

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - 09-584

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3

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021.

4

6:00 P.M.

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7

In the Matter of the Northern States Power Company Site

8

Permit Amendment Application for a Large Wind Energy

9

Conversion System for the Nobles Wind Repowering Project

10

in Nobles County

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PUC Docket Number: IP-6646/WS-09-584

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Meeting held remotely via:

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Webex and Telephone

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1 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Hello, my name is
2 Charley Bruce, I work with the Minnesota Public
3 Utilities Commission, and welcome to the public
4 meeting for the Nobles Wind Repowering Project,
5 Commission Docket No. 09-584.

6 The topic of the night is the Nobles Wind
7 Repowering Project. This involves Xcel Energy
8 retrofitting, or what we call repowering, the
9 currently operating Nobles Wind Farm with new
10 equipment, and Xcel representatives will go over
11 that project in greater detail later in the
12 presentation.

13 Tonight you're going to hear from
14 representatives like myself from the Public
15 Utilities Commission, Mr. David Birkholz from the
16 Department of Commerce, and Xcel Energy as well
17 about the proposed project.

18 I just want to remind everyone that you
19 are -- already know you have a comment to make or a
20 question to ask, you can press star one on your
21 phones to get in the commenting queue, and we'll
22 take your questions after the presentation.

23 And I kind of went over this, but again,
24 I'm with the Public Utilities Commission, and I'm
25 going to start off the presentation, we'll move on

1 to Xcel Energy, and then we will run it out with the
2 Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review
3 and Analysis, and then the opportunity for you as
4 citizens to ask questions or provide comments.

5 As I said before, we're here at the
6 public information meeting about this Nobles Wind
7 Repowering Project. What this means is that we're
8 here both to provide information to you as citizens
9 about the proposed wind project and also to answer
10 your questions. We're also listening from you about
11 the potential impacts of the repowering project on
12 your community.

13 Sorry about that.

14 So -- and like I said, you're going to
15 hear from two state regulatory agencies: The Public
16 Utilities Commission, who has the final permitting
17 say over this proposed project, and also the
18 Department of Commerce, who does a lot of the
19 environmental work related to wind and solar
20 projects for the Commission.

21 We'll each explain our role in the
22 permitting process of this proposed project, and
23 then the Company, Xcel Energy, will explain why the
24 proposed project is needed and why we're going to --
25 what it will look like when it's -- if it's built.

1 So the Minnesota Public Utilities
2 Commission is here because we are a state agency.
3 We ensure that there's enough power produced and
4 enough transmission capacity to keep the lights on
5 and houses warm in the winter and cool in the
6 summer, and we ensure there are enough transmission
7 lines to move power from the source to your
8 businesses or your home.

9 We regulate investor-owned utilities in
10 Minnesota, and we also ensure that Minnesotans are
11 charged a reasonable rate for their power.

12 Since 2005, we are the regulatory body
13 with the authority to permit energy generating
14 facilities and transmission lines for construction
15 in Minnesota.

16 A little bit about the Commission is it's
17 a five-member body. All of our Commissioners are
18 appointed by the governor, they serve staggered
19 terms, and no one political party can have more than
20 three members at any given time.

21 We function as a quasi-judicial body and
22 our powers and authority and functions really
23 resemble those as a court or a judge, and when
24 Commissioners make a final decision about a project,
25 their decision carries the weight of law.

1 So as a Commission staff member, you
2 might be wondering what do I do in these cases, I
3 help the Commission gather evidence, build a
4 record -- a record of public information, I analyze
5 information, and I eventually will make
6 recommendations for the Commissioners who will make
7 the final say about whether this permit should be
8 issued -- permit amendment should be issued.

9 This slide is kind of a flowchart of
10 where we are in the permitting process. Xcel Energy
11 has owned and operated the Nobles Wind Farm since
12 2010, and like I mentioned before, they're proposing
13 upgrades. We're in the middle of a repowering
14 process. The site permit amendment has been filed.
15 A draft site permit was proposed and filed by the
16 Department of Commerce.

17 And the green box is where we are
18 tonight, this indicates an opportunity for the
19 public to provide input on the project, and we're
20 expecting a final decision on the project by July or
21 so of 20- -- this year, 2021.

22 Also, I just to -- I want to remind
23 everyone listening that, again, press star one if
24 you want to get in the queue and ask a question or
25 provide a comment. We'll be taking those after the

1 presentation.

2 This is the -- this slide is kind of a
3 timeline of what we've done so far. The application
4 for a permit amendment to repower was submitted on
5 February 26th. The Department of Commerce issued
6 its comments about the application and its
7 completeness and proposed the draft site permit on
8 March 19th, 2021. Tonight we are here on the 29th
9 of April to have the public information meeting.

10 There's currently a written comment
11 period open that will -- comment period is open that
12 will end by May 24th, 2021. As I noted earlier,
13 you'll see that we're expecting a Commission
14 decision around July this year.

15 So this slide shows how you can get
16 involved in the Commission's proceedings. So first
17 of all, you can provide written comments during the
18 written comment period, and again, the comment
19 period ends on May 24th. You can give verbal input
20 and ask questions tonight. There's also a court
21 reporter taking a transcript of the comments that
22 will be received tonight, and this will be included
23 in the record that will be reviewed by the
24 Commissioners before a final decision is made.

