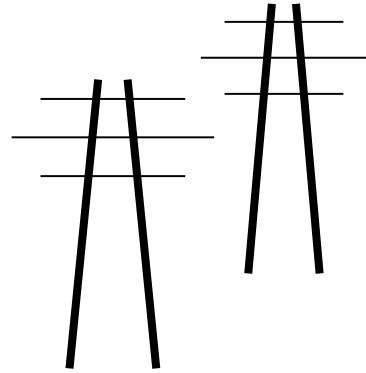


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August 27, 2025

Mike Bull
Acting Executive Secretary
Public Utilities Commission
121 – 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101

via eFiling only

RE: Iron Range – Arrowhead Transmission Line
PUC Docket E015/CN-25-111

Dear Mr. Bull:

Thank you for the Notice of Comment Period regarding the above docket's Notice Plan and Exemption Petition. These Comments are submitted on behalf of No CapX 2020 and World Organization for Landowner Freedom (Arrowhead-Weston Intervenor, MP-HVTL-EA-1-99).

800 MVA LIMITATION

MP and ATC plan to request elimination of the 800 MVA limit at the Arrowhead substation, using language indicating that approval of this project is a foregone conclusion. This 800 MVA limitation was put in place to limit bulk power transfer. Although the Commission hasn't seen a transmission line it doesn't like, removal of the 800 MVA limit shouldn't be assumed. Applicants state:

The ISA Project will change the configuration of the transmission system such that power flow through the ATC Arrowhead 345/230 kV Substation into Wisconsin will, at times, exceed 800 MVA. Therefore, the Applicants will need to request that the Commission remove the MEQB 800 MVA limit on power flow through the ATC Arrowhead 345/230 kV Substation. Because the information the Commission needs to evaluate the removal of the 800 MVA limit as a result of the Project will be provided with the Certificate of Need Application, the Applicants request that the 800 MVA issue be moved to and resolved in this docket, Docket No. E015/CN-25-111. The Applicants also recommend providing notice of the request to remove the 800 MVA issue via filing summary not only to the persons required under Minn. R. 7849 but also to the parties in Docket Nos. E015/AI-11-75 and E015/PA-04-2020.

Exemption Request, p. 12-13; see attached EQB Order, MP-HVTL-EA-1-99, March 19, 2001.

There's a disturbing statement in the Commerce comments where basic information is missing:

D. 800 MVA LIMIT

- *The Department recommends that the Commission require the Applicants to provide notice of the request to change or remove the 800 MVA limit via filing summary not only to the persons required under Minn. R. 7849 but also to the parties in Docket Nos. E015/AI-11-75 and E015/PA-04-2020.*

Applicants and Commerce have both improperly limited notice of this planned change. Commerce has apparently agreed to provide notice **ONLY** to those participating in those two dockets. Applicants claim that removal of this limitation is necessary to build and operate this Iron Range – Arrowhead transmission project “as developed by MISO.” Those two dockets are **NOT** the only docket with intervenors and participants who have an interest in, a stake in, the 800 MVA limit. Notice of any request to change or remove the 800 MVA limit must also be provided to intervenors and participants in the recent HVDC Modernization Project dockets, **E015/22-607 and E015/22-611**, where this was raised as an issue. Notice must also be provided to those parties and participants in the Arrowhead-Weston transmission Exemption docket before the Minnesota, circa 1999-2001, MEQB Docket No. **MP-HVTL-EA-1-99**, in which the 800 MVA limit originated. ATC left out any mention of notification for those participating in the original Arrowhead-Weston docket. Order, EQB MP-HVTL-EA-1-99, March 19, 2001.

A reminder: MISO is not the decider. It's the Commission's job to make an independent review and decision. The 800 MVA limit was a material condition of EQB approval of the Arrowhead-Weston exemption from the PPSA, the purpose of which is to limit bulk power transfer..

