

Office of Land Management

395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55155
MS 678

April 24, 2026

Logan Hicks

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

**Re: In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for the Xcel Energy West Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket No. E002/TL-24-427**

Mr. Hicks,

On March 20th, 2026, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued a Notice of Complete Application and Public Information Meetings on Xcel Energy's (Applicant) route permit (RP) application for the West Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Line Project (Project). The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the application regarding the proposed Project and submits the following comments in response to the Notice.

MnDOT performed a cursory Project review and submitted documentation of those findings directly to the Applicant. This review included information exchanged during meetings, emails, MnDOT's Utility ENM process, and all available project information to-date. MnDOT's Early Coordination Letter for the West Maple Grove Project begins on **page 245** of the application materials and is available here: [Route Permit Application](#)

MnDOT Structure in Project Area: Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC)/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

[Section 7.3.2.1] – The application identifies a non-residential MnDOT structure (TMC Shed) located approximately 50 feet from the anticipated alignment. MnDOT acknowledges this and expects continued coordination to evaluate any perceived or actual impacts to this RTMC/ITS facility, including operational access, equipment needs, and sight-line considerations. MnDOT also requests ongoing communication regarding any alignment or route-width adjustments in this area.

Safety and Pole Placement

Because portions of the Project are collocated with I-94 and MN 610 (Freeway Design), MnDOT is of the understanding that the Applicant will be respectful of trunk highway clear zones, bridge safety buffers, intersection sight lines, and future MnDOT use of the corridor. These items will again be reviewed further during MnDOT's permitting process.

Roadside Vegetation and Protected Species Areas

The alignment overlaps areas designated as MnDOT "vegetation of concern" and Monarch CCAA Adopted Acres. MnDOT appreciates the Applicant's proactive outreach and requests continued coordination regarding native seed requirements and herbicide restrictions (spot treatments only).

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Traffic Management Systems (RTMC/ITS)

MnDOT maintains significant ITS infrastructure along this portion of I-94. Pole placement, construction access, and conductor stringing should avoid interference with fiber, cameras, detection systems, and power feeds. Continued collaboration with RTMC/ITS staff, including possible mitigative measures, is expected.

General Information

MnDOT requests ongoing coordination on contaminated materials screening, noxious weed management, wetland considerations, and proper handling of any activities within MnDOT ROW. These items will receive further review during agency downstream permitting.

MnDOT has a continuing interest in working with all parties to ensure that possible impacts to the entire state trunk highway system, safety of the traveling public and MnDOT maintenance personnel, and environmentally significant areas of concern are adequately addressed. Should the Commission issue a Route Permit for the Project, continued coordination with MnDOT staff is expected. Any MnDOT permits required as a part of this Project can be coordinated at an earlier time but may not be issued until the Commission has approved all necessary permits for this Project. All applicable [permitting](#), [traffic control](#) and construction coordination efforts should be made through the appropriate MnDOT [district staff](#). MnDOT District Specialists should be given the opportunity to participate in pre-construction meetings as they apply to MnDOT- owned property.

MnDOT appreciates the Applicant's engagement to date and looks forward to continued collaboration as the Project advances.

Sincerely,

Karissa Hogan

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Office of Land Management
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cc: MnDOT ENM Review Staff