



Office of Planning
Lynn G. Moratzka, AICP
Director

March 21, 2005

Dakota County
Western Service Center
14955 Galaxie Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Alan Mitchell
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Centennial Office Building – Third Floor
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

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RE: Possible Amendments to Minnesota Rules, Chapter 4415, Governing the Routing of Proposed Intrastate Pipelines

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the possible State Rules amendments. We offer the following comments.

- 1) Impact of Pipelines on Farmland and Natural Area Protection Programs
Proposed pipeline routes through Dakota County could adversely impact the County's efforts to protect up to 10,000 acres of high-value farmlands and natural areas through permanent conservation easements. In some cases, Federal funds are used to acquire the conservation easement. We suggest that the EQB research the potential impact on the State's pipeline routing process from Federal requirements for permanent conservation easements on protected farmlands and natural areas. Other Federal land programs such as LAWCON, CREP, etc. could also impact pipeline routing.
- 2) Exemption for pipeline routes that are less than 25 miles in length
Pipelines less than 25 miles in length could also have local impacts (e.g., see #1, above) that Counties may wish to comment on. We suggest that the EQB eliminate the exemption for pipeline routes less than 25 miles in length.
- 3) Possible Rule Requiring an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan
County staff support allowing the EQB to require the permittee to prepare an agricultural impact mitigation plan on agricultural lands that will be crossed.

If you have any questions, please call me at (952) 891-7033.

Sincerely,

Lynn Moratzka, Manager
Office of Planning

c: Joseph A. Harris, Chair, Dakota County Board of Commissioners
Brandt Richardson, County Administrator
Greg Konat, Director, Physical Development Division
Brian Watson, Manager, Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District