



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Land Management

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February 4, 2014

Burl Haar, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul MN 55101-2147

RE: In the Matter of the Laskin Energy Center Natural Gas Pipeline Project
PUC Docket Number: E015/GP-13-978

Dear Mr. Haar,

On December 27th, 2013, the Minnesota Office of Energy Security (OES) issued a Notice of a Public Information Meeting, which includes a public comment period regarding the Pipeline Routing Permit Application of Minnesota Power for a Pipeline Routing Permit for the Laskin Energy Center Natural Gas Pipeline Project in Hoyt Lakes. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the application regarding the proposed project and submits the following comments in response to the Notice.

The environmental document should include language specifying that the Permittee shall obtain all relevant permits or authorizations from road authorities relating to any pipeline or associated facilities placement that may be proposed to be placed in a public road right-of-way. MnDOT has adopted a formal policy and procedures for accommodation of utilities on the highway rights-of-way ("Utility Accommodation Policy"). A copy of MnDOT's policy can be found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/policy/utilitypolicy.html>. MnDOT's policy seeks to permit utilities to occupy portions of the trunk highway rights-of-way where such occupation does not put the safety of the traveling public or highway workers at risk or unduly impair the public's investment in the transportation system. Compliance with MnDOT's Utility Accommodation Policy, and similar policies of other road authorities, should be included as a condition of the routing permit.

Based on the information provided in the Application, it appears that both the project area and preferred alignment do not *directly* abut a state trunk highway. However, there may be highway-related considerations related to oversize/overweight hauling of the pipeline and equipment. Specifically, these large loads of freight are often transported along nearby interregional corridors such as US 169, US 53 and TH 61. Because MnDOT's highway construction activities could impact the Applicant's plans to haul oversize loads to the proposed site, the Applicant will need to coordinate with MnDOT when planning such loads. If the Laskin Energy Center Natural Gas Pipeline Project or its associated facilities should happen to intersect with the trunk highway system, the Applicant will need to apply for and obtain permits for those locations.

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Any pipeline construction work, including delivery or storage of materials or equipment that may affect MnDOT right-of-way is of concern such that MnDOT should be involved in planning and coordinating such activities. Please note that if work is required within MnDOT right of way for temporary or permanent access, such work should be coordinated with Wayne Scheer in the District 1 Permits Office at 218-725-2780 or Wayne.Scheer@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Stacy Kotch

Utility Transmission Route Coordinator

Minnesota Department of Transportation

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