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PUBLIC HEARING - 25-389

WINDOM - APRIL 7, 2026 - 6:00 P.M.

BEFORE THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS  
FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Big Bend Wind, LLC,  
and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for a 161-kV  
High Voltage Transmission Line and Associated Facilities  
in Martin County, Minnesota

MPUC DOCKET NO: IP-7013/TL-25-389

CAH DOCKET NO: 22-2500-41594

Windom Community Center  
1750 Cottonwood Lake Drive  
Windom, Minnesota

April 7, 2026

BEFORE: Judge Christa Moseng

STENOGRAPHIC COURT REPORTER:

Janet Shaddix Elling, Appearing Remotely by Zoom

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APPEARANCES:

CHRISTINA BRUSVEN and RYAN COX, Attorneys  
at Law, Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.,  
cbrusven@fredlaw.com and rcox@fredlaw.com, appeared  
on behalf of the Applicants.

PUC STAFF:

Cezar Panait

Rich Davis

WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were  
duly had and entered of record, to wit:

1                   JUDGE MOSENG: We are on the record In  
2                   the Matter of the Application of Big Bend Wind, LLC  
3                   and Great River Energy for a Route Permit for a 161  
4                   Kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line and  
5                   Associated Facilities in Martin County.

6                   This is PUC Docket Number  
7                   IP-7013/TL-25-389 and it's Court of Administrative  
8                   Hearings Docket 22-2500-41594.

9                   Go to the next slide.

10                  My name is Christa Moseng, I'm an  
11                  administrative law judge with the Court of  
12                  Administrative Hearings, and I will give just a  
13                  brief overview of what we'll be doing today.

14                  Which will be, first, my introduction.  
15                  Then we'll hear about the process from the Public  
16                  Utilities Commission staff. And then a description  
17                  of the proposed project from the Applicants. And  
18                  then there will be time for questions and comments,  
19                  and I will take back over to lead that section.

20                  Go ahead.

21                  So, the Court of Administrative Hearings  
22                  is an independent state agency within state  
23                  government. And the purpose of the Court of  
24                  Administrative Hearings is to provide hearings like  
25                  this in a manner that's fair to everybody and

1 impartial.

2 So, the Public Utilities Commission  
3 requested that an administrative law judge preside  
4 over the public hearings and prepare a summary of  
5 public comments for the Commission to consider.

6 So, the purpose of this hearing is to  
7 obtain public input for the Commission's  
8 consideration regarding the proposed project. And  
9 the hearing is being held under Minnesota Statute  
10 Chapter 216I.

11 So the hearing has two objectives. To  
12 let people have the opportunity to be heard about  
13 the proposed site permit and to ask questions and  
14 obtain more information from the company and others  
15 about the process of the site permit. So that the  
16 folks that are here are here to answer questions.  
17 If you have any, feel free to ask them.

18 And we'll now hear from the staff of the  
19 Public Utilities Commission.

20 MR. CEZAR PANAIT: Thank you, Your Honor.  
21 Good evening, everybody.

22 My name is Cezar Panait, I'm an engineer  
23 with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in  
24 St. Paul, Minnesota. And I am one of the two staff  
25 assigned to work on the -- the public review of this

1 route permit application.

2 I just want to mention briefly, before I  
3 go into describing the slides that I have, we have a  
4 number of handouts, meeting materials outside on the  
5 table. We have a copy of tonight's public hearing  
6 notice. We have copies of the PowerPoint. We have  
7 copies of the draft route permit. The Commission  
8 issued recently a draft permit which gives more  
9 specifics about this project, and so that's out  
10 there. And, also, there are copies of the  
11 application and, also, which include the  
12 environmental assessment and the testimony from the  
13 Applicants, a few copies of those.

14 So, the review timeline for this route  
15 permit application included a few major milestones.  
16 I'm not going to read each one and every one of  
17 these. But the application was filed on  
18 December 5th and then we have another -- a series of  
19 two meetings, one in person and one virtual already  
20 in this room.

21 The Commission recently decided on three  
22 items. One of them was to issue the draft route  
23 permit. Another one was they consider whether to  
24 require an addendum to the environmental assessment,  
25 a supplement of the environmental information that

1 was provided as part of the application.

2 And, lastly, the Commission chose the  
3 review process and requested the assistance of a  
4 judge from the Court of Administrative Hearings to  
5 come preside over this hearing and summarize the  
6 public comments received.

7 So, we are here for the in-person  
8 hearing. There is a virtual one tomorrow night,  
9 6:00 p.m., via Webex. We'll be covering exactly the  
10 same presentation, the same topics. And then there  
11 is the associated comment period for the hearing,  
12 that closes on April 20th. And then the judge will  
13 be submitting a report of the public comments  
14 received. And then the Commission will meet one  
15 more time in an open agenda meeting that happens on  
16 Thursdays, this one is tentatively scheduled for  
17 May 21st to decide on the route permit requested by  
18 the Applicants.