25 And then if you want to provide a comment

1 by e-mail, there's an e-mail address to e-mail
2 comments to. There's my mailing address, we have
3 staff at the office who will make sure that it's
4 filed away. If you have any questions, that's my
5 phone number, you can give me a call, and we can
6 get -- I can help you with any comments or questions
7 you might have about filing a comment.

8 This slide is probably part of the notice
9 that you saw, but it's just kind of the questions
10 that we're looking for comments on, you know, what
11 are the potential impacts of the project, what
12 should the Commission consider when it's deciding
13 about -- making a decision about the proposed
14 upgrades that were requested, should there be
15 conditions or any sort of amendments to the current
16 permit, and then should the Commission approve the
17 requested amendment.

18 And, again, try to -- the comment period
19 is -- the initially comment period is open until May
20 10th, and the reply comment period closes on May
21 24th. So there's still some time to make your
22 comment, and try to include the Commission's docket
23 number in your comments, again, that's 09-584.

24 If you'd like more information about this
25 project, there's a few different ways to get

1 information. You can check out the Department of
2 Commerce's website, which Mr. Birkholz will have
3 more information on, you can go to the Commission's
4 eDocket system so you can view all documents that
5 have been filed related to this project.

6 You can sign up for a project mailing
7 list which will keep you informed of major project
8 milestones, or you can subscribe to the docket.
9 This will entail a lot of e-mails, but it is the
10 best way to ensure that you're aware of any document
11 that's been filed about this project.

12 And, again, I want to thank you everybody
13 for taking time out of their evening tonight. We
14 know that evenings are a precious time, and we
15 really appreciate it, the members of the public that
16 are taking time out their day to come and give
17 comments and help build a record for the project.

18 Again, my contact information is on the
19 screen, as well as Mike Kaluzniak, another PUC
20 staffer. He's the public advisor on the project,
21 and his role with the project is just to ensure that
22 the process is easy and accessible for the public.
23 So if you have any questions and you cannot reach
24 me, feel free to reach out to Mike and either one of
25 us will be happy to help answer any questions.

1 And with that, I'll be turning it over
2 to, I believe, Matt Langan with Xcel Energy. Thank
3 you.

4 Matt, I believe you're on mute still.

5 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Thanks for that,
6 Charley, and just as a way of logistics here, I
7 think you have to click through the slides for me;
8 is that correct?

9 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Yeah, that's correct.

10 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay. So I'll just
11 let you know then when we're ready to move from one
12 slide to the next.

13 But good evening, everybody. My name is
14 Matt Langan, I'm with Xcel Energy. I think Charley
15 was alluding to it when he just spoke here, first
16 and foremost, under normal circumstances, Charley
17 and I and David, who will speak later, along with
18 members of the project team would typically be doing
19 this in person. And, you know, that's our preferred
20 format, we -- to be on site in Nobles County
21 somewhere, being able to speak face-to-face.
22 Obviously we're not under normal circumstances these
23 days, so I want to thank Charley for arranging this
24 as a second-best alternate format, and I'd like to
25 thank everybody for taking time out to join, either

1 via the web or via phone tonight.

2 What I will say is that we're here to
3 provide some project -- some information about the
4 proposal that we have to repower the Nobles Wind
5 Farm, and then be able to accept comments for sure,
6 but also answer questions, and we're going to do our
7 best to answer those here on the spot.

8 I guess I will reserve the right if
9 there's something that I am not able to answer
10 tonight, I'll commit to being -- to following up
11 directly with you to address your question if we're
12 not able to tonight.

13 So I wanted to start out with that
14 information, and then what I'll say is my role on
15 the project as part of the team is to see that we
16 file a complete application that describes entirely
17 our proposal. And that really is a package of
18 information and preconstruction studies that we
19 conduct and provide the state for their review --
20 provide the public for their review.

21 And so that's why we'll make sure that
22 application gets filed, and then I will be in the
23 lead of, you know, following that state review
24 process over the next several months. As well as
25 making sure that when we go to construct the

1 project, when we go to operate the project that
2 we're doing so in compliance with the terms of the
3 permit that we're applying for.

4 And so, again, my name is Matt Langan,
5 that's my role on the team, and everything I just
6 described right there does not happen with one
7 person, certainly. There are a whole, you know,
8 project team that we have, folks from operations,
9 folks from environmental services, mapping agents.
10 We have, you know, of course, engineers and project
11 management, and those people, some are participating
12 in the call tonight, others we have where we can
13 gain information from them in order to answer your
14 questions.

15 So just letting you know that we have a
16 team here tonight hoping to answer your questions on
17 the spot where we can, and so thank you for making
18 any of those questions or comments you want to make
19 ahead of time.

20 The last thing I'll say before we move on
21 to the next slide and we introduce the company and
22 the reason we're here tonight, this is -- oh, shoot,
23 a note just popped up that distracted me. What I
24 was going to say is, certainly if you don't provide
25 a comment tonight or don't get a question asked

1 tonight, you still have opportunity, like Charley
2 was describing, through May 10th to offer a written
3 comment or a written question, and that's something
4 that we can reply to as well.

