably heard
25 me give you this spiel before. But right now we're

1 about three-quarters of our energy comes from
2 burning coal, we want to reduce that eventually down
3 to about a third. So getting hydropower from
4 Manitoba Hydro is right now the most competitive
5 thing we can do and has a lot of benefits. Being a
6 very strong resource, the hydro system in northern
7 Manitoba is vast and it can accommodate our needs
8 very well. They're very flexible. At the same
9 time, we're trying to keep up with increasing
10 demand. And most of that is coming from expansion
11 on the Iron Range, mostly with ferrous operations at
12 this time, but we also have significant prospects
13 for growth in nonferrous mining.

14 This is just some structure types to give
15 you an idea of scale. But these two types are guyed
16 structures, and we'd likely use those in areas where
17 we're crossing wetlands or heavily forested areas,
18 through a state forest, that sort of thing. We do
19 not use guyed structures on agricultural land. The
20 tallest ones would be in the neighborhood of about
21 150 tall and those are the one on the left.

22 And this is an example of one of the
23 structure types. Probably the one we would use when
24 crossing agricultural land. Everything that we've
25 done so far in our route development has been to

1 minimize how much agricultural land we have to go
2 across, but there will be some, undoubtedly, and
3 those are the likely structure types to be used in
4 those settings.

5 Another way to keep involved in the
6 project is through our contact directly with
7 Minnesota Power. And you can always do that by
8 contacting me personally. There's information on
9 the handouts that many of you I think already have.
10 If you don't, they're over on the table. And on the
11 back sheet you can see how to get ahold of us in the
12 future. We also have a website, which is
13 greatnortherntransmissionline.com. And I'm sure
14 many of you have been on there. We've received a
15 lot of comments over the last year and a half, so I
16 know it's being well used.

17 And that's about it.

18 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Jim. Good
19 evening folks. My name is Bill Storm, and, as Tracy
20 said, I'm with the Department of Commerce.

21 The Department of Commerce's role in a
22 docket or a certificate of need application is
23 environmental review. The certificate of need rules
24 require that an environmental review or the
25 environmental review document be generated for

1 projects before the Commission for a certificate of
2 need. That document is called an environmental
3 report and it is my office that writes that report.
4 The main reason we're here tonight is to solicit
5 input from the public on what you would like to see
6 in that report. What impacts do you want to make
7 sure I cover and what alternatives would you like to
8 see me cover.

9 The Environmental Review and Analysis
10 group, my badge says Energy Facility Permitting, we
11 have since changed, my unit's name now is Energy
12 Environmental Review and Analysis. We are the staff
13 that prepares the environmental report for the PUC
14 in determinations of need.

15 The statute and rules lay out what the
16 report must contain so there is boilerplate issues
17 and concerns that statute says I must deal with in
18 my environmental report. A part of what I'm here
19 tonight to do is ask the public what kind of detail
20 do you want me to add to that report, what issues do
21 you want me to cover.

22 When we're dealing with a certificate of
23 need as opposed to a route permit application, we're
24 looking at different things in the environmental
25 review. In the environmental review under the

1 certificate of need docket, I'm looking at human and
2 environmental impacts of the proposed project, but
3 impacts that are associated with the size of the
4 project, the timing of the project, the type of the
5 project. Type would be transmission versus
6 generation. Size, for this project would be 230
7 kilovolt, 500 kilovolt, 765 kilovolt. System
8 configuration in this context would be instead of
9 the point A and B that Minnesota Power has selected,
10 looking at C, D and E endpoints, different
11 endpoints, and then also voltage.

12 This is a lot of words, but this is just
13 to give you that boilerplate I was talking about
14 that the rules require me to put in my environmental
15 report. This is all the items I have to cover, you
16 know, from a broad perspective.

17 I have to give a general description of
18 the project. I have to give a general description
19 of the alternatives to the project. I have to look
20 at the -- do an analysis of the human and
21 environmental impacts of the project and any
22 alternatives to the project that make it through
23 scoping, this process that we're doing tonight.
24 Selecting impacts and alternatives is called
25 scoping.

1 I have to analyze the potential impacts
2 of the project specific. I have to look at any
3 measures that might mitigate some of the impacts. I
4 have to provide a list of downstream permits. And
5 as Jim alluded to, if they get the certificate of
6 need approved by the Commission, they will then seek
7 a route from the Commission. And a route is where
8 does it go. Certificate of need says is the project
9 needed and is transmission the way to answer that
10 need. If that gets granted, the next question on
11 the table is, okay, where do we put the transmission
12 line.

13 Okay. And as Jim alluded to, there are
14 downstream permits when you get to that phase. If
15 they make it through the CN phase and they go to the
16 routing phase and they get a route permit, there are
17 other permits they need down the road. If they're
18 crossing DNR land, they'll need a public lands,
19 public water crossings. If they're crossing a
20 highway they'll need a MnDOT crossing permit.
21 Mines, if they're crossing mine lands, they'll need
22 a DNR permit for that. So there are other
23 downstream permits that they may need.

24 As I said, what we're here to do tonight
25 is we're here to scope the environmental report.

1 The rules tell me -- as I showed you that wall of
2 words, the rules tell me these are the things, Bill,
3 you must include. But in addition to that I come
4 out to the public and I seek what other details
5 would you like to make sure that I cover in my
6 environmental report. And that can be alternatives
7 and impacts.

