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To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: Submitted Public Comment Form
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Name *	Kira Christine Dunkle Weyrauch Anderson
Address	☐ 11049 New Haven Road Northwest, (Local Address) Pine Island MN 55963 (Local Address) 1405 Akamai St (Temp. Mailing Address) Kailua, HI 96734 United States
Phone Number	(541) 510-8514
Email	kiraweyrauch@gmail.com
Provide the docket's number.	MPUC Docket No. E002/TL-26-135

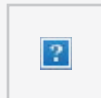
Leave a comment on the docket. *

I respectfully request that the Commission take the following actions before granting any approval to MPUC Docket No. E002/TL-26-135

1. Require the Applicants to make a complete showing that the claimed Certificate of Need exemption applies;
2. Require full disclosure of cost allocation, cost recovery, and ratepayer protections;
3. Require analysis of reasonably foreseeable future transmission, substation expansion, and related load growth;
4. Fully evaluate agricultural, landowner, environmental, and cumulative impacts; and
5. Withhold approval unless the record demonstrates substantial public benefits sufficient to justify permanent impacts on affected landowners and communities.

At a minimum, the record should clearly answer these questions: Who primarily benefits from the project? Who ultimately pays for it? Will Minnesota ratepayers bear any current or future costs? What future load growth and transmission expansion are reasonably foreseeable? And why should local landowners bear permanent impacts for infrastructure that appears principally designed to serve a private development?

Attach a File



[public_statement_north_rochester_to_skyway_tl26135_pii_redacted.pdf](#)
165.66 KB • PDF

24 June 2026

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

Re: Public Comment Regarding the North Rochester to Skyway 345 kV Transmission Line Project
MPUC Docket No. E002/TL-26-135

Dear Commissioners:

My family owns property and currently resides in the Pine Island area, near the proposed North Rochester to Skyway 345 kV Transmission Line Project. As a long-standing Minnesota family with deep ties to this community, we believe major infrastructure decisions should be made with exceptional transparency, accountability, and care for the public interest. Because this project may impose permanent impacts on nearby landowners, agricultural land, and the surrounding community, I respectfully urge the Commission to require a complete, transparent, and well-supported record before granting any approval.

The application describes a new approximately 1.2-mile, double-circuit 345 kV transmission line connecting Xcel Energy's North Rochester Substation to four new Skyway substations associated with Project Skyway. Although the application states that the line would serve a single utility customer, the broader development is described as approximately 482 acres with potential data center, technology, research and development, and light industrial uses.

That scale raises a material public-interest question: whether this proposal is properly characterized as a limited transmission line for a single customer, or whether it is an enabling component of a larger industrial and technology development that warrants broader Commission scrutiny.

Certificate of Need and Statutory Review

I am concerned that the Applicants rely on a statutory exemption from the Certificate of Need process based on the assertion that the project serves a single customer. Because the project exceeds 300 kV and extends more than one mile, the Commission should require the Applicants to affirmatively demonstrate that every condition for the claimed exemption is satisfied.

A project tied to a 482-acre development, four substations, and significant future capacity should not be treated as exempt unless the record demonstrates that such treatment is consistent with both the text and purpose of Minnesota law.

Public Benefit Versus Private Benefit

The Commission should carefully distinguish between private benefit and public necessity. While Project Skyway may generate economic activity, the record should establish whether the proposed transmission line provides substantial benefits to Minnesota electric customers generally, rather than principally providing reliable service for one large private electricity user.

Cost Allocation and Ratepayer Protection

If this infrastructure is needed primarily because of the electrical demand created by a private data center or technology development, the entities creating that demand should bear the full cost. The Commission should require clear disclosure of whether the developer or end user will pay 100 percent of transmission-related costs, whether any costs may be recovered from Xcel Energy ratepayers, and whether future upgrades could become obligations of the broader customer base.

Future Expansion Concerns

The application also raises significant questions about future expansion. The proposed North Rochester Substation expansion would increase the facility from approximately 10 acres to approximately 22 acres and add six new breaker-and-a-half rows with capacity for ten additional line terminations. These facts suggest that additional transmission infrastructure may be reasonably foreseeable beyond the 1.2-mile line now before the Commission.

Agricultural and Landowner Impacts

The project would impose a permanent 150-foot-wide transmission right-of-way and structures approximately 100 to 180 feet tall. These are substantial, long-term burdens on local landowners, farmland, and rural operations. Transmission infrastructure can fragment fields, reduce operational flexibility, interfere with drainage, limit future land use, and complicate farming with large equipment, aerial application, or irrigation. Those impacts should not be imposed unless the need, cost responsibility, and public benefit are clearly established in the record.

Environmental Review

The environmental review should evaluate not only the transmission line, but also cumulative impacts associated with the broader Project Skyway development, including impacts to agricultural resources, wildlife, migratory birds, state-listed species, and surrounding habitats. Any approval should include enforceable mitigation measures proportionate to the scale and permanence of the impacts.

Requested Action

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Commission take the following actions before granting any approval:

1. Require the Applicants to make a complete showing that the claimed Certificate of Need exemption applies;
2. Require full disclosure of cost allocation, cost recovery, and ratepayer protections;
3. Require analysis of reasonably foreseeable future transmission, substation expansion, and related load growth;
4. Fully evaluate agricultural, landowner, environmental, and cumulative impacts; and

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5. Withhold approval unless the record demonstrates substantial public benefits sufficient to justify permanent impacts on affected landowners and communities.

At a minimum, the record should clearly answer these questions: Who primarily benefits from the project? Who ultimately pays for it? Will Minnesota ratepayers bear any current or future costs? What future load growth and transmission expansion are reasonably foreseeable? And why should local landowners bear permanent impacts for infrastructure that appears principally designed to serve a private development?

Unless these issues are fully addressed and supported by substantial evidence in the record, I respectfully urge the Commission to withhold approval of the project as proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kira Christine Dunkle Weyrauch Anderson
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