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PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETING

25-145, 25-154, 25-161 & 25-163

Webex - August 12, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Certificate of Need, Site Permit, Transmission Line Route Permit, and Pipeline Route Permit for the Lyon County Generating Station in Lyon County, Minnesota

MPUC DOCKET NOS. E002/CN-25-145  
G002/GS-25-154  
E002/TL-25-161  
G002/GP-25-163

Meeting held remotely via:  
Webex and Telephone

August 12, 2025

COURT REPORTER: Christine Simons, RMR, RPR

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I N D E X

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1 MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Good evening.  
2 Welcome to the public information and environmental  
3 review scoping meeting for Xcel -- for Xcel's Lyon  
4 County project. This is the second hearing we're  
5 having. The first one was, obviously, yesterday  
6 that we had in person.

7 This is my contact information. If you  
8 have any questions or concerns after the meeting, go  
9 ahead and feel free to reach out to me. I'd be  
10 happy to answer your questions.

11 The meeting agenda will start with myself  
12 doing an overview of the permitting process. Next,  
13 we'll get a description of the project by Xcel  
14 Energy, and then we'll get through the environmental  
15 review process, Jim will provide that with the  
16 Public Utilities Commission.

17 Our role at the Commission is to regulate  
18 investor-owned utilities to ensure Minnesotans are  
19 charged reasonable rates for power. The Commission  
20 also permits generation facilities and transmission  
21 lines, and as well as certain petroleum and gas  
22 pipelines. My job as Commission staff will be to  
23 build the record, analyze information, and make  
24 recommendations to the five Commissioners who will  
25 have the final say on the permit decision.

1           The Lyon County project includes two  
2           210-megawatt combustion turbines and two 345-kV  
3           transmission lines and a natural gas pipeline. For  
4           them to build all of their project, they're going to  
5           need to go through certain steps. And one of them  
6           is they'll need a certificate of need, they'll need  
7           a site permit, they'll need a transmission line  
8           permit, and they'll need to go through the -- a  
9           pipeline route permit through the partial exemption  
10          process.

11           In making a decision on a certificate of  
12          need, the Commission must consider factors listed in  
13          rule and statute. Those are Chapters 7849 and  
14          Minnesota Statute 216B. General factors include the  
15          benefits of the facility, including its uses to  
16          protect and enhance the environment; increase  
17          reliability of energy supply in Minnesota and the  
18          region; evaluation of possible alternatives for  
19          satisfying the energy demand, including but not  
20          limited to, the potential for increased efficiency  
21          and upgrading existing energy generation; and other  
22          factors listed in statute and rule.

23           When examining the permit, the site  
24          permit, which is where the project will -- the  
25          turbines will actually be located, the Commission

1 looks at factors in 7850 and in Minnesota Statutes  
2 216E. And general factors include to conserve  
3 resources; minimize environmental impacts; minimize  
4 human settlement and other land-use conflicts; and  
5 ensure an efficient, cost-effective, and secure  
6 power supply and electric transmission  
7 infrastructure.

8 And we also look at, should we -- should  
9 the Commission actually decide to give the location  
10 a site permit, we look at measures to possibly  
11 mitigate some of the impacts that the facility -- or  
12 whatever we're permitting -- may -- whatever  
13 problems may it pose -- it pose by siting it.

14 The other thing we look at for the  
15 transmission line route permit is we look at 216E  
16 Subd. 7 and Minnesota Rules 7850. And our  
17 Commission is guided by goals of conserving  
18 resources; minimizing and mitigating environmental  
19 impacts; minimizing human settlement and other  
20 land-use conflicts. We look at, to the extent it's  
21 possible and with the other factors, using existing  
22 right-of-way. We look at electric system  
23 reliability, and we also look at the project cost.