19 Speaking about route permits. These are  
20 just a few of the considerations, the route permit  
21 considerations that are covered in newly adopted  
22 statute 216I. The requirements themselves are found  
23 in the previous statute and administrative rules.

24 So, the Commission, in deciding whether  
25 to grant the route permit, these are some of the

1 factors that the Commission is required to include  
2 in their decision. So, there is a project going to  
3 conserve resources and minimize the impact on  
4 environment. Whether the project has any human  
5 settlement and other various topics and help  
6 minimize those conflicts. And the least is the big  
7 picture of the state energy needs and whether this  
8 project is meeting that objectives.

9 The comment period for this project is  
10 April 20th. And there is three ways by which --  
11 well, people in the member cities and then any local  
12 or state agencies is presented with an opportunity  
13 to provide comments either online, there's our  
14 website that lets you place where you can submit  
15 comments. And, also, you can email your written  
16 comments to [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us). And, also,  
17 the old-fashioned U.S. mail service.

18 In addressing your comments and writing  
19 your comments, please focus your attention to these  
20 two questions that were also part of the notice  
21 tonight. And those are whether the Commission  
22 should issue a route permit for the proposed 161 kV  
23 transmission line. And, if granted, what  
24 considerations or requirements or conditions should  
25 be included in the route permit.

1                   With that, I'm going to pass it over to  
2 Rich to speak more about the review process.

3                   MR. RICH DAVIS: All right. Thanks,  
4 Cezar.

5                   I'm Rich Davis, the environmental review  
6 manager with the Public Utilities Commission.

7                   Just a little bit of additional  
8 information that you can find on the project, if  
9 you'd like. The full record for the project is on  
10 our system that's referred to as eDockets. As you  
11 can see up on the screen, that's the eDockets  
12 website. And if you go in there it's a pretty  
13 simple search process. And if you put in the docket  
14 number, the 25-389, and search that, you will get  
15 everything that's been filed in the record to date.

16                   Additionally, if you would like to be  
17 notified when information gets filed, you can  
18 subscribe to the docket. That second web address up  
19 there, if you click on -- or not click on it, but if  
20 you go to that website and follow the prompts on  
21 there you will be able to sign up. You will get  
22 more e-mails, so make sure -- and I only mention  
23 that just in case folks don't want a ton of emails  
24 coming in.

25                   A little bit more on the EA addendum and

1 draft route permit process.

2 As Cezar stated, the Applicants actually  
3 completed the environmental assessment for this as  
4 part of their application when it came in. And  
5 recently, March 24th, the Commission decided that no  
6 addendum was necessary for the EA that was submitted  
7 by the Applicants, which that means that no  
8 additional analysis needs to be completed at this  
9 time. And -- excuse me, and no alternative routes  
10 will be carried forward for further analysis.

11 With that, the Commission also issued a  
12 draft route permit, which, as Cezar stated, is out  
13 on the table. And with that draft route permit they  
14 issued, it had pretty much all of our standard  
15 general conditions that come with a route permit,  
16 but it also had special permit conditions with tree  
17 removal planning, a tree replacement plan, and  
18 cemetery screening as additional conditions from a  
19 general route permit.

20 And, also, I think it's been stated a  
21 couple times, but with the Commission's order on the  
22 24th of March, they requested that an ALJ conduct  
23 the hearing here and provide a summary of public  
24 comments.

25 This is our contact information, if you

1 need to get ahold of Cezar or I. If you have issues  
2 with eDockets or have questions on anything on what  
3 we do for the environmental review side of things,  
4 I'm happy to discuss things, or if you want to shoot  
5 me an email. I'm generally pretty easy to get ahold  
6 of and so is Cezar.

7 And thanks for coming.

8 MS. BRIE ANDERSON: Good evening. My  
9 name is Brie Anderson, I'm senior director of  
10 project permitting. I am just one -- I represent a  
11 larger project team working on Big Bend.

12 With me tonight is Jarrod Beckstrom, who  
13 is a director of project development. Christy  
14 Brusven and Ryan Cox of Fredrikson & Byron, our  
15 counsel. And Mark Strohfus with GRE, because this  
16 is a joint application with Big Bend Wind and GRE.

17 Big Bend is not a new project. I've been  
18 working on this project for I think six years now  
19 and others at our company much longer. In 2022, the  
20 Commission issued a site permit for a wind farm.  
21 That wind project is up in Cottonwood and Watonwan  
22 Counties. At the same time they issued a route  
23 permit for 18 miles of 161 transmission. Since  
24 2022, we've negotiated and worked on a power  
25 purchase agreement with Great River Energy. And

1 part of that agreement was to change where we plug  
2 in the power, where are we going to connect to the  
3 existing transmission grid. That is different than  
4 the permit that was issued in 2022 and so we are  
5 here tonight for four and a half more miles of  
6 transmission to get to GRE's Lakefield Generating  
7 Station.

