

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

12-1163 SCOPING MEETING - BEMIDJI
FEBRUARY 19, 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

The Sanford Center
1111 Event Center Drive NE
Bemidji, Minnesota

February 19, 2014

COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

I N D E X

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SPEAKER	PAGE
Tracy Smetana	3
Jim Atkinson	14
Bill Storm	17
Don Wille	28
Unidentified	30

1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Again, thank you for
2 coming. My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm with the
3 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and we're
4 here to talk about the Great Northern Transmission
5 Line Project and the certificate of need.

6 I know that several of you talked with
7 either Bill or myself on the way in and learned that
8 there are two parts to this process. Part one is
9 the question of need, is the project needed, and
10 part two, if it's needed, where is it going to go?
11 And tonight we're talking about question number one,
12 the need question. Down the road we'll get to the
13 part about where is it going to go. So we want to
14 stay focused on that particular issue.

15 The other thing that I want to mention
16 is, as the company is preparing to file its
17 applications for this project, I know they come out
18 and do a number of meetings that look sort of like
19 this, but this is the first sort of official meeting
20 sponsored by the state agencies that actually have
21 the authority to grant the permits required for this
22 project.

23 So this is a little bit of what we're
24 going to talk about tonight. Some brief
25 introduction. I'm going to talk some about the

1 roles and process for the certificate of need
2 application. I'm going to ask Minnesota Power to
3 provide a summary of the project. And then the
4 Department of Commerce will talk about the
5 environmental review process. And then we'll get to
6 the main event, which is opening it up for your
7 comments and questions about the question of need.

8 So, first off, I like to start out with
9 who is the Public Utilities Commission. Because I'm
10 guessing a number of folks in the room haven't heard
11 of us before. We are a state agency. We're
12 responsible for regulating permitting for power
13 plants, transmission lines, pipelines, and so on.
14 We also regulate local and in-state long-distance
15 telephone companies, as well as rates and services
16 for investor-owned electric and natural gas
17 utilities. So we dabble in a lot of different
18 things.

19 We have five commissioners that are
20 appointed by the governor and they serve staggered
21 terms. So when we get a new governor we don't get a
22 whole new batch of Commissioners, we have some that
23 are appointed by our current governor and some that
24 have been appointed by previous governors. So they
25 stick around for awhile.

1 Also, it's full-time employment for those
2 Commissioners. So I know for me, I'm a small town
3 girl, and our city council people, you know, come to
4 a few meetings a month and that's their duty in
5 terms of serving in that role. The Commissioners,
6 it's a full-time job for them, they're in the office
7 40 hours a week. We also have about 50 staff at the
8 Public Utilities Commission that help the
9 Commissioners to make the best decisions possible.

10 I also want to talk a little bit about
11 some other folks that you might encounter throughout
12 this process. The first is the applicant. That's
13 the term that we use for the company asking for the
14 certificate of need. So in this case it's Minnesota
15 Power. So if you hear someone say the applicant,
16 they're talking about Minnesota Power.

17 We've also got the Department of
18 Commerce, another state agency. And there's two
19 different pieces of the puzzle that they fit into.
20 The first is the environmental piece. And I know
21 you talked with Bill on the way in and he gave you
22 the scoop on that a little bit. He's with the
23 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis group, you
24 might see that abbreviated as EERA. There's also an
25 Energy Regulation and Planning piece with the

1 Department of Commerce, and they deal with more of
2 the financial aspects and some of the other
3 technical aspects of this type of an application and
4 their role is to represent the public interest.

5 Later on in the process we will ask the
6 Office of Administrative Hearings to get involved.
7 You might see them abbreviated as OAH. And they'll
8 have an administrative law judge assigned to this
9 project who will come out and hold public hearings,
10 so we'll be back up here again for those likely this
11 fall. The judge will gather evidence from citizens,
12 from the applicant, from other interested parties,
13 and ultimately write a report for the Commission
14 making some recommendations on is this project
15 needed.