24 For the pipeline partial exemption, an  
25 applicant who believes their pipeline project will

1 have a minimal impact on people can go ahead and go  
2 through the partial exemption process. The main  
3 difference between the full process and the partial  
4 exemption process is through the partial exemption  
5 process, there's not a period where there's an  
6 evidentiary hearing where there's the ability of  
7 different counsels to cross-examine witnesses and  
8 provide testimony.

9 When deciding on a partial exemption, the  
10 Commission will review the record and follow the  
11 following criteria: We look at human settlement;  
12 the natural environment; lands of historical,  
13 archeological, and cultural significance; economics  
14 within the route; pipeline cost and accessibility;  
15 use of right-of-way; natural resources; and the  
16 cumulative potential impacts of the project and its  
17 related pieces.

18 This is an overview of the timeline we  
19 anticipate for the docket. Although things may  
20 change, specifically with the EA scope, we predict  
21 mid-September; EA issued mid-December; public  
22 hearing heard before an ALJ would be January 2026;  
23 ALJ report issued would be March 2026; and we  
24 anticipate the final decision from the PUC to be in  
25 May of 2026.

1           For those interested, you can review all  
2 the applications and the documents associated with  
3 this docket by visiting eDockets at the website and  
4 link included here. And you would just enter in the  
5 docket number you're most interested in. If you're  
6 interested in a specific portion of the project, you  
7 would just enter in that associated docket number,  
8 and you'd hit search. And that would have all the  
9 information in the record that the Commissioners  
10 would consider when making a determination on a  
11 certificate of need or a route permit.

12           If you're interested, if you would like  
13 to get updates on project milestones and when  
14 there's opportunities to participate, you can ask to  
15 subscribe to the project mailing list. You can do  
16 that through the website here at  
17 eServices.admin@state.mn.us, or call 651-201-2246  
18 and enter -- and tell them the docket numbers -- or  
19 tell us the docket numbers -- that you would like to  
20 get notices on.

21           The other thing you may do is you may --  
22 to receive notifications when new documents are  
23 filed to this matter, and what you do is you would  
24 subscribe through the link provided here. Just a  
25 forewarning that everything that is filed will end

1 up in your inbox, and you may get a lot of e-mails.

2 Okay. Now, I will pass it over to Lyon  
3 County -- or to Xcel for their project. And you'll  
4 need to -- just a heads-up to the folks from Xcel,  
5 when you're ready to have me change the slide, just  
6 say, "next slide, please." Thank you.

7 MR. JARED GRAHAM: Thank you very much,  
8 Craig.

9 My name is Jared Graham. I'm a plant  
10 director for Xcel Energy, an engineer by trade, and  
11 I've worked for Xcel for 18 years.

12 You can go to the next slide, Craig.

13 All right. So this is some project  
14 details. The proposed site is about one mile  
15 northeast of the city of Garvin, and it's depicted  
16 on the map here with that star. As Craig talked  
17 about before, it's a 420-megawatt natural gas  
18 powered power plant. On-site facilities include the  
19 control room, pump buildings, some -- natural gas  
20 water bath heater, diesel fire pump, water storage  
21 tanks, and other diesel and backup diesel  
22 generators.

23 There will be two 345,000-transmission  
24 lines connected to the two units, and about  
25 1,000 feet of natural gas pipeline on Xcel's

1 property, all within the boundaries of the property.

2 This site is needed. You know, we are  
3 reusing the interconnect at Sherco. So this  
4 interconnect is coming all the way down from Becker  
5 all the way to Garvin, and along the way, there will  
6 be, you know, wind and solar projects  
7 interconnecting to that transmission line. And when  
8 the wind is not blowing and the sun's not shining  
9 and on the coldest and, probably, hottest days of  
10 the year, this plant will be called upon to run.  
11 And it needs to answer the call to be reliable for  
12 the energy needs in Minnesota and the greater  
13 region.

14 Craig, can you go to the next slide,  
15 please?

16 So the project details here continue.  
17 This is just a map of the site. So kind of in the  
18 southwest -- or bottom left quadrant, if you will --  
19 it's about 30 acres within the greater 155-acre  
20 parcel that is outlined in a square -- red -- the  
21 red square there on the map.

