

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Ellen Anderson
J. Dennis O'Brien
Phyllis Reha
David Boyd
Betsy Wergin

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

David Gross
ITC Midwest
20789 780th Ave.
Albert Lea, MN 56007

SERVICE DATE: September 13, 2011

DOCKET NO. E6675/MC-11-566

In the Matter of the Application by ITC Midwest, LLC for a Minor Alteration to Construct the Faribault Switch Station in Faribault County, Minnesota

The above entitled matter has been considered by the Commission and the following disposition made:

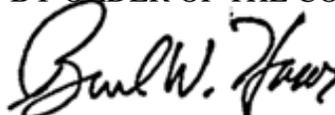
Authorized the minor alteration request for the Faribault switch station with the following condition:

A. Notification to Commission.

- 1. At least ten days before the switch station is to be placed into service, ITC shall notify the Commission of the date on which the station will be placed into service and the date on which construction was complete.**
- 2. At least ten days before the switch station is to be placed into service, ITC shall verify that construction of the station is consistent with the site plan and drawings submitted with ITC's request for minor alteration authorization. If ITC anticipates significant changes to this plan, it shall notify the Commission at least ten days before implementing the changes.**
- 3. Within 60 days after completion of construction, ITC shall submit to the Commission geo-spatial information for the switch station.**

The Commission agrees with and adopts the recommendations of the Department of Commerce which are attached and hereby incorporated in the Order.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION



Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary



This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e. large print or audio) by calling 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.



BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ENERGY FACILITY PERMITTING STAFF**

DOCKET NO. ET6675/MC-11-566

Meeting Date: September 8, 2011

Agenda Item # _____

Company: ITC Midwest, LLC

Docket No. ET6675/MC-11-566

**In the Matter of the Application by ITC Midwest, LLC for a Minor
Alteration to Construct the Faribault Switch Station in Faribault County,
Minnesota.**

Issue(s): Should the Commission authorize a minor alteration for the proposed Faribault switch station? If so, what conditions, if any, should attach to the minor alteration?

EFP Staff: Ray Kirsch.....651-296-7588

Relevant Document(s)

ITC Midwest, LLC's Request for Minor Alteration Authorization.....June 10, 2011
Notice of Minor Alteration Application and Comment Period..... July 25, 2011

The enclosed materials are work papers of Department of Commerce, Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff. They are intended for use by the Public Utilities Commission and are based on information already in the record unless otherwise noted.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651-296-0391 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1-800-627-3529 or by dialing 711.

Documents Attached

1. Project Overview Map

Additional documents and information can be found on eDockets:

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (11-566) and the Commission's energy facilities permitting website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/>.

Statement of the Issues

Should the Commission authorize a minor alteration for the proposed Faribault switch station per the provisions of Minnesota Rule 7850.4800? If so, what conditions, if any, should attach to the minor alteration?

Introduction and Background

ITC Midwest, LLC (ITC) is an independent electrical transmission company with a service area that includes Iowa and southern Minnesota. ITC is proposing to construct and operate a new 161 kilovolt (kV) switch station to accommodate the interconnection of the Big Blue wind farm.¹ The switch station would be co-located with the project substation for the Big Blue wind farm and adjacent to ITC's existing Winnebago Junction – Buffalo Center 161 kV transmission line (see attached map).

The proposed project includes: (1) the relocation and replacement of two transmission line structures on the existing 161 kV transmission line and (2) the construction of a switch station, including breakers, switches, bus work, and a control building. The fenced area of the switch station will be approximately 2.5 acres. The estimated cost of the project is \$4.0 million dollars.

Regulatory Process and Procedures

A minor alteration is a change in a large electric power generating plant or high voltage transmission line that does not result in significant changes in the human or environmental impact of the facility (Minn. Rule 7850.4800). Minnesota Rule 7850.4800 outlines the application, review, and public notice procedures to be used in seeking minor alteration authorization.

ITC filed a request with the Commission for minor alteration authorization for the project on June 10, 2011. On July 25, 2011, EFP staff, on behalf of the Commission, issued a notice of application for a minor alteration and associated comment period. Comments were sought on whether the proposed project is a minor alteration, and any conditions that may be appropriate should the project be authorized as a minor alteration. The comment period closed on August

¹ The Big Blue wind farm is a 36 megawatt (MW) wind farm to be located just east of the city of Blue Earth, Minn (Commission docket number: IP6851/WS-10-1238). The Commission authorized a site permit for the Big Blue wind farm on August 17, 2011 | [Order Issuing LWEC Site Permit](#).

12, 2011. One comment was received, voicing support for the Big Blue wind farm and all necessary interconnection approvals.

The Commission may authorize the minor alteration or determine that the alteration is not minor and requires a full permitting decision (Minn. Rule 7850.4800, Subp. 3). The Commission may authorize the minor alteration but impose reasonable conditions on the approval (Minn. Rule 7850.4800, Subp. 3).

DOC EFP Staff Analysis and Comments

Minor Alteration

ITC's request for minor alteration authorization has been reviewed by EFP staff. The request provides adequate information for staff to conclude that the proposed project would not result in significant changes in the human or environmental impacts of ITC's existing 161 kV transmission line and is eligible for authorization as a minor alteration.

The transmission line structures which must be relocated to accommodate the new switch station will be within the existing transmission line right-of-way. No new transmission rights-of-way or easements will be required.

The new switch station will be located on land which is currently in agricultural production. Thus, the station will create agricultural impacts. The loss of wildlife habitat will be minimal. Co-locating the switch station with the project substation for the Big Blue wind farm and adjacent to ITC's existing 161 kV transmission line, minimizes potential environmental impacts, i.e., impacts of a relatively more compact project will be less than a dispersed project which would require additional transmission line(s) for interconnection.

The new switch station will be accessed by a paved drive from a county road onto ITC property; thus, vehicles can reach the station site without crossing private lands. There will be noise and dust impacts during construction, but these impacts are not anticipated to rise to the level of a "significant change."

The project is an expansion of an existing transmission facility. The switch station will be co-located with the project substation for the Big Blue wind farm. Thus, though the switch station will introduce an incremental visual impact, this impact is not anticipated to be significant.

One public comment was received on the proposed project and this comment related support for the project.

Accordingly, EFP staff concludes that the project is eligible for authorization as a minor alteration.

Conditions

EFP staff believes it would be appropriate to attach a reporting condition, common to transmission line routing permits, to authorization of this minor alteration. EFP staff recommends the following condition:

A. Notification to Commission.

1. At least ten days before the switch station is to be placed into service, ITC shall notify the Commission of the date on which the station will be placed into service and the date on which construction was complete.
2. At least ten days before the switch station is to be placed into service, ITC shall verify that construction of the station is consistent with the site plan and drawings submitted with ITC's request for minor alteration authorization. If ITC anticipates significant changes to this plan, it shall notify the Commission at least ten days before implementing the changes.
3. Within 60 days after completion of construction, ITC shall submit to the Commission geo-spatial information for the switch station.

Commission Decision Options

- A. Authorize the minor alteration request for the Faribault switch station without conditions.
- B. Authorize the minor alteration request for the Faribault switch station with condition A noted above.
- C. Determine that the alteration is not minor and requires a full permitting process.
- D. Make some other decision deemed more appropriate.

DOC EFP Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends option B.

Faribault Switch Station – Project Overview Map

Faribault County, Minnesota