16 At the Public Utilities Commission
17 there's two different folks that play a role. The
18 first is the public advisor, and that's me, so my
19 job is to talk to people, help you figure out this
20 process. It can be a little complicated, a little
21 confusing. I can help you understand when you can
22 jump in. What type of information we're looking for
23 at various stages of the process. Help you get
24 connected to the right resources.

25 My job is not to give legal advice, I'm

1 not an attorney. I'm also not an advocate. So I'm
2 not going to go to the Commissioners and say, hey,
3 John Smith over here says you shouldn't build this
4 project because of A, B and C. It's not my job to
5 advocate for any one person or position. I'm a
6 neutral party.

7 Now, my counterpart is a staff analyst.
8 His job is to review the technical aspects, assist
9 in collecting evidence and building the record.
10 Also informs Commissioners on the impacts of various
11 decision options that are available.

12 Again, the Commission staff, we're
13 neutral, we're not going to give you legal advice
14 and we're not advocating for any one party or
15 position.

16 So this particular project is defined in
17 the statutes and rules as a large energy facility,
18 which means that before anyone can build this type
19 of project they need a certificate of need from the
20 Public Utilities Commission. There are some
21 specific statutes and rules that I've identified
22 here, in case you're looking for some really
23 interesting reading, you can do some further
24 research there.

25 Now, even though we're not talking about

1 the route permit yet, I wanted to just provide some
2 information about that 'cause I'm guessing if folks
3 are interested in the need they are probably
4 interested in question number two about the route as
5 well. In this case it's a high voltage transmission
6 line that does require a route permit from the
7 Public Utilities Commission. And, again, the route
8 will be decided in a separate process.

9 So how does the Public Utilities
10 Commission decide if this project is needed? Well,
11 there's some questions that we need to answer in
12 order to make that happen. So some of the things we
13 look at are what if the project isn't built, what
14 will happen, in terms of adequate, reliable,
15 efficient service for Minnesota and also neighboring
16 states. We want to look at whether there's a better
17 solution. Minnesota Power's coming in with one
18 solution, maybe there are others that would satisfy
19 the need that maybe are better in the mind of the
20 Commission.

21 We also want to be concerned with the
22 environment. Not just wildlife environment, but
23 people environment. Social, economic factors and so
24 on, we want to look at that full picture in terms of
25 the question of need.

1 We also want to be certain the project
2 meets other government regulations. So, for
3 example, the Department of Natural Resources might
4 have some rules or regulations that come into play
5 with a project like this. And so while we don't
6 oversee those rules, we definitely want to make sure
7 the company is following those and is aware of them
8 as well.

9 Okay. If you like pictures, this is a
10 little bit of what the process looks like, kind of
11 an overview of the steps that will happen. And so
12 before we even get to this chart, so up here you
13 could pretend there's another box that says
14 application submitted. So that's what kicks this
15 whole thing off. The company has to submit an
16 application.

17 This first box on the chart, application
18 accepted, all that means is we've checked everything
19 off on the list in terms of what the company needs
20 to provide in order to call it a complete
21 application. So essentially what that does is it
22 says, hey, we've got everything we need to start the
23 review process. I know that term accepted sometimes
24 is confusing, people think, well, hey, if it's
25 accepted, what are we doing here, it's already a

1 done deal, and that's not the case at all.

2 So the next step is where we're at today,
3 the public information and scoping meeting. And
4 then you can see it kind of branches off from there.
5 Over on the left we've got the environmental report
6 aspect. And Bill from the Department of Commerce is
7 going to talk in more detail about that so I won't
8 steal his presentation. And then if we move over to
9 the other side we start dealing with the review of
10 the facts and merits. More details, this is where
11 people will debate what Minnesota Power has
12 submitted, or folks might debate what other folks
13 submit in terms of is this project needed.

14 We'll be back for public hearings with
15 the administrative law judge, as I mentioned
16 earlier. And then the judge will take all that
17 information and move it forward into the evidentiary
18 hearings, where folks will provide sworn testimony
19 and all of that type of stuff. And ultimately the
20 judge will write a report and submit that to the
21 Commission.