22 As I discussed earlier, you know, the  
23 transmission lines that would go from this site and  
24 also the natural gas pipeline, and the interconnect  
25 is all under Xcel Energy property. And you can see

1 the docket numbers there that are associated with  
2 those.

3 There will be one permanent access off of  
4 U.S. Highway 59 that runs north and south -- 59  
5 does -- and it's the green line that goes east and  
6 west about in the middle of the page there you can  
7 see. That is the permanent access to the facility.  
8 There will also be one other temporary access on --  
9 north of that primarily for the substation  
10 construction activity.

11 So start of construction for the power  
12 plant block is estimated right around July of 2026,  
13 if all the approvals go through from the Public  
14 Utilities Commission, with an anticipated commercial  
15 operation date of December 2028.

16 Craig, if you could do our next slide,  
17 please?

18 So environmental review, we did complete  
19 the environmental and cultural resource assessments,  
20 and there are no impacts anticipated to wetland,  
21 waterway, protected species, suitable habitat, or  
22 cultural resources in this parcel.

23 The project will meet the MPCA noise  
24 guidance. The air permit for this project will be  
25 submitted by the end of this month to the Minnesota

1 Pollution Control Agency, and typical  
2 preconstruction permits will be applied for, of  
3 course, prior to July of 2026.

4 So next slide, Craig.

5 I tried to color-code some major  
6 components on this map here. So the combustion  
7 turbines are in yellow, kind of in the middle or  
8 upper right; the control room is in the top left  
9 corner; and the pump building is kind of in the  
10 lower right quadrant.

11 The natural gas water bath heater is the  
12 little blue speck in the lower left quadrant. Why  
13 we need that is combustion turbines really like to  
14 have the natural gas at a certain specific  
15 temperature to avoid combustion dynamics and keep  
16 our emissions low.

17 The diesel fire pump is in the bottom  
18 right quadrant in the red, and then the water  
19 storage tanks are in orange in the bottom right  
20 corner. And the backup diesel generators are in the  
21 top, dead center in purple.

22 Next slide, Craig.

23 This is just a couple of pictures of  
24 typical components here. 345-kV transmission line  
25 and structure on the left, and typical natural gas

1 pipeline on the right.

2 Next slide, please.

3 Construction activities, so, you know,  
4 we'll probably start survey marking probably in the  
5 May/June time frame, to -- just to mark everything  
6 out. The grading, of course, would have to wait  
7 until the site permit is issued by the PUC.

8 And then we would move on to underground  
9 utilities, you know, piping, electrical, items like  
10 that. Moving into concrete foundations and  
11 transmission line structures. Then, followed by  
12 engineering equipment installations, like the  
13 combustion turbines, pumps, compressors, and the  
14 support buildings. Followed by aboveground piping,  
15 electrical, and then at the end, site restoration  
16 and final grading.

17 Next slide, please.

18 So for operations and maintenance, we  
19 plan to have about five folks out there Monday  
20 through Friday, you know, kind of, eight hours a  
21 day. The site will be monitored by a remote  
22 diagnostic center so that we can keep track of all  
23 pressures, temperatures, and things of that nature,  
24 vibrations on the combustion turbine to make sure  
25 we're operating within design parameters.

1           We will perform routine inspections and  
2 preventative maintenance for reliable operations.  
3 We do expect, you know, major maintenance every five  
4 to ten years, and we have a long term service  
5 agreement we plan to execute with General Electric  
6 Vernova -- they are the original equipment  
7 manufacturer -- so that we keep the design basis,  
8 keep parts available, and, you know, keep in line  
9 with O&M recommendations.

10           The transmission lines will be inspected  
11 regularly from aerial and also from the ground, and  
12 also gas pipeline inspections and maintenance.

