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MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

February 3, 2005 ♦ 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm
Midwest Center for Wind Energy
2390 Lincoln County Highway 1
Hendricks, Minnesota

Route Permit Application
by Xcel Energy
for a

115 kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line Between the Buffalo Ridge Substation in Lincoln County, Minnesota, and the White Substation in Brookings County, South Dakota, and the Yankee Substation

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) will hold a Public Hearing on an application by Xcel Energy for a Route Permit to construct a new 115 kV high voltage transmission line from the existing Buffalo Ridge Substation, located south and east of Lake Benton in Lincoln County, Minnesota, to the existing White Substation in Brookings County, South Dakota. The line will be approximately 28 miles in length, of which approximately 18.6 miles will be in Minnesota.

As part of the project, Xcel Energy will expand the Buffalo Ridge Substation. In addition, Xcel Energy is proposing to construct a new substation along this line that will be called the Yankee Substation. Xcel Energy is also requesting authorization to reroute approximately 1.9 miles of the existing Lake Yankton-Pipestone line to remove the line from the Hole-in-the Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the Nature Conservancy's Hole-in-the-Mountain Prairie.

The public hearing will be held on February 3, 2005, at the Midwest Center for Wind Energy, 2390 Lincoln County Highway 1, Hendricks, Minnesota. The hearing will convene at 2:00 p.m. and an evening session will be held commencing at 7:00 p.m.

The Western Area Power Administration (Western) of the U.S. Department of Energy, in response to an interconnection application from Xcel Energy to terminate the transmission line at Western's White Substation in South Dakota will participate in the EQB public hearing. Western will announce its participation in a separate notification prior to the hearing. Western's participation will support its environmental review for the project as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.



Presiding Hearing Officer Alan Mitchell, EQB staff member, will preside at the hearing. Mr. Mitchell's address is Environmental Quality Board, 300 Centennial Building, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota. 55155. Telephone: 651-296-3714, email: Alan.Mitchell@state.mn.us

Project Description Xcel has proposed to construct a 115 kilovolt high voltage transmission line about 28 miles long between the Buffalo Ridge Substation and Western's White Substation. Xcel has proposed a route (comprised of route segments A, B, C, D, E and F) as shown on the accompanying map.

Environmental Assessment The EQB has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed project. The EA addresses the potential impacts of the proposed project and evaluates an alternative route segment J along 120th Street and Lincoln County Highway 1 as shown on the accompanying map.

Copies of the permit application and other material are available for public review at the Lake Benton Public Library. These documents and other project related documents may also be found on the EQB webpage at: <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=7768>

Conduct of Hearing The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Power Plant Siting Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 116C.51 to 116C.69, and the rules of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, Minn. Rules parts 4400.2000 to 4400.2950, for projects of the size and type proposed here.

The EQB staff will be present at the hearing and make a brief presentation about the project and introduce into the record a number of documents relating to the project, including the application, the Environmental Assessment, and certain procedural documents. Representatives of the applicant (Xcel Energy) will be present to offer evidence and to answer questions. Western staff representatives will be present and make a brief presentation on Western's environmental review requirements for the project. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of EQB staff and Xcel representatives, to make statements, and to offer written comments and material into the record at both the afternoon and evening sessions. Members of the public are not required to file any papers in advance of the hearing in order to participate. There is no advance sign-up process. Alan Mitchell will call on those who want to speak.

The record will remain open for at least ten days after the close of the hearing for interested persons to submit written comments to Mr. Mitchell. A deadline for comments will be determined at the hearing. Comments must be submitted directly to Mr. Mitchell at the address above.

Purpose of Hearing The purpose of the public hearing is to compile the record for the EQB Board to consider in making a final decision on the route to approve. Upon closure of the public comment period, the EQB staff will prepare a report and make a recommendation to the EQB on which route segments and substation site or sites to authorize and on any appropriate permit conditions. The EQB will make a final decision on the permit at a subsequent Board meeting.

Additional Information Questions about the EQB process can be directed to Larry Hartman of the EQB staff at 658 Cedar Street, 300 Centennial Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, phone

651.296.5089, e-mail at Larry.Hartman@state.mn.us or to the public advisor, George Johnson, at the same address, phone (651) 296-2888, e-mail at George.Johnson@state.mn.us

Mailing List Any person may add his or her name to the mailing list maintained by the EQB for future mailings regarding this project, including notice of the EQB's final decision in this matter. Names can be added to the list by contacting Mr. Hartman or Mr. Johnson or electronically by visiting the EQB webpage cited above.