8 And the way you go about putting an
9 alternative or an impact on the table is you submit
10 it. You can submit it tonight orally, we have a
11 court reporter here, and there will be a comment
12 period following these series of scoping meetings.
13 Since we have two weeks of scoping meetings, the
14 comment period ends March 14th. So your scoping
15 comments need to be to me by March 14th.

16 A person that desires a particular
17 alternative to the proposed project or a possible
18 impact must submit to the Department of Commerce, to
19 me, identify the alternative of the impact that you
20 want included in the scope of the environmental
21 review, provide an explanation of why the
22 alternative impact should be included in the
23 environmental report, and then submit any supporting
24 information that you'd like to support that
25 position.

1 The commissioner of the Department of
2 Commerce is the one who determines what the scope of
3 the environmental document will be. That's
4 basically my boss, many levels up. The PUC, the
5 Public Utilities Commission, they have the final
6 decision on whether to grant the certificate of need
7 or not. But as far as the environmental review and
8 the scoping of the environmental review, it is my
9 commissioner at the Department of Commerce who will
10 determine what will be in the scope of the
11 environmental document.

12 Now, my commissioner can exclude from
13 analysis -- like I said, what I'm here to do tonight
14 is to get input from you what impacts you want me to
15 cover or what alternative do you want to put on the
16 table and make sure I look at. You submit that to
17 me during the comment period, which is open till
18 March 14th. You submit that on why you want it and
19 your supporting information.

20 Now, the commissioner can exclude from
21 analysis, meaning remove it so it doesn't make it to
22 the scope, so then it wouldn't make it into the
23 environmental document any alternative that does not
24 meet the underlying need for the project, that is
25 not likely to have any significant environmental

1 benefit compared to the proposed project, or if
2 another alternative will be analyzed that had
3 similar benefits and less environmental adverse
4 impact.

5 That said, the Department of Commerce
6 will include in the scope of the environmental
7 document any alternative impact that the Commission
8 requests. So the Commission, the PUC, can request
9 impacts and alternatives also.

10 Since the Department of Commerce does the
11 environmental review, and what we're here to do is
12 scope the environmental review, if you'll notice
13 there is a document that I put on the table that
14 some of you might have grabbed, this explains what
15 scoping is under the rules and how I go about
16 scoping and gives you an idea of where I'm headed
17 with what my environmental review will look like.

18 And basically you can think of a scoping
19 decision as setting the table of contents for the
20 environmental report. If you happened to have
21 grabbed this off the table and you turn to the back
22 portion of it, let me see, page 6, you can see this
23 thing that looks like a table of contents. This is
24 basically what I'm suggesting the table of contents
25 for the environmental report should look like.

1 Basically, the scope of the environmental document.
2 And what I'm asking people to do through this week
3 and next week is when you look at something like
4 this, if you see details that you want to make sure
5 I cover, let me know. Either e-mail me, comment
6 tonight about it, or write a comment during the
7 comment period.

8 And as an example, when you look at the
9 table of contents in this draft document, you can
10 see that one of the headings is environmental
11 effects. And these are the broad categories that I
12 look at. And what I seek from the public is help me
13 fill in the details. An example here would be, if
14 you look at 4.5, health and safety, a subcategory
15 there that I'll be covering is electromagnetic
16 fields. You may have a subcategory to one of these
17 larger categories that you want to make sure I
18 cover. And that's what this example is all about
19 and that's what scoping is all about.

20 So if you have an impact that you want to
21 make sure I cover that falls in one of these broad
22 categories and you're afraid I might not cover it, I
23 want to hear from you. I want you to say, well,
24 Bill, I see that you're going to do health and
25 safety, does that include EMF because I'm concerned

1 about EMF. So that's the type of input I'm looking
2 for from the public.

3 And just like we have that with impacts,
4 we also have it with alternatives. You may think
5 that, well, Bill, okay, they're talking about a 500
6 kV line and you're going to do the environmental
7 impact at the high elevation because we don't have a
8 route yet, we're not at routing, I'm not looking at
9 how this 500 kV line impacts a certain parcel, I'm
10 just looking at generally what are the impacts one
11 can expect, the Commission can expect with a 500 kV
12 line. And that allows the Commission to
13 differentiate a 500 kV line from maybe a 230 kV line
14 and so on.

15 And the same way you looked at impacts
16 and you saw that there are broad categories and you
17 want details of the broad categories, an
18 alternative, 3.6, facilities of different size, you
19 may think, well, Bill, they're talking about
20 building a 500 kV line, what would the impact be if
21 they jumped that up, built a 765 kV line, I want you
22 to look at that as an alternative. So that's what
23 I'm trying to get at to solicit input from the
24 public to help me flesh out details that you want to
25 make sure I cover.

1 On the routing side, we'll be back
2 here -- when the applicants put a routing permit
3 before the Commission, we'll be back up here doing
4 sort of the same public meeting. And there is a --
5 with the routing docket there is an environmental
6 review and that's called an environmental impact
7 statement, and everybody has heard of an
8 environmental impact statement. That's a
9 site-specific document that looks at the impacts to
10 specific parcels. Okay, this is where -- we now
11 have a line on the map, let's look at what the
12 impact of that line is on the parcel it's crossing.
13 Very similar, when we look at alternative routing,
14 we'll look at what are alternatives to that line on
15 the map and we'll get to that in the next phase.
16 The environmental review for a certificate of need
17 is a higher elevation. We're looking at a bigger
18 picture, we're not looking at the specific impacts
19 to a specific piece of property.