13           Next slide, please.

14           So on this slide it's just some contact  
15 information for the project. You can click on the  
16 Xcel Energy and "Projects Near You." I think the  
17 best way is probably to give me a buzz. My phone  
18 number there is listed. That's my work number and  
19 my e-mail.

20           And that's all I have, Craig, and I think  
21 I'll turn it over to Mr. Sullivan.

22           MR. JIM SULLIVAN: Okay. I think I'm  
23 unmuted right now. Just let me know if I sound  
24 okay. I'm not sure if this is unmuted or not. I  
25 can't really actually tell.

1                   Okay. Great. Thank you, Patrick.

2                   So good evening. It is after 6:00 p.m.,  
3 and I am Jim Sullivan with the environmental review  
4 component of the PUC. We're known as the Energy  
5 Infrastructure Permitting Group, and we will be  
6 responsible for generating the environmental  
7 assessments documents, we oftentimes refer to as the  
8 EA. This process is, as noted by Craig, part of the  
9 statute that -- and rule that we have been  
10 implementing for the last several decades.

11                   Could you move to the next slide, please?  
12 Thank you.

13                   So as I mentioned, the Public Utilities  
14 Commission will prepare the environmental  
15 assessments for this project. Again, it is under  
16 7850.3700, which lays out the expectations for the  
17 process.

18                   What is important to note in this  
19 particular effort is that one environmental  
20 assessment will be done for all of the  
21 administrative decisions that are made for this  
22 project, which includes the certificate of need, the  
23 site permit, the transmission line route permit, and  
24 then all of the pipeline related decisions.

25                   If you can go to the next slide, please,

1 Craig.

2 Now, the goal of the entire environmental  
3 review process, in particular in the scoping where  
4 we start all of this work, is to gather public  
5 information and input regarding their concerns about  
6 the proposed project. And what we want to do is add  
7 that to the list of items that we'll explore during  
8 the environmental assessments. Where we can go  
9 ahead and discuss and analyze potential impacts, as  
10 well as identify any strategies that we might be  
11 able to use to avoid or mitigate those impacts. The  
12 goal here is to assemble a set of objective facts  
13 for the Commission so that they can make a  
14 reasonable decision based on the record.

15 Our part of the PUC is not involved in  
16 advocating for or against the project. We are  
17 designed to do our best in gathering the facts as we  
18 can find them, and then also listening to the public  
19 and their concerns so that we can web our  
20 factfinding with the public input.

21 Next slide, please.

22 So the question that often comes up is,  
23 what is scoping? And more commonly we would refer  
24 to it as the table of contents for the study. So  
25 the scope really tells us not only what to look at,

1 but how much we need to look at it, what detail is  
2 needed.

3 And for our purposes, what we're focusing  
4 on are the potential human health -- human and  
5 environmental impacts, including human health. And,  
6 again, ways that we can minimize, mitigate, or avoid  
7 any of those potential impacts.

8 More importantly, within the project  
9 area, because we are here in St. Paul, we don't know  
10 the land, we don't know the area, we don't know the  
11 region. But the people that live there do, and they  
12 know those unique characteristics of a particular  
13 area. We want to know what those are as well so  
14 that we can include those in the environmental  
15 assessment, and whether or not those would be  
16 affected by the proposed project.

17 We also want to know about any other  
18 project alternatives or modifications that you might  
19 think would be helpful for us to consider.

20 Next slide, please, Craig.

21 So in terms of commenting, today you can  
22 comment virtually just through the spoken record  
23 that we'll develop. You can also complete and  
24 submit a comment sheet, which I believe we have  
25 online, or you can go directly to our online website

1 and go to the project site and comment directly  
2 there. You can send me an e-mail.

3 Important to note that the comment period  
4 ends August 27th for this phase of the project. So  
5 anything after that, the -- it's up to the  
6 Commission if they want to consider those or not.

