



414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

October 30, 2023

**To: Landowners and stakeholders affected by the proposed construction of the Minnesota Energy Connection 345-kV transmission line between the retiring Sherco power plant near Becker and Lyon County, Minnesota.**

**Re: Notice of Filing of Route Permit Application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC Docket No. E002/TL 22-132)**

Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation, doing business as Xcel Energy (the Applicant or Xcel Energy) has submitted a route permit application (Application) to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC or Commission) for approval to construct the Minnesota Energy Connection Project (MNEC or Project) in Sherburne, Stearns, Kandiyohi, Wright, Meeker, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville, Redwood, and Lyon counties in Minnesota. The Project will provide a 345 kilovolt (kV) connection between the existing Sherburne County Generation Station (Sherco Substation) in Becker, Minnesota, and a new substation proposed to be constructed near the Town of Garvin in Lyon County, Minnesota. A map of the Project is included with this notice.

The Application was submitted pursuant to the full permitting process contained in Minnesota Statute § 216E.03 and Minnesota Rules 7850.1700 to 7850.2700 and 7850.4000 to 7850.4400.

### **Project Description**

The Project components include:

- A double-circuit 345 kV transmission line connecting Xcel Energy's Sherco Solar West Substation in Becker, Minnesota, to a new substation near Garvin. The routes included in the Application are between 171 and 174 miles long;
- A new 3.3-mile single circuit 345 kV line between the Sherco Substation and the Sherco Solar West Substation to be co-located as a double circuit line with an existing 345 kV line between these two substations;

- Modifications to the existing Sherco Substation and Sherco Solar West Substation;
- A Voltage Support Substation that will be located approximately 80 miles along the transmission line west and south of the Sherco Substation in Meeker, Kandiyohi, or Renville County, depending on the final route selected;
- An Intermediate Substation that will be located approximately 20 miles north of the new substation proposed near Garvin in Lyon or Redwood County, depending on the final route selected; and
- A new substation as the terminal point of the Project near Garvin in Lyon County referred to in this Application as the Terminal Substation.

### **Certificate of Need**

Minnesota Statutes section 216B.243, subdivision 2 states that "[n]o large energy facility shall be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a certificate of need by the [Public Utilities Commission]". A large energy facility includes "any high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 200 kilovolts or more and greater than 1,500 feet in length" and "any high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 100 kilovolts or more with more than ten miles of its length in Minnesota or that crosses a state line." Minn. Stat. § 216B.2421. The Applicant filed an application for a certificate of need to construct the Project in March 2023 in Docket No. E002 /CN-22-131.

### **Route Permit Process**

A route permit from the Commission is required before the Project can be constructed. The Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E) and Minnesota Rules parts 7850.1000 to 7850.5600 establish the requirements for submitting and processing a route permit application. The statutes and rules also establish notice requirements for various stages of the process, including this letter being sent to landowners, local government officials, tribal governments and other interested stakeholders. The Application will be considered by the Commission under the full permitting process in Minnesota Statute § 216E.03 and Minnesota Rules 7850.1000 to 7850.2700 and 7850.4000 to 7850.5600. The Commission has up to one year from the time the Application is accepted as complete to process and make a decision on the route permit according to Minnesota Statutes section 216E.03, subd. 9, and Minnesota Rule 7850.2700, subp. 1. The Commission may extend this time limit for up to three months for just cause or upon agreement of the Applicant.

Within 60 days after the Commission accepts the application as complete, the Commission and the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and

Analysis (EERA) unit will hold a public information and scoping meeting to provide information and seek public comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be prepared for the Project. At this scoping meeting, and throughout a comment period after the scoping meeting, EERA will gather information from stakeholders on potential impacts and mitigation measures that should be evaluated in the EIS. EERA will recommend to the Commission those impacts and mitigation measures, including routes and route alternatives, that it believes should be evaluated in the EIS. EERA will issue a “Scoping Decision” that identifies the impacts and mitigation measures to be evaluated in the EIS. EERA will issue a Draft EIS and meetings will be held in the Project area to gather comments on the content of the Draft EIS. After these meetings, EERA will issue a Final EIS.

