

# **Appendix D**

## **Agency Correspondence**

This appendix provides a summary of outreach efforts conducted by Xcel Energy. On November 2, 2020, Xcel Energy sent electronic letters to individuals representing federal, state, and local entities requesting comment on the proposed Nobles Wind Farm Repowering Project. The agencies contacted are included in the table below and a representative letter as well as agency responses as of February 2021 follow the table.

<b>Agency Correspondence for the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Response Date (Type)</b>
<b>Federal</b>	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, La Crescent Field Office	No response to date
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office	December 2, 2020 (Response)
National Telecommunications and Information Administration	December 31, 2020 (Response)
<b>State</b>	
Minnesota Historical Society – State Historic Preservation Office	December 11, 2020 (Response)
Minnesota Office of the State Archaeologist	No response to date
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) – Energy Projects Review	November 2, 2020 (Response)
MNDNR – Region 4 (Southern Region)	December 2, 2020 (Response)
MNDNR – Natural Heritage Information System Review	No response to date
Minnesota Department of Health	No response to date
Minnesota Department of Agriculture	No response to date
Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT)– Routing and Siting Coordinator	December 1, 2020 (Response)
MNDOT – District 7 Engineer	November 4, 2020 (Response) November 5, 2020 (Response) December 1, 2020 (Response)
Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development	No response to date
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	No response to date
Minnesota Department of Public Safety	No response to date
<b>County</b>	
Southwest Regional Development Commission	No response to date
Nobles County – Public Works, Environmental Services	November 3, 2020 (Response)
Nobles County – Public Works	No response to date
<b>Local Government Units</b>	
Larkin Township – Commissioner, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District	No response to date
Summit Lake Township – Commissioner, 1 <sup>st</sup> District	No response to date

<b>Agency Correspondence for the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project</b>	
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Response Date (Type)</b>
Olney Township – Commissioner, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District	No response to date
Dewald Township – Commissioner, 3 <sup>rd</sup> District	No response to date
<b>Native American Tribes</b>	
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Lower Sioux Indian Community	No response to date
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Upper Sioux Community	No response to date
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer/Director Prairie Island Indian Community	No response to date
Shakopee Cultural Resource Director	November 30, 2020 (Response)
Bois Forte Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
Fond du Lac Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
Grand Portage Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
Mille Lacs Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
Red Lake Archaeologist	No response to date
White Earth Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	No response to date
MIAC Cultural Resources Specialist	No response to date

# **Representative Project Introduction Letter**

Northern States Power Company  
Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project  
Docket No. IP-6646/WS-09-584  
February 2021



414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis,  
MN 55401

November 2, 2020

[Address Block]

**RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota**

Dear [Name],

Xcel Energy is writing to request comments regarding the Applicant’s plans to acquire an amended site permit from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) for the Nobles Wind Farm (Nobles) Project located in Nobles County, Minnesota (see attached Project Location Map). The original Site Permit for the 134-turbine, 201-megawatt large wind energy conversion system was issued by the MPUC on December 11, 2009. Xcel Energy anticipates applying for an amendment during First Quarter 2021.

The Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project (“Project”) would extend the life of the wind farm and include adding longer blades (rotors) and a new nacelle, and upgrading other components within the turbine that would change the turbine rating from 1.5 megawatts (“MW”) to 1.6 MW. The purpose of the Project is to improve turbine technology and to maximize energy yield. Longer blades provide an increase in the rotor swept area, which results in a corresponding increase in the nominal production capacity of the Project. No new turbines would be added to the existing wind farm as part of the Project and the Project is expected to extend the life of the wind farm for 25 years.

The previously permitted locations of turbines, access roads, collection lines, and other supporting infrastructure will remain the same. A full-sized crane will be used to remove the old rotors and nacelles and install the new components. Some minor upgrading of public roadways and intersections may be required to allow for delivery of the replacement rotors and nacelles to each turbine location. A temporary laydown yard will be constructed within agricultural lands to stage the turbine components prior to installation. A temporary crane path will also be required for installing the new rotors and nacelles, which will be restored to pre-construction conditions following the repower. Xcel Energy anticipates construction to begin in Spring 2022.

Xcel Energy is conducting field studies to identify a suitable location for the staging/laydown area and crane paths and the precise location of these facilities is pending. Table 1 provides the public land sections that are included in the Project area.

<b>County Name</b>	<b>Township Name</b>	<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Sections</b>
Nobles	Dewald	102N	41W	2-10 and 15-18
	Olney	102N	42W	1-2, 11-12
	Summit Lake	103N	41W	15-17, 20-23, 25-28, and 31-35
	Larkin	103N	42W	10-15, 22-26, and 34-36



