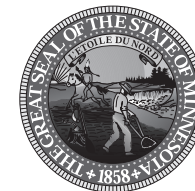




STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Energy Security

Issued: December 18, 2009



NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for the Fargo-St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project

PUC Docket Number: E002, ET2/TL-09-1056

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security (OES) will conduct public information and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping meetings at the times and locations listed below on the Route Permit application by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

(Commission) for the proposed Fargo to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Project (Project). The purpose of the meetings is to provide project information and to identify issues and route alternatives to study in the EIS that will be prepared by OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP).

PUBLIC INFORMATION & EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

Meetings are at **1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.** at each venue.

Each meeting will present the same information and opportunity for public discussion, so you need attend only one meeting.

Alexandria	Melrose	St. Joseph	Fergus Falls	Barnesville	Elbow Lake
January 19, 2010	January 20, 2010	January 21, 2010	January 26, 2010	January 27, 2010	January 28, 2010
Broadway Ballroom 115 30th Avenue East	American Legion 265 County Road 173	El Paso Sports Bar and Grill 200 2nd Avenue NW	Bigwood Event Center 925 Western Avenue	Hildebrand Hall 307 Front Street North	Dream Weaver's Banquet Facility 410 2nd Street NE

During the public information meetings, EFP staff will give a presentation about the state's high voltage transmission line full permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public may be involved. The applicants will have representatives at the public meetings who can answer general questions about the proposed project. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, present comments, and propose issues, impacts and alternatives to be studied in the EIS.

Review copies of the Route Permit application, a flow chart depicting the full permitting process, and comment forms will be available at the public meeting. Each meeting will offer the same process and information, so interested persons need attend only one of the meetings.

Project Description

Xcel Energy and Great River Energy are making this application to construct a new 345 kV high voltage transmission line (HVTL) between the Red River, either at a location south of Moorhead or south of Breckenridge, and the new Quarry Substation west of St. Cloud.

The Minnesota portion of the proposed Fargo-St. Cloud 345 kV Project will be approximately 169 to 180 miles long, extending from the Red River to the existing Alexandria Switching Station located south of Alexandria and to the new Quarry Substation to be located west of St. Cloud. The North Dakota portion of the Project – from a new Bison Substation west of Fargo to the Red River, depending on the route selected – will be approximately 31 to 81 miles.

The proposed structures will primarily include single-pole, double-circuit capable, self-weathering or galvanized steel structures that will range in height between 130 and 175 feet. The span length between structures will range between 600 and 1,000 feet depending on site-specific considerations. Although the proposed line will be built using double-circuit capable poles, only one circuit will be installed for this Project. The second position will be left available for a future additional circuit, as per the Commission's Certificate of Need (CN) order. The right-of-way for the proposed 345 kV electrical transmission line will generally be 150 feet wide.

Project construction is expected to begin in 2014 and be completed and in service by the third quarter of 2015.

Review Process

A Route Permit application for the project was filed by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy on October 1, 2009. The application was accepted as complete to start project review by the Commission on November 13, 2009.

HVTL Route Permits applications are subject to environmental review, which is conducted by EFP. Staff is herein providing notice and will conduct public information and scoping meetings to solicit public comments on the scope of the EIS. The Director of the OES will ultimately determine the final scope of the document. The EIS will address issues related to routing, such as construction impacts, environmental features, use of existing rights-of-way, impacts on homes and businesses, and possible route alternatives.

Upon completion of the draft EIS, it will be issued for public review and comment, including public meetings. Substantive comments on the draft EIS will

be responded to and included in a final EIS. Concurrent with development of the final EIS, public hearings will be held, presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ). Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak at the hearings, present evidence, ask questions and submit comments. The ALJ will submit a report to the Commission containing findings, conclusions and a recommendation on the Route Permit for the proposed transmission line. A decision on routing will be issued by the Commission in late 2010 or early 2011.

Notice of the public meetings and public hearings will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the OES project mailing list. Minnesota Statutes and Rules governing the process are available on the following website: <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>

Project Documents

A more detailed explanation of the proposed project is contained in the Xcel Energy and Great River Energy Route Permit application. An electronic version of the application and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the PUC website at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?id=25053>

or on eDockets by entering "09" and "1056" at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>

Printed copies of the Route Permit application are available for public review at:

Albany Public Library

400 Railroad Avenue
Albany, MN 56307
320-845-4843

Browns Valley Public Library

15 3rd Street South
Browns Valley, MN 56219
320-695-2318

Fargo Public Library

102 Third Street North
Fargo, ND 58102
701-241-1472

Melrose Public Library

225 East First Street North
Melrose, MN 56352
320-256-3885

Saint Cloud Public Library

1300 St. Germain Street West
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
320-650-2500

Barnesville Library

104 North Front Street
Barnesville, MN 56514
218-354-2301

Clemens Library

37 College Avenue South
St. Joseph, MN 56374
320-363-5611

Fergus Falls Public Library

205 East Hampden Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-9387

Moorhead Library

118 South 5th Street
Moorhead, MN 56560
218-233-7594

Thorson Memorial Library

117 Central Avenue
Elbow Lake, MN 56531
218-685-6850

Breckenridge Library

205 7th Street North
Breckenridge, MN 56520
218-643-2113

Douglas County Public Library

720 Fillmore
Alexandria, MN 56308
320-762-3014

Glenwood Public Library

108 SE First Avenue
Glenwood, MN 56334
320-634-3375

Sauk Centre Public Library

430 Main Street
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
320-352-3016

Public Comments

Comments on this project will be accepted until **4:30 p.m. on February 11, 2010**. Comments may be submitted by letter, email or fax or directly online at the PUC website (see above). Please include docket number "TL-09-1056" on your comments.

Project Contacts

Persons interested in adding their names to the project mailing list should contact the OES project manager or public advisor, or register online at the above PUC site.

To submit comments, ask questions or seek further information about this project please contact:

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This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio tape) by calling (651) 201-2202 (voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY relay service).