5 And importantly, if you have neighbors
6 out there or acquaintances, folks that you know
7 wanted to participate tonight but could not for one
8 reason or another, certainly let them know that
9 there's still opportunity to provide input or to ask
10 questions on the project. We've got some contact
11 information at the end of our presentation where
12 they can, you know, e-mail or call us directly, and
13 then certainly Charley and David are providing their
14 information as well.

15 Okay. We can move to the next slide, if
16 you will, Charley.

17 First, we just want to talk about Xcel
18 Energy as a company. We have service territory in
19 eight states, and that includes 3.6 million
20 electricity customers and 2 million natural gas
21 customers.

22 We are a nationally recognized leader in
23 wind energy, energy efficiency, innovative
24 technology, storm restoration, and carbon emission
25 reduction.

1 And, Charley, if you'll go to the next
2 slide.

3 This has been a real focus of our company
4 is to reduce our carbon levels from -- as compared
5 to 2005. We've got some interim goals that we're
6 meeting or on track to meet, and ultimately
7 achieving a vision of 100 percent carbon-free
8 electricity by the year 2050. Lots of work to do
9 between then and now for sure, but this Nobles
10 project has been and will continue to be part of
11 those goals, of that carbon-free future.

12 So Charley, you can go to the next page.

13 We -- there's a couple different -- in
14 order to do that, in order to -- for this repower to
15 be approved by the Commission, there are a couple
16 different steps of approvals that need to occur.
17 And one is where the Company needs to submit a
18 petition or a proposal to add generation to our mix,
19 and that's something that we did in the last year.

20 And as part of that, our company proposed
21 upgrades of four Upper Midwest wind farms, existing
22 wind farms where we're looking to repower those,
23 upgrade them with new technology, and then, you
24 know, extend the life of those wind farms.

25 We presented that with the benefits

1 associated, that we can actually save our customers
2 money with the purchasing of the components, we can
3 increase the energy that's produced. Again, we can
4 extend the life of the Nobles Wind Farm itself and
5 the three others that we're proposing.

6 And then some of the benefits,
7 additionally, are additional landowner and local
8 government payments either, you know, immediately or
9 over time. And, again, it's helping us with our
10 carbon-free focus and goals.

11 So that was a proposal that we submitted
12 to the Commission last year, and we received
13 approval to move forward with those proposals in
14 December, December of 2020. So that's the first --
15 that's the first approval the Commission has to
16 issue for us to proceed with these projects and the
17 Nobles Wind Project.

18 The next step -- and yeah, Charley, I
19 think you can go to the next slide now.

20 The next step in approving this project
21 is the process we're in that Charley described right
22 now. We will need to seek amendments to our permit,
23 our existing operating permit, in order to repower
24 this, and that includes a host of impacts to
25 evaluate, timelines to consider, compliance

1 obligations to meet.

2 And so that's really the part that we're
3 in now, we need to make sure that we can comply with
4 the permits and everything that's out there with our
5 regulators on this. And it really does offer us a
6 chance to work with the community on making this the
7 best project it can be, trying to make it, you know,
8 a win-win for the community and for the environment.

9 And so our proposal is to take that --
10 take the existing wind farm that was built and
11 operational in 2010, that consisted of 134 GE
12 1.5 megawatt turbines, and retrofit that, if you
13 will, repower that with new components that will
14 upgrade the capacity of each turbine and extend the
15 life of the wind farm.

16 And what that looks like is we -- and
17 we'll get into the construction details in a couple
18 slides here, but we'd like to have this built and
19 operational by the end -- by December of 2022. We
20 are intending to repower 133 of the 134 turbines
21 with GE 1.6 megawatt turbines. We'll talk about the
22 components of those specifically in a slide or two.

23 And we are going to replace one existing
24 turbine with a Vestas V136 model. And for those who
25 are familiar with the Nobles 2 Project that just

1 built very recently just north of this project area,
2 those are the model of turbines that were used
3 there, the Vestas V136, so we'll replace one GE
4 turbine with a Vestas.

5 And then it is our intent also to
6 install -- during this repower to install an
7 aircraft detection lighting system. And the aim
8 there is to, instead of having lights permanently on
9 the top within the nacelles on top of the towers, or
10 those permanently blinking, here they would -- we
11 would install a radar to know when approaching
12 aircraft were on their way and only activate the
13 lights at those times of the evening. So we'd
14 have -- you know, we could have a majority of the
15 time with no lights on in -- on the turbines.

16 Charley, if you will, please move to the
17 next slide.

18 So to get into a little bit more of the
19 nuts and bolts of what the repower is, what the new
20 components are, you know, these turbines that are
21 repowered, first and foremost, they'll stay in the
22 same place right now. We're not -- with the
23 exception of the V136, which will move about 60 to
24 100 feet in location, the rest of these -- the rest
25 of the repower will be accomplished with the

1 turbines on the same foundation in the same
2 location.

3 And what we're proposing to replace, and
4 to gain that added efficiency, are the blades
5 themselves, the hub that attaches the blade, and
6 then components within the nacelle of the wind
7 turbine.