20 And, as I said, the comment period is
21 open till March 14th for this, so you have until
22 March 14th to get your comments on what impacts or
23 what alternatives you'd like me to look at in the
24 environmental report. You can mail them to me,
25 snail mail, you can e-mail them to me, or you can

1 talk tonight and get it on the record with the court
2 reporter here.

3 So I think that's it for -- that's a
4 basic rundown of what the environmental review is
5 about under the certificate of need.

6 So what I'm going to do is I'm going
7 to -- I asked you when you came in if you know you
8 want to speak on the record, fill out a card. I'm
9 going to call on people from the cards. I'll ask
10 that you step to the mic, ask your question or make
11 your comment. And when you step to the mic, state
12 and spell your name, please, for the court reporter.
13 Try to speak slower than I did tonight. And we can
14 begin with that portion of it.

15 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Would you also throw
16 my name in there? Because you told me I shouldn't
17 fill out a card because that's for the mailing list.

18 MR. BILL STORM: I'll get you, Carol.

19 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Okay.

20 MR. BILL STORM: Again, I keep hammering
21 on the distinction that we're here for a certificate
22 of need docket. And I know most people are affected
23 on the routing side more than they are on the need
24 side. Some people will ask me if you can -- I'm not
25 going to tell you what to say, say what you want,

1 but the comments I'm looking for are comments
2 surrounding the question that's before the
3 Commission in this docket, and that question is, is
4 this project needed and is transmission the best way
5 to answer this need.

6 And from the environmental review
7 standpoint, what impacts or issues related to the
8 size, type, timing, system configuration, or voltage
9 of this proposed project do you want me to look at.
10 And I know -- I feel like I'm beating a dead horse
11 when I say this, but when the applicants come forth
12 with a routing application, the flow chart that
13 Tracy showed up here, there's a similar flow chart
14 for the routing process, and we'll be back up here
15 to get your comments on the route and your comments
16 on where the line should actually go if they do get
17 a certificate of need. And I know from my history
18 of doing this that's where the rubber meets the road
19 for most people. You know, where is the line going
20 to go, is it going to cross my property or is it
21 going to cross a piece of property that I'm
22 concerned about and I have some local knowledge of a
23 deer winter stand or a fen or a mature stand of
24 trees and I'm worried about that. That type of
25 analysis will be done in the environmental impact

1 statement for the route. So I hope I didn't beat
2 that too much.

3 So I'm going to just start with the
4 cards. Eric Douglas, will you please step to the
5 mic, state and spell your name for the court
6 reporter.

7 MR. ERIC DOUGLAS: Good evening. My name
8 is Eric Douglas, E-R-I-C, D-O-U-G-L-A-S. I feel
9 like I'm talking to the wall.

10 MR. BILL STORM: Just look at me.

11 MR. ERIC DOUGLAS: I am opposed to
12 Minnesota Power's Great Northern transmission line
13 and question several aspects of this project.

14 One of the stated goals is to complement
15 and store wind-generated power from the Bison Wind
16 Farm in North Dakota. If that is the case, a more
17 direct approach would be to route straight to the
18 Bison Wind Farm and use the existing DC line for
19 transmission to the Iron Range which can transport
20 more energy over longer distances with less line
21 loss than an AC line.

22 A substantial portion of Manitoba Hydro's
23 annual generation can already be exported over the
24 tie to Minnesota with existing lines. In 2003, a
25 line was completed to the United States, the

1 Harvey-Glenboro line. Manitoba Hydro's largest
2 interconnection is the Dorsey-Forbes-Chisago 500 kV
3 AC line that begins at the Dorsey Substation near
4 Winnipeg and travels south into the United States to
5 the Forbes Substation northwest of Duluth, and from
6 there it goes to the Chisago Substation just north
7 of St. Paul. Why can't the existing infrastructure
8 be used? This route is already established and
9 already runs to the stated destination.

10 Manitoba Hydro is also in the process of
11 seeking program approval and route definition for
12 this project; however, their timeline is lagging the
13 US timeline considerably. Manitoba Hydro just
14 recently completed the first round of comments on
15 routes and border crossings with a second round to
16 be completed in the spring of 2014. They anticipate
17 sharing the preferred routes late in 2014. This is
18 a full year later than the US schedule.

19 Once Manitoba Hydro has a preferred
20 route, they need to file the project's environmental
21 impact statement for regulatory approval and include
22 input from First Nations, the Manitoba Metis
23 Federation, local municipalities, stakeholder
24 groups, government departments, local landowners,
25 and the general public.

1 Finally, Manitoba Hydro plans to file an
2 application with the National Energy Board and
3 submit an environmental impact statement to Manitoba
4 Conservation and Water Stewardship in 2015. It is
5 premature for Minnesota Power to finalize their
6 route and talk about the needs when Manitoba Hydro
7 is just beginning the process.