22 And then finally we get down to a
23 decision by the Commission. And in this particular
24 case we're anticipating, from box number one at the
25 top down to the decision is about 15 to 18 months.

1 So you can see we have a long way to go.

2 If you like lists better than pictures,
3 this page is for you. It essentially goes through
4 the same items that we just talked about in a list
5 form. You can see this is where we're at today.
6 The public hearings we expect to be in October. And
7 we're looking at a decision on the question of need
8 roughly in May 2015. And please note at the top,
9 this is called an estimated timeline. Things happen
10 through any process like this that could speed
11 things up or slow things down. So don't carve these
12 in stone and, you know, mark your calendar on those.

13 Now, if you've decided that this is
14 really interesting stuff and you want to learn more,
15 there's some ways that you can do that.

16 First off, the Department of Commerce
17 maintains a project website that has a nifty little
18 timeline, that kind of walks through some of the
19 steps that we've looked at in the picture and in the
20 list to show you where we're at in this project. It
21 also has links to maps and other documents that may
22 be of interest to you.

23 You can also see all documents related to
24 this project. So the company and others who
25 participate in this process submit information

1 electronically to the Public Utilities Commission in
2 what we call an eDocket system. And once it's in
3 that eDocket system, it's on the web for folks to
4 look at. So you can just follow the steps listed
5 here and you can look at any document that's been
6 filed in this particular case.

7 Now, I included information here for both
8 the need question and the route question. Again,
9 I'm assuming if you're interested in need you might
10 also be interested in the route. But just to let
11 you know, the route hasn't actually been filed yet,
12 so if you look in that second one, the 14-21, it's
13 probably going to come up as an empty search 'cause
14 nothing has been submitted yet.

15 Some other ways you can stay informed
16 would be to add yourself to our project mailing
17 list. Now, I know some folks have mentioned they're
18 already on a mailing list. That could be either
19 with the company, if you've been to one of their
20 open houses prior to today, or it could be because
21 you're a property owner in the proposed project
22 area. So if you want to make sure that you continue
23 receiving information, the best thing to do is to
24 get on this project mailing list, and you can go
25 ahead and sign in on the sign-in sheets and mark the

1 box for the project mailing list. If you don't do
2 it tonight and you think about it later, you can
3 also get in touch with me and I'll be happy to add
4 you as well.

5 Now, if you want to see every little
6 thing that happens in this case, we have a
7 subscription service for folks who like e-mail. The
8 instructions are here for the need docket. Now,
9 just to let you know, for some people this is going
10 to be way too much e-mail, so if you like e-mail a
11 lot this might be the option for you. If you just
12 want to know about when are other meetings coming
13 up, when do I have an opportunity to send in a
14 comment, what kinds of things are you looking for
15 help on, then it would be that project mailing list
16 that you'd be most interested in.

17 There's some additional resources here.
18 The Department of Commerce has not only a project
19 page, but some general information about the process
20 and how things work. The statutes and rules, I
21 mentioned that earlier, if you do want to dig in and
22 read those, they're available on the web. And, of
23 course, the Commission's website has information as
24 well.

25 And as I mentioned, there are two folks

1 that you might interact with at the Public Utilities
2 Commission. The first is me, I'm the public
3 advisor, and my contact information is listed there.
4 My counterpart, the staff analyst for this project
5 is Mike Kaluzniak, he is not here this evening, but
6 his contact information is here as well. If you do
7 have questions of a more technical nature he'd
8 certainly be happy to help you with that.

9 And with that I will turn it over to Jim
10 Atkinson with Minnesota Power.

11 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Hi, I'm Jim Atkinson
12 with Minnesota Power. I'm the environmental siting
13 and permitting manager.

14 And I'm here to talk about our proposal,
15 which is the Great Northern Transmission Line, which
16 is a 500 kV line, so it's a rather large
17 transmission line from the Canadian border down to
18 our Blackberry Substation, which is about 10 miles
19 east of Grand Rapids.