8 And specifically the length of the blades
9 will increase in many -- in most cases from a
10 77-meter rotor diameter, so, you know, the math on
11 that is 30 -- what is it, 38.5-meter blade, to a
12 97-meter rotor diameter blade. So the blade lengths
13 themselves will increase about ten meters or
14 30-some -- 33 feet in length, each blade. What that
15 does is it increases the rotor-swept area and allows
16 us to capture energy more efficiently from the wind
17 in the area.

18 There will be some turbines that are
19 retrofitted with 91-meter blades, and then of course
20 the Vestas V136 replacing one of the existing GE
21 1.5.

22 Charley, please, next slide.

23 Some details around the construction
24 process itself, there you can see the components
25 that we just discussed. The power stays in place,

1 the cell stays in place but gets some components
2 replaced, and then blades and hubs get replaced to
3 new lengths.

4 We're anticipating six to eight months
5 worth of construction, that includes removing the
6 existing components and replacing with new
7 components. And that would run from springtime of
8 next year, 2022, sort of the second quarter of next
9 year once road restrictions are lifted, to the end
10 of the year, December of 2022 or before, being up
11 and being commercially operable.

12 We accomplish the switch-out of
13 components by cranes, and cranes would move from
14 turbine to turbine. And what I know is that we have
15 land agents that are out in the field, we've made
16 contact with all the landowners that support a
17 turbine currently, were to have a crane path on
18 their property, and have worked directly with them
19 to optimize where those cranes paths would go.

20 I would say that if you're listening in
21 and that you have not had that opportunity to review
22 those, please first get in touch with us. We'd like
23 to speak with you about how those crane paths can
24 reduce impacts on your land.

25 And then also that, if you want, the

1 crane paths are available on the docket that
2 Charley -- online that Charley identified on map, so
3 you can view them that way as well. But please
4 reach out if you haven't had a chance to, you know,
5 have a conversation about optimization of those
6 crane paths.

7 To reduce impacts on the land, we are
8 planning to use construction matting on all crane
9 paths to reduce compaction across land, and of
10 course land that where there is compaction, we do
11 work with the landowner to restore that land to its
12 original condition after that temporary use of the
13 crane paths.

14 And then of course at each turbine there
15 will be some temporary workspace to take the old
16 components off, install the new components. Our
17 review has included a maximum 400-foot radius around
18 each turbine foundation to accommodate that
19 temporary workspace, and our impact evaluation has
20 followed along with that.

21 But that's another issue, if you have
22 concerns about the area around your turbine
23 foundation, please get in touch with us at the
24 contact information that we'll provide, and we're
25 happy to work with you on what works best for the

1 laydown and the construction area around each
2 turbine.

3 And then something that we'll do is we're
4 going to work with the county and state road
5 authorities where perhaps some turning radii or some
6 public road improvements may need to be made in
7 order to conduct the deliveries, in order to bring
8 the components out to the site, and that's something
9 that we work with Charley and David's group, again,
10 the county highway department, and MnDOT as well to
11 make sure that we're doing all that properly and in
12 compliance.

13 Okay. So next -- if you will, Charley,
14 the next slide is my final slide.

15 And this is just really a few different
16 ways to get in touch with us or to keep up with the
17 project and the process of it. These will be
18 available not only through this time of state review
19 of our permit application, but afterwards and
20 throughout construction.

21 We have an e-mail devoted specifically to
22 the project. You can e-mail us there, we monitor
23 that, and reapply to it. Same thing for that
24 general project phone number, if -- you can leave a
25 message there and a project team member -- the

1 correct project team member will reply to you.

2 And then we do have a web page developed
3 for this project and you can track updates and
4 developments on that if that's a good way for you to
5 keep track of the project.

6 And, again, I would just say, I hope that
7 everybody here either saw the newspaper ad that we
8 put in the Worthington Globe or received directly an
9 e-mail notice of tonight's meeting. If you are
10 aware of somebody that is not getting those
11 mailings, if somebody mentioned that to you or maybe
12 you're joining tonight and you never received a
13 mailing, please get in touch with us at this
14 contact. We want to get you -- we would like to get
15 you on the mailing list so that you will receive
16 routine updates, and we're sorry to have missed you
17 on the first round.

18 Okay. With that, Charley, that's all I
19 had to say. I'll stand by later for any questions
20 that might come up. Thank you.

21 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: All right. David, I
22 think you're up.

23 MR. DAVID BIRKHOLZ: Am I unmuted then?

24 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Yes, you are.

25 MR. DAVID BIRKHOLZ: Okay. Good evening,

1 everyone. I'm just asking because through the
2 migrate organization, I'm always planning on this
3 energy project about four minutes before the
4 meeting, my earbuds said, you know you're going to
5 run out of energy on your earbuds so you better
6 rethink that plan.

7 So here I am and it's -- I'm working, so
8 you can ask me questions if you missed something
9 that -- I'm using antique equipment here as we go.

10 But I am David Birkholz with the Energy
11 Environmental Review and Analysis, which is the unit
12 of Department of Commerce's energy division that
13 deals with energy facilities. We do some planning,
14 mostly environmental review, and also any technical
15 assistance to the Public Utilities generally comes
16 from our department and from our unit.