EXEMPTION REQUESTS

As an introduction to its Comments on the Exemption requests, Commerce states:

The Department examines each exemption request separately. The required criterion is whether the Applicants have shown that “the data requirement is unnecessary to determine the need for the proposed facility or may be satisfied by submitting another document” as discussed above. The Department notes that similar exemptions were approved recently by the Commission in proceedings for other transmission lines resulting from the MISO's LRTP process, which is also the source of the proposed ISA Project.⁴

Commerce Comment, p. 3. Commerce lists other dockets where Exemptions have been granted:

⁴ For examples see: *In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power and Great River Energy for a Certificate of Need for the Northland Reliability Project 345 kV Transmission Line, Order Approving Requested Exemptions and Notice Plan*, June 21, 2023, Docket No. E015, ET2/CN-22-416, (eDockets) [20236-196704-01](#); *In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of Need for the Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks Transmission Project, Order*, April 19, 2023, Docket No. E017, ET2, E002, ET10, E015/CN-22-538, (eDockets) [20234-194943-01](#).

Commerce applies this “logic” to these exemptions without support. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0240, Subp. 2(B)

Over time, the Commission has historically minimized the definition of “promotional activities.” This project, as a MISO Tranche 2.1 Project, is promotional, a continuation of a massive transmission buildout for the benefit of MISO members. What is not addressed in these transmission dockets is an admission that it is MISO members receiving the “benefits,” and that these projects are detrimental to the ratepayers and landowners. Applicants argue, and Commerce states again, that the exemption “request is consistent with several prior exemption requests approved by the Commission.” See Commerce Comment, p. 3 and fn. 5. So? Commission past practice does not legitimize granting of this exemption. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0260

Rates will be affected – the primary driver of rate increases is the allocation of transmission costs the MVP cost allocation methodology and the share allocate to Minnesota, and in the process, the cost/benefit analysis used by MISO to justify its proposed projects. The benefits accrue to the MISO member utilities, and the ratepayers take the hit. As the Commission is well aware, the MISO Tariff is the subject of a FERC Complaint, docket EL-25-109, and the Commission is participating in this docket. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0260 A(3) and C(6)

MP and ATC must provide information on losses. Losses are proof of the inherent inefficiency of transmission, inefficiency which would be avoided with sensible siting near load. It is not possible to claim that transmission lines are efficient without consideration of losses. Keep in mind, the losses for Xcel’s Minnesota Energy CON line were estimated at 10-12%. How is this proposed transmission any different?

Systemwide losses? SYSTEM? That would be expressed as a fraction, with no disclosure of the system and the losses both expressed in MW. To use “systemwide losses” is deceptive. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.260 D

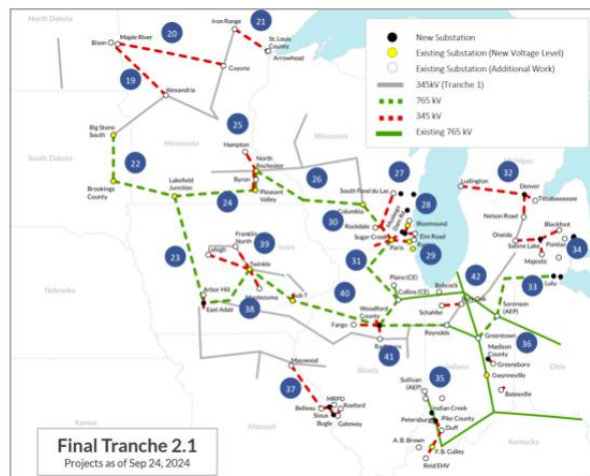
Applicants request exemption from this rule for ATC. As ATC logically has no load centers to serve, ATC should be required to provide powerflows so we know where the power is going. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0260 B(4) and (8)

All MISO puts on its proposal maps are endpoints and then a straight line between them. Based on these “maps,” the legislative and Commission posturing of use of only MISO endpoints improperly limits alternatives, and again positions MISO (member utilities) as the decider. The state has abdicated its authority and transferred proffering of fundamental alternative options to MISO, a “non-profit” marketing entity comprised of for profit utility and transmission owning members. Only those members have influential input, and the members and the non-member

“stakeholders” are not advocating in the public interest or in support of environmental considerations. A look at the Tranche 2.1 map shows that endpoints are shown on a “map” with zero consideration for the routes between, and in fact noting that the “map” is not an accurate presentation of where the lines would go, and no indication of the existing web of transmission.