414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis,  
MN 55401

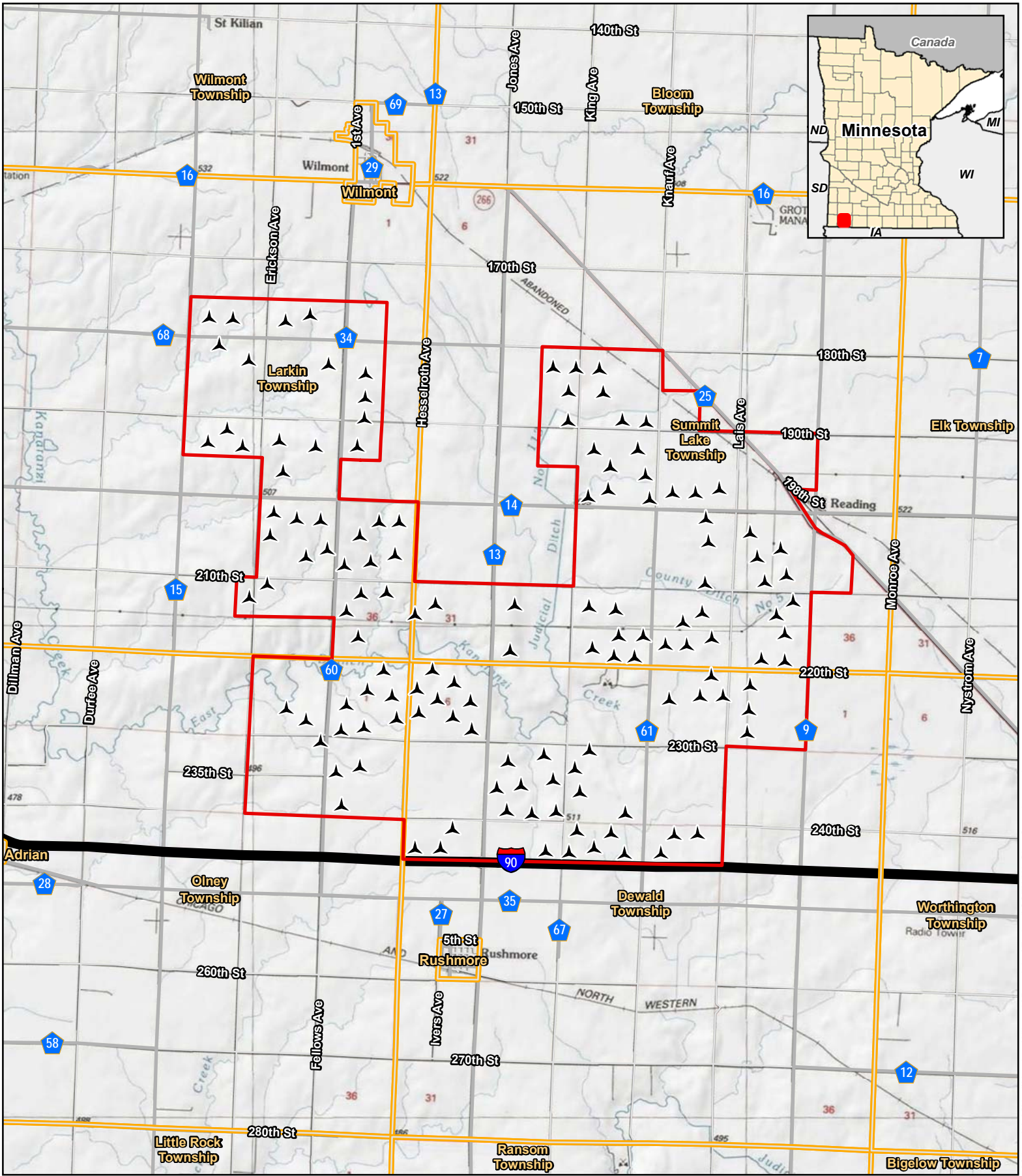
With this letter, Xcel Energy is requesting comments on any resources that should be considered in the Site Permit Amendment Application for the proposed Project. To facilitate your review, we have enclosed a map that depicts the proposed Project area. We welcome any comments your agency may have at this time and throughout the permit application process. Any written agency comments provided in response to this letter will be incorporated into the Commission's review process.

If you require further information or have questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (612) 330-6954 or [Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com).

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Langan  
Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights  
Xcel Energy

Enc. Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project Area Map



0 0.5 1 Miles  
1:100,000

**Xcel Energy**  
RESPONSIBLE BY NATURE™

For Environmental Review Purposes Only

## Nobles Repower Project Project Location Nobles County, Minnesota

- Turbine
- Project Boundary
- City/Township

## **Agency Responses**



**From:** [Marsh, Dawn S](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 11:28:00 AM

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**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK before opening links and attachments.**

Matt,

Because of current workload management, we are not able to provide the level of initial technical assistance you are requesting. We now rely on available web-based tools to provide initial technical assistance.

You can obtain information on federally listed species that could occur in your project area through our Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>). Through IPaC, you will be able to enter geographic and activity details for your project to generate an Official Species List, a list of federally listed species and designated critical habitat that may be impacted by your project. The species list will also include any species proposed for listing and any areas proposed as critical habitat that overlap with the project area. The Official Species List provided through IPaC is considered a technical assistance tool intended to be used by the project proponent to determine whether project activities could impact federal trust resources and, therefore, require further consultation with the Service.

The species list includes links to species-specific project-design guidelines and survey recommendations to help you determine whether your project may affect the species and, if so, how to avoid or minimize those effects. After reviewing the species list and applicable links, if you determine that further consultation is required with the Service, please contact me for further assistance.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,  
Dawn

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Dawn Marsh (she/her/hers) | Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | Minnesota-Wisconsin Field Office  
4101 American Blvd. E., Bloomington, MN 55425  
Tel: (952) 252-0092 x 202\*  
\*Teleworking - please email to schedule a call

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**From:** Langan, Matthew A <Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 11:26 AM

**To:** khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us <khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us>; srdc@swrdc.org <srdc@swrdc.org>; Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us <Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us>; Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us <Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us>; cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>; Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us <Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us>; David.Bell@state.mn.us <David.Bell@state.mn.us>; Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us <Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us>; stacy.kotch@state.mn.us <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; angela.piltaver@state.mn.us <angela.piltaver@state.mn.us>; Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us <Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us>; marc.fischer@state.mn.us <marc.fischer@state.mn.us>; kari.howe@state.mn.us <kari.howe@state.mn.us>; karen.kromar@state.mn.us <karen.kromar@state.mn.us>; david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil <david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil>; Quamme, Sarah <sarah\_quamme@fws.gov>; cheyanne.stjohn <cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com>; Samantha Odegard <samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov>; noah.white@piic.org <noah.white@piic.org>; culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org <culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org>; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov <blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov>; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com <jillhoppe@fdlrez.com>; maryannng@grandportage.com <maryannng@grandportage.com>; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net <amy.burnette@llojibwe.net>; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com <natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com>; kade.ferris@redlakenation.org <kade.ferris@redlakenation.org>; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov <jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov>; melissa.cerda@state.mn.us <melissa.cerda@state.mn.us>; Rheude, Margaret G <margaret\_rheude@fws.gov>; Rigby, Elizabeth A <elizabeth\_rigby@fws.gov>; Marsh, Dawn S <dawn\_marshall@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; mary.otto@state.mn.us <mary.otto@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

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Hello all. Thank you to those who have already provided input regarding the Nobles Windfarm Repowering project.

For those that are still reviewing the material, please let me know if you have any questions. We are hoping to receive your initial comments by the end of the day this Wednesday, 12/2.