17 So we've been performing that function
18 since 2005, and before that we did the same for the
19 EQB when we were the decisionmaking people. So
20 we've been working with the wind development process
21 since -- well, for over 20 years -- well, since the
22 beginning.

23 Could you pass the slide, please?

24 All right. On this particular project --
25 and again, it's good to talk to a group out here

1 because everyone out in the -- in your area is
2 obviously familiar with wind development and the
3 wind processes, but to be real specific about this
4 one that we're involved in today, as was mentioned
5 earlier, there was a 2010 permit, and this was built
6 about ten years ago and put into service.

7 As Mr. Langan earlier stated, the
8 turbines will basically be staying put, so it's a
9 lot simpler process in that regard so that we're not
10 designing a layout and having to do environmental
11 review of where the micro-siting of turbines needs to
12 take place.

13 But there are quite a few things that do
14 need to be changed. So we basically started out
15 with the permit as it existed, and then we looked at
16 the things that are going to need to take -- be
17 considered and be taken care of going forward in
18 order to make this update efficient and
19 environmentally sound.

20 So we started out with an obvious point
21 that if you have larger turbine blades that you're
22 adding on and that you'll have a requirement for a
23 three-by-five RD setback, a rotor diameter setback,
24 from nonparticipating landowner parcels, then there
25 has to be some consideration made for that.

1 The company, Xcel Energy, is currently
2 out there, and I'm sure many of you have talked to
3 them, they're trying to make arrangements or
4 agreements about that extension. But there also is
5 the concept in the -- in the permit that a variance
6 may be allowed for a certain percentage of the
7 setbacks that don't meet that requirement, that no
8 arrangement has been made but that will still not
9 have an actual impact on the adjacent landowner.

10 And I should say that the three-by-five
11 setback that is considered -- has been considered
12 over the years has changed and developed to the best
13 that we can estimate as a reasonable place, but it's
14 not -- it's not a magic number.

15 And it's specifically -- I want to make
16 the point, it's specifically made to protect
17 development rights. So it's not a specific number,
18 but it is whatever's required to make sure that
19 nonparticipating neighboring landowners are still
20 able to protect their own development rights. So
21 that's where that stands, and you have some more
22 questions about that later.

23 But the other things that we did is we
24 sat down and redrafted a site permit that existed.
25 We still had to consider all the same others issues,

1 as you'll see on the slides, the soils, roads,
2 lighting, noise, all of those things are being
3 reconsidered.

4 As Mr. Langan mentioned, the aircraft
5 detection lighting system is being required now
6 generally by the Commission in all of its new
7 permits.

8 And it's interesting that you have an
9 example right north of you there in Nobles to the
10 project, in which I was a consultant as well from
11 the state perspective, giving us a proof of concept,
12 if you will, on the ALDS systems. And there are
13 other new ones coming on that we're doing, but I've
14 driven out there enough times in the dark, and in
15 the Nobles project out there, it was always a thing
16 to see -- quite a thing to see, the blinking red
17 lights were as far as you can see in the night. And
18 I think this is an incredible development that can
19 be greatly mitigated at this point in time, and
20 that's definitely a piece of this particular draft
21 permit.

22 Okay, Charley.

23 The other things that will be readdressed
24 and reevaluated are the things you will see in this
25 slide. The best environmental and human approaches

1 are continually developing, continually evolving,
2 and certainly our understanding of them and our
3 knowledge of them, so we try to incorporate into
4 each new permit the best information that we have.

5 And for this project, we will have a
6 postconstruction noise monitoring, so -- and
7 essentially that's designed to make sure that the
8 noise models that you see in the application when we
9 review it are actually -- they're actually living up
10 to that and they're actually meeting the concepts.

11 So overall as we go forward, we're able
12 to make sure that when we review noise modeling in a
13 permit we are able to say that we've tested that
14 after the fact and those -- we're able to understand
15 which models are accurate and to be trusted in
16 planning.

17 We also have -- there will be
18 additional -- with the new turbines and the new
19 size, there will be a new round of bird and bat
20 fatality monitoring that goes on, and that will be
21 going for two years in this case. And the company
22 will be working with our unit and also with the DNR
23 and the Federal -- FWS -- Wildlife Service, to
24 continue that study, so we continue to learn more
25 about reducing bird and bat fatalities.

1 And also there will be an updated
2 decommissioning plan. The decommissioning plan will
3 be reevaluated every five years, but that's an
4 important thing to know that the permit fully
5 considers the fact that this may at some time -- the
6 life of the project may come to an end, and the
7 return to the original use as close as possible is
8 the thinking behind an updated decommissioning plan.

9 So go ahead, Charley.

10 So these are all things in the draft
11 permit, the information you have from Mr. Langan,
12 the other things, these are all things that are open
13 for discussion sensibly before the Commission turns
14 around and gives a permit.

15 So we have a draft site permit, but
16 that's not -- it doesn't necessarily have to be the
17 final version. We'd like to have a lot of local
18 comment and local impact and probably you all know
19 the drill. So all the information that we can get
20 about local impact is going to be extremely useful
21 for designing the final site permit for this new
22 plan.

