

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, MN • 55155-40



July 23, 2014

Steve M. Mihalchick, Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
P.O. Box 64620
600 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55164

Re: Odell Wind Farm, LLC's Proposed 115 kV Transmission Line and Associated Facilities
Office of Administrative Hearings Docket Number: 48-2500-31501
Public Utilities Commission Docket Number: IP-6914/TL-13-591

Dear Judge Mihalchick:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Route Permit Application for the proposed 115 kV transmission line project associated with the Odell Wind Farm (Odell Transmission Project). The DNR sent the attached letter, dated February 24, 2014 regarding the Route Permit Application for the Odell Transmission Project. Please consider the February 24, 2014 letter part of the Office of Administrative Hearings record. After reviewing the EA, the DNR has the following additional comments.

The EA discusses various configurations of the Woad Hill Substation. The DNR continues to encourage configuring the substation to avoid the eastern portion of the proposed substation area depicted on EA Figure 1 to increase the vegetative buffer along the watercourse. The three configurations included in the EA appear to avoid the eastern portion of the substation area, where there is habitat associated with Cedar Creek.

Table 2 on Page 9 of the EA should include a License to Cross Public Lands and Waters from the DNR. The license is required because the proposed route includes two crossings of the public watercourse Cedar Creek.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Odell Transmission Project. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Schrenzel".

Jamie Schrenzel
Principal Planner
Environmental Review Unit
(651) 259-5115

Enclosure: 1

cc: Richard Davis, Department of Commerce
Michael Kaluzniak, Public Utilities Commission
Patrick Smith, Geronimo Energy



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February 24, 2014

Richard Davis, Environmental Review Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: In the Matter of the Application of Odell Wind Farm, LLC for a Route Permit for a High Voltage Transmission Line for the Odell Wind Farm Project
Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: IP-6914/TL-13-591
DNR ERDB Number: 20140215

Dear Mr. Davis:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Route Permit Application (Application) for the Transmission Line for the Odell Wind Farm Project. Please consider the following comments regarding the Application and for preparation of an Environmental Assessment.

As discussed in the Application, the proposed route includes two crossings of the public watercourse Cedar Creek. This activity will require a License to Cross Public Waters. Also the Woad Hill Substation is close to the same public watercourse. It would be beneficial to keep the substation footprint to the western portion of the proposed substation site and to increase the vegetative buffer by the watercourse. The attached aerial photograph shows habitat along Cedar Creek in the vicinity of the substation site.

The Application states that there are no rare features within one mile of the proposed project. The DNR has reviewed data for this project and concurs that there are no rare features within one mile of the project area. However, it is unclear from the Application how the project proposer made their determination. A Natural Heritage Review was not completed specifically for this project and the Natural Heritage letter, completed for the Odell Wind Farm and attached to the application, mentions several rare features. It should be noted that the Natural Heritage letter for the Odell Wind Farm does not apply to the Odell Transmission Line. Natural Heritage letters are project specific and only valid for the project as described on the Natural Heritage Information System Data Request Form.

Though the DNR reviewed this project and concurs with the findings in the Application, in the future, a Natural Heritage Review should be completed prior to the submission of the Route Permit Application. Or, if the determination of no rare features was done through a License Agreement, the Application should note this and include the License Agreement number.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Route Permit Application for the Transmission Line for the Odell Wind Farm Project. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Schrenzel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" and last name "Schrenzel" clearly legible.

Jamie Schrenzel
Principal Planner
Environmental Review Unit
(651) 259-5115

Enclosure: 1

cc: Michael Kaluzniak, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Patrick Smith, Odell Wind Farm, LLC