8 According to Manitoba Hydro, income from
9 US sales is used to keep Canadian electric rates
10 low. Wholesale electricity sold to US customers is
11 currently priced 50 percent higher than what
12 industrial customers in Manitoba pay. Proceeds from
13 this transmission line agreement will be used to
14 fund expansion of Canadian hydroelectric generating
15 stations and infrastructure improvements. As the
16 U.S. seeks energy independence, I believe we should
17 invest in US based electrical generation and
18 infrastructure improvements, not foreign based
19 sources.

20 Additionally, Manitoba Hydro views this
21 agreement as an interim outlet for surplus
22 electricity as the province's usage catches up.
23 I've submitted written documentation, too, so all
24 these citations are included in that. What happens
25 to our needs when that occurs? What happens if

1 there is a drought? Who will be cut off first? The
2 Canadian domestic market or the surplus export? The
3 export of electrical energy is regulated in Canada.
4 The National Energy Board licenses exports based on
5 the criteria that the exports are surplus to the
6 domestic need and that the prices charged are
7 reasonable and in the Canadian public interest. I
8 believe a better course is to expand our domestic
9 capacity and not be held hostage to availability,
10 weather, or market forces in Canada.

11 The project is designed not to help our
12 local area, but instead we are simply a conduit. We
13 bear the burden of giving up property and tolerating
14 an eyesore in an otherwise picturesque natural
15 environment. The proposed route cuts across
16 farmland and prime hunting land. It cuts through
17 the Agassiz Lowlands and affects Lost River State
18 Forest, Pine Creek Peatland Scientific and Natural
19 Area, and Sprague Creek Peatland Scientific and
20 Natural Area. I chose to live where I do for the
21 very fact that I do not want to raise my family
22 around congested highways, large populations, or
23 monstrous power lines.

24 Geologically, the proposed route crosses
25 the Agassiz Lowlands Subsection, which is

1 characterized by flat, poorly drained lake plain,
2 including bog and peatlands. The route borders what
3 is locally known as the lake bottom which can be
4 viewed on satellite images as a circular area
5 northwest of the city of Roseau. This area captures
6 spring runoff as well as excess rain during the
7 summer months. Water can reach depths of ten feet
8 or more and persist for several weeks at a time.
9 The proposed route goes directly through areas that
10 flood every spring and careful consideration would
11 be needed prior to any construction that may affect
12 grade or elevation.

13 Soils are predominantly organic. About
14 75 percent of the soils are peat in this area. Peat
15 depths can exceed 15 feet, so tower construction
16 techniques need to be carefully considered. The
17 risk of fire in peatland is also a concern and would
18 need to be understood.

19 According to Tomorrow's Habitat for the
20 Wild and Rare: Agassiz Lowlands Subsection Profile
21 published by Minnesota DNR, the proposed route goes
22 through an area that contains 88 Species in Greatest
23 Conservation Need. These Species in Greatest
24 Conservation Need include 28 species that are
25 federal or state endangered, threatened, or of

1 special concern. One example this Boreal Chickadee,
2 a federally protected migratory bird. The study
3 goes on to state that when a Species Problem
4 Analysis was conducted, habitat loss and degradation
5 were the most significant challenges facing Species
6 in Greatest Conservation Need. 90 percent of these
7 species are vulnerable or in decline because of
8 habitat degradation. A 500 kV line along the
9 proposed route constitutes habitat degradation.

10 Finally, the DNR study discusses ten-year
11 goals for the area. Goal number one, stabilize and
12 increase population of Species in Greatest
13 Conservation Need. The strategy for this is
14 priority Conservation Actions to Maintain, Enhance,
15 and Protect Key Habitats. The proposed route for
16 the Great Northern High Voltage Transmission Line
17 directly contradicts the ten-year plan laid out by
18 Minnesota DNR.

19 In conclusion, this project is not well
20 thought out, as evident with the last-minute route
21 changes and lack of consideration for use of
22 existing infrastructure. It is not well
23 coordinated, as can be seen by the Manitoba Hydro
24 project timing discrepancies. It is also a step
25 backwards in energy independence by funding foreign

1 power plant expansion and by subsidizing Canadian
2 customers at the expense of U.S. customers.

3 This project negatively impacts not one,
4 but three environmentally sensitive areas locally
5 and directly conflicts with stated Minnesota DNR
6 goals.

7 I respectfully submit that this project
8 is not needed at this time. It should be halted and
9 more sensible alternatives considered if a true need
10 is demonstrated in the future.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Harvey, boy, Grinson?

13 UNIDENTIFIED: He isn't here.

14 MR. BILL STORM: Already left?

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, he had to leave.

16 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Mary Langaas.

17 Please state and spell your name, 'cause I probably
18 butchered it.

19 MS. MARY LANGAAS: Mary Langaas, M-A-R-Y,
20 L-A-N-G-A-A-S.

21 And I'm actually reading a letter from my
22 daughter. She is a student at college and she has
23 some concerns regarding the land, so I'm going to
24 read it from my daughter.

25 I am not supporting the building of the

1 Great Northern Transmission Line because, as the
2 next generation to inherit the land in the proposed
3 area where the line will be built, I do not want to
4 see this decreasing the value of a fourth generation
5 family farm, negatively affecting area agriculture,
6 or deal with any of the safety hazards associated
7 with increased voltage.

8 Other possible complications are
9 associated with the building of this transmission
10 line that are of great concern to me, and these
11 include the following.