23 And my recommendation is -- at this point
24 in time is to go to our website and look. We
25 have -- when we -- we worked at EERA with the

1 company to make sure that they reviewed the things
2 that we thought needed to be reviewed in order to
3 put in an application.

4 At which time, again, we put together the
5 draft site permit when they did submit their
6 application. I recommend that you go to the --
7 either the EERA website or the eDocket site and
8 actually open up these documents. Because we went
9 through and described our review of the application
10 and we went through and described why we were making
11 recommendations for change to the permit that we
12 were making, and we also have included a full and
13 developed draft of that site application.

14 So in order to help you make comments on
15 your opinion and your viewings about what's included
16 and what's not included and what may be improved
17 upon, you would probably be best served to actually
18 pull that up and read it.

19 Also, just as a sidenote, in the
20 application that's filed, you can review that as
21 well. That's a very useful document to review, and
22 in that application there are appendices that you'll
23 note that have actual -- the bird and bat protection
24 plan or the conservation plan and the new
25 decommissioning plan are spelled out in those

1 appendices, so those are good things to read to make
2 sure that you can understand the project fully.

3 So one more, I think.

4 Okay. Now this is on the website -- or
5 this is on the -- Charley is posting, or has posted,
6 the slide presentation from tonight on the eDocket
7 site, and so I have included these actual live links
8 to our EERA site. So you can actually click
9 directly through to those documents about which I
10 was speaking, so you can actually see our comments
11 and recommendations and actually see the other
12 information relevant to the project, including the
13 application.

14 So I highly recommend, again, that as we
15 have ten days, I believe, for comments, go ahead and
16 make comments tonight, go ahead and make comments if
17 you want, but I also recommend going ahead and
18 reviewing that information. And just because you've
19 made comments one time doesn't mean you can't go
20 back after you've made some evaluations and make
21 additional comments, so please feel free to do that.

22 And there is one more slide, I'm sure.

23 Ah, there's two more slides, yeah, right.

24 Just to be clear, there's freedom about
25 what you want to say and what you want to ask,

1 that's perfectly fine, but if you've seen the notice
2 itself, these are the questions that are really
3 going to be helpful for the Commission as they make
4 a decision about whether this repowering project
5 should go forward, and if so, what needs to be
6 addressed in the permit.

7 And the first thing you'll be making
8 comments on are human and environmental impacts,
9 those -- what's going to affect your land, what's
10 going to affect your life in the area. So go back
11 through the permit, feel free to make comments about
12 what permit conditions need to be changed or what
13 ones are missing. And then, of course, the final
14 question is, should the Commission approve the
15 repowering, which is what we're coming to in the
16 end.

17 But if it does, we want to make sure it's
18 done right. If it's done right, we need to have
19 that done in the final permit, and if we're going to
20 do the final permit correctly, we're going to need
21 the input of the people who live in the project
22 area.

23 So that effectively ends my presentation,
24 there's one more slide for a reference point. So
25 I'll leave it to the call person to go ahead and

1 give you information on how to go ahead and make
2 comment.

3 As was mentioned earlier, Mr. Langan,
4 Mr. Bruce, and myself will be available to answer
5 questions, questions we can't answer will be
6 responded to the future. As you make your comments
7 and when you bring in further comments, we will be
8 responding to them in reply comments.

9 So -- but otherwise, feel free to contact
10 us, feel free to ask us tonight, feel free to make
11 comments tonight, and feel free to make comments
12 throughout the period.

13 So thank you very much for listening to
14 me and for participating tonight, and I will turn it
15 over to the call director.

16 PHONE OPERATOR: All right. Everyone, as
17 a reminder to ask a question or if you want to make
18 a comment, you need to press star one on your
19 telephone keypad. Again, that's star one on your
20 telephone keypad. We will pause for a just a moment
21 to compile the Q&A roster.

22 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Hey, operator, this
23 is Charley.

24 PHONE OPERATOR: There are no questions.

25 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Oh, okay. That's

1 what I was going to ask. We can give it a couple
2 more minutes. Again, this is Charley with the
3 Public Utilities Commission. I want to -- again,
4 you know, if anybody has any inspiration, please
5 press star one and hopefully we can answer a
6 question for you.

7 Operator, did someone just join the
8 queue?

9 PHONE OPERATOR: Yes, sir. Our first
10 question comes from the line of Nathan Runke. Your
11 line is open.

12 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: So, yeah, my name is
13 Nathan Runke, so that's N-A-T-H-A-N, R-U-N-K-E. I
14 don't know if I have to do that on all of these, but
15 I work for a company -- or a union at
16 (indiscernible), and we just wanted to make the
17 comment that we really do appreciate --

18 THE REPORTER: Mr. -- Mr. Runke, hello.
19 Hi, this is Christine.

20 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: Yeah.

21 THE REPORTER: I'm the court reporter,
22 you cut out for a second after you said --

23 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: Oh, sorry.