Tranche 2.1 - Approved

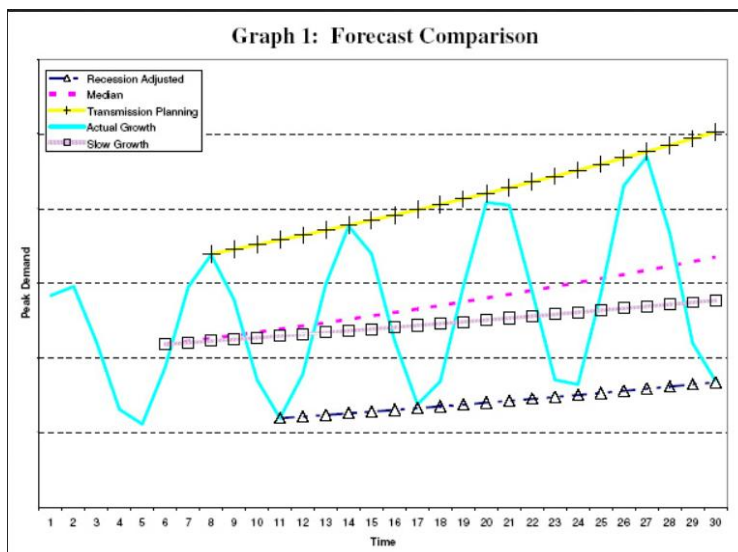


The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0270, Subpts. 1-6 Peak Demand and Annual Consumption Forecast

The information required by this rule provides the essence of a need claim. Again, Applicants propose “a discussion of the different regional demand scenarios evaluated in the analysis used by MISO to justify the Project. Again, this is abdicating to MISO as the decider.

Particularly important is the Forecast Methodology, Data Base for Forecasts, and Assumptions and Special Information. This information is needed because the Commission was grossly misled by the CapX 2020 “forecast” of 2.49% annual demand increase. When that was challenged the most bizarre bar-napkin forecast supporting the utility forecast was provided by Dr. Rakow:



Without the information requested in Minn. R. 7849.0270, Subp. 1-6, we could very well end up with yet another gross overbuild put on the backs of ratepayers and landowners. Given the immense transmission capacity proposed in Tranche 2.1, following on Tranche 1, following the MVP 17 project Portfolio, and starting with the overbuild of CapX 2020, it's foolhardy to presume, without detailed forecasting data, that we need more transmission. It's clear that MISO and MISO members want more transmission, but that is not "need" as defined by Minn. Stat. §216B.243. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0280

Need for transmission focuses in large part on the ability of the grid to serve demand. An exemption from this rule is an admission that the Applicants cannot demonstrate need, that the grid well serves load. Applicants should provide this information. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7849.0290

Conservation is a big contributor to the flat demand for electricity. Applicant MP should provide all the information required, and for ATC, a 15 year graph of electricity into and out of its system to provide an idea the demand and whether ATC is also experiencing flat demand, or if demand is increasing, where within ATC's system that increased demand is located. The exemption should be denied.

Minn. R. 7840.0300 and 7849.0340

The impact of consequences of delay is important in this case because the project is based on MISO member wants, which is different than need. This rule relies on the demand and capacity, and load and capability (Load & Capability Reports are no longer available), and the ability of the grid to serve demand. Without that information, without the full compliment of information above, whether there are consequences of delay, and whether there is an impact if there is a delay, cannot be determined. This exemption should be denied.

800 MVA LIMIT

As above, the Applicants and Commerce have both improperly limited notice of this planned change, agreeing that **ONLY** to those participating in two dockets should receive notice. See E015/AI/11/75 and E015/PA/04-2020. Those two dockets are **NOT** the only docket with intervenors and participants who have an interest in, a stake in, the 800 MVA limit. Notice of any request to change or remove the 800 MVA limit must also be provided to intervenors and participants in the recent HVDC Modernization Project dockets, **E015/22-607 and E015/22-611**, and the original Arrowhead-Weston docket, **MEQB Docket No. MP-HVTL-EA-1-99**, in which the 800 MVA limit originated. See attached EQB Order, MP-HVTL-EA-1-99, March 19, 2001.