12 Cell phone service in northern Minnesota
13 has never been great, and with the possibilities of
14 corona discharges, the transmission line could even
15 make cell phone service, radio signal and television
16 signal even worse. Each of these signals is very
17 important in a farming community especially during
18 harvest season in order for people to establish an
19 efficient and safe work schedule.

20 Interference with the GPS signals
21 associated with farm equipment is also a great
22 concern to farmers. The GPS units, auto steer units
23 inside each piece of equipment can cost over
24 \$10,000. Since the cost of these devices are
25 extremely high, interference with the signal would

1 not allow for the device to be used to its full
2 effect, and would not allow farmers to get the full
3 benefits of a device they paid for. And even though
4 it states on the website that the interference with
5 the GPS system is minimal, any interference with the
6 GPS unit would mean a farmer would have to
7 continually reset his device in hopes that it would
8 regain signal. Trying to reset a GPS unit while
9 moving interrupts the pace and can greatly distract
10 the driver, which can ultimately lead to increased
11 safety risks, especially if this were to happen
12 multiple times in one field.

13 The EMF, electric and magnetic fields, is
14 also of great concern. Let's see. Any extra added
15 risk of interfering with any medical problems should
16 be completely avoided, especially since people
17 usually operate equipment by themselves without
18 others close by. Other studies have shown that EMFs
19 have been associated with increased risks of
20 developing leukemia and other cancers, things that
21 nobody wants to have a chance of developing.

22 Stray voltage and induced voltage are
23 other concerns, especially since the line would be
24 going through fields that are being continuously
25 occupied throughout the year by people, livestock

1 and equipment. Although the website says necessary
2 precautions would be taken to prevent these, it's
3 impossible to know the overall effect of the
4 possibilities of what some stray or induced voltage
5 could produce. Especially since weather conditions
6 aren't always perfect and farmers sometimes have to
7 leave all their equipment in their fields as
8 lightning and rain passes. This possibility would
9 not be favorable to any of the people and expensive
10 equipment in the area.

11 The added noise from the line would also
12 be a safety hazard to farmers. Farmers are
13 constantly listening to their machines for any
14 possible noises that would be associated with a
15 mechanical problem. Farming equipment is already
16 noisy enough, and any increased noise in a field
17 area would also decrease a farmer's ability to
18 notice certain mechanical problems on his/her
19 equipment.

20 Construction is also another area of
21 concern. Construction never goes as planned and
22 more than likely takes longer than the estimated
23 time to complete. With that in mind, this would
24 affect a farmer's ability to access fields. And
25 with a decreased ability to access fields, this

1 would cause farmers to fall behind in planting and
2 harvesting, which results in poor crop yield or
3 unused land. Farmers and ranchers would also have
4 to make up for the extra traffic which would
5 decrease access to pastures, ditches, roads and
6 fields. So, either way, the farmer is at a loss.

7 Even though the overall goal is to
8 increase emission-free energy, why is there no
9 concern over all the added power lines and
10 infrastructure? These added structures would go on
11 land that is home to people, wildlife, livestock,
12 forests and farmland. Northern Minnesota has
13 beautiful, flat land that is home to species of
14 animals that don't exist elsewhere. So even though
15 the hopes are to reduce emissions, the well-being of
16 the land must be taken into consideration too. It's
17 ridiculous to overlook what added infrastructure
18 will add to land used to grow crops, especially when
19 food needs are steadily increasing and farmers are
20 trying to produce as much as possible in order to
21 feed an increasing population.

22 The wildlife also needs to be considered
23 in this project, along with their natural habitats.
24 If any destruction occurs to untouched land, this
25 project could ultimately do more harm to the

1 environment. The cutting down of trees, rutting up
2 of land, and making roads and trails where they
3 never existed before can't be any better for the
4 land than emissions. And since this type of
5 infrastructure could be permanent, there's no going
6 back, no growing more trees where they've been cut,
7 and wildlife and livestock are forced to live in new
8 habitats that won't necessarily be more sustainable
9 for them.

10 And the added emissions from constructing
11 this line are not mentioned on the website, which is
12 a bit suspicious, especially since large equipment
13 uses a lot of fuel, and constructing the line would
14 take years.

15 Science and technology will continue to
16 advance, and before this project would even be
17 completed, we should consider other options that
18 don't include added lines and power structures on
19 land that is untouched with buildings and
20 infrastructure.

21 What if it doesn't work? What happens
22 when the expected reduction on emissions is not met?
23 What happens when higher voltage causes problems in
24 certain areas? Would it even be possible to remove
25 these structures and power lines if a problem

1 occurs? How often will people have to upkeep these
2 structures and access farmland, pasture land and
3 woodlands? Continual upkeep of the line would be
4 required, and access to the lines during spring,
5 summer and fall months would cause much hassle to
6 farmers and ranchers. Although the winter would
7 allow for easier access due to less traffic, the
8 snow and extreme weather conditions would also be a
9 huge problem if upkeep is needed. If it takes so
10 long to build this project, and then the projected
11 idea doesn't meet the expectations, everyone is at a
12 loss. And the risk of building this line would do
13 more harm than good.

