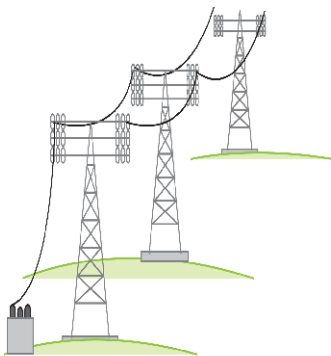


PERMITTING REFORM STAKEHOLDER REPORT TO MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (December 31, 2023)

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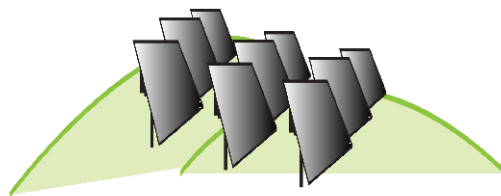


Transmission - MN Stat. 216E

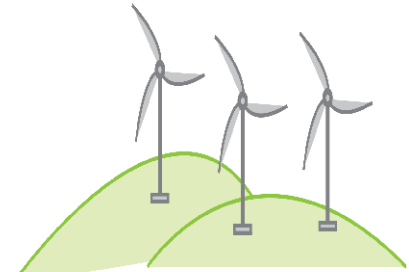
Route Permits

Certificate of Need

MN Stat. 216B.243

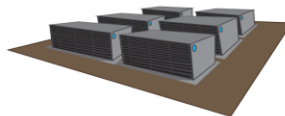


Solar - MN Stat. 216E



Wind - MN Stat. 216F

Site Permits



Storage - MN Stat. 216E

I. PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

A. COMMISSION ACTION INITIATING STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

On August 22, 2023, the Commission held a Planning Meeting to discuss Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) permitting processes in light of the 100% by 2040 legislation enacted and signed into law in 2023. At the conclusion of the meeting the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the following motion:

The Commission directs the Executive Secretary to convene stakeholder meetings to discuss improvements to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission wind, solar, and transmission permitting and environmental review processes to help advance the State's interest in timely and cost-effective compliance with the renewable energy and decarbonization standards in Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.1691. The Commission requests Dan Lipschultz to serve as the meeting facilitator for the stakeholder meetings. The Commission directs the Meeting Facilitator to solicit participation from a cross-section of interested stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, utilities, labor, clean energy and environmental justice advocates, tribal governments, and local units of government. The Meeting Facilitator shall report back to the Commission by December 31, 2023.

B. STAKEHOLDER SELECTION

After agreeing to serve as facilitator, I consulted with Commission Staff to solicit stakeholder participation consistent with the Commission's motion. Our goal was to assemble a group of stakeholders who would provide highly informed and diverse perspectives related to the Commission's permitting processes.

We reached out to over 30 potential stakeholders, including state agencies, environmental advocacy organizations, utilities, developers, labor unions, counties, cities, townships, farm organizations, property rights advocates, and Tribal Nations, to seek their participation. The vast majority of the stakeholders we contacted agreed graciously to volunteer their time to participate. Along the way, we also received many requests to participate from other interested stakeholders who we had not reached out to. All those who contacted us were invited to participate.

The end result was a group of 31 stakeholders participating in the process. A list of participating stakeholders is attached as *Exhibit A* to this Report. In addition to the feedback provided by this group, the Commission convenes an annual Power Plant Siting Act (PPSA) hearing, most recently on December 20th, 2023, to provide an ongoing opportunity for public input on the Commission's permitting processes.

C. STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

The stakeholder group met three times for three hours each session on: October 6; October 30; and November 29. Given the compressed time frame, there was no practical opportunity for

more meetings. All the meetings were held in-person and online to maximize stakeholders' ability to participate in the meetings.

The first meeting on October 6 began with Louise Miltich, Department of Commerce, and Christy Brusven, permitting attorney with Fredrikson & Byron, providing an extensive overview of the various Commission approval processes for renewable generation and transmission line projects. Following that presentation, stakeholders were provided the opportunity to ask questions, which led to a robust discussion of the Commission's permitting and certificate of need processes. The subsequent two meetings were devoted to discussing these processes, including the development and discussion of ideas for improving those processes.