-Matt

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

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**From:** Langan, Matthew A

**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 4:29 PM

**To:** khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us; srdc@swrdc.org; Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us; Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us; cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us; Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us; David.Bell@state.mn.us; Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us; stacy.kotch@state.mn.us; angela.piltaver@state.mn.us; Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us; marc.fischer@state.mn.us; kari.howe@state.mn.us; karen.kromar@state.mn.us; david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil; Sarah\_Quamme@fws.gov; cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; noah.white@piic.org; culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com; maryanng@grandportage.com; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com; kade.ferris@redlakenation.org; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov; melissa.cerda@state.mn.us

**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; mary.otto@state.mn.us

**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

Dear Agency Staff,

Xcel Energy has developed plans to extend the life of its Nobles Windfarm in Nobles County, MN, and is reaching out to your agency for input and coordination. The proposed project would upgrade turbine components and attach longer blades at the existing 134 turbine locations. No additional turbine locations are proposed. Upgrading the existing turbines is expected to extend the life of the wind farm 25 years. Project details and timelines are included in the attached letter and project map.

The re-power project would require Xcel Energy to apply for an Amendment to its existing Site Permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Xcel Energy intends to submit its amendment application in early 2021 to provide sufficient time for the associated MnPUC public review process. Your early input will help develop the information included in the amendment application, as well as refine project plans.

I've listed my contact information below so you can reach out with any initial questions you have, or information you need, after reviewing the information in the attached letter and project map. Xcel Energy is available over the next month to meet with you online to discuss the project. Please email me to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

**P:** 612.330.6954

**E:** [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Telecommunications and**  
**Information Administration**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 31, 2020

Mr. Frank O'Brien  
COMSEARCH  
19700 Janelia Farm Blvd.  
Ashburn, VA 20147

Re: Nobles Wind Repower Project: Nobles County, MN

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

In response to your request on November 11, 2020, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration provided to the federal agencies represented in the Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC) for review, the plans for the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project, located in Nobles County, Minnesota.

After a 45+ day period of review, no agencies had issues with turbine placement in this area.

While the IRAC agencies did not identify any concerns regarding radio frequency blockage, this does not eliminate the need for the wind energy facilities to meet any other requirements specified by law related to these agencies. For example, this review by the IRAC does not eliminate any need that may exist to coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration concerning flight obstruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these proposals.

Sincerely,

John R. McFall  
Deputy Chief, Spectrum Services Division  
Office of Spectrum Management

December 11, 2020

Matthew Langan  
Xcel Energy  
414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

RE: Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project  
Nobles County  
SHPO Number: 2021-0544

Dear Mr. Langan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above project. Information received on November 2, 2020 has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (Minn. Stat. 138.666).

According to your November 2, 2020 cover letter, Xcel Energy is planning to retrofit 134 existing wind turbines by installing larger rotors and different nacelles. This will improve turbine technology, increase energy yield, and extend the useful life of the project. The previously permitted locations of turbines, access roads, collection lines, and other supporting infrastructure will stay the same, however, large cranes will be used to remove the old rotors and nacelles and install the new components. Some minor upgrades to existing public roadways and intersections may be required to allow for delivery of these large components and a temporary equipment laydown yard and crane path will be constructed in order to install the new equipment.

Due to the nature and location of the proposed project, we recommend that a Phase IA literature review be conducted to assess the potential for architectural and archaeological resources being located within the proposed project area. If, as a result of this assessment, a Phase I archaeological survey is recommended, this survey should be completed. The Phase I survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified. For a list of consultants who have expressed an interest in undertaking this type of research and archaeological surveys, please visit the website <http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/preservation-directory>, and select "Archaeologists, Contract" in the "Specialties" box.

The Phase Ia literature review and assessment should take into account not only direct impacts, but potential indirect impacts of this project as well. This would include the introduction of visual, atmospheric, or audible elements that may have an effect on any historic structures that are listed in the National or State Register of Historic Places, as well as any changes to a historic property's use.

The resulting cultural resources report should include a map with clearly marked project areas including the new laydown yard, crane paths, and larger above-ground equipment structures in relation to any identified cultural resources (architectural properties and archaeological sites). The report should discuss ways in which the project will avoid impacting, both directly and indirectly, any cultural resources that are identified.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36 CFR § 800. If this project is considered for federal financial assistance, or requires a federal permit or license, then review and consultation with our office will need to be initiated by the lead federal agency. Be advised that comments and recommendations provided by our office for this state-level review may differ from findings and determinations made by the federal agency as part of review and consultation under Section 106.

If you have any questions regarding our review of this project, please contact me at [kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,

*Kelly Gragg-Johnson*

Kelly Gragg-Johnson  
Environmental Review Specialist

**From:** [Boettcher, Joanne \(DNR\)](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Monday, November 2, 2020 4:44:28 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK** before opening links and attachments.

Hello Matt,

Can you please provide shapefiles of the project area, turbines, and any other areas that will be affected. If there are other areas of impact outside of the project footprint (e.g. road improvements), please also indicate this.

Thanks,

Joanne Boettcher  
Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist  
MNDNR – Mankato  
(507) 389-8813



---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A <Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 4:29 PM  
**To:** khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us; srdc@swrdc.org; Beimers, Sarah (ADM) <sarah.beimers@state.mn.us>; Gronhovd, Amanda (ADM) <amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>; Boettcher, Joanne (DNR) <Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us>; Bell, David (MDH) <david.bell@state.mn.us>; Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <angela.piltaver@state.mn.us>; Gaug, Ryan (DOT) <ryan.gaug@state.mn.us>; Fischer, Marc (DOT) <marc.fischer@state.mn.us>; Howe, Kari (DEED) <kari.howe@state.mn.us>; Kromar, Karen (MPCA) <karen.kromar@state.mn.us>; david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil; Sarah\_Quamme@fws.gov; cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; noah.white@piic.org; culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com; maryannng@grandportage.com; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com; kade.ferris@redlakenation.org; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov; Cerda, Melissa (MIAC) <melissa.cerda@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; Otto, Mary (COMM) <mary.otto@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

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Dear Agency Staff,

Xcel Energy has developed plans to extend the life of its Nobles Windfarm in Nobles County, MN, and is reaching out to your agency for input and coordination. The proposed project would upgrade turbine components and attach longer blades at the existing 134 turbine locations. No additional turbine locations are proposed. Upgrading the existing turbines is expected to extend the life of the wind farm 25 years. Project details and timelines are included in the attached letter and project map.

The re-power project would require Xcel Energy to apply for an Amendment to its existing Site Permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Xcel Energy intends to submit its amendment application in early 2021 to provide sufficient time for the associated MnPUC public review process. Your early input will help develop the information included in the amendment application, as well as refine project plans.