14 I feel that the people behind this
15 project have not experienced or researched enough
16 regarding the effects the line could have on
17 agriculture, wildlife and livestock. No research,
18 statistics or statements have been posted on the
19 website that allow concerned landowners to evaluate
20 how this could affect their land, farms, wildlife,
21 livestock, forests and community. This has led me
22 to believe this line project is completely
23 unnecessary and could have a negative impact on
24 agriculture and communities in northern Minnesota.
25 And the most important thing to remember is

1 agriculture affects everything and everyone. And
2 since agriculture is what defines a majority of the
3 northern Minnesota communities, the building of this
4 line should be highly avoided.

5 Thank you for taking the time to listen
6 to my concerns regarding this matter. Alyssa
7 Langaas.

8 MR. BILL STORM: Douglas Erickson.

9 MR. DOUGLAS ERICKSON: I didn't come
10 prepared like the rest of these guys. This is just
11 off-the-cuff, you see what I mean?

12 MR. BILL STORM: I'm informal also.
13 Would you state and spell your name, please?

14 MR. DOUGLAS ERICKSON: Douglas Erickson,
15 D-O-U-G-L-A-S, E-R-I-C-K-S-O-N.

16 I'm a farmer, landowner, like many of
17 these people here. And a lot of us don't want these
18 big power lines going through our fields
19 kitty-corner and so forth. The other day I was
20 through to Fargo, North Dakota, took Highway 10
21 East, and there's a big power line being built along
22 the interstate there towards Fergus Falls. And I
23 says, My goodness, those big circular mounts that
24 they were putting the power lines on are about half
25 the size of this room here, if not bigger, with big

1 poles sticking up and in comes a helicopter and they
2 drop these things in. And like I say, very tall.
3 Kind of unsightly looking things.

4 But, you know, I don't want those things
5 going through my fields. When there's poor land
6 that is not, like was stated, four or five
7 generation land, that can be used, that these power
8 lines could be used on, such as forest land, so
9 what? Some people may oppose that, but the danger
10 to human beings isn't as great there as with the
11 stray voltage, the things that are given off through
12 the air that we don't even know those. What do you
13 call it, there's a name for those electric --

14 MR. BILL STORM: Electromagnetic fields.

15 MR. DOUGLAS ERICKSON: Well, it's just
16 voltage going through there. So I just feel that if
17 you're going to do this project, as much as I can
18 say anything about it is, shove the stuff east. You
19 got a big power line going east of town here, take
20 and shove that alongside that one and then you have
21 power structures all in one area and it's easier to
22 maintain. As much as that's worth, that's the way I
23 look. Because we as farmers, like was just stated,
24 we got GPS equipment nowadays, we drive as straight
25 as an arrow, and we don't want to be zigzagging

1 we are Residents and Ratepayers Against the
2 Not-So-Great Northern Transmission Line. So if you
3 want information about it, I put a site together,
4 it's called Not-So-Great Northern Transmission, if
5 you Google it it'll pop up. And it's very
6 important, as they've explained, this is about need
7 and it's not about routing. So you really need to
8 focus on those kinds of issues here in this
9 proceeding.

10 They mentioned size, type, and timing.
11 Like size, an example of that, and Mr. Storm said,
12 well, what about 765, not 500 kV. Well, this line
13 has an emergency rating of 1572 MVA, and they're
14 talking about meeting it for a 250 megawatt PPA, and
15 maybe a PPA for some more in the future. So 250 out
16 of 1572 potential, that's a problem and so maybe
17 they're building this too large. And that's
18 something that as an alternative should be looked
19 at.

20 Another example, the type of line,
21 someone referred to a DC line to bring power over
22 from North Dakota. Well, this is about Manitoba,
23 and Minnesota Power did buy that DC line and it's
24 going to be used strictly for wind, the coal that is
25 currently on it will end down on the CapX line. So,

1 you know, what is this for? You need to take a look
2 at, you know, what type of line this will be -- this
3 is a DC line, right?

4 MR. BILL STORM: AC.

5 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: This is AC? Okay.
6 Never mind. I'm confused there.

7 The timing of it, is it appropriate to do
8 it now, or should it be done after this maybe PPA
9 comes about? We need to look at those kinds of
10 things.

11 EMF, that's an important issue, but it's
12 more than just EMF. You've got to look at EMF, you
13 need to look at a range of EMF. Do you look at EMF
14 where 250 is coming across on the line or do you
15 look at EMF where the full 1572 is coming across?
16 And the environmental report should look at a range,
17 not just what they say it is going to be, because
18 they build lines, they don't run them at a little
19 bit, they run them at close to capacity and
20 sometimes above capacity. And so those are
21 important.

22 Also, there's a system alternative, and
23 I'm not quite sure what this is about. The Regional
24 Utilities, which means Xcel and their cohorts, are
25 looking at proposing running it from the Dorsey

1 Substation -- I put a map on this handout -- down to
2 Barnesville where it will pick up with the CapX
3 line. And yet they have not intervened and haven't
4 really proposed that, and then who are they to
5 propose that? This is Minnesota Power's project.
6 It's kind of a confusing thing but this is something
7 the environmental report ought to look at.

8 I'm concerned because what Xcel has a
9 habit of doing is introducing things at the very end
10 where it's too late for people to talk about or
11 consider it. And that's what they've done in a
12 couple of CapX cases. And we need to know what
13 that's about. And we need to put them on the spot
14 and say, well, you know, what are you really
15 proposing here, and are you going to intervene, are
16 you going to really push for this, or are you just
17 using this as a threat for a share of ownership like
18 they did with ATC out in Wisconsin. What is this
19 all about? And having dealt with Xcel for the last
20 20 years, I don't trust them, I think they're
21 throwing their weight around.