As ideas were presented and discussed, Commission staff memorialized those ideas and key discussion points in what has been termed an "Idea Matrix", which is attached to this Report as *Exhibit B*. The Idea Matrix includes 35 ideas raised by stakeholders. The first column identifies the idea discussed by the group. The second column identifies the implementing authority, which would be the Minnesota Legislature for the vast majority of the listed proposals. The third column includes some explanatory notes associated with each idea.

While all the listed ideas were discussed, some received more discussion and support than others. The process did not seek consensus and no votes were solicited on any of the ideas presented.

II. STAKEHOLDER SENTIMENT AND REFORM IDEAS

A. GENERAL STAKEHOLDER SENTIMENT

The stakeholder discussions were substantive and robust with widespread support for implementing a number of process changes.

While there were varying degrees of disagreement on some of the ideas presented, the overall sentiment of the group coalesced around the premise that the current process is not broken but can and should be improved to better align with the demands of the energy transition requirements mandated by the Legislature. Many stakeholders observed that aspects of current processes create avoidable delays and uncertainties for developers, while also creating confusion and frustration on the part of stakeholders seeking clarity on the decision-making process. To that end, the group focused on identifying and discussing possible changes that would make the various Commission approval processes, especially permitting, more efficient, shorter, and less costly - without compromising public input and community involvement or impairing the Commission's ability to make informed decisions.

Although the process did not involve votes or tallies, it is fair to say the only idea that generated substantial policy opposition was the proposal to eliminate or change the Commission's prime farm land rule. The Department of Agriculture, Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, the Farmers Union, and the Farm Bureau all expressed strong opposition to changing or eliminating that rule, which they connected to the State's policy interest in protecting and preserving Minnesota's soil and agricultural economy.

Other suggestions in the Idea Matrix received varying degrees of discussion and support but very little if any strong opposition, although the Department of Commerce expressed misgivings about moving the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review & Analysis (EERA) staff from the Department to the Commission, while the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) expressed concern about public perception if EERA were moved to the Commission.

It is important to note that the timeline did not permit the group to discuss every proposal in great detail. My observations above should not be interpreted as documentation of any participant's formal support for any proposal, but rather as a high-level characterization of the stakeholder discussions.

B. FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING STAKEHOLDER IDEAS

The concepts in the Idea Matrix are listed in a priority order designed to focus the Commission's discussion, in the limited time allotted, on the most thoroughly discussed and well-understood stakeholder ideas that, in combination, would likely make the Commission's approval processes significantly more efficient and shorter without compromising public input and community involvement or impairing the Commission's ability to make informed decisions.

Accordingly, the Idea Matrix is organized to focus on the first 10-15 ideas with particular emphasis on the first 12 as a set of core proposals that would in combination make a meaningful difference without dramatically changing the current process. This sequencing is not intended to suggest that the other more than 20 ideas lack merit or are not worthy of consideration. In fact, all the remaining ideas listed in the Matrix are thoughtful and potentially beneficial, and all of them are certainly open for Commission discussion.

C. THE CORE PROPOSALS

The first 12 ideas listed in the Idea Matrix include four changes the Commission could make under its existing authority (1-4), and eight changes the Legislature would have to make (5-12). Each change on its own would likely have a marginal impact on the time and cost associated with the Commission's processes, but *implemented collectively these changes would make these processes far more efficient and likely reduce permitting time significantly. In the aggregate, these 12 reforms alone could reduce permitting time by as much as 9 months* while likely also reducing confusion and providing more certainty for utilities, developers, and the public generally.

In discussing these ideas, stakeholders seemed well aware that shaving months from the permitting process alone only addresses a relatively small portion of the 5+ years it often takes to develop, process/permit, and construct major projects from start to finish. But the stakeholder group in general did not see that as a reason to forgo changes that improve the efficiency and timeliness of the permitting processes.

Moreover, some stakeholders pointed out that shaving even a couple months from the permitting process can save many additional months that would otherwise be potentially lost to a missed

construction season. Some stakeholders also stressed additional time saving synergies and benefits associated with reduced permitting time, including: (1) avoiding supply chain constraints and cost increases that can accompany delay; and (2) providing utilities, developers and stakeholders with more clarity and certainty, which can potentially reduce time and cost outside the permitting process.