I've listed my contact information below so you can reach out with any initial questions you have, or information you need, after reviewing the information in the attached letter and project map. Xcel Energy is available over the next month to meet with you online to discuss the project. Please email me to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

**From:** [Hanson, Laurel](#)  
**To:** [Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us](mailto:Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us)  
**Cc:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** #20201104-1157-05311# - A file is available for download  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 11:58:46 AM

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Joanne,

The turbine location and project boundary GIS shapefiles for Nobles wind farm can be accessed using the link below. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

One or more files have been made available for you to download.  
In order to download the file(s), please use the link(s) below.  
The link(s) will expire at 2020-11-09 11:57:05 AM CST and may be used for no more than 5 times.

Xcel Energy Nobles Data:

<https://xpressdrive.xcelenergy.com/portal-seefx/~public/96bdb28e-a700-4484-9b5f-8612afe77df8?download>

Thanks,

**Laurel Hanson Hodkiewicz**

**Xcel Energy**

**Senior Geospatial Analyst - Siting & Land Rights**

1414 W. Hamilton Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701

P: 715.737.1308 C: 715.456.1819

E: [Laurel.Hanson@xcelenergy.com](mailto:Laurel.Hanson@xcelenergy.com)

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[XCELENERGY.COM](http://XCELENERGY.COM)

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Division of Ecological & Water Resources  
Region 4 (Southern Region)  
21371 Highway 15 South  
New Ulm, MN 56073

December 2, 2020

Matthew Langan  
Excel Energy  
Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com

Subject: DNR Early Coordination Comments for Nobles Wind Repower

Dear Matthew,

This letter includes DNR's early coordination review comments of the proposed Nobles Wind Repower project in response to a 11/2/20 review request and shapefile project information received 11/4/20 (footprint and turbines) and 11/20/20 (crane paths). The proposed project, located in central Nobles County, is to retrofit 134 turbines with larger rotors and different nacelles to increase energy yield and extend the life of the project. The originally permitted wind towers, access roads, and collection lines will be used, but road/intersection upgrades and temporary impacts including crane paths and a laydown yard will occur. This project is located along the peak of the Prairie Coteau, a substantially wind-developed area within Minnesota. This is a high priority conservation region in the [MN Wildlife Action Plan](#), the [MN Prairie Conservation Plan](#), and the [Missouri River One Watershed One Plan](#).

### **General Guidance and Recommendations**

The project should review and integrate the [MNDNR Guidance for Commercial Wind Energy Projects](#). Several natural resource GIS data layers are available on the [Minnesota Geospatial Commons](#) including Native Plant Communities, Public Waters, and MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance to assist in your project planning. Additional resources are also available from conservation groups such as the [The Nature Conservancy's Site Wind Right](#). Since most of the project components are already in place, most avoidance strategies apply to the temporary impacts associated with the project.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) protects non-participating landowners through the wind access buffer of 5 rotor diameters (prevailing wind direction) and 3 rotor diameters (non-prevailing wind direction). The only public land identified within the project footprint is Blue Bird WMA (Herlein-Boote and Van Drie Ridge WMAs are just outside of the project footprint area). At about 0.2 miles to the closest turbine, we are not identifying any issues with this setback in regards to State owned lands, but ensure this requirement is met for private lands as well.

### **NHIS Review, Rare Species, and Habitat Protection**

The MNDNR recommends or requires (depending on the specific type of species/community impact) avoidance of rare species, communities, and features in accordance with [Minnesota Rules Chapter 6134](#). A Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) review provides direction on these rare species/communities. The NHIS review must be completed and plans to avoid impacts should be in place prior to submitting the PUC application. The NHIS review can be requested using the form on the [NHIS review webpage](#). The NHIS review results are valid for one year. Please note that generally the DNR prefers for NHIS reviews to proceed early coordination review. As such, some NHIS issues may be referred to in this letter, but the NHIS review may provide more specific requirements.

Several natural resources (i.e. native plants, sites of biodiversity significance, mussels, Topeka shiners, other Species in Greatest Conservation Need) have been identified adjacent to the East Branch of Kanaranzi Creek. Overall, the proposed project crane paths seem to consider this and other resource-rich areas within the project boundary. However, some areas (e.g. crane path between towers 61 and 62 adjacent native plant communities) appear to come excessively close to high value resources despite an adjacent road. We recommend that wherever possible, any resources are avoided by using already established roads or access roads.

The project area is within the Rock River watershed and the East Branch Kanaranzi Creek subwatershed, a designated critical habitat for the federally protected and state special concern species [Topeka Shiner](#). The project should consult with the USFWS. Generally, avoidance practices for this species include those that avoid impacts or degradation of the stream, habitat, or water quality within streams. Specific recommendations are found in the USFWS' [Recommendations for Projects Affecting Waters Inhabited by Topeka Shiners in Minnesota](#).

The State Threatened [Blanding's Turtle](#) has not been specifically identified in this project boundary; however, its habitat often overlaps with Topeka Shiner habitat. This species depends upon both upland and aquatic habitats, moving between them. On-site workers should be provided the Blanding's Turtle ID and Reporting Factsheet (attached) and be vigilant for Blanding's turtles. If a Blanding's turtle is observed within the project area, please document its location and promptly notify the MNDNR Southern Region Nongame Wildlife Specialists who will provide further guidance, as needed. If a Blanding's turtle is in danger of imminent or likely harm, the turtles should be transferred by hand (Blanding's turtles don't bite, hold them by their shells, not by their tails or legs) to a safe, nearby location beyond project activities or other hazards. Turtles which are not in imminent danger should be left undisturbed. Many practices that generally protect stream, wetland, and upland habitat will also help protect Blanding's turtles, although additional measures may be required depending upon site and project specific circumstances. More information and specific recommendations are provided in the [Blanding's Turtle Fact Sheet](#).

We generally recommend wildlife friendly erosion control and invasive species prevention practices (attached) to minimize risks to aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

### **Bat and Bird Protection**

The project proposer will need to prepare an Avian and Bat Protection Plan (ABPP a.k.a. Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy) per [US Fish and Wildlife Service Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines](#) to identify and document measures to avoid and minimize risks to rare species. After the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Evaluations, we can

discuss if any additional surveys are recommended. The ABPP should include, as an Appendix, a post-construction fatality monitoring plan to assess project impacts using the [Minnesota Avian and Bat Survey Protocols for Wind Energy Projects](#).