20 The line will end up being somewhere
21 between 200 to 250 miles long, depending upon which
22 route the Public Utilities Commission ultimately
23 chooses, and any variation of those. And it'll
24 require about a 200 foot wide right-of-way.

25 And on that we will site structures for

1 the transmission line, that would be anywhere from
2 about 1000 to about 1450 feet apart. Most of them
3 would be close to that 1400 foot mark.

4 It has a design capacity at this point of
5 about 750 megawatts. And we have a Power Purchase
6 Agreement with Manitoba Hydro right now that's
7 approved by the Commission for a 250 megawatt
8 purchase, and then we will be submitting for
9 Commission approval another Power Purchase Agreement
10 for another 133 megawatts. The line needs to be in
11 service according to the terms of those Power
12 Purchase Agreements by June 1st of 2020.

13 Here's a few reasons why we're proposing
14 this. And the two big ones are -- the first one is
15 diversifying our energy portfolio. Minnesota Power
16 is really trying to, over the next several years,
17 change the way it makes electricity. And currently
18 we do most of it by burning coal, to the tune of
19 about 75 percent. And our goal is to get that down
20 to about a third. And then a third from renewable
21 sources, like Manitoba Hydro, and wind and other
22 things. There will be some solar. And the other
23 third would be gas, natural gas, and other market
24 purchases that are strategic and economic.

25 At the same time that we're trying to

1 diversify we have increasing demand on our system.
2 And most of that is coming from Iron Range taconite
3 expansions, is the main driver of that expanding
4 need. And then we also have the prospect of
5 significant load growth in the form of nonferrous
6 mining. Many of you have probably heard of Polymet,
7 and that's just one example of the nonferrous
8 entities up here that will need service from
9 Minnesota Power.

10 This is some of the structure types that
11 would be used, or likely would be used. These would
12 be the ones that would be sited in areas like the
13 wetlands and forested areas. They have guys to
14 support them. The tallest ones would be about 150
15 feet tall. And this is a structure type that would
16 likely be used in any agricultural setting or any
17 area that had a lot of development. And they are
18 four-legged, self-supported, a little bit shorter,
19 and they're probably about 40 feet by 40 feet at the
20 base from each corner.

21 And this is how you can stay in touch
22 with us. We have a website,
23 greatnortherntransmissionline.com. We have a hot
24 line up there and you can submit comments and
25 e-mails. You can also get my card, if you'd like,

1 and contact me any time.

2 And with that I guess I'll turn it over
3 to Bill and say thank you for coming tonight.

4 MR. BILL STORM: Good evening folks. My
5 name is Bill Storm, I'm with the Department of
6 Commerce.

7 And as Tracy said, the Department of
8 Commerce's role is to do the environmental review.
9 And when a utility wants to build a large energy
10 infrastructure project in the state of Minnesota
11 they need to get two approvals, both from the Public
12 Utilities Commission, they are the ultimate
13 decision-makers.

14 The first approval is the need. The
15 utility who wants to build the infrastructure
16 project needs to come to the Commission and make
17 their case of we need this power, this is why we
18 need the power, and the solution to getting that
19 power is a transmission line.

20 The second process is the route. If they
21 are successful in getting a certificate of need,
22 they would then move on to a route permit. And the
23 route permit basically is -- the Commission decides
24 whether to issue them a route permit, where the
25 route will go, meaning where will that line be

1 across the state, and what conditions should be put
2 in that permit.

3 These are two separate processes that run
4 almost concurrently. There is a little overlap with
5 them. Currently Minnesota Power has submitted an
6 application to the Public Utilities Commission for
7 the need and that's what we're discussing tonight.
8 But both processes have scoping meetings and public
9 information meetings. The public information point
10 is just so we can get the information out to you
11 that this project does exist. And what scoping
12 means is developing the details of the environmental
13 review. So both processes include public
14 information and scoping meetings, both processes
15 have an environmental review document, both
16 processes have a public hearing, and then both
17 processes have that final determination at the end.
18 But they are two distinct processes.