In short, each of the exemptions requested by MP and ATC should be denied. The Commission should reassert its decision-making power and cease ceding its power to MISO

member utilities and transmission owners, and in this case, Applicants Minnesota Power and American Transmission Company/ATC Management, Inc.

Regarding the Notice Plan, after a quick scan, it seems OK.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in this docket on behalf of No CapX 2020 and World Organization for Landowner Freedom (W.O.L.F.).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Overland". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Carol A. Overland
Attorney at Law



Dept. of Administration / Environmental Quality Board

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In the Matter of the Exemption Application by Minnesota Power for a 345/230 kV High Voltage Transmission Line Known as the Arrowhead Project

**MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD'S FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS, AND ORDER GRANTING EXEMPTION****MEQB DOCKET NO.****MP-HVTL-EA-1-99**

Contact: Alan Mitchell, 651-296-3714

The above-entitled matter came before the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board at a regular meeting on March 15, 2001, pursuant to an application by Minnesota Power for an Exemption from the Power Plant Siting Act for a High Voltage Transmission Line known as the Arrowhead Project.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Should Minnesota Power be granted an Exemption from the Power Plant Siting Act for a 345/230 kV High Voltage Transmission Line to be constructed in St. Louis County, Minnesota

Based upon all of the proceedings herein, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Findings of Fact of the Administrative Law Judge in his report dated January 29, 2001, are adopted with the following amendments.
2. The second bullet of Finding No. 11 is amended to read and a new footnote 18A is added to read:

Adding four single-phase 345/230 kilovolt transformers to interface with the 345 kV line. These transformers step up the voltage from 230 kV to 345 kV. The approximate rating of these transformers is 800 MVA. [18A]

18A. Transcript at 1874.

3. The first sentence of Finding No. 15 is amended as follows, footnote 26

SIX.

[26] MEQB EX. 1, at 10.

4. Finding No. 37 is amended to read:

37. MP will notify the DM&IR railroad when construction of the 345 kV HVTL and 115 kV power line will be affecting the railroad's trackage. Similar notification to the Minnesota Department of Transportation will occur when the construction crosses Interstate 35. MP will schedule its construction activities to minimize the effect on vehicular traffic.[88] There are no impacts on public services arising out of the Arrowhead Project.

5. Finding No. 38 and footnotes 91 and 92 are amended to read:

38. Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) arise from the flow of electricity and the voltage of a line. The intensity of the electric field is related to the voltage of the line and the intensity of the magnetic field is related to the current flow through the conductors.[89] There are no state or federal standards for transmission line electric fields or magnetic fields.

38A. Electric fields are measured in units called kilovolts per meter (kV/meter). The MEQB has included permit conditions for other transmission lines specifying that maximum electric fields must not exceed 8 kV/meter.[90] The maximum anticipated electric field exposure for the MP transmission line, measured directly under the HVTL, is approximately 6.1 kV/meter.[91] At a distance of 100 feet of the centerline of the HVTL, the electric field strength nears zero. [92]

[91] MEQB Exhibit 17 at 4.

[92] Id. at DLV -1, Sheets 1-6.

6. Finding No. 39 and footnote 94 are amended to read:

39. Magnetic fields are measured in milligauss (mG). Common electrical appliances produce magnetic fields while in operation, as do HVTLs. The Arrowhead Project will increase exposure to magnetic fields for persons living along the right of way above current levels.[93] The amount of the increase ranges from approximately 50 mG at the edge of the right of way to approximately 10 mG at the distance of the nearest home to the Arrowhead HVTL, which is approximately 160 feet.[94] These increased levels occur at the periods of peak flow and are present approximately 5% of the time.[95]

[94] By way of comparison, an electric stove emits a magnetic field of 21.6 mG at a distance of one foot. A person making a photocopy is exposed to a magnetic field of 31 mG. MP-17; DLV-6. The 160 feet figure for the distance to the nearest home is found at Tr. at 314.

