

**Comments from Operating Engineers Local 49 and North Central States Regional Council
of Carpenters**

April 11, 2025

Mr. Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

*In the Matter of the Application of Gopher State Solar LLC for a Site Permit for the up to 200
MW Gopher State Solar Project in Renville County, Minnesota (24-106)*

Dear Mr. Seuffert,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this matter. We respectfully submit this letter supporting the granting of a site permit for the Gopher State Solar project.

As the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) knows, our members work on a wide array of energy projects performing both construction and maintenance work. We support an “all of the above” approach to energy as long as the projects will benefit local workers and provide good paying jobs and benefits. We have had the opportunity to meet with both Ranger Power and DESRI throughout the permitting process and believe the project will provide important benefits to local workers. We thank them for these discussions and look forward to working with their selected contractor on a staffing model that maximizes local benefits.

We also know that with the 100% by 2040 law our utilities are going to need access to a significant amount of solar. Approving projects like Gopher State Solar is critical to ensuring that the resources are available and permitted to meet our state’s goals. As the Commission knows, last year the legislature passed important legislation expediting the permitting process for projects like these. Approval by the Commission will help demonstrate to utilities and developers that Minnesota is a good permitting environment for solar projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Nathan Runke, Regulatory and Political Affairs Coordinator, International Union of Operating
Engineers Local 49

Richard Kolodziejski, Public Affairs Director, North Central States Regional Council of
Carpenters