

From: [John Schmeling](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Cc: [John Schmeling](#)
Subject: Dodge County Wind LLC, Public comment period
Date: Wednesday, December 20, 2023 11:02:05 AM

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To Whom it may concern-

Regarding:

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number:
IP6981/CN-20-865 (certificate of need);
IP6981/WS-20-866 (site permit);
IP6981/TL-20-867 (route permit)

My name is John Schmeling, son of Evan Schmeling, land owner in Dodge County MN. I own no land affected by the proposed project, but I am trustee to our farm which is near it. Although I am not categorically against the Dodge County Wind (DCW) project, I have the following comments & questions to register.

1. It is my understanding AI-Corn Clean fuel has a recently updated substation (fed by Steele/Waseca Coop), that lies approximately 6.75 miles north of the proposed project hub. Of this 6.75mi, only 2.25mi lies outside of the project borders, compared to 23+ miles on the proposed routes to Pleasant Valley. How is the proposed route more economical by comparison? Furthermore, if the premise of this project is centered around MN-legistated "green" electricity, and this electricity is brokered for sale to Great River Energy (GRE), why is it pragmatic to send said energy south & east, to then bring it back north?
2. I haven't the patience to investigate...but in light of these projects how many MN-legislated dollars will NextEra Energy receive in compensation for this project? I would comment that allowing the private sector a seat at the table has its issues→how many of these dollars stay in MN, or do they all go to Florida???
3. In conversation with several neighbors, the narrative regarding power-pole placement seems to have changed as of recent. More exactly, along the route through Dodge County, many were courted with offers of easement dollars for sightings in private land. Now, it appears DCW has preferentially selected a route that sits poles on public rights of way (ROW), save for a few miles at beginning of route. Essentially, land owners who object will lose the ability to say no (if public use commission (PUC) votes "for") AND have no prospect of compensation.
4. Regarding the potential route principally following MN56, it is my understanding that **this route is the preferred route by both Dodge County proper, as well as most Dodge County land owners.**
 1. This appears to be in official writing in the environmental assessment (EA) page 4: *"The (Dodge) County Engineer determined that placement of the transmission line within a road with a ROW of 50 feet or less is not feasible because the narrow road ROW..."*
 2. The Dodge County Task Force also states its first preference for highway 56 in the EA, pg 5: *"The task force recommended two major north-south route alternatives (Minnesota Highway 56 and Dodge County Highway 9/Mower County Highway 20) with several connector segments."*
 3. Lastly, DCW is recorded as being optimistic the Hwy 56 route can be utilized, EA pg 5: *"On June 9, 2023, DCW indicated general agreement with the task force's route recommendations and expressed optimism that the recommended route alternatives would provide a path forward."*
5. At the 12/19/2023 1pm public hearing I questioned whether future additions to the power line capacity are expected, to which the panel answered it *can* be grown, but with another public comment period by the PUC. On this I want to comment that if this line is implemented today (@161kv), I predict precedence will

be set in favor of any future increases to capacity. Thus, PUC should take this perspective into consideration. This proposed line could very well run over 345kV in the near future--consider the burgeoning growth of power consumption and creation.

6. Lastly, in my opinion, the economic impact bragged about is distorted. Four-hundred workers local to construct and erect will only be employed, what...2-3 years? And if they're local, as the union fellas brag, they're not staying in hotels. Once the project is constructed, 5-8 permanent positions isn't that great (some will certainly be placed here by NextEra). Yes, easement dollars are guaranteed to landowners and are significant to those who get them. But keep in mind there appear to be few getting compensated for power-poles, and a significant portion of easement dollars go out-of-county, or even out-of-state to alien land owners. I would love to tabulate a list of this, but it is near impossible as that info is either private or proprietary.

In conclusion, I don't delude myself that this, or similar projects can be stopped outright. But I would prefer the power lines go north. If they must go south, go along highway 56. **Under no circumstances should it be routed by Behounek Dairy on Dodge County 4.**

Regards,

John Schmeling