7. Finding 48 is amended to change the last sentence to read:

The expansion of the existing right of way for that segment has no significant human or environmental impact.

8. Finding No. 49 is amended to read:

49. The other alteration to the right of way for the Arrowhead Project moves the 0.8 miles of the existing route to the eastern side of the DM&IR rail yard. The change is proposed at the request of the

portion of Gary. The Arrowhead Project uses existing rights-of-way to minimize the impact of upgrading the existing 115 kV power line to a 345 kV HVTL.

9. Finding 54 is amended to read:

54. The Arrowhead Project will not result in a significant impact on human health or the environment in Minnesota from the construction and operation of the proposed transmission line.

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board makes the following:

CONCLUSIONS

1. Any of the foregoing Findings more properly designated as Conclusions are hereby adopted as such.
2. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the hearing pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 116C.57.
3. All relevant substantive and procedural requirements of law and rule have been fulfilled in order to grant an application for exemption from the Power Plant Siting Act.
4. The proposed project, when constructed in accordance with the attached conditions, "will not create significant human or environmental impact" in any of the categories of impact examined under the terms of Minn. Rule 4400.1310.
5. The Applicant has demonstrated that the Arrowhead Project meets the standards for exemption from the Minnesota Power Plant Siting Act process in Minn. Stat. § 116C.57, subd. 5.

Based upon the foregoing Conclusions, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board makes the following:

ORDER

The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board hereby grants an Exemption to Minnesota Power Company from the requirements of the Minnesota Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. Sections 116C.51 - .69) for the Arrowhead Project, consisting of construction of a 12 mile long 345 kV/115 kV and 345/230 kV High Voltage Transmission Line (for one segment operated at 115 kV) from the Arrowhead substation to the Wisconsin border, and a corresponding modification of the Arrowhead substation, subject to the following conditions:

1. Minnesota Power shall follow the existing right-of-way now occupied by Lines 22, 131, and 132, except for 0.8 miles of new right-of-way along the DM&IR rail yard and except for additional right-of-way width as described in the application.
2. Minnesota Power shall install the low-noise transformers identified in the application at the Arrowhead substation.

Midway segment. No herbicides shall be used for clearance if the landowner objects to use of such methods.

4. Minnesota Power shall remove all construction debris from the right-of-way as soon as construction is completed. Minnesota Power shall implement reasonable measures to provide revegetation of low-growing plants along construction areas.
5. Minnesota Power shall implement measures to minimize erosion and to prevent silt from entering surface waters during construction by installing barriers and using set back zones as necessary. The company shall maintain existing trees along streams to be crossed by the line to prevent changes in water temperature.
6. Minnesota Power shall perform no instream work in the four trout streams to be crossed by the line during the time September 15 to April 30.
7. Minnesota Power shall avoid impacts to any wetlands to be crossed by the line by constructing structures in such areas during the winter months when the wetland areas are frozen. If construction or maintenance must be performed in such areas when the wetland is not frozen, Minnesota Power shall use mats to prevent damage.
8. Minnesota Power shall consult with landowners whose property is to be crossed by the line regarding placement of structures to minimize interference with agricultural operations.
9. Minnesota Power shall obtain all necessary permits from federal and state and local units of government before proceeding with construction.
10. Minnesota Power shall apply to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board under section 116C.57 for authorization to make any changes in the Arrowhead substation that would allow Minnesota Power to increase the capability of the substation to transmit power over the transmission line beyond 800 MVA.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Dated: March 19, 2001 signed original on file

Gene Hugoson, Chair

active/arrowhead/march 15/fof

RESOLUTION OF THE

MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

March 15, 2001

Minnesota Power Company Arrowhead High Voltage Transmission Line Project

BE IT RESOLVED, that the MEQB approves and adopts the proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order, as revised, granting an Exemption to Minnesota Power Company for the Arrowhead High Voltage Transmission Line; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chair of the Board is authorized to sign the Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Order.

Adopted on March 15, 2001, by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board on a vote of 9-0.

webmaster@mnplan.state.mn.us