

Friends of the Riverfront

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Daniel P. Wolfe, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th PI E #350
St Paul, MN 55101

December 15, 2017

Re: Reply Comments

In the Matter of Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund (RDF) Annual Report, Tracker Account True-up, and Request for 2018 Rider Factor, PUC Docket Number: E-002/ M-17-712

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

Friends of the Riverfront appreciates the opportunity to respond to the comments filed in the above matter.

Activity does not mean progress

The DOC noted that the last Crown status report showed "activity" and highlighted in italics language about Crown's having held a meeting¹ and that it would be holding two more meetings². These meetings are regarding the 106 process which is a mandated review when a federal action may impact historic resources.

Contrary to what the DOC might have inferred from the statement. Crown has made close to no progress on the 106 process even though they have long been advised of their responsibility and specifically assumed certain responsibilities in February 2016.

During the 106 process, Crown is required to confer with consulting parties. Many of these federal and state agencies have extensive experience with the 106 process and offered Crown helpful advice.

Reading correspondence and attending meetings regarding the 106 process in the Crown project is akin to the movie *Groundhog Day*. While the consulting parties such as the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office would provide helpful information about

¹ Contrary to Crown's progress report statement that all agencies attended, Crown was advised by SHPO at the meeting that they had failed to invite the Minnesota Department of Transportation which is responsible for the Stone Arch Bridge. (Crown proposed to tunnel under the Stone Arch Bridge.) Crown's failure to do so was despite a written request from MnDOT's general council to be a consulting party.

² With respect to the public meeting, Crown failed to properly advise the public of the date. At the December 6th teleconference, Crown volunteered that it had been a disaster.

the process and what was required, just like *Groundhog Day*, nothing would change in Crown's response and the consulting parties once again would repeat the same information.

In an unusual move, because nothing was happening, the American Council for Historic Preservation was asked during the summer to intervene and has done so.

FERC has taken notice of Crown's failings and has tightened its supervision over Crown, requiring frequent status reports and holding a December 6, 2017 teleconference with all parties.


At the beginning of the teleconference, Steven Hocking from FERC said:

Let me first say that, I'm speaking to Crown Hydro, that given the history of this project, the fact that it was licensed back in 1999, it's still unconstructed, we have this amendment in front of us that has been in front of the Commission for some time. Part of the reason we're going to have this conference call is because we really need to move forward with this proceeding. We need to get the information that the Commission needs in order to make a decision in this case, and we need to do that quickly and timely. It's been over a year since we issued our draft EA, we had certain recommendations in that EA for some additional information, we're going to go through that shortly, but it's important for us to keep moving forward with this docket. If we can't do that then the Commission will be unable to make a decision and then we'll have the issue on the table, you know, further action. If we can't get the information we need in order to complete our FEA and bring this matter up for a Commission decision we're going to have to go back to Crown and either dismiss the amendment application or take some sort of other action. So Mr. Monson, I just want to make sure it's clear that we really do need to get this information, we have an obligation to complete section 106, we need to do that, and if we can't do that in a fairly expeditious manner than we're going to have to start looking at dismissing the application. So I wanted to state that upfront.

Nothing with respect to the 106 process is indicative of Crown's making progress.

Thus Friends of the Riverfront, respectfully asks that the PUC orders that no further ratepayer funds be expended on the Crown project.

Sincerely,



Edna C. Brazaitis