19 For the need process and for the routing
20 process, the group inside the Department of Commerce
21 that does the environmental review is called the
22 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis staff. We
23 prepare the document, we collect the public input.
24 Basically what scoping is is I'm asking the public,
25 here's what I think should be in the document, tell

1 me what I'm missing or tell me what issues you want
2 me to cover.

3 When we're inside a need docket, when
4 we're looking at a need application, we look at what
5 should be in the environmental document relative to
6 the size of the project, the type of the project,
7 the timing of the project, system configuration, and
8 voltage.

9 When we get back up here for the routing
10 and I'm scoping the EIS, the environmental impact
11 statement for the routing, then the issues will be
12 where should this line go and what adjustments
13 should be made for the alignment, things that are
14 actually on-the-ground issues.

15 The rules and the statutes specify what I
16 must -- what must be in my environmental document.
17 They sort of give me an outline of those general
18 topics that I have to cover. And this wall of words
19 is basically taken right out of the rules. You can
20 see -- I'll just go through a couple of these -- a
21 general description of the proposed project and
22 associated facilities, a general description of
23 alternatives to the project.

24 The rules do ask that when the utility
25 makes their case for the certificate of need, that

1 they must look at alternatives of how to meet that
2 need. And some of the ones that are canned, meaning
3 they're built into the rules, are the no-build
4 alternative, demand-side management, which is
5 basically can you meet the need through
6 conservation, get everybody to use less, a power
7 purchase, a facility of a different size or energy
8 source, upgrading an existing facility, can you
9 upgrade the lines that are already there to help
10 meet the need and so on and so forth.

11 The bulk of the document is an analysis
12 of the human and environmental impacts associated
13 with the proposed project and any alternatives that
14 may get accepted into the scope of the environmental
15 document.

16 I also will talk about, of those impacts
17 that we've identified and will be discussing in the
18 environmental document, how can we mitigate some of
19 them, what are some of the ways to lessen the burden
20 or the impact that they have. Another one would be
21 the list of downstream permits. If the utility is
22 successful in getting a certificate of need granted
23 and they are successful in getting a route permit,
24 before they can build the project they will have to
25 get other permits from other state agencies. If

1 they're crossing a highway they would have to get a
2 permit from MnDOT. If they're going across a
3 wetland they are going to have to get a permit from
4 the DNR, those sorts of things. So I have to list
5 what other requirements there would be for them to
6 actually build the thing.

7 As I said, what scoping is all about is
8 it's my attempt to come and solicit from the public
9 what impacts and issues do you want me to cover in
10 my environmental report and what alternatives do you
11 want me to cover.

12 If you notice, when you came in on the
13 table there was this little guide to environmental
14 review in a certificate of need docket. If you turn
15 to page 6 of that guide, you'll see what looks like
16 a table of contents. Scoping can be described as
17 developing a table of contents for the environmental
18 document. And in the need docket, the environmental
19 document is referred to as an environmental report.

20 So part of what I'm doing for scoping is
21 I lay out for the public, these are the general
22 issues and categories that I think I need to cover
23 in the environmental document, but I'm also asking
24 the public, are there impacts or alternatives that
25 you want me to consider that I may not have or that

1 don't show up in the broad higher elevation look at
2 this table of contents.

3 Now, if you want to put forth a impact or
4 issue that you want to make sure I cover in the
5 environmental report or if you want to put forth an
6 alternative, the rules say there's a method you have
7 to follow to do that. And one is you have to
8 identify the alternative or impact that you want me
9 to include, you have to provide an explanation of
10 why you want this alternative or this impact to be
11 included, and then three, you need to give me any
12 data that you think or any information you think
13 supports your position of why this should be
14 included in the scope of the environmental document.

15 Now, as I said, the Department of
16 Commerce does the environmental review for both need
17 dockets and for routing dockets. While the PUC is
18 the ultimate decision-maker in whether to grant a
19 need certificate or to grant them a route permit,
20 the environmental review and everything around that
21 scoping is under the authority of the Department of
22 Commerce. And it is the commissioner of the
23 Department of Commerce who ultimately decides the
24 scope, the table of contents, what will be in the
25 environmental report.