In addition to a Draft and Final EIS, public hearings on the Project will be held. The public will be invited to make comments on the Project at the hearings before an administrative law judge. Anyone may speak at the public hearings, present documentary evidence, ask questions of Applicant and EERA staff, and submit written comments. After the hearings, the administrative law judge will provide a period during which stakeholders can provide written comments on the Project. Additionally, the administrative law judge will receive briefs from the Applicant and other parties to the proceeding. The administrative law judge will review the record and will then prepare findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommendations for the Commission. During an open meeting, the Commission will deliberate and make a decision as to the Certificate of Need and the Route Permit for the Project.

Before beginning construction, Xcel Energy will acquire property rights for the transmission line. The Project requires a 150-foot-wide right-of-way. Xcel Energy typically will acquire these property rights through the purchase of an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner. If Xcel Energy and the landowner are unable to negotiate an easement for the right-of-way, Xcel Energy will acquire real property rights through exercise of the power of eminent domain pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 117. The process of exercising the power of eminent domain is called condemnation.

### **How to Learn More**

For more information about the regulatory process or to have your name included on the Project mailing lists, contact:

**Minnesota Department of Commerce    Minnesota Public Utilities**  
Andrew Levi, Environmental Review    **Commission**

Manager  
85 7th Place East, Suite 280  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198  
[andrew.levi@state.mn.us](mailto:andrew.levi@state.mn.us)  
651-539-1840  
[mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities](http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities)

Scott Ek, Energy Facilities Planner  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147  
[Scott.Ek@state.mn.us](mailto:Scott.Ek@state.mn.us)  
651-539-1070  
[mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc)

There are two options for citizens, landowners, and interested persons to receive Project information:

1. **Sign up for the Project Mailing List.** To sign up to receive notices about Project milestones and opportunities to participate (meetings, comment periods, etc.) email [docketing.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:docketing.puc@state.mn.us) or call 651-201-2234 with the docket number (22-132), your name, mailing address and email address. You may request to receive notices by email or U.S. Mail.
2. **Subscribe to the Docket.** To receive email notifications when new documents are filed in the Route Permit docket visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>, select *Subscribe to eDockets* and follow the prompts.

Note - subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

Current information about the Project and Route Permit Application is available online at <https://www.mnenergyconnection.com/>.

A paper copy of the Route Permit Application is also available for review at the following public locations:

Great River Regional Library 13020 Orono Parkway Elk River, MN 55330	Great River Regional Library 1300 W. St. Germain St. St. Cloud, MN 56301	Willmar Public Library 410 5th Street SW Willmar, MN 56201
Great River Regional Library 18 Lake Blvd NW Buffalo, MN 55313	Litchfield Public Library 216 N Marshall Ave. Litchfield, MN 55355	Montevideo Public Library 224 S 1st St. Montevideo, MN 56265

Canby Public Library 110 Oscar Ave N. Canby, MN 56220	Olivia Public Library 405 S 10th St. Olivia, MN 56277	Redwood Falls Public Library 509 S Lincoln St. Redwood Falls, MN 56283
Marshall-Lyon County Library 201 C St. Marshall, MN 56258		