Recent Minnesota Public Utilities Commission site permits have required that all turbines are locked or feathered up to the manufacturer's standard cut-in speed from one-half hour before sunset to one-half hour after sunrise from April 1 to October 31 of each year of operation. Site permits also state that operating turbines must be equipped with operational software capable of adjusting turbine cut-in speeds. The MNDNR supports this site permit requirement.

### **Waterbodies**

Several public water streams, their floodplains, and many other smaller flow paths are within the project boundary. Some National Wetland Inventory wetlands and sensitive groundwater areas are also located within the project boundary. Any crossings of public waters will require a [DNR Utility Crossing License](#). If any dewatering or water appropriations are necessary, we encourage early coordination with DNR Hydrologists when applying for [Water Appropriation Permit](#) due to sensitive groundwater and surface water features found in and near the project area. The project should work with the appropriate authority (typically the county) to ensure any Wetland Conservation Act, flood plain, or other local environmental requirements are fulfilled.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to working with you on this in a positive and collaborative manner to ensure that sustainable energy sources are developed while protecting Minnesota's natural resources. Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments.

Sincerely,



Joanne Boettcher

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist

cc:

Cynthia Warzecha, Energy Project Planner

Megan Benage, Regional Ecologist

Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer, South District Nongame Wildlife Specialist

Brent Beste, Groundwater Protection Hydrologist

Tom Kresko, Area Hydrologist

Ryan Doorenbos, Area Fisheries Supervisor

Bill Schuna, Area Wildlife Supervisor

Todd Kolander, EWR South District Supervisor

Tim Gieseke, EWR Assistant Regional Manager

Robb Collett, EWR Regional Manager

Nick Utrup, USFWS

Dawn Marsh, USFWS



# HAVE YOU SEEN A BLANDING'S TURTLE ?

State-listed Threatened Species



**Carapace**



**Male=concave Plastron Female=flat**

**Carapace** (upper shell): Round, dome-shaped, very smooth, dull black with specks and streaks of yellow throughout.

**Plastron** (lower shell): Yellow with dark splotches on each scute (section); hinged between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> pair of scutes (front closes like a drawbridge) So the Blanding's turtle is sometimes called a "semi-Box Turtle"

The **bright yellow chin and underside of the long neck** is one of the most conspicuous features of this turtle. Marshes, ponds, rivers & streams, adjacent uplands; Also travel overland & cross roads. May bask on logs, shore



**Yellow neck/chin; no stripes**



**Domed Carapace**

The MNDNR Nongame Wildlife Program (NWP) is seeking reports of **Blanding's turtles** in the counties of southern Minnesota\*.

If possible, sightings should be verified promptly by either:

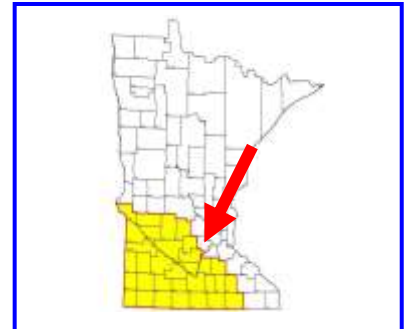
1. photographs showing identifying characteristics (top & bottom of shell, jaw) AND/OR
2. a detailed written description specifying identifying characteristics and circumstances of the sighting. (incl. if turtle shell is marked in any way)

Please include:

- Name phone number &/or email address of person reporting sighting
- Date of Sighting
- Number of Blanding's turtles observed
- Specific Location of Sighting  
e.g. GPS coordinates OR Township, Range Section to the nearest 1/4 1/4 section &/OR
- Specific directions (e.g. roads with distance and direction from nearest town or other conspicuous landmark with any other information that may be helpful for locating the site. Details about the habitat & landowner contacts also really help. **Many Thanks !**

Please Report Sightings as soon as possible to:

MNDNR Nongame Wildlife Program- Southern Region  
Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer, Phone: 507-233-1254 Email: lisa.gelvin-innvaer@state.mn.us  
Mike Worland Phone: 507-362-8786 Email: michael.worland@state.mn.us





## Standard Erosion Control and Invasive Species Prevention Best Practices

Take precautions when working near waterbodies to prevent sedimentation and erosion:

- Erodible surfaces should not be left exposed for greater than one day. For example, work should not commence late in the week if it will be left unfinished over a weekend.
- Work should not commence if rain is predicted.
- All wheeled or tracked construction equipment should be restricted to work areas above the stream bank.
- Fill material should not be stockpiled in the floodplain.
- Backfill placed below Ordinary High Water (OHW) should consist of clean granular material free of fines, silts, soils, and mud.
- Use [Best Practices for DNR General Public Waters Work Permit GP 2004-0001: Species Protection](#). Refer to pages: 3, 11, 14, 16, 25, 33, and 34 as relevant to a particular project.
- Vegetative “grout” should be incorporated with any installed rip rap (see page 33 of above link).
- [Native species planting/seeding](#) should be used.
- DNR Public Waters Work Permit may be required. Permit requirements must be followed.

Use wildlife friendly erosion control:

- Biodegradable netting should be used, preferably natural materials with short degradation periods.
- Erosion control blankets should be limited to bio-netting or natural netting types due to the risk of entanglement and death of small animals. [2018 MnDOT Standards Specifications for Construction](#) identify acceptable materials in Category 3N or 4N mulches.
- Do not use products that require UV-light to degrade (also called “photodegradable”), as they do not degrade properly when covered/shaded.
- Do not use products containing plastic mesh netting or other plastic components.
- Do not use mulch products that contain synthetic (plastic) fiber additives near waterbodies.
- See [Wildlife Friendly Erosion Control](#) for more information.

Take active steps to prevent invasive species introduction and spread:

- Clean all equipment (including but not limited to: vehicles, clothing, and gear) at a site prior to moving to another site. All soil, aggregate material, mulch, vegetation, seeds, animals, etc. need to be removed using a hand tool, brush, compressed air, pressure washer, or otherwise.
- If equipment is not cleaned before arriving to a work site, then clean the equipment in the parking or staging area, ensuring no material is deposited at the new site. Material cleaned from equipment should be disposed of legally.
- All equipment (including but not limited to: waders, tracked vehicles, barges, boats, turbidity curtain, sheet pile, and pumps) used for work in an “infested water” must be adequately decontaminated. See [Watercraft Decontamination Manual](#) for more information.
- See [Come Clean, Leave Clean](#) for more detailed guidance. This guidance is required for those working on DNR lands as part of grant or contract or are working under a permit, your grant, contract, or permit.