24 THE REPORTER: -- a union, and then I
25 missed what you said after that. Thank you.

1 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: Yeah. Sure. It's the
2 International Union of Operating Engineers, Local
3 49. We represent heavy equipment operators in
4 Minnesota and both of the Dakotas. And we just
5 wanted to kind of -- or kind of convey our members
6 and our support for this repower project.

7 Xcel has been a really amazing partner
8 over the last few years with the trades and things
9 like that to work through projects like this, and it
10 really offered members like ours great opportunities
11 to create, like, family-sustaining jobs in that -- in
12 Southwest Minnesota and, frankly, throughout the
13 state. So we just wanted to convey our support for
14 the project, and yeah, we hope that it gets
15 approved, and that was all my comment.

16 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Thank you, Mr. Runke.

17 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: And then how do I get
18 off?

19 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: There you go. The
20 operator takes care of that.

21 PHONE OPERATOR: Again, as a reminder,
22 everyone, if you would like to ask a question or
23 make a comment, please press star one on your
24 telephone keypad.

25 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Well, in the

1 meantime, again, this is Charley with the Public
2 Utilities Commission, I just want to remind everyone
3 that there is a comment period open, and I'll go
4 back to the slide. So please, you know, if you
5 are -- have any comments to make, questions to be
6 answered, here are the questions that the Commission
7 is seeking comments on. The comment period is open
8 until May 10th, and then there'll be a reply comment
9 period until May 24th, on any help that the
10 Commission and the Department of Commerce can get
11 from local citizens describing the impacts of the
12 projects on their community, it helps us build a
13 better record and a better record for our
14 Commissioners to review and base their decision on,
15 so please help us out.

16 It looks like we might have one more
17 commenter in the queue, Operator.

18 PHONE OPERATOR: Yes, sir, we have one
19 caller on the queue. Please state your first and
20 last name, and the line will be open.

21 MR. GARY KLEVE: Gary Kleve.

22 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Mr. Kleve, could you
23 spell your name for the court reporter.

24 MR. GARY KLEVE: K-L-E-V-E.

25 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: All right. And do

1 you have a comment or a question?

2 MR. GARY KLEVE: Yeah, when this -- these
3 wind generators first were put up, I was promised
4 compensation for the noise and everything. I'm just
5 wondering if that's going to happen again. I never
6 got compensation for any of it.

7 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Thank you, Mr. Kleve.
8 You know, those are contracts with the landowners
9 and Xcel.

10 Mr. Langan, would you have anything to
11 add to Mr. Kleve's question?

12 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay. Good, that's
13 working. Thank you, Charley.

14 And good evening, Mr. Kleve. I guess I
15 would have to know if you have been -- if you are
16 within the three-by-five rotor diameter setback, are
17 you aware, have you spoken with any of our land
18 agents from WSB & Associates?

19 MR. GARY KLEVE: I spoke with the ones
20 that are going around signing us up to -- for a
21 variance on it. They're -- you know, I'm supposed
22 to be getting a check from you guys, from Xcel
23 Energy or whoever is doing this. And I'm -- you
24 know, I'm just wondering if you're going to be
25 paying this or not. They said --

1 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Sure.

2 MR. GARY KLEVE: -- they are going to be,
3 so I don't have a tower right on my land, but I'm
4 surrounded by them.

5 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

6 MR. GARY KLEVE: I've got three in back
7 of me and three in front of me and a couple to the
8 north of me, you know.

9 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

10 MR. GARY KLEVE: And I'm just wondering,
11 you know -- yeah.

12 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: I'm sorry, I was
13 going to ask, so did -- were you offered a
14 participation agreement that was -- that you
15 recently signed or --

16 MR. GARY KLEVE: Yeah. Yes, I have.

17 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay. And so I think
18 maybe your question is, when do payments go out for
19 those participation agreements in the project?

20 MR. GARY KLEVE: Yeah, I'm just
21 wondering, you know, if this was all a big farce or
22 if you're actually going to pay. You know, the ones
23 that don't have a wind generator on their land, if
24 we're still going to get compensated for the shadows
25 and the noise and all that other stuff.

1 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: So, sir, yes, there
2 will be -- if you signed a participation agreement,
3 there is a payment associated with that.

4 MR. GARY KLEVE: Okay.

5 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: And what I can --
6 what I can commit to is getting one of our
7 representatives in touch with you about details
8 around payment schedules. It is for real, sir, just
9 to answer your question.

10 MR. GARY KLEVE: Okay. Well, that's
11 what -- that's what I really want to know.

12 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Sure, you bet.

13 MR. GARY KLEVE: You know, because --

14 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: And I've got your
15 name taken down here, and I'll make sure that one of
16 our land agents is in touch with you about the
17 schedule for payments and the like. Is that -- is
18 that -- does that sound good?

19 MR. GARY KLEVE: Yeah, yeah.

20 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

21 MR. GARY KLEVE: I was just looking for
22 the contract that I signed here now. But yeah, I
23 signed a contract on it, and in fact, the payment is
24 supposed to be towards the end of this month,
25 beginning of next month.

1 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

2 MR. GARY KLEVE: And so, yeah.

3 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

4 MR. GARY KLEVE: Okay. Yeah, that's what
5 I was just wondering. And then other thing, I
6 couldn't sign in on the Internet to watch the
7 presentation.

