



Power Plant Siting Act 2011 Year in Review

Permitted Energy Facilities

In 2011, Department of Commerce- Energy Facility Permitting staff assisted the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) in permitting 13 energy facilities and prepared 7 required environmental review documents:

- 8 transmission lines (approximately 301 miles)
- 5 wind farms (300MW)
- 7 Environmental Review Documents (2 Environmental Impact Statements, 2 Environmental Assessments, and 3 Environmental Reports)

Energy Projects under Review

As of December 2011, there are 18 energy facilities currently in the permitting process:

- 13 transmission lines (approximately 186 miles)
- 5 Wind farms (309 MW)

2011 Focus Areas

Transmission Line Routing

Staff engaged in permitting several large transmission projects and compliance tracking for, including three transmission lines associated with CapX 2020 Phase I. Areas of work related to transmission line routing issues included:

- Review of Plan and Profile and other filings for compliance with permit requirements, development of guidance materials and an integrated compliance tracking system.
- Continued collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to resolve issues associated with locating transmission lines adjacent to interstate highways.
- Continued discussions with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on avian issues, including implications of the Bald and Golden Eagle protection act on transmission and wind projects.
- Establishment of an interagency energy working group to increase interagency coordination and awareness of wildlife and natural resource issues related to energy projects in the State of Minnesota.

Public Participation and Outreach Activities

Staff developed and enhanced tools for increased public participation in the permitting process and provided outreach to Minnesota's local governments:

- Upgrades to the energy facilities permitting website to improve ease of use, aid public participation, and better integrate the site with the state's electronic docketing system (eDockets). Upgrades include tabbed browsing, improved database search functions, direct eDockets links, and a new 'How to Participate' section.
- Providing outreach to Minnesota's local governments, including (1) assisting with local review projects, (2) development of a local review fact sheet, and (3) consultation regarding proposed wind farm siting.