### Referenced Links

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt\\_section/pwpermits/gp\\_2004\\_0001\\_chapter1.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/pwpermits/gp_2004_0001_chapter1.pdf)

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/seed-mixes>

<https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/wildlife-friendly-erosion-control.pdf>

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/pre-letting/spec/2018/2018-spec-book-final.pdf>

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/dnrlands.html>

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/dnrlands.html>

[https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural\\_resources/invasives/mndnr\\_ais\\_decontamination\\_handbook.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural_resources/invasives/mndnr_ais_decontamination_handbook.pdf)

**From:** [Piltaver, Angela \(DOT\)](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 10:32:15 AM

---

**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK** before opening links and attachments.

Matthew,

Good morning! Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed wind farm repower project in Nobles County prior to submittal to MnPUC for permitting. We had previously received correspondence about the proposed repower in September, and after reaching out to the identified contacts, was able to obtain a kmz file of the project boundary and crane paths. Has the project area or any other components of the project changed since September? If there have been changes in the project boundaries and/or crane paths, would you please send an updated kmz file or files with those changes? This information is of great assistance in conducting our review on the proposed project.

Angela Piltaver, M.A.U.P., AICP, LEED AP  
Senior Planner  
MnDOT District 7  
2151 Bassett Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001-6888  
507-508-3409  
[angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us)

---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A [mailto:Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 02, 2020 4:29 PM  
**To:** khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us; srdc@swrdc.org; Beimers, Sarah (ADM) <sarah.beimers@state.mn.us>; Gronhovd, Amanda (ADM) <amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>; Boettcher, Joanne (DNR) <Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us>; Bell, David (MDH) <david.bell@state.mn.us>; Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <angela.piltaver@state.mn.us>; Gaug, Ryan (DOT) <ryan.gaug@state.mn.us>; Fischer, Marc (DOT) <marc.fischer@state.mn.us>; Howe, Kari (DEED) <kari.howe@state.mn.us>; Kromar, Karen (MPCA) <karen.kromar@state.mn.us>; david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil; Sarah\_Quamme@fws.gov; cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; noah.white@piic.org; culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com; maryanng@grandportage.com; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com; kade.ferris@redlakenation.org; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov; Cerda, Melissa (MIAC) <melissa.cerda@state.mn.us>  
**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; Otto, Mary (COMM) <mary.otto@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota



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Dear Agency Staff,

Xcel Energy has developed plans to extend the life of its Nobles Windfarm in Nobles County, MN, and is reaching out to your agency for input and coordination. The proposed project would upgrade turbine components and attach longer blades at the existing 134 turbine locations. No additional turbine locations are proposed. Upgrading the existing turbines is expected to extend the life of the wind farm 25 years. Project details and timelines are included in the attached letter and project map.

The re-power project would require Xcel Energy to apply for an Amendment to its existing Site Permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Xcel Energy intends to submit its amendment application in early 2021 to provide sufficient time for the associated MnPUC public review process. Your early input will help develop the information included in the amendment application, as well as refine project plans.

I've listed my contact information below so you can reach out with any initial questions you have, or information you need, after reviewing the information in the attached letter and project map. Xcel Energy is available over the next month to meet with you online to discuss the project. Please email me to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

**From:** [Piltaver, Angela \(DOT\)](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Thursday, November 5, 2020 1:54:26 PM

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Matt,

Hi there! Thank you for getting back to me this week. My apologies about the crane path statement – I was actually thinking of a different wind farm that is contiguous to the Nobles Wind Farm for which we do have crane paths. My error. I will look forward to hearing back from you after the crane paths for this project are developed. Big thing we will want to ensure is that there are no impacts to our highways, of course.

Has Xcel identified any state highway intersections where “minor upgrades” might be needed to facilitate transport of the rotors and nacelles, and/or shipping routes? We have a project programmed for 2021 on State Hwy 91 to replace the bridge over I-90 in Adrian. I see from your letter that the timing of the wind repower project is in 2022, but want to make you aware of our bridge project in case it slides back a year. This could affect your available transportation routing to the site.

In the meantime, our functional groups will review the preliminary request for comments/concerns, and pending completion of that review, a response letter will be sent to you by our District Engineer, Greg Ous.

Angela Piltaver, M.A.U.P., AICP, LEED AP  
Senior Planner  
MnDOT District 7  
2151 Bassett Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001-6888  
507-508-3409  
[angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us)

---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A [mailto:Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 05, 2020 1:15 PM  
**To:** Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <angela.piltaver@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

Hello Angela! Thanks for your email. I was aware Pete Gitzen had sent the project boundary kmz to you in mid-Sept ... and that boundary is unchanged since that time. But, I wasn't aware crane paths had been sent – and, frankly, we're still working on those over the next week+ before asking for feedback from landowners. Once we have that final draft (prob the week of Nov. 16,) I'll make sure to send you an updated kmz.

If anything pops up in the meantime, feel free to contact me. Also, if you think a virtual mtg would be helpful after reviewing the project files, just let me know and we'll get something set up later in the month.

Thanks again,  
Matt

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

---

**From:** Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <[angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 10:32 AM

**To:** Langan, Matthew A <[Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com)>

**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK** before opening links and attachments.

Matthew,

Good morning! Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed wind farm repower project in Nobles County prior to submittal to MnPUC for permitting. We had previously received correspondence about the proposed repower in September, and after reaching out to the identified contacts, was able to obtain a kmz file of the project boundary and crane paths. Has the project area or any other components of the project changed since September? If there have been changes in the project boundaries and/or crane paths, would you please send an updated kmz file or files with those changes? This information is of great assistance in conducting our review on the proposed project.

