

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
BEFORE THE  
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Katie J. Sieben	Chair
Valerie Means	Commissioner
Matthew Schuerger	Commissioner
Joseph K. Sullivan	Commissioner
John A. Tuma	Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR  
A CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR THE  
PROPOSED 345 KV BROOKINGS COUNTY –  
LYON COUNTY AND HELENA – HAMPTON  
SECOND-CIRCUIT PROJECT

MPUC DOCKET NO. E002/CN-23-200

**SUMMARY OF CERTIFICATE OF NEED  
APPLICATION**

On August 15, 2023, Northern States Power, doing business as Xcel Energy (Xcel Energy or Company), filed an application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a Certificate of Need to construct the Minnesota portion of the Brookings County – Lyon County Second-Circuit Project and the Helena – Hampton Second-Circuit Project (collectively, the Brookings County – Lyon County Second-Circuit Project and the Helena – Hampton Second-Circuit Project are referred to as the Project).

The Project is aimed at reducing energy costs by addressing one of the most electrically congested areas in Minnesota. Currently, low-cost energy generated in South Dakota, North Dakota, and southern Minnesota faces congestion when flowing to load centers, like the Twin Cities. When this congestion occurs, the cost of electricity increases either due to congestion charges or because electricity must come from higher-cost generators in areas without transmission constraints. These higher costs create inefficiencies in the wholesale energy market and increase costs for consumers. The Project is needed to relieve the current transmission congestion in this area. By relieving congestion, the Project is expected to increase access to low-cost, carbon-free, renewable generation; provide economic benefits; strengthen the regional grid; support wind generation facilities in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota; and advance the State’s energy policy. Xcel Energy estimates that the Project would provide Company-specific benefits of \$334.83 million in production-cost and other quantifiable economic benefits on a present-value basis over the 63-year life of the Project, as well as significant progress toward carbon-emission reduction policy objectives.

The Project involves installing a second 345 kilovolt (kV) circuit on double-circuit-capable structures installed when the Brookings County – Hampton 345 kV transmission line was originally constructed. The Project will also require reconfiguring certain lines near substations, mostly within existing easements. As part of the Project, the Company will also upgrade the Brookings County, Lyon County, Helena, and Hampton substations with new 345 kV breakers. The Project will also require relay setting changes to the Steep Bank Lake and Hawks Nest Lake substations.

A copy of the Certificate of Need Application can be found on the Commission's website at <http://mn.gov/puc/> by clicking on "eDockets" on the right side of the website, entering "23" and "200" in the "Docket Number" boxes, and then clicking "Search." A copy of the application will also be available on the Project's website: [www.Brookings2ndCircuit.com](http://www.Brookings2ndCircuit.com).