Proposed Route Alternatives Considered Buffalo Ridge to White 115 kV Transmission Line
Xcel Energy Windfarm Transmission Improvement Projects

Legend

-  Potential Locations for Proposed Yankee Substation
-  Existing Substations
-  Rejected Route Segments

- Potential Route Segments**
-  A
 -  B
 -  C
 -  D
 -  E
 -  F
 -  G
 -  H
 -  I
 -  J

- Existing Transmission Lines**
-  Less than 69 kV
 -  69 kV
 -  115 kV
 -  115 kV - to be relocated with new 115 kv line
 -  345 kV

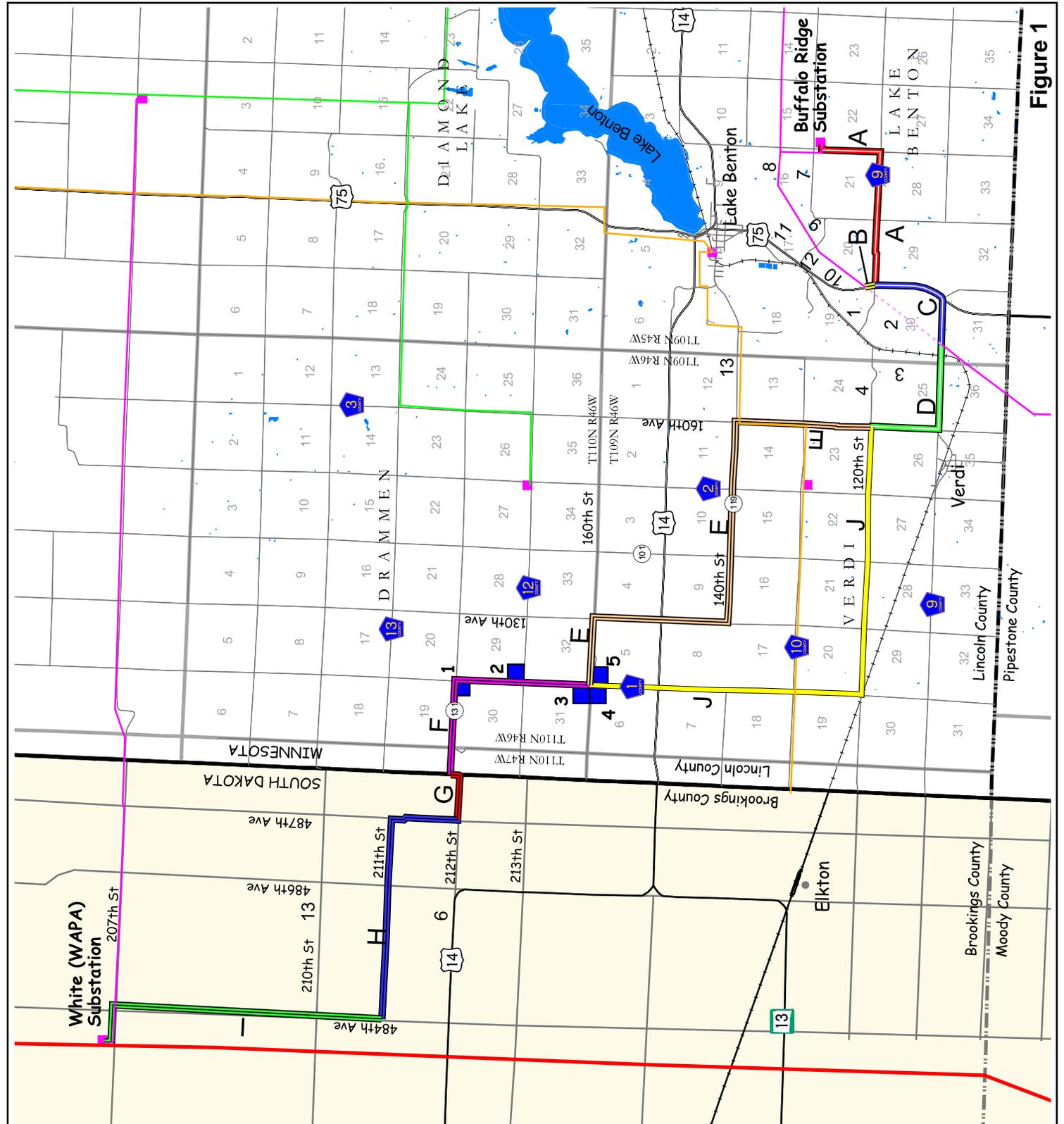
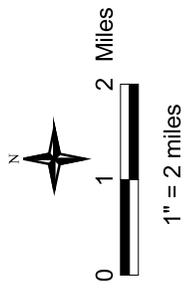


Figure 1