

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS  
FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy for a Certificate of Need for the Grand Meadow Wind Farm	<b>SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED</b>
--	--

On June 25, 2007, Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy (Xcel or the Applicant) filed an application for a certificate of need and, simultaneously, a request for an exemption from certain certificate of need filing requirements and a variance to the timing of an exemption request.<sup>1</sup> On August 7, 2007, the Commission issued its Order granting exemptions proposed by the Applicants and referring the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings to conduct a public hearing and provide a summary of the public comments received.<sup>2</sup> Administrative Law Judge Steve M. Mihalchick conducted the public hearing beginning at 6:00 p.m. on November 20, 2007, at Grumpy's Restaurant, 204 4th Avenue NE, Grand Meadow, Minnesota.

Xcel is an investor-owned utility company. For the purposes of the Grand Meadow Wind Farm (the Grand Meadow project), Xcel is working in partnership with enXco Development Corporation ("enXco"). After enXco constructs the facility, ownership of the Grand Meadow project will be transferred to Xcel.<sup>3</sup>

The Grand Meadow project will cover approximately 40 square miles in Mower County. The project will have a nameplate capacity of up to 100.5 MW and consist of up to 67 wind turbine generators. The turbines and access roads will occupy approximately 68 acres. The site permit application has been filed by enXco for development of a 200 MW total nameplate capacity wind generating facility, known as the Wapsipinicon site ("Wapsipinicon"). Half of Wapsipinicon is the Grand Meadow project.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Xcel Application (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4407916>).

<sup>2</sup> Order Varying Time Period, Accepting Application as Complete, Approving Use of Informal Review Process and Combining Need and Siting Processes Where Practicable (Commission Order issued August 7, 2007) (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4747548>).

<sup>3</sup> Xcel Application, Summary of Filing.

<sup>4</sup> Xcel Application, 1-1.

The Wapsipinicon site has been under development by enXco since 2001. Xcel described as a "significant factor" the status of that site, including its place in the Midwest Independent System Operator ("MISO") queue for interconnection.

Notice of the public hearing was filed and posted on the Commission's Edocket system and published at 32 *State Register* 875 on November 13, 2007.<sup>5</sup> Xcel published the Notice in the *Austin Daily Herald* and the *Meadow Area News* on November 7, 2007.<sup>6</sup> The Notice identified the purpose of the public hearing as:

Xcel Energy seeks approval of its claimed need for the purchase of 100.5 megawatts, which is approximately half of a 205 megawatt wind project being proposed by enXco Development Corporation. enXco has filed a concurrent application with the Commission for a Site Permit for its Wapsipinicon Wind Farm. A separate proceeding is underway for the site permit. However, public comments on either the question of Xcel Energy's 100 megawatt need or enXco's proposed 205 megawatt site will be received at the public hearing.<sup>7</sup>

The Minnesota Department of Commerce prepared a Notice of Application, Draft Site Permit availability, Public Information and Scoping Meeting. The Department Notice was published in the *Bluff Country Reader* on September 3, 2007, and *Austin Daily Herald* on September 3, 2007.<sup>8</sup> The Department Notice of Environmental Report Availability was in the *EQB Monitor* of November 5, 2007.<sup>9</sup>

Approximately 18 members of the public attended the public hearing. In addition, approximately seven people were present on behalf of the Xcel and enXco. Two staff members were present on behalf of the Department of Commerce. The Applicants and Department staffers described the application process, the nature of the project, the participation and support of the landowner group, and the role of the Department and its recommendation for approval of the project.

After the presentations by the Applicant and Department, members of the public were invited to ask questions or make comments. One comment was made. That person expressed support for wind-generated electricity. He noted that the intermittent nature of wind power results in actual power production being below the rated generating capacity of the installed turbines. He questioned whether the Applicant was seeking more rated capacity in order to obtain the generated capacity actually sought by the utility.

---

<sup>5</sup> State Register copy (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4843472>).

<sup>6</sup> Affidavit of Publication (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4851451>). The *Austin Daily News* Affidavit of Publication was not available by the date of this Summary.

<sup>7</sup> Notice of Public Hearing, Grand Meadows/Wapsipinicon Wind Project (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4827099>).

<sup>8</sup> Affidavits of Publication (<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4843894> and <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/ShowFile.do?DocNumber=4843895>).

<sup>9</sup> *EQB Monitor*, Vol. 31, No. 23 (November 5, 2007) (<http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/documents/EQBMonitor11-5-07.pdf>).

Xcel responded that wind power is usually assessed by MISO at 13.5% of the rated capacity toward the summer peak capacity. The approach described by Xcel relies on averaging and forecasting to ensure that the wind power generated will be used to reduce generation from fossil-fueled plants.

The Administrative Law Judge invited the public to submit written comments by November 27, 2007 and then adjourned the hearing at approximately 6:32 p.m. Several individual conversations then took place among the members of the public and the Applicant's and Department's personnel.

No public comments have been received by the Administrative Law Judge. If any comments are received following the issuance of this Summary, they will be submitted to the Commission.

Dated: December 7, 2007

s/Steve M. Mihalchick  
STEVE M. MIHALCHICK  
Administrative Law Judge

Reported: Digitally recorded; no transcript prepared.