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To: [#PUC Public Comments](#)
Subject: Comment on route permit poles 49-53
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To whom it may concern,

This comment is written in response to the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse Transmission Line Project and the alteration requests filed by Xcel Energy on January 24, 2014. Specifically these comments pertain to the alternation proposed for Segment 2- Poles 49-53. The requested alterations for these poles do not meet the definition of a minor alteration and Commissioners should deny Xcel Energy's request and require the full permitting decision process.

Under Minnesota Rules 7850.4800 the first factors listed for determining if an action meets the definition of a minor alteration are "Effects on human settlements including...aesthetics". While the report states the requested alteration results in "No Change" in this factor we strongly disagree. Under the previous plan looking out our front door we would see the large power poles moving across the field directly in front of us. These poles do effect the view and aesthetics as we look out of property and it will be virtually impossible to miss that impact every time we step outside our home. Now, under the proposed alterations, the poles will not continue directly to the east and out of our line of site. Instead the poles will stop south of our front door and then proceed at an angle to the southeast before turning due east once again. This will greatly increase the number of poles and power lines in the direct site line of our property and the front of our home further decreasing the aesthetic value we enjoy every day.

In addition, when weighing issues under this process it is not only important to look at the impact but also the timing of the impact on landowners. This is my first opportunity to really speak on this matter and I want to make sure the reality of how this truly impacts family farms such as ours is understood. The property I own and the property owned by my father, Neil Stolp, directly to the south of our home have been in our family since 1887. Our family farm is listed in the Century Farm Registry which is something we take great pride in. My property was and is part of that family farm and I will one day own the entire family farm when my father passes it down to me. This is how it has been in our family for 127 years and will continue with future generations.

When looking at how this process functions it seems impacts are addressed only by

considering the effect on the current listed property owner and then assuming the market will take care of future impacts as future owners will buy in knowing and weighing those impacts. Yet, that is clearly not the case with century old family farms such as ours. With family farms you do not buy in, you are born in and you continue investing in that property through hard work knowing it will someday help provide for your future generations as well. There is only one century old Stolp family farm. There is only one family farm in which all previous and current generations have put hard work and investment into knowing that it will someday provide for us.

In this way the family farms tie current and future generations to the land creating positive incentives. Even from a young age I remember being taught the importance of taking care of our land as it would someday take care of us. We treated our land not like a simple commodity with an eye towards maximizing current profits even if it hurt the land in the future. Instead we always treated our land as a family asset with a goal of conserving, protecting and maintaining its value for the future as it would be our future generations that would inherit it. This knowledge of the future impact of our actions has lead us to work with the government to install field tiles and maintaining waterways. To make sure we did not allow depletion of top soil or contamination of waterways. The land held its value not only in the present but also in the future and our actions mattered in relation to the future. These incentives promote the type of long term decisions that we should want in our land stewardship process.

However, though our family recognizes the impact land decisions today have on our future generations I do not see that recognition demonstrated in the Public Utilities planning process as this is my first opportunity to even speak on this matter directly. I know every square foot of our land by heart as do my children. I have helped work and care for the farm knowing that someday it would be passing down to me and eventually to my children. Our family is tied to this land and connected through it to future generations. In this way family farms do create good and very real incentives that promote proper land management and should be recognized, promoted, and protected. At the very least the future generations of family farms, including century old family farms such as ours, should be acknowledged in the process. I want to make sure Commissioners understand this and realize this even if it has no impact on the current case. Commissioners should include the unique aspects of family farms in future assessments as they are a vital yet dwindling assets that deserves at the very least consideration in the process.

Thank you,

David Stolp