22 But those are some things I think should
23 be looked at and I think I'll shut up for now.
24 Again, not-so-great-northern-transmission-line.org,
25 you can get some more information and I'll be

1 posting some details on that.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Carol.

4 That's all my cards, but if anybody else
5 wants to speak, if we can do a show of hands. Did
6 that spur anybody, the conversation spur anybody?
7 Any questions, if you have questions -- you, sir, in
8 the back, will you please step up to the mic and
9 state and spell your name?

10 MR. TOM JOHNSON: Yes. Tom Johnson. I
11 live in Roseau and I farm.

12 I was just looking at your estimated
13 project timeline, where it had the administrative
14 law judge report and the certificate of need
15 decision. Are those supposed to be 2015 dates that
16 we're looking at, or 2014?

17 MR. BILL STORM: Tracy? It says March of
18 2014.

19 MS. TRACY SMETANA: I apologize. It
20 should be 2015. Thank you.

21 MR. BILL STORM: You remember from the
22 flow chart, we have this meeting tonight, we have
23 the comment period going until March 14th. The
24 scoping decision will come out shortly after that.
25 I'll write the environmental report and then we'll

1 be back up here with an administrative law judge, a
2 judge to actually have public hearings for people to
3 comment on the environmental report, any
4 shortcomings they see in it, and also to reiterate
5 their feelings to the judge. Then the judge will
6 make a report with recommendations to the
7 Commission.

8 MR. TOM JOHNSON: So just for
9 clarification for me, the certificate of need, the
10 application, will that be granted before a route is
11 proposed?

12 MR. BILL STORM: The way the rules and
13 the statute says is the Commission, the Public
14 Utilities Commission cannot make a determination on
15 the route until they make one on need. But the
16 processes can run concurrently and usually what
17 happens is there's some overlap. But an applicant
18 will come in, Minnesota Power will come in with a
19 certificate of need asking the Public Utilities
20 Commission, we need this and we think this is the
21 way to do it. And then shortly after that they'll
22 come in with a route. And the two processes will
23 run sort of concurrently. But when you get to the
24 end, the Commission can't make a determination on a
25 route without making a determination on need. And

1 it's the gamble that the applicant is taking to
2 start on both, because the applicant could start
3 them both, they could run concurrently, and the PUC
4 could say we're not granting your need, so all that
5 effort you put into the route, that was your risk,
6 so.

7 MR. TOM JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Could you explain
9 intervention and when the deadline is? I haven't
10 heard anything about that. Or someone explain it.

11 MR. BILL STORM: You know, I can't. Do
12 you have -- okay, Dave, I'll let the attorney for
13 Minnesota Power.

14 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Thank you.

15 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I'm David Moeller
16 from Minnesota Power.

17 The date, if you want to become a party
18 in the certificate of need docket, the
19 administrative law judge set a schedule last month,
20 and the date is August 29th, I believe, to be a full
21 party. And if you want to intervene you have to
22 file a motion. You can either do it through an
23 attorney or on your own if you have an interest in
24 doing so. And then you have the rights of a full
25 party. You always have the right to participate in

1 these type of public hearings and provide written or
2 oral testimony, or oral comments, I should say. But
3 if you want to be a party and provide more
4 evidentiary testimony or kind of more formal
5 testimony or other rights of a party, you have to
6 file a motion to intervene.

7 Does that make sense? Lawyers aren't
8 always good at explaining things.

9 MR. BILL STORM: Yeah. In this process,
10 though, you don't have to intervene to participate
11 like we're doing now. And to participate in the
12 public hearing that's going to come, you don't have
13 to be a party to do that. But there are certain
14 organizations and entities that want the party
15 status, it lets you cross-examine, it lets you get a
16 little bit more involved in the formal process.

17 If you remember Tracy's diagram about the
18 steps, one of the steps is a public hearing. In
19 this case that public hearing will actually have two
20 functions. It will be a public hearing, which is
21 sort of informal, anybody can speak, you get to ask
22 questions of me on my environmental report, you get
23 to ask questions of the applicant, to pin them down
24 on things, to ask them about things. And then
25 following that public hearing there's an official

1 evidentiary hearing where you get to put testimony
2 in the record and stuff. The public gets to
3 participate without necessarily being a party, so.

4 Okay. Any show of hands? Anybody have a
5 question for me, Tracy, or MP, or any comments on
6 what you'd like to see in the environmental report?
7 Okay. I do want to thank you for --

8 MR. DOUGLAS ERICKSON: I'd like to ask
9 you one more question.

10 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. State your name,
11 please?

12 MR. DOUGLAS ERICKSON: Douglas Erickson.
13 How about building a new power plant? A
14 new nuclear plant. Get, you know, something that's
15 state of the art. Because this state is going to
16 grow, we're going to need more power. Why not
17 centralize it someplace and build a nuclear power
18 plant that's bigger and we'll help everything.
19 Because we're all paying big money for electrical.

