

**In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Site Permit for the up to 250 MW
Sherco 3 Solar Energy Generating System in Sherburne County, Minnesota
(PUC Docket Number: E-002/GS-23-217 OAH Docket Number: 24-2500-39813)**

LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on Xcel Energy's petition for approval of a site permit for the proposed Sherco 3 Solar Project. We believe that the project, with phases 1 and 2 already under construction, offers unique environmental and socioeconomic benefits.

LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota represents more than 14,000 unionized construction workers statewide. This number includes hundreds of LIUNA members that live in or near the City of Becker and work at Xcel's Sherco and Monticello power plants. Many of these members face impending retirement of power plants where they have worked for years, and where their families have worked for generations.

Our members worry about losing work in coal fired power facilities and about the quality of jobs on new renewable energy projects. The Sherco Solar project has provided an opportunity for some of these members to direct their careers toward renewable energy work. The project has also provided lease payments and tax revenues to communities that are being impacted by plant retirements.

The addition of 250 MW of solar energy in any location would have the potential to protect environmental resources by displacing carbon emissions. But Sherco Solar is unique because it utilizes an existing industrial site and existing interconnection resources, and is being constructed in relatively close proximity to plant host communities and to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. By comparison, most existing and proposed large wind and solar projects are located in renewable resource-rich areas of Southern Minnesota.

Today, phases 1 and 2 of Sherco Solar are creating hundreds of jobs for Laborers and other Trades, which translates into tens of millions of dollars worth of good pay, health care, pension, and training contributions. The approval of Sherco 3 will allow this work to continue, providing continued employment and new career opportunities, including opportunities for participants in Xcel's Power Up program which serves communities underrepresented in the construction and energy industries.

We thank the Commission for your consideration and ask you to approve this critical project.

Dated: May 22, 2024

Respectfully Submitted,
LIUNA Minnesota & North Dakota

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