III. RECOMMENDED COMMISSION ACTION

The Commission initiated this stakeholder effort to (1) focus attention on the approval processes for the enormous amounts of new renewable generation and transmission assets Minnesota will need to implement the State's ambitious energy transition; and (2) generate ideas for improving those processes from a cross-section of Minnesota's energy stakeholder community. Commission Staff and I agree that this effort has clearly accomplished those objectives.

However, there are some modest additional steps the Commission can take to make the most of its stakeholder initiative. To that end, the Commission could take the following next steps:

1. Direct Staff to develop plans for implementing the first four ideas in the Matrix as soon as practicable;
2. Refer the Report to the Minnesota Legislature to consider all the ideas requiring legislative action; and
3. Recommend that the Legislature enact ideas 5-12 in the Idea Matrix as a set of core changes that have been well-developed by the Stakeholder group and would, in combination, significantly improve the efficiency and timeliness of the permitting process for renewable generation and transmission projects without compromising public input and community involvement or impairing the Commission's ability to make informed decisions. *(This recommendation to the Legislature would not imply a negative view of the remaining ideas discussed by the stakeholder group).*

Exhibit A

Permitting Reform Stakeholder List

	Organization	Name
1.	Department of Commerce	Louise Miltich
		Pete Wyckoff
2.	DOC EERA	Ray Kirsch
3.	DNR	Cynthia Warzecha
4.	MNDOT	Amber Dallman
		Jessica Oh
5.	MDA	Commissioner Thom Petersen
		Stephen Roos
6.	EDF Renewables	Adam Sokolski
7.	NextERA	Julie Voeck
8.	Apex Energy	Chris Kunkle
9.	Clean Grid Alliance	Beth Soholt
		Madelyn Smerillo
10.	Fresh Energy	Allen Gleckner
11.	MCEA	Amelia Vohs
12.	CEEM	George Damian
13.	LiUNA	Kevin Pranis
14.	Operating Engineers/ Carpenters	Charles Sutton
15.	Great River Energy	Priti Patel
		Dan Lesher
16.	Minnesota Power	Mike Bull
17.	Xcel Energy	Matt Langen
18.	Otter Tail Power	Dean Pawlowski
19.	Connexus Energy	Brian Burandt
20.	Rural MN Energy Board	Tom Appel
		Sam Ritchie
		Gene Metz
		Dan Wildermuth
		Jason Walker
21.	Association of MN Counties	Brian Martinson
		Angie Berg
		Joe Perske
22.	Coalition of Greater MN Cities	Elizabeth Wefel
23.	MN Association of MN Townships	Graham Berg-Moberg
24.	Farmers Union	Stu Lourey
25.	Farm Bureau	Kaytlin Bemis
26.	Soybean Growers Association	Joe Smentek
27.	Corn Growers Association	Amanda Bilek

Exhibit A

28.	Fredrikson & Byron	Christy Brusven
29.	Land and Liberty Coalition	Nathan Dull
		Kayla Christensen
30.	Weber Johnson Public Affairs	Mike Franklin
31.	Great Plains Institute	Connor McKenzie
32.	PUC	Bret Eknes

Exhibit B

Permitting Reform Stakeholder Idea Matrix

PERMITTING REFORM STAKEHOLDER IDEA MATRIX

This Idea Matrix is intended to offer suggested improvements to the approval processes for renewable energy generation and associated transmission projects to better align those processes with the new statutory carbon-free standards while maintaining robust public participation. The ideas are focused on achieving one or both of the following: (1) making the processes more efficient to better align with the ambitious carbon-free time frames under the 100% by 2040 law; and (2) making the processes less burdensome/costly to further the goal of ensuring that the energy transition is as affordable and cost-effective as possible for consumers.