8 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

9 MR. GARY KLEVE: I don't know what in the
10 heck was wrong with that but --

11 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay.

12 MR. GARY KLEVE: -- has the incorrect --
13 that number and the incorrect password, so -- but
14 that's the only thing I've got.

15 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Okay. Well, I
16 appreciate the question, sir, and like I say, I've
17 got your name down. And we'll have one of our land
18 agents get in touch with you and clarify, you know,
19 the schedule of payments and the terms of the
20 agreement, but thanks for signing and we'll be in
21 touch soon.

22 MR. GARY KLEVE: All right. Thank you.

23 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Thank you.

24 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Thanks. I'm really
25 sorry, Mr. Kleve, you had some difficulty signing in

1 to the video portion of tonight's presentation. As
2 David, Mr. Birkholz, mentioned before, the
3 presentation is available on the Public Utilities
4 Commission's website, so that's mn.gov/puc.

5 And if you go to our calendar, there's a
6 notice about tonight's meeting and the presentation
7 is included there, and I will also be uploading the
8 presentation to our eDocket system. David said I
9 had -- I was slated to do it tomorrow morning, I
10 just wanted to make sure there were no last minute
11 changes, but I'll be uploading it there as well, so
12 that's another avenue to get ahold of this
13 presentation.

14 And, again, I'm sorry that it didn't
15 quite work out this evening, but I'm glad you were
16 able to get in touch with us via the audio option
17 and get your question answered with the Xcel
18 representative, Mr. Langan, so that's great.

19 Do we have any more commenters, Ann?

20 PHONE OPERATOR: At this time we don't
21 have any comment or questions, but everyone, if you
22 would like to make a comment or question, feel free
23 to press star one to open your line.

24 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: I think one other
25 thing that I'd like to mention is, you know, there's

1 a lot of contact information with myself,
2 Mike Kaluzniak, the public advisor on this project,
3 Mr. Birkholz, and Xcel representatives. So if you
4 have any questions about the project that might --
5 if your inspiration hits after this meeting, you
6 know, please feel free to reach out to any of us.
7 We are all knowledgeable about the project.

8 And if you have any specific questions
9 about the process and the Commission itself, feel
10 free to contact me or Mike Kaluzniak. If you have
11 any questions about the draft site permit or some of
12 the environmental impacts, feel free to reach out to
13 Mr. Birkholz. You know, all of our contact
14 information is included, and we're here to answer
15 questions and provide any assistance that anyone may
16 need.

17 I think we'll give it a couple more
18 minutes here, and then if we do not have any more
19 commenters -- unless if Mr. Langan or Mr. Birkholz
20 has anything to add, but a couple more minutes and
21 then if no one else presses star one, we can call it
22 a meeting.

23 MR. MATHEW LANGAN: Charley, this is
24 Matt, I do not have anything else for this evening,
25 but I'll stand by for a few minutes if additional

1 comments or questions come in.

2 MR. DAVID BIRKHOLZ: And I would just
3 add -- and again, thanks for coming, but as
4 frustrating as it is for all the attendees, it's
5 also incredibly frustrating to do meetings in this
6 manner, and hopefully the world is coming around
7 soon enough to where we can actually get out and do
8 these things face-to-face.

9 It's certainly in the interest of all the
10 people on this end to be out there on site, and the
11 state is planning to do that as quickly and as
12 efficiently as possible when it's reasonable to do
13 so, so hopefully that's real soon.

14 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Yeah. Thank you, and
15 that's a really great note that this is strange
16 times to be doing this kind of meeting and this kind
17 of work. So we're doing our best under the
18 restrictions that are in place, and like David
19 mentioned, we hope to be out in the community
20 talking to people eye-to-eye in the local community.

21 Operator, do we have any more people
22 ready to ask a question or provide any comment?

23 PHONE OPERATOR: No other questions or
24 comments at this time. You may continue.

25 MR. CHARLEY BRUCE: Okay. I think at

1 this point if no one else jumps in to provide any
2 comments or provide any -- have any questions
3 answered, we'll just, again, put the slide up again
4 about the comment period. Please feel free to --
5 you know, we're accepting written comments, again,
6 through May 10th and reply comments until May 24th.
7 If you do choose to provide a written comment,
8 again, try to include the docket number, 09-584.

9 And with that, I hope everyone has a
10 great evening. Thank you for spending your Thursday
11 night with us, and let's be safe out there and thank
12 you very much.

13 PHONE OPERATOR: This concludes this
14 conference call. Thank you all for participating.
15 You may now disconnect.

16 (Public comment concluded.)
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	<p>8:18,23;9:12,18;12:4;15:3,9;21:9;22:6;23:25;29:4;30:14;32:19;33:2,3;34:21;35:1;36:5;40:14;42:3;43:3,3,5,8</p>	<p>29:22;30:1 application (13) 7:3,6;11:16,22; 21:19;27:8;29:3,6,9, 13,20,22;30:13</p>	<p>9:10;22:10;36:17 away (1) 8:4</p>	<p>built (5) 4:25;16:10,18;17:1; 24:5</p>
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