Angela Piltaver, M.A.U.P., AICP, LEED AP

Senior Planner

MnDOT District 7

2151 Bassett Drive

Mankato, MN 56001-6888

507-508-3409

[angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us)

---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A [<mailto:Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com>]

**Sent:** Monday, November 02, 2020 4:29 PM

**To:** [khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us](mailto:khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us); [srdc@swrdc.org](mailto:srdc@swrdc.org); Beimers, Sarah (ADM) <[sarah.beimers@state.mn.us](mailto:sarah.beimers@state.mn.us)>; Gronhovd, Amanda (ADM) <[amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us](mailto:amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us)>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <[cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us](mailto:cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us)>; Boettcher, Joanne (DNR) <[Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us](mailto:Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us)>; Bell, David (MDH) <[david.bell@state.mn.us](mailto:david.bell@state.mn.us)>; Roos, Stephan (MDA) <[stephan.roos@state.mn.us](mailto:stephan.roos@state.mn.us)>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <[stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)>; Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <[angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us)>; Gaug, Ryan (DOT) <[ryan.gaug@state.mn.us](mailto:ryan.gaug@state.mn.us)>; Fischer, Marc (DOT) <[marc.fischer@state.mn.us](mailto:marc.fischer@state.mn.us)>; Howe, Kari (DEED) <[kari.howe@state.mn.us](mailto:kari.howe@state.mn.us)>; Kromar, Karen (MPCA) <[karen.kromar@state.mn.us](mailto:karen.kromar@state.mn.us)>; [david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil); [Sarah\\_Quamme@fws.gov](mailto:Sarah_Quamme@fws.gov); [cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com](mailto:cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com); [samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov](mailto:samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov); [noah.white@piic.org](mailto:noah.white@piic.org); [culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org); [blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov](mailto:blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov); [jillhoppe@fdlrez.com](mailto:jillhoppe@fdlrez.com); [maryanng@grandportage.com](mailto:maryanng@grandportage.com); [amy.burnette@llojibwe.net](mailto:amy.burnette@llojibwe.net); [natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com](mailto:natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com); [kade.ferris@redlakenation.org](mailto:kade.ferris@redlakenation.org); [jaimie.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:jaimie.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov); Cerda, Melissa (MIAC) <[melissa.cerda@state.mn.us](mailto:melissa.cerda@state.mn.us)>

**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <[louise.miltich@state.mn.us](mailto:louise.miltich@state.mn.us)>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <[david.birkholz@state.mn.us](mailto:david.birkholz@state.mn.us)>; Otto, Mary (COMM) <[mary.otto@state.mn.us](mailto:mary.otto@state.mn.us)>

**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

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Xcel Energy has developed plans to extend the life of its Nobles Windfarm in Nobles County, MN, and is reaching out to your agency for input and coordination. The proposed project would upgrade turbine components and attach longer blades at the existing 134 turbine locations. No additional turbine locations are proposed. Upgrading the existing turbines is expected to extend the life of the wind farm 25 years. Project details and timelines are included in the attached letter and project map.

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I've listed my contact information below so you can reach out with any initial questions you have, or information you need, after reviewing the information in the attached letter and project map. Xcel Energy is available over the next month to meet with you online to discuss the project. Please email me to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)



**District 7 - Mankato**  
**2151 Bassett Drive**  
**Mankato, MN 56001**

December 1, 2020

Mr. Matthew Langan  
Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights  
Xcel Energy  
414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
[matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

Dear Matthew,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide preliminary comment on the proposed Nobles Wind Farm Repower project located in Nobles County. We understand that this project includes retrofitting 134 existing turbines with larger rotors and different nacelles to optimize energy production, and that all infrastructure and turbine locations will remain the same. We also understand that a full-sized crane will be used to remove and replace the old rotors and nacelles, and a temporary crane path will be required to install new components, which may require some “minor upgrading” of public roads and intersections.

Please provide additional information on the roads and intersections that may require minor upgrades, including any proposed upgrades to Interstate 90 ramp systems. If any sign removal is needed it must be coordinated through District 7 Traffic, and other requests for widenings and temporary accesses must go through Permits.

Additionally, it appears that the crane path between turbines 60 and 66 crosses Nobles County Road 13 within a quarter mile of the I-90 ramp terminals. We prefer that the alternate crane path that runs along 240th Street between turbines 60 and 66 be used to increase spacing from the CR13 ramp terminals.

We look forward to review of the formal application once submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and again, thank you for your early coordination on this project.

Sincerely,

Greg Ous, P.E.  
District Engineer

CC: Ronda Allis, Planning Director

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

**From:** [Kotch Egstad, Stacy \(DOT\)](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 1, 2020 4:21:28 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK before opening links and attachments.**

Good Afternoon Matt,

MnDOT offers the following initial comments for your consideration regarding the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project:

- \*No new access will be allowed via I90
- \* Sign removals/additions will need to go through MnDOT Traffic Engineering
- \* Temporary widenings or any other MnDOT trunk highway modifications will need appropriate permits ([MnDOT Permits](#))
- \*Oversize/Overweight permits are likely needed for hauling of new turbine components ([MnDOT OSOW Permits](#))

Any trunk highway access permits needed for the proposed repowering project should be coordinated through MnDOT's District 7B Engineering Specialist, Marc Fischer at 507-831-8012.

Finally, any MnDOT permits applied for will not be issued by our agency until after the MPUC issues their Amended Site Permit for this project.

These comments do not serve as a guarantee of any MnDOT permit approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments,

*Stacy Kotch Egstad*

Utility Routing and Siting Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Office of Land Management  
Available via Skype at [stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us)



---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A <Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 11:27 AM  
**To:** khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us; srdc@swrdc.org; Beimers, Sarah (ADM) <sarah.beimers@state.mn.us>; Gronhovd, Amanda (ADM) <amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR) <cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>; Boettcher, Joanne (DNR) <Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us>; Bell, David (MDH) <david.bell@state.mn.us>; Roos, Stephan (MDA) <stephan.roos@state.mn.us>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; Piltaver, Angela (DOT) <angela.piltaver@state.mn.us>; Gaug, Ryan (DOT) <ryan.gaug@state.mn.us>;

Fischer, Marc (DOT) <marc.fischer@state.mn.us>; Howe, Kari (DEED) <kari.howe@state.mn.us>; Kromar, Karen (MPCA) <karen.kromar@state.mn.us>; david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil; Sarah\_Quamme@fws.gov; cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; noah.white@piic.org; culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com; maryann@grandportage.com; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com; kade.ferris@redlakenation.org; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov; Cerda, Melissa (MIAC) <melissa.cerda@state.mn.us>; Rheude, Margaret G <margaret\_rheude@fws.gov>; elizabeth\_rigby@fws.gov; Marsh, Dawn S <dawn\_marshall@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; Otto, Mary (COMM) <mary.otto@state.mn.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

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Hello all. Thank you to those who have already provided input regarding the Nobles Windfarm Repowering project.

For those that are still reviewing the material, please let me know if you have any questions. We are hoping to receive your initial comments by the end of the day this Wednesday, 12/2.