7 Craig, next slide, please.

8 For purposes of our forum today, we  
9 expect that one speaker will participate at a time.  
10 This is in part because we have a court reporter  
11 here, and we want to make sure that the court  
12 reporter is able to get all of your contents. And  
13 it's very difficult to do when we have two or more  
14 speakers competing for the speaker's attention.

15 Again, maintain respect for one another.  
16 Reasonable people can certainly disagree. We want  
17 to make sure that ideas are presented as full -- as  
18 fully as they can, so we don't want to get in mock  
19 competition and debate. We want you to begin by  
20 stating and spelling your name, and directing your  
21 comments and questions to the scope of the  
22 environmental assessment.

23 I think, given the amount of people that  
24 are participating today, we probably can limit,  
25 initially, the comments to five minutes, but we can

1 certainly come back and open it up again if there's  
2 more -- more content that folks want to communicate.

3 Craig, next slide, please.

4 Again, just in closing, to make sure that  
5 you're focusing your comments on potential human and  
6 environmental impacts. And if you have any thoughts  
7 about how to minimize, mitigate, or avoid those  
8 potential impacts, identifying any unique  
9 characteristics of the proposed project area that we  
10 should consider here in the EA, and any other  
11 potential project alternatives that you think might  
12 address potential impacts.

13 Again, August 27th is the comment  
14 deadline. So if you can get comments in by that  
15 time, that would be great. You don't have to  
16 necessarily say everything today, or if things come  
17 to you after the comment period -- or after our  
18 event today, you can certainly send those to us.

19 Craig, next slide, please.

20 In Webex, what you'll want to do to  
21 participate is to click the chat icon, which is in  
22 the lower-right corner of the screen, and you can  
23 send a message indicating that you'd like to speak.  
24 If you're a caller, then just press \*3 on your  
25 telephone and add yourself to the comment queue, and

1 then, again, you can press \*3 to remove yourself.  
2 And, again, repeat if you want to speak again. I'm  
3 certain we can open that up again as well.

4 Craig, next slide, please.

5 In terms of the process, again, all  
6 comments are treated equally in our forum. You can  
7 write or e-mail your comments to us directly. You  
8 can tell us what they are. You can file them on the  
9 PUC website. Certainly feel free to contact either  
10 Craig or I if you have questions about any part of  
11 the project or the process. And certainly feel free  
12 to contact the applicant directly as well if you  
13 have questions about the facility. We will continue  
14 to update the eDockets and the project calendar as  
15 we move forward in the process.

16 There we go. And just another overview  
17 of the ways you can contact us. Again, Craig  
18 Janezich is the energy facilities planner for the  
19 project, and myself as the environmental review  
20 manager, Jared Graham is the plant director.  
21 August 27th, 2025, by 4:30 p.m. is the close of the  
22 comment period.

23 And then if you have any other thoughts  
24 about the process, you can certainly take our online  
25 survey to give us feedback on how you think we might

1 be able to do this a little bit better.

2 And with that, I will open it up to any  
3 questions.

4 MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: So far, Jim, I'm not  
5 seeing anybody that is either raising their hand or  
6 is in the chat asking to speak.

7 MR. JIM SULLIVAN: We'll give folks a  
8 couple of minutes, and then we can ask again and see  
9 if anyone has any thoughts they want to share.

10 MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Sure.

11 I'll just say it again, if you're a  
12 caller, press \*3 if you'd like to make a comment,  
13 and then, again, after you make your comment, please  
14 use \*3 to remove yourself from the queue.

15 Okay. I'm still looking at the chat and  
16 the attendees list, and I'm not seeing anybody who  
17 is wanting to participate at this time.

18 MR. JIM SULLIVAN: Okay. Going once,  
19 going twice.

20 Okay. I think this concludes the public  
21 portion -- or at least this particular aspect of it  
22 for our scoping for the Lyon County generating  
23 project.

24 I don't think I have anything else to  
25 add.

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MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: All right. Thank you, everyone, for participating. Again, you still can submit comments if you'd like to participate, but otherwise have a good evening and take care.

(End of public comment.)

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