IDEA	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	EXPLANATION
GENERAL MODIFICATIONS		
1.	Replace Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) completeness order with staff check-off certifying completeness.	<p>Administrative/ PUC</p> <p>Minn. Stat. § 216E.03, subd. 3 requires the PUC to “determine whether an application is complete and advise the applicant of any deficiencies within ten days.” The statute does not expressly require a Commission Order.</p> <p>This proposal would delegate the responsibility for determining an application is complete to the Executive Secretary. This change is likely to reduce the permitting timeline by 30-60 days.</p>
2.	Require early coordination meetings with relevant agencies as check-off item for application.	<p>Administrative/ PUC</p> <p>When permit applicants are drafting permit applications, they and relevant agencies, local governments, and Tribal Nations should be coordinating to avoid potential delays. This change implements a best practice that creates better applications, identifies issues early, and gives participants the opportunity to resolve them early (or before) the permitting process.</p>
3.	Establish comment periods with deadlines for state agencies (prior to public hearing).	<p>Administrative/ PUC</p> <p>This proposal would add a requirement for relevant state agencies to submit comments on a permitting proposal early in the process, prior to the public hearing.</p> <p>Examples (not comprehensive) of affected agencies would be: DNR, MDOT, PCA, and MDA.</p>
4.	Allow pre-construction compliance filings work to begin before final written PUC Order granting permit.	<p>Administrative - PUC Guidance to EERA</p> <p>Current practices have PUC and Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review & Analysis (EERA) staff reviewing pre-construction compliance filings after the written order is issued.</p> <p>This proposal would allow the pre-construction compliance filings to begin prior to the written order. This change is expected to reduce the time between final written order and the start of construction by 30-60 days.</p>
5.	Move EERA staff & responsibilities from	<p>Legislature</p> <p>EERA is the staff unit that performs environmental reviews on behalf of the Responsible Government Unit (RGU), which is the agency responsible for</p>

<p>Department of Commerce (DOC) to PUC.</p>		<p>overseeing and preparation and analysis of environmental review documents. For generation and transmission facilities, the RGU in Minnesota is the PUC. However, the staff unit that performs the environmental analysis on behalf of the PUC is currently housed at the DOC.</p> <p>This proposal would move EERA to the PUC, in alignment with the fact that the Commission, not the Department, is the RGU for environmental review under State law, and EERA is the staff unit that performs the environmental analysis for the RGU. The PUC is unique among Minnesota State agencies as the only agency designated as an RGU that has its RGU staff housed in another agency. Therefore, moving EERA to the Commission would also align with all other Minnesota state agencies that perform environmental review.</p> <p>Moving EERA to the PUC would streamline internal work in the permitting process, reducing cross-agency inefficiencies and miscommunications while aligning management of this key function. One example of potential efficiencies relates to the scoping process, which currently entails the following steps: (1) EERA summarizes the record on scoping; (2) the PUC staff drafts briefing papers for the Commission; (3) the Commission meets; (4) the Commission issues a written order on scoping; and (5) the Commissioner of Commerce issues a scoping decision. Presumably, if EERA were at the PUC, these largely duplicative scoping steps between EERA and the PUC could be eliminated, saving 30-60 days.</p> <p>Further, to fully realize the efficiency gains (time savings) from delegating the application completeness determination to the Executive Secretary as recommended in #1 above, EERA staff would need to move to the Commission to ensure that the Executive Secretary has direct access to them.</p> <p>Finally, if EERA is moved to the PUC, it would be important to keep EERA <i>outside</i> the PUC’s Ex Parte restrictions to ensure that EERA can continue to</p>
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			fully coordinate with all stakeholders to facilitate the environmental review process. An exemption from Ex Parte requirements may require legislative action.
6.	Allow Applicant to prepare the Environmental Analysis (EA) and file with permit application for all projects in the alternative review process.	Legislature	<p>This proposal would transfer responsibility for preparing the EA from EERA to the Applicant.</p> <p>This would place solar facilities and some high voltage transmission line projects on the same footing with wind facilities, which are processed under Minn. Stat. § 216F and Minn. R. 7854.</p> <p>The Applicant’s EA would remain subject to agency, stakeholder, and PUC scrutiny. This change is anticipated to reduce the overall permitting timeline by 30-60 days.</p>
7.	Replace Citizen Advisory Task Force procedure with authority for PUC staff or the applicant to convene a stakeholder group.	Legislature	<p>Minn. R. 7850.2400 gives the PUC the authority to appoint Citizen Advisory Taskforces, either by its own action or by citizen request, and prescribe its charge.</p> <p>This proposal would modify the authority and allow staff or the applicant to convene a stakeholder group that would work within the confines of the established approval process. This change is expected to reduce the overall permitting time by 0-60 days (recognizing taskforces are not utilized in all proceedings).</p>
ALTERNATIVE SITING/ROUTING REVIEW PROCESS MODIFICATIONS			
8.	Combine all wind, storage, and solar generation facilities into the alternative review process.	Legislature	<p>The alternative review process under Minn. Stat. § 216E.04/Minn. R. 7850 includes all solar facility permit applications, storage projects, and certain high voltage transmission line (HVTL) projects.</p> <p>Wind projects are not included in the alternative review process but are instead permitted under a different statute, Minn. Stat. § 216F/Minn. R. 7854.</p>

