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Upper Midwest utilities to study transmission grid in light of ambitious carbon reduction goals

CapX2020 utilities say electric grid must have resilience and capacity to meet changing generation mix

The CapX2020 utilities plan to study the transmission system that serves the Upper Midwest to identify system improvements and infrastructure upgrades that may be needed to achieve the ambitious 2050 carbon reduction goals established or proposed by utilities and policymakers. The study, which is called the CapX2050 Transmission Vision Study, will look at maintaining a safe, reliable and cost-effective electric grid as the system adds more carbon-free energy.

According to CapX2020, the study is critical to the eventual development of a comprehensive plan that will ensure the continued reliable delivery of low-cost electricity in a cost-effective manner. The utilities believe an emphasis on holistic long-term planning will ensure a successful transition to a clean energy future as the Upper Midwest generation fleet transitions to use higher levels of carbon-free generation, distributed generation and new energy storage technologies.

Executive leaders of the 10 CapX2020 member utilities recently approved the transmission system study, which will help them better understand regional transmission needs to ensure grid reliability, flexibility and low-cost electricity. They said it will provide valuable data for sharing with policymakers, regulators and the public while providing opportunity for stakeholder input. The study is targeted to be completed in January 2020.

About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 10 transmission-owning utilities in Minnesota and the surrounding region formed to plan, upgrade and expand the electric transmission grid to ensure continued reliable and affordable service. In 2017, CapX2020 successfully completed an 800-mile, nearly \$2 billion grid expansion in the Upper Midwest. The projects included four 345-kV transmission lines in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin and a 230-kV transmission line in northern Minnesota.

The CapX2020 utilities are Central Municipal Power Agency/Services, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, Missouri River Energy Services, Otter Tail Power Company, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, WPPI Energy and Xcel Energy. For more, visit capx2020.com.

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