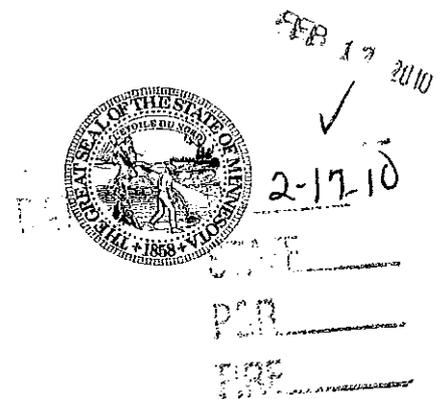




STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: February 11, 2010

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**In the Matter of the Application by Xcel Energy and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for the Monticello to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket Number: E002, ET2/TL-09-246, OAH Docket No. 15-2500-20665-2**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that public hearings will be held on behalf of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on the Xcel Energy and Great River Energy route permit application for a new 345 kV transmission line facility.

A combined public hearing and evidentiary hearing will be held on March 8, 2010, at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM, at the Clearwater Township Hall, Clearwater, Minnesota, and the evidentiary hearing will continue on March 9, 2010, at the Offices of the Public Utilities Commission, Saint Paul, Minnesota, as necessary to complete the hearing. The public hearings will be held at the times and locations listed below. Ending times reflect the latest a public hearing will run. Hearings may conclude earlier where all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded.

HEARING DATES & LOCATIONS

March 8, 2010 Public and Evidentiary Hearing	2:00 PM – 5:00 PM & 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Clearwater Township Hall 15015 State Highway 24 Clearwater, Minnesota
March 9, 2010 Evidentiary Hearing (continuing March 10-12 if necessary)	9:30 AM	Public Utilities Commission 121 Seventh Place East, Ste 350 St. Paul, Minnesota

Administrative Law Judge. Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), Beverly Jones Heydinger will preside at the hearings. Her address and contact information is: Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 64620, 600 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620, Phone: (651) 361-7900, Fax: (651) 361-7936, email: routecomments.oah@state.mn.us.

Written Comments. Written comments regarding the route permit should be submitted directly to Judge Heydinger. Comments may be submitted by U.S. Mail, fax or email. Comments will be accepted through March 19, 2010, and should include the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number 15-2500-20665-2. Mailed comments must be postmarked by that date. Faxed, emailed, and delivered comments must be received by 4:30 P.M. that date.

Purpose of Hearing. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive comments from members of the public and to compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the transmission line route permit request. The ALJ will write a report and make a recommendation to the Commission on which route to authorize and on any appropriate permit conditions. The Commission will make a final decision on the route permit at a subsequent Commission meeting.

Project Description. Xcel Energy and Great River Energy are making this Application to construct and operate a new 345 kV high voltage transmission line (HVTL) between the existing Monticello Substation and a new Quarry Substation west of St. Cloud.

- Monticello Substation - Modifications will be made at the existing Monticello Substation to accommodate the proposed 345 kV transmission Line.
- Monticello to St. Cloud 345 kV Transmission Line - The proposed 28-mile line will be constructed primarily on single-pole, double-circuit capable, self-weathering or galvanized steel structures.
- Quarry Substation - The proposed Quarry Substation will be located west of the city of St. Cloud. The substation is proposed to be a 345/115 kV substation, ultimately up to 15 acres in size, to allow for the interconnection of the proposed 345 kV transmission line, an existing 115 kV transmission line, and future high voltage transmission lines.

Construction of the transmission line is proposed to begin in 2011 with completion by 2012

Route Permit. Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Statute 216E, subd. 2), a route permit from the Commission is required to build a high-voltage transmission line. A high-voltage transmission line is a conductor of electric energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operation at a nominal voltage of 100 kilovolts (kV) or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length. A route permit application for the proposed 345 kV transmission line project was filed by the applicants on April 8, 2009, and was accepted as complete by the Commission on May 13, 2009. The Office of Energy Security (OES) staff prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed project. The Draft EIS discusses potential impacts of the project, evaluates alternatives, and suggests mitigation.

Electronic versions of the Route Permit Application, Draft EIS, and other documents relevant to this matter are available for viewing or download at the Commission website at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19957> or eDockets at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> ("09" year and "246" number).

Office of Administrative Hearing Rules. The ALJ will conduct the contested case hearings in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 14, and the Office of Administrative Hearings procedural rules for the Commission's energy facility permitting process (Minnesota Rules, Chapter 1405). The applicable statutes and rules are available on the Office of the Revisor of Statutes webpage at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov>. Statutes and rules may also be purchased at Minnesota's Bookstore, 660 Olive St., St. Paul, Minn. 55155, or telephone at (651) 297-3000.

Conduct of Hearing. At the start of each hearing session, the ALJ will explain the procedural rules for the hearing, including the sequence for providing testimony and questioning witnesses. Members of the public may participate without the necessity of intervening as a party.

Representation by legal counsel is permitted but not required. Participation includes: a) offering direct testimony; b) offering testimony or other material in written form at or following the hearing; and c) questioning witnesses.

Any person who wishes to question a witness, but does not want to ask the questions, may submit questions in writing to the ALJ, who will then question the witness. Questions may be submitted during the hearing or may be sent to the ALJ in advance of the hearing. A transcript of the proceedings will also be available.

Request for Accommodation. Any person who needs an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in the hearing, and any person who requires an interpreter, including a foreign language interpreter, should promptly notify the Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 64620, 600 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620, Phone: (651) 361-7900 (voice) or (651) 361-7878 (TDD).

Continuation of Hearing. The ALJ may elect to recess the hearing and set additional days for hearing, if necessary.

Identified Parties. The parties to this proceeding identified on the date of this Notice are as follows:

Applicants

Darrin Lahr, Xcel Energy, 414 Nicollet Mall, MP-8A, Minneapolis, MN 55401, 1-800-238-7968, fargoinfo@capx2020.com.

Craig Poorker, Great River Energy, 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard, Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718, 1-888-473-2279, cpoorker@greenergy.com.

Intervenors

At the intervention deadline of January 22, 2010, no parties had intervened in the proceeding.

Project Contacts. If you have questions or would like further information about this project please contact OES staff. David Birkholz (david.birkholz@state.mn.us, (651) 296-2878) is the Project Manager and Ray Kirsch (raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us, (651) 296-7588) is the Public Advisor. The public advisor is available to answer questions about the permitting procedures and how to effectively participate in the process, but does not provide legal advice. The address for staff is: Minnesota Office of Energy Security, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198.

OES Legal Counsel. Karen Finstad Hammel, Minnesota Attorney General's Office, 1400 Bremer Tower, 445 Minnesota Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-2127, Phone (651) 757-1248, Fax (651) 297-1138, karen.hammel@state.mn.us.

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).