



**In the Matter of a Northern States Power,
d/b/a Xcel Energy, Application for a Route
Permit for the Eastwood 115 kV/115 kV
Transmission Line and Substation Project
in Blue Earth County**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCOPING DECISION**

**PUC Docket No. E002/TR-05-1192
EQB Docket No. 05-95-TR-Eastwood**

The above matter has come before the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (the Department) for a decision on the Scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA) to be prepared on the proposed HVTL project in Mankato and Lime Townships in Blue Earth County.

The Energy Facilities Permitting (EFP) Unit of the Department held a public meeting on August 25, 2005, in Mankato, Minnesota 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 September 9, 2005, to submit written comments regarding the scope of the EA.

Having reviewed the matter, and having consulted with the EFP staff, I hereby make the following Scoping Order:

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The Environmental Assessment will address the following matters:

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Project Description
- 1.2 Project Location
- 1.3 Project Purpose
- 1.4 Project Alternatives
- 1.5 Sources of Information

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 PUC Permit Requirement
- 2.2 Environmental Assessment Requirement
- 2.3 Scoping of Environmental Impacts and Alternative Routes
- 2.4 Certificate of Need

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

- 3.1 Description of Environmental Setting
- 3.2 Impacts on Human Settlement
 - 3.2.1 Socioeconomic
 - 3.2.2 Displacement

- 3.2.3 Noise
- 3.2.4 Aesthetics
- 3.2.5 Human Health and Safety
- 3.3 Impacts on Land-based Economics
 - 3.3.1 Recreation
 - 3.3.2 Prime Farmland
 - 3.3.3 Transportation
 - 3.3.4 Mining and Forestry
 - 3.3.5 Economic Development
 - 3.3.5 Archeological and Historic Resources
- 3.4 Impacts on Natural Environment
 - 3.4.1 Air Quality
 - 3.4.2. Water Quality, Soils and Geology
 - 3.4.3 Groundwater and Wetlands
 - 3.4.4 Fish and Wildlife Resources
 - 3.4.5 Vegetation
- 3.5 Rare and Unique Natural Resources

4.0 FEASIBILITY OF ALTERNATIVES

5.0 PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE EA

The Environment Assessment will not consider the following matters:

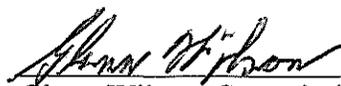
1. Whether a different size or type of transmission line should be built.
2. The no-build option.
3. Any alternative sites for the Eastwood Substation

SCHEDULE

The EA shall be completed by October 17, 2005.

Signed this 21 day of Sept, 2005

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



Glenn Wilson, Commissioner