20 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Doug. If you
21 look at that draft environmental document I had, one
22 of the items was generation as opposed to
23 transmission. So one of the things I would look at
24 is Minnesota Power states it has this need and they
25 want to meet it by transmission. One of the things

1 I'll look at is can that need be met by generation,
2 you know. So that will -- that is one part of that
3 boilerplate that I have to cover, that's one of the
4 questions I still have to cover in my document. And
5 I'll cover the answer to that, I guess. It doesn't
6 mean everybody will agree with it, but it'll be out
7 there and then it can be debated at the public
8 hearing.

9 Anybody else? Any questions?

10 Yes, sir, please come up and state your
11 name.

12 MR. ROBERT BENTOW: I'll stay here.

13 MR. BILL STORM: Make sure she can hear.

14 MR. ROBERT BENTOW: Robert Bentow.

15 COURT REPORTER: How do you spell your
16 last name?

17 MR. ROBERT BENTOW: B-E-N-T-O-W.

18 I have a question for your attorney. The
19 contract that you signed with Manitoba Hydro, can
20 you get out of it?

21 MR. DAVID MOELLER: The short answer is
22 no.

23 MR. ROBERT BENTOW: So this is all just a
24 moot point?

25 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I wouldn't say that.

1 I mean, Minnesota Power signed a contract with
2 Manitoba Hydro that the Minnesota Public Utilities
3 Commission approved. And as part of the contract,
4 we have a covenant to build a new transmission line,
5 to build -- that contract is to deliver power from
6 Manitoba Hydro to Minnesota Power, and then we are
7 working on another one as well. But it's not our
8 say as far as whether this line gets approved or
9 not, it's the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.
10 We can make an application, we've done so, but the
11 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission also has a say
12 on not only was the contract necessary on this need,
13 but also the line, the way to build that in
14 Minnesota, as well as other regional utilities.

15 MR. ROBERT BENTOW: So if they refuse
16 your line, what's plan B?

17 MR. DAVID MOELLER: That's a very good
18 question, sir. I think we'd have to assess what our
19 needs were at that point and figure out if we can
20 build new generation or build other transmission
21 lines, but for now our plan is to go forward with
22 this line.

23 MR. BILL STORM: Please state and spell
24 your name.

25 MR. ERIC DOUGLAS: Eric Douglas, E-R-I-C,

1 D-O-U-G-L-A-S.

2 We talked about the need, but how are the
3 needs determined and how are they verified? Are
4 there forecasts and all that stuff? I'd really like
5 to see that information and understand it.

6 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. The -- do you
7 have a copy of the CN here, a spare copy that you
8 can give? There is a CN application, the actual
9 application that Minnesota Power presented to the
10 Commission. It is in eDockets, so it's on eDockets,
11 the site that Tracy gave you. It's also at the
12 Department of Commerce site, too, where you can find
13 it. And I could certainly -- if you want to leave
14 me your name and number I can certainly mail you a
15 hard copy.

16 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I don't have a full
17 one with me, but we can mail one as well.

18 MR. BILL STORM: And that has --
19 basically what the certificate of need application
20 is is Minnesota Power's argument for why they need
21 this. And forecasting and a lot of that information
22 is in that document. It's a big, thick document.
23 There's a group in the Department of Commerce that
24 looks at that from an economic standpoint. The DER
25 is the group.

1 MR. JIM ATKINSON: There's several copies
2 at local libraries, too, hard copies.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Carol, please.

4 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: I wanted to follow
5 up on the question about the PPA. And if the state
6 turned down the certificate of need, would that be
7 force majeure and you could get out of the PPA? As
8 could Goodhue Wind.

9 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Sure. David Moeller
10 again from Minnesota Power. I don't think -- it's
11 not a force majeure if we don't get a transmission
12 line built by June 1st, 2020, but we do have a
13 contractual obligation to do so under the contract
14 that we signed and got approved. But it's not --
15 there's not a force majeure clause, as far as
16 regulatory approval on a new transmission line.

17 MR. BILL STORM: Okay.

18 MR. DAVID MOELLER: If you want me to
19 explain force majeure, I could do that, too.

20 MS. CAROL OVERLAND: Force majeure
21 perhaps.

22 MR. BILL STORM: Anyone else? Did that
23 generate any questions? Concerns?

24 Okay. I really appreciate you coming
25 out. This is important and I know that when we get

1 to the routing portion of it, where the rubber
2 really meets the road, that that's where people can
3 really sink their teeth in to looking at -- that's
4 where you can actually look at you're crossing my
5 land this way, why don't you cross to the north of
6 me. And you can put forth alternative route
7 segments on the table for us to look at, and to me
8 that's really where the rubber meets the road. I
9 keep saying that a lot, but as far as back here at
10 the certificate of need, if you have an issue that
11 you want to make sure I cover in the ER, or if you
12 have a system alternative that you want me to look
13 at, please get your comments to me by March 14th.
14 And, again, snail mail, e-mail, tonight. You can
15 always call me and we can talk if you need help
16 formulating the words that you want to use to put
17 your thing forward.

18 Other than that, I really appreciate you
19 coming out, it's part of the process and we need the
20 input from local people. Like I said, we'll be back
21 here for public hearings on the need, but we'll also
22 be back here for the routing, where you actually get
23 to look at big maps, aerial photographs, and you'll
24 be able to see where they're proposing to put this
25 and you'll be able to add alternative segments or

1 adjustments to it that we can evaluate.

2 Okay. Well, okay, thanks. I appreciate
3 it.

4 (Meeting concluded at 7:19 p.m.)

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