			<p>This proposal would bring the wind generation into the alternative process. Putting all renewable generation and storage projects under the same process would reduce confusion for applicants and the public, providing a more consistent approach to permitting renewable generation.</p>
9.	<p>Bring additional transmission projects into the alternative review process (e.g. Gen-Tie lines; transmission up to 345 kilovolts (kV); rebuilds; relocations and possibly subsets of transmission projects).</p>	<p>Legislature</p>	<p>The alternative review process under Minn. Stat. § 216E.04/Minn. R. 7850 includes HVTLs that meet statutory requirements. Currently, lines between 100 and 200 kV and those over 200 kV that are less than 30 miles long qualify for the alternative process.</p> <p>This idea would expand the HVTL projects that would qualify for the alternative review process to include gen-tie lines, rebuilds, relocations, and/or all transmission lines up to 345 kV. In effect, this modification would reserve the full permitting process for new transmission lines that are over 345 kV and at least 30 miles long. Including more transmission projects in the alternative process is critical to achieving significant time savings for transmission projects associated with the energy transition.</p> <p>There was no stakeholder agreement on a full list of exactly what additional projects should be included in the alternative process, but there was broad agreement on expanding the alternative process to include more transmission, including gen-tie lines, rebuilds and transmission up to 345 kV. This change would reduce the timeline for permitting eligible transmission projects by 90 to 180 days.</p>
CONTESTED CASE PROCESS			
10.	<p>Limit required contested case referrals to projects in which there is a dispute involving issues that will require expert testimony.</p>	<p>Legislature</p>	<p>The full review process under Minn. Stat. § 216E/Minn. R. 7850 requires a contested case proceeding as part of the permitting process.</p> <p>This proposal would raise the bar for the use of contested case proceedings in the full review process. Currently, referral to contested case proceedings is based on the size of the projects, not necessarily disputes, or identified issues where a contested case proceeding would be beneficial to understanding the</p>

			<p>matters. This proposal could reserve Commission discretion to refer matters to OAH, but would limit what projects are automatically referred. This change could reduce the permitting timeline by 60-90 days for some projects.</p>
REDUCE OR STREAMLINE CERTIFICATE OF NEED REQUIREMENT			
11.	Eliminate Certificate of Need (CN) for all wind and solar projects, regardless of the applicant.	Legislature	<p>Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, subd. 9 currently exempts utility wind and solar projects intended to meet the standards under Minn. Stat. § 216.1691 if those projects are reasonable and prudent approaches to meeting those standards. In addition, solar and wind projects are exempt from the CN requirement if a site permit is filed by an IPP (Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, subd. 8(a)(7).</p> <p>This proposal is based on the presumption that any new solar or wind generation will invariably be needed to meet the carbon-free standards.</p>
12.	Eliminate CN requirement for gen-tie transmission lines if associated with renewable generation that is exempt from the CN requirement and a site permit application is submitted for the associated generation.	Legislature	<p>In 2023, the Legislature amended Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, subd. 8 to exempt wind and solar projects from CN requirements if a site permit application is submitted by an independent power producer. As drafted, the language did not include an exemption for related gen-tie transmission lines (i.e., transmission lines associated with the wind or solar facility necessary to interconnect the facility to the larger transmission grid). This creates a scenario where the underlying generation is exempt from CN requirements, but the related transmission line may still trigger the CN requirement.</p> <p>This proposal would expand the CN exemptions under subd. 8 to include gen-tie transmission lines related to wind and solar projects otherwise exempt under Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, subd. 8(a)(7). This would eliminate the additional time spent by the applicant preparing the CN application while also potentially reducing the processing time associated with determining the CN. It would result in a more efficient use of resources, eliminating the need to engage the DOC’s DER staff and reducing the analytical time spend by the Commission staff evaluating the CN.</p>
13.	Eliminate CN requirement for other types of HVTL projects		<p>The thinking behind this idea is that the need will have already been established in the MISO process.</p>

