

STATE OF MINNESOTA

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

**In the Matter of Xcel Energy's Application
for a Site Permit for the High Bridge
Repowering project.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCOPING DECISION
EQB Docket No. 05-91-PPS-Xcel Energy HB**

The above-entitled matter came before the Chair of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) for a decision on the scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA) to be prepared on the proposed High Bridge Repowering project.

The EQB held a public meeting on March 3, 2005, to discuss the project with the public and to solicit input into the scope of the EA to be prepared. The public was given until March 21, 2005 to submit written comments regarding the scope of the EA.

Having consulted with the EQB staff, I hereby make the following Scoping Order.

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The EA on the Cannon Falls Energy Center plant project will address the following matters:

- 1.0 OVERVIEW
- 2.0 INTRODUCTION
 - 2.1 Project Description
 - 2.1.1 Description of Power Generating Equipment and Processes
 - 2.1.2 Air Emission Control Equipment
 - 2.1.3 Water Use
 - 2.1.4 Wastewater
 - 2.1.5 Solid and Hazardous Waste Generation
 - 2.1.6 Fuel Supply
 - 2.1.7 Electrical Interconnection
 - 2.2 Purpose
 - 2.3 Sources of Information
- 3.0 Regulatory Framework
 - 3.1 Certificate of Need
 - 3.2 Site Permit Requirement
 - 3.3 Other Permits
 - 3.4 Issues Outside EQB Authority
- 4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING
- 5.0 HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS
 - 5.1 Air Quality
 - Potential to Emit
 - Criteria Pollutants
 - Air Emissions Risk Analysis
 - 5.2 Biological Resources
 - Flora
 - Fauna
 - Rare and Unique Natural Resources

- 5.3 Culture, Archeological and Historic Resources
- 5.4 Geology and Soils
- 5.5 Health and Safety
- 5.6 Land Use
 - Zoning
 - Displacement
 - Recreational Areas
- 5.7 Noise
- 5.8 Socioeconomics
- 5.9 Transportation
- 5.10 Visual Impacts and Aesthetics
- 5.11 Water Resources
 - Surface Water
 - Groundwater
 - Wetlands
- 5.12 Waste Management and Disposal
 - Wastewater
 - Solid Waste
 - Hazardous Waste
- 6.0 Summary of Mitigative Measures
- 7.0 Feasibility

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE EA

The EQB will not, as part of this environmental review, consider the following matter:

1. Whether a different size or different type of power plant should be built.
2. The no-build option.
3. Any alternative sites for the proposed plant.

IDENTIFICATION OF PERMITS

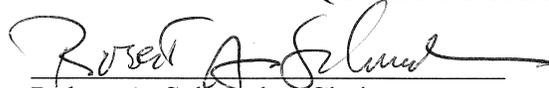
The EA will include a list of permits that will be required for the applicant to construct this project.

SCHEDULE

The EA will be completed by May 5, 2005.

Signed this 22 day of March, 2005

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD


Robert A. Schroeder, Chair



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March 23, 2004

TO: Robert A. Schroeder, Chair
EQB (Tel: 651-296-3391)

FROM: William Cole Storm
EQB Staff, (Tel: 651-296-9535)

RE: Scope Decision: Environmental Assessment
Xcel Energy High Bridge Repowering Project
EQB Docket No. 05-91-PPS-Xcel Energy High Bridge

ACTION REQUESTED: Signature of the Chair on the attached Scoping Decision. The MEQB staff will mail notice of the scoping decision to interested parties within five days of the Chair's decision.

BACKGROUND: On January 31, 2005, Xcel Energy submitted to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) a site permit application regarding a proposal to construct and operate a natural gas-fuel, simple-cycle electric generating facility capable of producing 480 to 665 megawatts (MW). This project is part of Xcel Energy's Metropolitan Emission Reduction Proposal (MERP). MERP was reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in Docket E002/M-02-633. The proposal consists of replacing the existing 270 MW coal fueled plant (i.e., the High Bridge Plant) with a new, natural gas-fired, combined cycle plant. The conversion of the High Bridge Plant is exempted from the Certificate of Need requirements of Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243.

To supply natural gas to the facility, a new, high pressure pipeline will need to be constructed connecting the plant to an existing Northern Natural Gas Company (NNG) interstate pipeline. The new pipeline will originate at the Cedar Town Border Station in Burnsville, approximately 10 miles southwest of the new plant. The natural gas pipeline will be permitted through separate process.

In order to accommodate the proposal, Xcel Energy will need to modify several existing on-site structures. The High Bridge Substation and several transmission line structures will need to be relocated on the site. All of the relocated lines will remain at the same voltage, but will be reconductored.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPING PROCESS: On March 3, 2005, a public meeting was held by the MEQB staff at the Centennial Office Building to discuss the project with interested persons and to solicit input into the scope of the Environmental Assessment. Three people, in addition to representatives of Xcel Energy, attended the public meeting. The public also had an opportunity to ask questions during informal discussions with company representatives. The comment period was held open until 5:00 pm March 21, 2005. No written comments were received.

SCHEDULE: The Environmental Assessment will be completed by May 5, 2005.

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