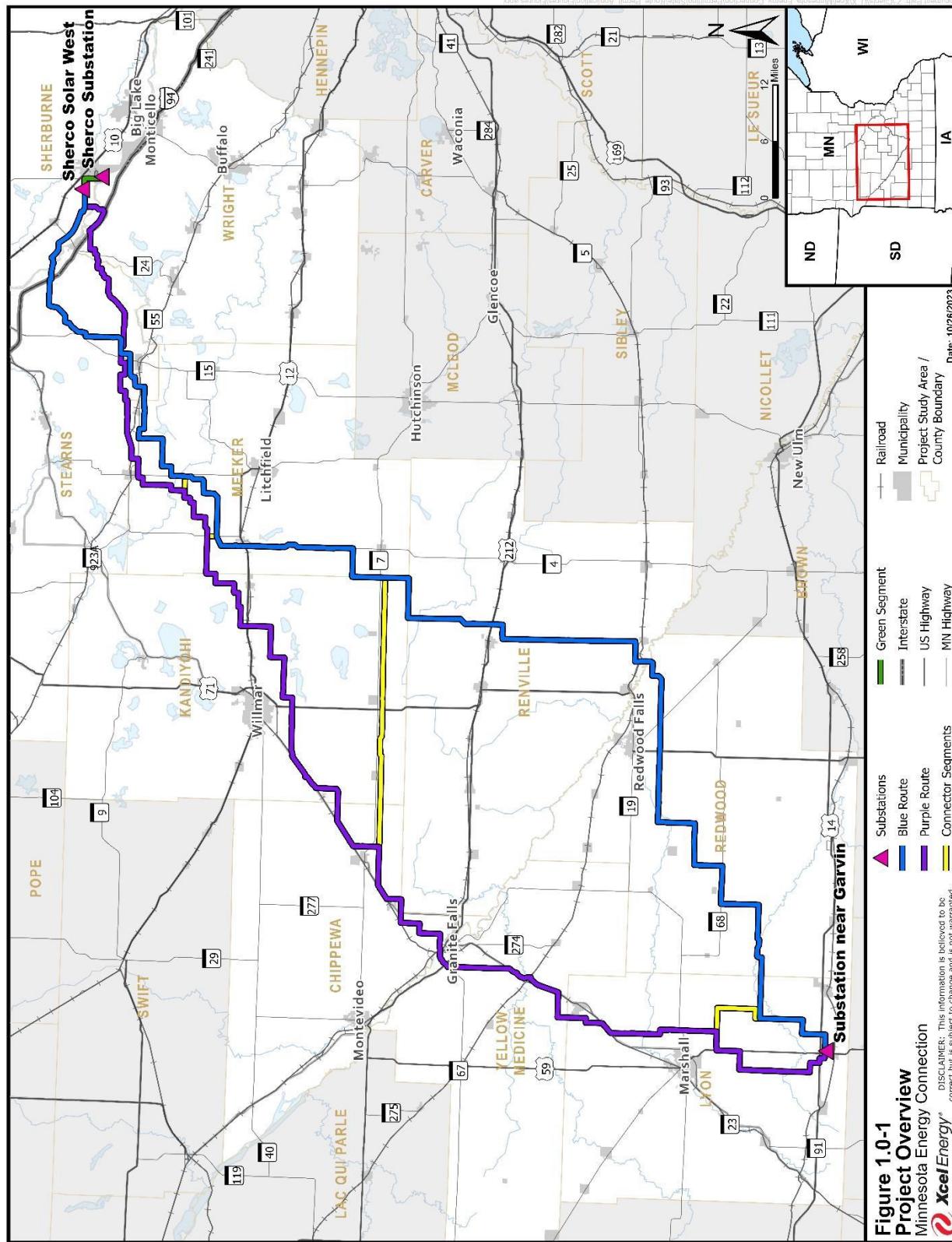
If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Project team at [MNEnergyConnection@xcelenergy.com](mailto:MNEnergyConnection@xcelenergy.com) or by phone at 1-888-292-4714.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Matt Langan*

Matt Langan  
Principal Agent, Siting & Land Rights

Enclosures



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**In the Matter of the Route Permit  
Application for the Minnesota Energy  
Connection Project in Sherburne,  
Stearns, Kandiyohi, Wright, Meeker,  
Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Renville,  
Redwood, and Lyon counties in  
Minnesota**  
**MPUC Docket No. E002/TL-22-132**

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

Breann L. Jurek certifies that on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of October 2023, she e-filed on behalf of Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, a true and correct copy of the following documents:

1. Notice of Filing Application of Northern States Power Company doing business as Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for the Minnesota Energy Connection Project; and
2. Certificate of Service.

with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission via eDockets ([www.edockets.state.mn.us](http://www.edockets.state.mn.us)). Said documents were also served on the General Service List maintained by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and as attached hereto.

Executed on: October 30, 2023

*Signed: /s/ Breann L. Jurek*

Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.  
60 South Sixth Street  
Suite 1500  
Minneapolis, MN 55402