

The meetings will inform the public about the project and the regulatory proceedings; discuss environmental, social and economic issues of importance in the areas potentially affected; and gather public input into the scope of the Environment Report (ER) to be prepared for the project. The meetings provide the public an opportunity to ask questions about the project and suggest alternatives and specific impacts that should be addressed in the ER.

Representatives of DOC, PUC and the CapX 2020 utilities will be at the meetings to describe the proposed project and answer questions.

Project Description

The proposed transmission lines would connect substations in the following locations:

- A 250-mile line between Fargo, North Dakota and Monticello.
- A 200-mile line from a substation near Brookings, South Dakota to a new substation near Hampton; plus a related line between Marshall and Granite Falls.
- A 150-mile line running from a new substation near Hampton to Rochester and continuing to La Crosse, Wisconsin.

These transmission lines are part of a longer-term plan intended to strengthen the transmission network to meet demand for electrical power anticipated in Minnesota and parts of surrounding states by 2020 and to increase access to renewable energy sources. In addition, the project is intended to address community service reliability concerns in several communities including Rochester, St. Cloud, the Alexandria area and the Red River Valley.

Specific routes that the transmission lines would follow, if approved, have not yet been proposed by the CapX 2020 utilities. The transmission line routes will be reviewed through a separate PUC permitting process expected to begin sometime in 2008.

Certificate of Need

Before any large High Voltage Transmission Lines can be constructed in Minnesota, the Commission must determine that they are necessary and in the best interest of the state. The Certificate of Need process includes environmental review and public hearings, and typically takes 12 months. This process is the only proceeding in which a no-build alternative and the size, type, timing, system configuration and voltage of the proposed project will be considered.

Xcel Energy and Great River Energy applied for a Certificate of Need on August 16, 2007. A copy of the Certificate of Need application can be reviewed at the CapX 2020 web page at:

<http://www.capx2020.com/Regulatory/State/Minnesota/capx2020con.html>

If issued a Certificate of Need and route permits by the PUC, Xcel Energy and Great River Energy may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire the land necessary for the project pursuant to Minnesota Statute 216E.12 and Minnesota Statute 117.

The DOC is responsible for analyzing the Certificate of Need application and administering the environmental review process for the Commission. The PUC is responsible for determining if the transmission lines proposed are needed.

Environmental Report and Public Comment Period

The Environmental Report is a written document that describes the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project, alternatives to the project and methods to mitigate anticipated adverse impacts. The ER must be prepared before the PUC can make a decision on the Certificate of Need application. These public information meetings and the comment period are your opportunity to participate in the determination of the content or “scope” of the ER.

Written public comments can be sent to the address below until January 14, 2008. Once the scope is determined, DOC staff will prepare the ER and introduce it into the record at a public hearing to be scheduled, noticed and held at a later date.

Additional Information and Mailing List

If you would like to obtain additional information about the project, the regulatory proceedings, the environmental review process, or to be added to the mailing list for future notices regarding environmental review of this project, please contact Mr. David Birkholz, 651-296-2878, toll-free 1-800-657-3794, Minnesota Department of Commerce, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101, david.birkholz@state.mn.us.

You can review documents relevant to this proceeding through the Commission’s web site at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19120>

You can also search for documents “efiled” in this docket on eDockets. Search “06-1115” at:

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>

