



September 29, 2023

—Via Electronic Filing—

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

RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR THE
BIG STONE SOUTH – ALEXANDRIA – BIG OAKS TRANSMISSION PROJECT
DOCKET NO. E002, E017, ET2, E015, ET10/CN-22-538

Dear Mr. Seuffert:

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits the enclosed Application for a Certificate of Need to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on behalf of itself, Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power Company, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Applicants), for approval to construct the Minnesota portion of the Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project (the Project).

The Project was studied, reviewed, and approved as part of the Long-Range Transmission Planning (LRTP) Tranche 1 Portfolio by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc.'s (MISO) Board of Directors in July 2022 as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan (MTEP21) report. The LRTP Tranche 1 Portfolio will provide significant benefits to the Midwest subregion of the MISO footprint by facilitating more reliable, safe, and affordable energy delivery. The Project, designated as LRTP2 in MTEP21, is a key part of the LRTP Tranche 1 Portfolio.

The Project is needed to improve reliability on the existing 230 kV system in eastern North Dakota and South Dakota and western and central Minnesota. The electric system is undergoing a transition as aging fossil-fueled baseload generation is retired and new renewable generation is being added to the system. This additional renewable generation is placing additional strain on the already constrained 230 kV system in this area. The Project alleviates these constraints by adding another 345 kV circuit to this area to provide additional capacity for the generation from North Dakota and South Dakota into and through Minnesota. By increasing the capacity of the transmission system, the Project will maintain and improve system reliability and strengthen the

regional grid; support new renewable generation facilities in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota; increase consumer access to cost-effective renewable generation; provide economic benefits; and advance the State's energy policy. The Applicants estimate that the Project would provide up to \$2.1 billion in economic savings across the MISO footprint over the first 20 years that the Project is in service, and up to \$3.8 billion in economic savings across the MISO footprint over the first 40 years. The Project will also help make significant progress toward state carbon-emission reduction policy objectives.

The Project is comprised of two segments: a western and an eastern segment. The western segment will consist of a new single-circuit 345 kV transmission line that will be placed on double-circuit capable structures from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota to the existing Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota (Western Segment). The majority of the eastern segment involves stringing a second 345 kV transmission circuit on existing double-circuit capable structures from the Alexandria Substation to the Riverview Substation and from the Riverview Substation to the Big Oaks Substation in Sherburne County, Minnesota (Eastern Segment). A short, approximately one-to four-mile segment of new right-of-way will be required to connect to the new 345 kV transmission circuit to the Big Oaks Substation. A Route Permit Application for the Eastern Segment of the Project is also being filed today in Docket No. E002, E017, ET2, E015, ET10/TL-23-159.

We have electronically filed this letter and the Certificate of Need Application with the Commission. Copies of this application are also being served on the persons on the attached distribution lists as provided in Minn. R. 7849.0200, subp. 2. A short summary of this application is being distributed, as required by Minn. R. 7829.2500, subp. 3. The application processing fee, as required by Minn. R. 7849.0210, subp. 1, is being sent under separate cover.

Please contact Bria Shea at 612-330-6064 or bria.e.shea@xcelenergy.com if you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

/s/Bria E. Shea

BRIA E. SHEA
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, REGULATORY POLICY
NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY

/s/JoAnn Thompson

JOANN THOMPSON
VICE PRESIDENT, ASSET MANAGEMENT
OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY

/s/Priti Patel

PRITI PATEL
VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF TRANSMISSION OFFICER
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

/s/ Daniel Gunderson

DANIEL GUNDERSON
VICE PRESIDENT – TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION
MINNESOTA POWER

/s/Terry Wolf

TERRY WOLF
SECOND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WESTERN MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY

Enclosures

cc: Service Lists

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR THE
BIG STONE SOUTH – ALEXANDRIA – BIG
OAKS TRANSMISSION PROJECT

Docket No. E002, E017, ET2, E015,
ET10/CN-22-538

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Theresa Senart certifies that on the 29th day of September 2023, on behalf of Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power Company, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, she efiled a true and correct copy of the **Certificate of Need Application** by posting the same on [eDockets](#) in the above-referenced docket. Said document was also served as designated on the attached Service List on file with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

/s/Theresa Senart

Theresa Senart

Paper Service for MPUC Docket No. E002, E017, ET2, E015, ET10/CN-22-538:

(Service is via a USB flash drive containing all the public files for the Certificate of Need Application and with instructions on how to obtain a paper copy.)

Robert Budreau
Leech Lake Bank of Ojibwe
190 Sailstar Drive NW
Cass Lake, MN 46633

Tara Geshick
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Tribal Government
5344 Lakeshore Drive
Nett Lake, MN 55772

Colleen Mueller
22186 State Hwy 4
Paynesville, MN 56362

Robert Prescott
Lower Sioux Indian Community
39527 Highway 1
Morton, MN 56270

Service List for MPUC Docket No. E002, E017, ET2, E015, ET10/CN-22-538:
via Hand Delivery (includes copies required by Minn. R. 7829.2500, subp.3)

Craig Janezich 4 copies
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
350 Metro Square Building
121 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dr. Steve Rakow USB flash drive
Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101

Richard Dornfeld 1 copy
Office of Minnesota Attorney General (DOC)
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1800
St. Paul, MN 55101

Sharon Ferguson 1 copy
Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101

Peter Scholtz 1 copy
Travis Murray
Office of Minnesota Attorney
General (OAG-RUD)
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400
St. Paul, MN 55101

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Jon	Brekke	jbrekke@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 553694718	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Generic Notice	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	445 Minnesota Street Suite 1400 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 280 Saint Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Benjamin	Levine	Blevine@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Generic Notice	Residential Utilities Division	residential.utilities@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012131	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
J.P.	Schumacher	jps@mrenergy.com	Missouri River Energy Services	N/A	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Christine	Schwartz	Regulatory.records@xcelenergy.com	Xcel Energy	414 Nicollet Mall FL 7 Minneapolis, MN 554011993	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Will	Seuffert	Will.Seuffert@state.mn.us	Public Utilities Commission	121 7th Pl E Ste 350 Saint Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159
Stuart	Tommerdahl	stommerdahl@otpc.com	Otter Tail Power Company	215 S Cascade St PO Box 496 Fergus Falls, MN 56537	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_23-159_TL-23-159