1 And as I take information from the public
2 and local units of the government who give me ideas
3 on impacts and issues or give me ideas on
4 alternatives and I make my recommendations to my
5 commissioner on what should be in the scope, my
6 commissioner can exclude certain things from --
7 certain alternatives from analysis if, one, the
8 alternative doesn't meet the underlying need and
9 purpose of the project, if the alternative isn't
10 likely to have a significant environmental benefit
11 over the proposed project, or if there's another
12 alternative that meets the need and has less
13 environmental impact. My commissioner is also
14 required to put any issues, impacts, or alternatives
15 into the scope of the environmental document that
16 the PUC, the Commission, deems should be in there.

17 Now, when we talk about impacts inside a
18 need docket. If you turn to page 6 of this document
19 you can see the broad categories of issues that I'll
20 be covering. And when I come to the public and ask
21 the public, well, what impacts or issues do you want
22 me to cover, what I'm asking you to do is help fill
23 in the broad categories. An example would be, if
24 you looked under what may be Chapter 4 of the
25 environmental report, environmental effects, 4.5,

1 health and safety, now that's a broad category and
2 normally it would cover things like stray voltage,
3 induced voltage, and electric and magnetic fields.
4 And what I'm asking you is I gave you in draft form
5 these broad categories and I ask you to fill in the
6 information. So if EMF is a particular concern to
7 you, that's what you'd want to give to me in your
8 comments, saying, Bill, I want to make sure you
9 cover EMF, or I want to make sure you cover stray
10 voltage. So any issue or concern that you have that
11 may fall under one of these broad categories, that's
12 what I want to hear about.

13 Now, the second thing that we're here for
14 with scoping is alternatives. And when I do a
15 certificate of need, this is the hardest one for I
16 think for the public to really have meaningful input
17 on. When we come back up here for the routing
18 process, I'll be doing the same sort of thing to
19 develop my environmental document in the routing
20 process. In that process the document is called an
21 environmental impact statement. And I'll be asking
22 for both impacts and issues and I'll also be asking
23 for alternatives. And in that document alternatives
24 seem obvious. I see where they want to put the
25 line, Bill, I have a concern. I know there's this

1 really nice fen on this piece of property and I'm
2 concerned about that, can we make an adjustment, can
3 I give you an alternative to move it north or south
4 of that fen so we don't impact that fen, or whatever
5 your interest may be.

6 In the need it's a little bit more
7 sophisticated and a little bit more complicated for
8 alternatives. Because if you're like me, most of
9 the public don't understand the electrical
10 engineering that's behind the grid and the issues
11 that may be around these alternatives. But to help
12 you and give you an example, it's the same document,
13 the same table of contents you can see, I have to,
14 as referred to back in the one slide, the rules say
15 I have to look at alternatives and I have to make
16 sure I look at these alternatives. The no-build
17 alternative, the demand-side management alternative,
18 upgrading existing facilities alternative.

19 Well, one of the categories is facilities
20 of a different size. That's one thing that the
21 rules ask me to look at. And it's one area where
22 the public can put an alternative on the table. You
23 may be thinking, okay, Jim, you want to build this
24 500 kV line, how long is that going to be good for,
25 why don't you build a 765 kV line? Or you may say

1 what you're proposing is too big, I want you to look
2 at building a 230 line, and you give that to me as a
3 scoping suggestion. And if it makes it into the
4 scope, what I would be doing then is evaluating the
5 environmental impact of building a 500 kV line
6 versus a 765 line.

7 And I do wrestle with this because I
8 think this is a hard issue for the public to have
9 input on because it's such a complicated issue, the
10 issue of alternatives inside a need docket. It's
11 not as tangible as an alternative to a route. I
12 mean, I can come up with alternatives to a route
13 because you're crossing my property or this is where
14 I hunt, where my deer wintering stand is, or
15 something that I know about that I don't want you to
16 impact and can be avoided. But that's what it is.

