

For Immediate Release
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MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION APPROVES NEED FOR, AND ROUTE OF, HIAWATHA TRANSMISSION LINES

St. Paul, Minnesota - The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission met today to reach Commission decisions on what is commonly referred to as the Hiawatha transmission lines, which involve two 115kV high voltage transmission lines by Xcel Energy in the Midtown District of south Minneapolis, Hennepin County.

The Commission granted the project a Certificate of Need after determining the project satisfies statutory requirements for such a certificate.

In addition, the Commission made a determination on the route of the transmission lines. In this regard, the Commission adopted the recommendation of an Administrative Law Judge that the circumstances of the record in this case justified burying the transmission lines along a route beneath East 28th Street in south Minneapolis.

To bury the transmission lines will increase the cost of the project compared to placing the lines overhead on steel poles. The Commission referred, to a separate proceeding, the question of how this incremental cost should be allocated to Xcel's ratepayers. Xcel indicated at today's meeting that it will provide a supplemental filing in this regard within 30 days.

Xcel initially applied for a route permit on April 24, 2009. The project involves the *construction* of the two new 115 kV single circuit transmission lines approximately 1.5 miles in length and two new distribution substations in the Midtown District of south Minneapolis.

A more comprehensive, final written order formally documenting the Commission's decisions will be issued within the next few weeks. That order will be filed in dockets E-002/CN-10-694 (the Certificate of Need) and E-002/TL-09-38 (the Route Permit), which are available on the Commission's website at www.puc.state.mn.us via the Commission's e-Dockets system.