	(e.g., projects approved by MISO for regional cost allocation).	Legislature	
14.	Apply the \$50,000 application fee under Minn. Stat. §216B.243, subd. 6 to all projects, including HVTL.	Legislature	Under Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, subd. 6 there is a \$50,000 fee cap, except for certain projects outlined in the statute which have a higher cap of \$100,000. This proposal would make all projects requiring a CN subject to the lower \$50,000 fee cap.
15.	Remove the following from § 216B.243, subd. 3a: “or that transmits electric power generated by means of a nonrenewable energy source”. Update criteria for HVTL under subd. 3; with new version of subd. 3a for HVTL projects.	Legislature	This language in subd. 3a is out of date in terms of the physics and in terms of how transmission systems operate. Some of the language in subd. 3 still requires analysis of energy demand, energy efficiency, and the use of renewable energy as part of the CN approval process for HVTLs. This language is out of date, established when transmission was usually built as part of generation. Now HVTLs are built for resiliency, congestion mitigation, etc.
PRIME FARMLAND			
16.	Eliminate prime farmland rule.	PUC or Legislature	Minn. R. 7850.4400, subd. 4 excludes siting large electric power generating plants on prime farmland unless there are no reasonable or prudent alternatives. This proposal would eliminate exclusion for siting electric generating facilities on prime farmland.
17.	Modify prime farmland rule, e.g., (1) limit to land acquired via condemnation or (2) create an exemption based on other factors like distance.	PUC or Legislature	Minn. R. 7850.4400, subd. 4 excludes siting large electric power generating plants on prime farmland unless there are no reasonable or prudent alternatives. This proposal would limit the prime farmland rule to only apply to land that would be acquired via eminent domain or condemnation.

			Or there could be an exemption to the prime farmland rule based on a project’s proximity to a point of interconnection.
WIND PERMIT CONDITIONS			
18.	Modify 3 by 5 setback rule.	PUC or Legislature	<p>The Commission has a wind permits condition that prohibits wind turbine towers from being placed less than five rotor diameters on the prevailing wind directions and three rotor diameters on the non-prevailing wind directions from the perimeter of the property where the permittee does not hold wind rights.</p> <p>This proposal would look to modify the three by five rule.</p>
19.	Modify the tall tower permit process.	Legislature	<p>A tall tower permit is a MnDOT downstream permit that may be required for facilities with towers over 500 ft. Applicants need a MnDOT review to determine whether the permit is required.</p> <p>This proposal would require applicants to give notice to MnDOT upon filing with FAA; encourage DOT to comment; 60-day time limit after application submission for DOT to decide.</p>
MISCELLANEOUS			
20.	4410 EAW petition exemption for PUC.	Legislature	<p>Under Minn. R. 4410.1100, persons can petition the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for an EAW which may lead to additional procedural steps and legal challenges.</p> <p>This proposal would more clearly exempt projects under consideration by the PUC from being subject to EAW petitions.</p>
21.	Replace current HVTL routing process with a more adjudicative process focused on developer proposal (up or down vote from Commission on single proposal).	Legislature	<p>This proposal would be a significant departure from MN system in place.</p> <p>Public engagement provides valuable insight, and this proposal may limit opportunity for public participation.</p>