17 So, as I said, we've been scoping, having
18 these scoping meetings last week and this week. The
19 scoping comment period is open until March 14th. So
20 if you do have an issue that you want to make sure I
21 cover in the environmental report, and the
22 environmental report is the environmental review
23 document for the need question, or if you have an
24 alternative that you would like me to consider, you
25 need to have your information to me by March 14th,

1 end of business. And you can e-mail it to me, you
2 can snail mail it to me. And if you are wrestling
3 with exactly how to put it down on paper, your issue
4 or your alternative, you know, give me a call and we
5 can talk about it and walk through it. But that's
6 basically what environmental review is all about
7 inside a need docket. And remember, we'll be back
8 up here when they do file for a route.

9 And now it's the point where I seek input
10 from the audience. And I do have a court reporter
11 here, and if you do choose to speak, it'll be part
12 of the record, it'll be part of what I present to my
13 commissioner as I develop the scoping
14 recommendations, and it'll be part of what gets
15 presented to the Commission when they make their
16 ultimate decision.

17 I noticed in the back we have a sign-in
18 sheet where you check a box if you want to speak and
19 nobody checked it, but I'll do a show of hands. Has
20 anything I said tonight or what Jim said, you can
21 ask your question of Jim, you can ask a question of
22 me, you can ask a question of Tracy. It can be on
23 the process, it can be on impacts or alternatives.

24 But I'll ask for a show of hands. Does
25 anybody want to speak tonight on the record?

1 Okay, sir, what I'll ask you to do is
2 stand up, state and spell your name, and then talk
3 strongly so the court reporter can hear you.

4 MR. DON WILLE: Don Wille, the last name
5 is spelled W-I-L-L-E.

6 I was wondering, are they purchasing the
7 land or just an easement?

8 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Minnesota Power would
9 buy an easement for the right-of-way.

10 MR. DON WILLE: Okay. So I get a
11 one-time payment for it, then?

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: That's correct.

13 MR. DON WILLE: Do you help me with my
14 taxes the next 50 years, or do I have to pay taxes
15 on the piece of land that's basically not mine
16 anymore?

17 MR. JIM ATKINSON: You'd have to pay the
18 taxes.

19 MR. DON WILLE: Is that a fair process?

20 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I believe so, since we
21 initially paid for the easement for the same amount
22 that the land is worth to begin with.

23 MR. DON WILLE: Okay. But you're using
24 that land every day. I might use it one day a year
25 for hunting. I'm paying tax for your use.

1 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Right. Well, we paid
2 the fee value of the land and we don't own it.

3 MR. DON WILLE: Okay. I'm a logger and
4 if I cut timber that the county doesn't want me to
5 cut, they charge me triple value for that. I don't
6 want to sell you the land, but you're going to pay
7 me fair market value. I feel I should have triple
8 the value of it. You're talking something that I
9 don't want to sell. I should be talking this way
10 instead of looking at him. Sorry. That was my
11 comment.

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Sure. Thanks.

13 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you. Anyone else?
14 Show of hands? Going once, going twice.

15 Okay. Before you leave I want to thank
16 you for coming out, because the process is all about
17 giving the people an opportunity to speak onto the
18 record so that the ultimate decision-makers can hear
19 your voice.

20 Remember that this is the need docket and
21 we will be back up here for the routing docket, I'm
22 anticipating probably the end of March getting the
23 routing filing submitted to the Commission from the
24 utility, and that will start the process. So maybe
25 in May, end of May, June, I'll be back up here to

1 take your input on routing. And typically, in my
2 12, 13 years of doing this, that's where I get the
3 public input because that's what people are
4 concerned about. But I do thank you and --

5 UNIDENTIFIED: With the routing process,
6 if we leave our name on the mailing, we'll be
7 contacted about that, too?

8 MR. BILL STORM: I will make sure if you
9 signed up for the mailing list that that mailing
10 list gets transferred over to the routing mailing
11 list.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

13 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you people. I
14 appreciate it.

15 (Meeting concluded at 6:41 p.m.)
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25