

CapX2020

Delivering electricity you can rely on

Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency
Dairyland Power Cooperative
Great River Energy
Minnesota Power
Minnkota Power Cooperative
Missouri River Energy Services
Otter Tail Power Company
Rochester Public Utilities
Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency
WPPI Energy
Xcel Energy

CapX2020 proposed transmission line project Delivering reliable electricity for the future

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 transmission-owning utilities in Minnesota and the surrounding region to expand the electric transmission grid to ensure reliable and affordable service to 2020 and beyond. The CapX2020 utilities include cooperatives and investor-owned and municipal utilities.

Project need

The region is experiencing job and population growth, leading to a steady increase in electricity usage. In Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin, electricity consumption has doubled since 1980, according to data from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration. In the Midwest, for example, sub-zero temperatures pushed electricity demand to an all-time winter peak in mid-December 2008. The electric transmission grid in the Upper Midwest hasn't had a major upgrade in nearly 30 years.

Planning studies show that customer demand for electricity will increase by 4,000 to 6,000 megawatts (MW) by 2020 – more than today's system has the capacity to deliver. The proposed new transmission lines would be built in phases designed to meet the electricity demand growth, as well as to support renewable energy expansion. The first group of CapX2020 projects includes three proposed 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines, one 230-kV line and associated substations.

- A 240-mile, 345-kV transmission line between Brookings County, South Dakota and Hampton, Minnesota, plus a related 345-kV line between Marshall and Granite Falls, Minnesota
- A 250-mile, 345-kV transmission line between Fargo, North Dakota and St. Cloud and Monticello, Minnesota
- A 150-mile, 345-kV transmission line between Hampton and Rochester, continuing on to La Crosse, Wisconsin

- A 70-mile, 230-kV transmission line between Bemidji and Grand Rapids in north central Minnesota

Minnesota Certificate of Need process

The CapX2020 utilities were granted a Certificate of Need (CN) from the Minnesota Public Utilities (MN PUC) on April 16, 2009 for the three 345-kV projects. A separate CN application was filed for the 230-kV transmission line in March 2008; the MN PUC unanimously approved the CN application on July 9, 2009.

The CN approval process generally takes 15 to 18 months and provides many opportunities, including public meetings and hearings, for individuals, interested parties and local governments to provide input to the MN PUC as well as to receive information from CapX2020 about the proposals.

North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin regulators determine whether portions of the proposed lines in their states are needed.

Project routing

While the MN PUC assesses the transmission lines' need, the utilities are working with local governments, landowners, electric cooperatives and other stakeholders to evaluate potential routes. In addition to state approval of the project need, each project also requires regulatory approval for each line's specific route.

In Minnesota, a Route Permit application must be filed with the MN PUC for each project, proposing a preferred and alternate route. The MN PUC makes the final route decision, taking into consideration recommendations from all participating parties and landowners, complying with federal agency reviews, and following a comprehensive process that includes public meetings and hearings examining route alternatives. Similar review, permit and approval processes are required from the North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin commissions.

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The CapX2020 utilities filed a Route Permit application with the MN PUC on December 29, 2008 for the Brookings County-Hampton transmission line. A Route Permit application for the Monticello-St. Cloud transmission line project was filed on April 8, 2009. A Route Permit application for the Bemidji-Grand Rapids project was filed on June 4, 2008. Route Permit applications will be filed in 2009 for the Fargo-St. Cloud and Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse projects.

Federal approval

Before the lines can be built, permits and approvals are also required from several federal agencies, including Rural Utilities Service, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Federal agencies conduct environmental review to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). State and federal agencies work together to coordinate their processes.

The CapX2020 utilities are committed to working with all interested parties during the need and routing processes.

Stay informed

The best way to participate is to stay informed. Follow progress on the individual agency Web sites and on the CapX2020 Web site at www.CapX2020.com.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission: To view CN documents, go to the MN PUC's Web site at www.puc.state.mn.us, click on "eFiling and eDockets" and then click on "Search Documents" and search for docket 06-1115. Use "06" for the year (when the first CapX2020 document was filed) and "1115" in the second field, then press search. All filings in the CapX2020 eDocket will be listed. The Brookings County-Hampton project Route Permit application docket number is ET2/TL-08-1474. The Monticello-St. Cloud project Route Permit application docket number is ET2, E002/TL-09-246. The Bemidji-Grand Rapid project Route Permit application docket number is E017, E015, ET6/TL-07-1327. The MN PUC can also be reached at 1-800-657-3782.

North Dakota Public Service Commission: Contact the commission at (701) 328-2400 or visit www.psc.state.nd.us.

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission: Contact the commission at (605) 773-3201 or visit www.puc.sd.gov.

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin: Check the status of the project case on the PSCW Web site, www.psc.wi.gov, by entering the document number 05-CE-136 in the "Link Directly to a Case" section. The PSCW can also be reached at 1-888-816-3831.

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