STATE OF MINNESOTA

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

In the Matter of A Pending Application By Xcel Energy For Route Permits For A New 345kV High Voltage Transmission Line And A New 115 kV Transmission Line in Southwest Minnesota.	**CITIZEN ADVISORY TASK FORCE DECISION AND SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION**

The above-entitled matter came before the Chair of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) for a decision on the need for a local Citizen Advisory Task Force to advise the MEQB on a pending High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) application.

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on March 11, 2003, issued a Certificate of Need to Xcel Energy for a new approximately 90-mile long, 345 kilovolt HVTL between the existing Split Rock Substation in South Dakota and the Lakefield Junction Substation in Jackson County, Minnesota (PUC Docket E-002/CN-01-1958); and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on March 11, 2003 issued a Certificate of Need to Xcel Energy for a new approximately 24-mile long, 115 kilovolt HVTL between a new Nobles County substation and the existing Chanarambie Substation in Murray County, Minnesota (PUC Docket E-002/CN-01-1958); and

WHEREAS, Xcel Energy expects to file a route-permit application with the MEQB for these two high-voltage transmission lines and the Nobles County substation in late April 2004; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes § 116C.59 requires the MEQB to adopt a broad spectrum of citizen participation including, but not limited to, the appointment of a Citizen's Advisory Task Force; and

WHEREAS, the length and complexity of the anticipated HVTL projects warrant the input and advice of a Citizen Advisory Task Force to help local citizens participate effectively in the MEQB route-permit decision-making process; and

THEREFORE, having reviewed this information, the Chair makes the following determination with regard to the need for and charge to a Citizen Advisory Task Force relating to this matter.

CITIZEN ADVISORY TASK FORCE AUTHORIZATION

The Chair has decided to appoint a Citizen Advisory Task Force to help the MEQB review the proposed HVTL permit applications. Task Force members will be solicited, as required by Minn. Stat § 116C.59, from the following governmental units:

- The Southwest Regional Development Commission
- Rock County; Nobles County; Jackson County; Murray County
- The City of Worthington
- The City of Luverne
- The City of Lakefield
- The City of Chandler
- One or more Town Board members from each of Rock, Nobles, Murray and Jackson Counties.

In addition, the Citizen Advisory Task Force will include citizens who live, work or own property on or near any of the proposed routes. The Task Force will comprise no more than 18 members.

The Chair charges the Task Force(s) as follows:

> Citizen Advisory Task Force members will assist the MEQB and MEQB staff to determine (1) whether important information is missing or inaccurate in the Xcel Energy route-permit application; (2) what impacts and issues of local concern should be assessed in the environmental impact statement; and (3) whether there are transmission-line routes or substation locations besides those proposed in the application that may maximize positive impacts, and minimize or avoid negative impacts, of the HVTL projects. Task Force members will advise MEQB staff on a proposed scoping document that will define the impacts and potential routes to be addressed in the environmental impact statement for the project. Task Force members are expected to participate with MEQB staff in up to four working Task Force meetings to help facilitate the duties listed above. The Task Force will expire upon completing the above assignment or 60 days after the application is accepted, whichever occurs first.

The MEQB staff is directed to compile a list of names for possible appointment to the Citizen Advisory Task Force for the Chair's consideration.

Signed this 25 day of March, 2004

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Robert A. Schroeder
Chair