-Matt

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A

**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 4:29 PM

**To:** [khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us](mailto:khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us); [srdc@swrdc.org](mailto:srdc@swrdc.org); [Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us](mailto:Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us); [Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us](mailto:Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us); [cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us](mailto:cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us); [Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us](mailto:Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us); [David.Bell@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Bell@state.mn.us); [Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us](mailto:Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us); [stacy.kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us); [angela.piltaver@state.mn.us](mailto:angela.piltaver@state.mn.us); [Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us](mailto:Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us); [marc.fischer@state.mn.us](mailto:marc.fischer@state.mn.us); [kari.howe@state.mn.us](mailto:kari.howe@state.mn.us); [karen.kromar@state.mn.us](mailto:karen.kromar@state.mn.us); [david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil](mailto:david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil); [Sarah\\_Quamme@fws.gov](mailto:Sarah_Quamme@fws.gov); [cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com](mailto:cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com); [samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov](mailto:samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov); [noah.white@piic.org](mailto:noah.white@piic.org); [culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org); [blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov](mailto:blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov); [jillhoppe@fdlrez.com](mailto:jillhoppe@fdlrez.com); [maryann@grandportage.com](mailto:maryann@grandportage.com); [amy.burnette@llojibwe.net](mailto:amy.burnette@llojibwe.net); [natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com](mailto:natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com); [kade.ferris@redlakenation.org](mailto:kade.ferris@redlakenation.org); [jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov](mailto:jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov); [melissa.cerda@state.mn.us](mailto:melissa.cerda@state.mn.us)



**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <[louise.miltich@state.mn.us](mailto:louise.miltich@state.mn.us)>; Birkholz, David (COMM) <[david.birkholz@state.mn.us](mailto:david.birkholz@state.mn.us)>; [mary.otto@state.mn.us](mailto:mary.otto@state.mn.us)

**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

Dear Agency Staff,

Xcel Energy has developed plans to extend the life of its Nobles Windfarm in Nobles County, MN, and is reaching out to your agency for input and coordination. The proposed project would upgrade turbine components and attach longer blades at the existing 134 turbine locations. No additional turbine locations are proposed. Upgrading the existing turbines is expected to extend the life of the wind farm 25 years. Project details and timelines are included in the attached letter and project map.

The re-power project would require Xcel Energy to apply for an Amendment to its existing Site Permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Xcel Energy intends to submit its amendment application in early 2021 to provide sufficient time for the associated MnPUC public review process. Your early input will help develop the information included in the amendment application, as well as refine project plans.

I've listed my contact information below so you can reach out with any initial questions you have, or information you need, after reviewing the information in the attached letter and project map. Xcel Energy is available over the next month to meet with you online to discuss the project. Please email me to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

**From:** [Kathy Henderschiedt](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 3, 2020 3:09:42 PM

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Matt –

As this project was originally permitted by the PUC and will be again, I am confident the standards of Nobles County Land Use Ordinance will again be met.

Nobles County Planning and Zoning will require a Conditional Use Permit for the staging/laydown yard, this process typically takes 45 – 60 days for approval upon receipt of a completed application.

Nobles County Highway will require over weight/height/length permits for use of the county roads when hauling in components and cranes; they may also require permits for the widening of intersections.

Please contact the appropriate departments to acquire the necessary permits prior to starting the project once the PUC has granted the repower permits.

*Kathy Henderschiedt  
Planning and Zoning Administrator  
Nobles County Environmental Services  
PO Box 187  
960 Diagonal Road  
Worthington MN 56187  
PH: 507-295-5322  
Fax: 507-372-8348  
[khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us](mailto:khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us)*

---

**From:** Langan, Matthew A <Matthew.A.Langan@xcelenergy.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 02, 2020 4:29 PM  
**To:** Kathy Henderschiedt <khenderschiedt@co.nobles.mn.us>; srdc@swrdc.org;  
Sarah.Beimers@state.mn.us; Amanda.Gronhovd@state.mn.us; cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us;  
Joanne.Boettcher@state.mn.us; David.Bell@state.mn.us; Stephan.Roos@state.mn.us;  
stacy.kotch@state.mn.us; angela.piltaver@state.mn.us; Ryan.gaug@state.mn.us;  
marc.fischer@state.mn.us; kari.howe@state.mn.us; karen.kromar@state.mn.us;  
david.a.studenski@usace.army.mil; Sarah\_Quamme@fws.gov; cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com;

samanthao@upperSiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; noah.white@piic.org;  
culturalresources@shakopeedakota.org; blatady@boisforte-nsn.gov; jillhoppe@fdlrez.com;  
maryanng@grandportage.com; amy.burnette@llojibwe.net; natalie.weyaus@millelacsband.com;  
kade.ferris@redlakenation.org; jaime.arsenault@whiteearth-nsn.gov; melissa.cerda@state.mn.us

**Cc:** Miltich, Louise (COMM) <louise.miltich@state.mn.us>; Birkholz, David (COMM)  
<david.birkholz@state.mn.us>; mary.otto@state.mn.us

**Subject:** Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota

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Sincerely,  
Matt Langan

**Matt Langan**

**Xcel Energy**

**Principal Agent, Siting and Land Rights**

414 Nicollet Mall, 414-6A, Minneapolis, MN 55401

P: 612.330.6954

E: [matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com](mailto:matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com)

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**From:** [Leonard Wabasha \(TO\)](#)  
**To:** [Langan, Matthew A](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Requesting Comments on the Nobles Wind Farm Repower Project in Nobles County, Minnesota  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 12:09:09 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**EXTERNAL - STOP & THINK before opening links and attachments.**

Dear Matthew Langan

Thank you for correspondence regarding the proposed upgrade to the Nobles Wind Farm Project. I have no concerns regarding the upgrade as long as there is no new ground disturbance and known/recorded cultural resources are avoided.

Please keep us informed of the progress of this project. Thank You and Have a Great Day.

Respectfully,



**LEONARD WABASHA**

Director of Cultural Resources • Cultural Resources  
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community  
d: 952.496.6120  
[hokokatati.org](http://hokokatati.org)  
[leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org](mailto:leonard.wabasha@shakopeedakota.org)

The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community is a federally recognized, sovereign Indian tribe located southwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. With a focus on being a good neighbor, good steward of the earth, and good employer, the SMSC is committed to charitable donations, community partnerships, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

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