22.	Eliminate requirement to propose alternative transmission route(s) in the permitting process.	Legislature	<p>In the full permitting process, under Minn. R. 7850.1900, subp. 2, applicants for a route permit must submit two route proposals, including their preferred option.</p> <p>In the alternative process, under Minn. R. 7850.3100, applicants do not have to submit alternative routes. Applicants must describe any route alternatives that were considered and rejected. The public may submit route alternatives during the review process as well.</p> <p>This proposal would eliminate the need for alternative route proposals.</p>
23.	Replace Agricultural Mitigation Plan (AMP)/Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) with a related permit standard.	Legislature	<p>EERA coordinates a working group that includes MDA, BWSR, DNR which provides one set of feedback on plans. This is currently meant to alleviate the need of applicants to get feedback/approval from all agencies with an interest in AMP/VMP.</p>
24.	Evaluate how state of MN scope environmental review documents and limit state agency Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to cover issues not included in the permit application and those that need further review.	PUC or Legislature	<p>Current environmental review (EA/EIS) scoping practices entail EERA taking the application, holding environmental scoping meetings, developing a scope, and drafting the environmental review. This can be duplicative as EA/EIS may cover topics addressed in a developers permit application.</p> <p>This proposal would evaluate the current environmental review document development processes. The proposal may result with an EA/EIS process where the state’s scoping practices lead to supplemental information being added to the applicant’s environmental information in the environmental review, rather than the state reproducing the information already provided in the application along with new information.</p>
25.	VMP (solar projects)— add more clarity and certainty on substance/expectations and timelines.	Administrative or Legislative	<p>VMP requirements are evolving, and additional clarity and certainty would be beneficial to permit applicants.</p>

26.	More clarity and certainty on process timelines.	Administrative	Permitting timelines are in statute and rule, though permitting times may vary based on the unique circumstances of each project. For instance, more controversial projects and large projects may entail additional time.
27.	Guidance documents	Administrative	State agencies could provide more transparency into the development of guidance documents to help the MPUC and permit applicants understand what a successful submittal for permit requirements looks like, i.e. VMPs.
28.	Earlier preparation of downstream permit applications (leading to earlier approval/issuance).	Developer/ Administrative/ Legislature	Proposal would have downstream permitting agencies tee up or have ready to review downstream permits needed for energy infrastructure projects.
29.	For smaller projects, like minor alterations, create exemptions.	PUC/Legislature	<p>Minn. R. 7850.4800 defines the Minor Alteration process. Under Minn. Stat. § 216E.01, an HVTL is defined as 100kV or more and 1500 ft. in length.</p> <p>This proposal would add an exemption from permitting for smaller HVTL projects, like projects that are 100kV or more and up to 1 mile in length.</p> <p>Additionally, Minn. R. 7850.4800 (Minor Alteration rule) uses the word ‘change’, but additional clarity/definition may help better define what actions qualify as Minor Alterations, i.e. rebuilds/relocations.</p>
30.	Standardization of all document types.	Administrative	Documents, like permits or VMPs, evolve and are adapted on a case-by-case basis to meet the permitting needs of individual projects, but some conditions make their way into documents more permanently and are not necessarily applicable for all projects.
31.	Staff consistency across agencies for project types.	Administrative	Ensuring staff at agencies are more consistent in how they address similar permitting issues across projects.
32.	Establish rolling process for reviewing administrative rules/processes/permit conditions/documents (VMP)	PUC or Legislature	<p>Permits are adapted on a case-by-case basis and provisions are added and removed from the template based on the unique facts of the project.</p> <p>This proposal would have the Commission review documents to ensure the best/most useful conditions remain in the template.</p>

33.	Aligning statutory or administrative expectations with reality.	Legislature	<p>Certain permitting requirements are not aligned with common practice, e.g., 50 dB noise limit is 47dB in practice.</p> <p>This proposal would revisit some of these inconsistencies to ensure that statute/rule aligns with practice.</p>
34.	Revisit statutory timelines; limit extension timelines or number of extensions allowed.	PUC or Legislature	<p>This proposal would define the amount of time an extension would grant in the permitting processes, e.g., 45, 60, 120, 180, etc. days.</p> <p>And/or there could be to limit the number of extensions allowable in a permitting process, similar to Wisconsin.</p>
35.	Have Governor align state agencies around implementation of CFS/RES	Executive Order or ongoing expectations/communications	<p>Ensure that all agencies prioritize implementing 2040 goal as it relates to downstream permitting.</p>