

Midwater BESS Docket # 24-294

I am against the permit application for Midwater BESS location.

The question I keep hearing is, why even consider this location?

The following statements are on an information flyer from Spearmint Energy. "Selecting a location for a BESS project requires significant research and planning. Available land that is primarily flat and free of environmental constraints."

Other statements made at public meetings include; we always look at keeping public and environmental safety in mind when looking at a site along with land availability.

With two schools within 1.5 miles from the proposed site and by the town of Glenville, human safety is a major concern. Battery energy storage systems, with the new batteries planned to be used, while generally safe, can pose fire and chemical risks. In the event of an emergency, the proximity to schools and residential areas could complicate evacuation or response efforts, potentially putting children and families at risk. Community health and safety should be prioritized when considering this location.

There are 29 building sites with private wells in a 1-mile radius along with Glenville's 2 city water wells just outside that radius. This site is just outside a DNR protected drinking water area designation along with a 50-acre DNR land area across the road and the Shell Rock River is a State Designated Water Trail. These are other considerations that should be taken into account.

Locating a BESS so near a river will disrupt the natural habitat of local wildlife. Sensitive species, including migratory birds, fish, mammals, bees and insect populations may be affected by noise, light pollution, and changes to their environment. Habitat infringements could force animals out of the area or diminish their populations, impacting the region's ecological balance. In addition, adding a 2,660-foot transmission line from the BESS to the substation will further congest an already congested area with more transmission lines coming in and going out of the substation affecting flight paths and more noise levels for wildlife and insect populations in the area.

There are also neighboring towns to the south in Iowa that have expressed concerns and entered comments in the docket.

A comment from Commissioner Tuma at a hearing in St. Paul was, if he was looking at this site and was asked about a wind turbine or solar panels, he would recommend not putting them there. Another commissioner agreed with him and said with new technologies such

as this, there should have been some educational opportunities Spearmint should have done with local residents and governments. Doing so might have brought them other possibilities from the meetings. The commission also asked why there were no alternative sites in the application.

I asked the question at a public hearing if there was a study on the possible sites at other substations in the county and was told there was not a study.

There are in fact two other substations in Freeborn County owned by the same company that owns the Glenworth Substation. One is West of Hayward MN and the other is east and south of Manchester. All three of these have transmission lines between them. By the substation west of Hayward, the company also owns land next to it and is approximately 2000 feet from a body of water. North of the Manchester location there is a wind farm with 100 wind turbines and another 100 in the process of getting permitted. There's also another substation straight north of Manchester along highway 13 that hooks into all of the turbines to the north. There is also a substation on the state line east of Gordonsville. There are approximately 12 turbines on the Minnesota side and there are hundreds south of them into Iowa. These are not owned by the same company. So, as you can see there could have been other alternative sites in Freeborn County that Spearmint Energy could have investigated for permitting for a BESS unit site.

I had a conversation with our county planning and zoning person. I asked if I would be able to get a permit for a cattle feed lot on this site. He said no. I asked why. He said it was too close to the river and a town.....

In summary, the proposed BESS site 250 feet from the Shell Rock River presents several risks related to environmental integrity, wildlife habitat, human safety, and limited economic benefit.

I urge you to consider these concerns and prioritize the health, safety of our county's residents and natural resources. The people of Minnesota count on you to make good decisions that affect them in their way of life, rural esthetics and our rural way of life.

One gentleman I talked with said, "at some point, common sense should prevail"

With all of this in mind I respectfully ask that the PUC deny this site permit and route permit for Midwater BESS LLC

Thank you for this opportunity.

Tim Kaasa