8 Next slide.

9 I love maps. I'm a visual learner. So,  
10 the black boundary here in the wind project in  
11 Cottonwood and Watonwan County, the blue dots are  
12 wind turbines. The yellow line extending south is  
13 the transmission line that has already been approved  
14 by the Commission. And then that circled area, the  
15 red area in the south, that's the four and a half  
16 miles we're here to discuss tonight and for which  
17 we're in this route permit process for.

18 So, a route permit is primarily along  
19 roads, 40th Avenue and 220th Street. It's in the  
20 red box on the slide here. In the southwest corner  
21 is a substation development where Big Bend Wind will  
22 have a substation on the same pad as Great River  
23 Energy, just a fence between us.

24 Next slide.

25 And this is just a much more detailed

1 map, it's actually the same map that's on the poster  
2 over there that shows a little bit more of the  
3 infrastructure in this area. There's several  
4 existing transmission lines and wind turbines to be  
5 routed to our transmission line to minimize and work  
6 with the existing infrastructure in this area.

7 Rich mentioned the cemetery as a special  
8 condition in our draft route permit. We have, as of  
9 tonight, executed a screening agreement with the  
10 Cedar Lutheran Cemetery to help mitigate the visual  
11 impacts of going around that parcel and so that we  
12 are happy to report on that.

13 Next slide.

14 The infrastructure associated with our  
15 transmission line. Again, it's about four and a  
16 half miles. We have wood or steel monopole  
17 structures of single poles that are 70 to 120 feet  
18 tall. Importantly, we have 100 percent voluntary  
19 agreements with landowners along the route that you  
20 see on the map that was on the screen. Not only do  
21 we work with landowners to sign agreements for  
22 infrastructure, but we also work really closely with  
23 them to figure out where on their parcel to put it.  
24 And in this case, we routed the transmission line  
25 where the landowners wanted it on their property,

1 and that happens to by along the roads versus along  
2 maybe the back side of their parcels. There are no  
3 residences in the route. We talked about the  
4 cemetery. And then at the end of the route is a  
5 substation development area.

6 Next slide.

7 Chapter 5 of our route permit application  
8 is the environmental assessment we heard from Rich,  
9 a scoping meeting that we were here in January for,  
10 and that addendum to this environmental assessment  
11 the Commission decided was not necessary and so the  
12 information in Chapter 5 discusses impacts or  
13 existing conditions with the human environment,  
14 residences, visual impacts, noise, the natural  
15 environment, soils, geology, land use, things like  
16 that. That is all in Chapter 5 of our route permit  
17 application.

18 Next slide.

19 Just an overall project schedule that  
20 includes this process, but overall project process,  
21 we're here for the route permit in the second  
22 quarter of this year, hoping to get through it in  
23 the next couple months. We are aiming to start  
24 construction later this year, this fall, to get both  
25 the wind project and the transmission line in

1 service in 2028.

2 With that, we're happy to answer any  
3 questions. I'd be happy to answer any questions  
4 after the judge gives some additional instruction.

5 JUDGE MOSENG: All right. Thanks,  
6 everybody.

7 So just a few instructions. If you are  
8 going to provide comments, I am going to ask that  
9 folks say and spell your name if you decide to offer  
10 a comment. And then we have a court reporter. The  
11 court reporter is not present physically here, but  
12 is watching online and is reporting everything and  
13 so if there are technical terms or things, names  
14 that need to be spelled, just make sure to spell  
15 those things out.

16 Did we have anybody sign up indicating  
17 they wanted to speak? No.

18 We do have members of the public here, so  
19 I guess I'll ask, is anybody interested in providing  
20 a comment today? Okay. I'm seeing shaking heads  
21 no.

22 So, I think that we may be reaching the  
23 end of the presentation because the members of the  
24 public here don't have any comments to provide. And  
25 normally I wait and let people think about it and

1           decide, but I don't think I even need to do that.

2                       So, under the circumstances, I'll just  
3           say thank you, everybody, for coming. It's  
4           important to the Commission that folks get this  
5           information, even if you don't ask questions or have  
6           comments. And I will be providing my summary of  
7           public comments for today and tomorrow's hearing to  
8           the Commission.

9                       So, thank you very much. Have a good  
10          read of your night, and we're adjourned.

11                      (Proceeding concluded at 6:20 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Janet Shaddix Elling, do hereby  
certify that the above and foregoing transcript,  
consisting of the preceding 15 pages is a  
correct transcript of my stenographic notes, and is  
a full, true and complete transcript of the  
proceedings to the best of my ability.

Dated April 13, 2026.

/s/Janet Shaddix Elling  
JANET SHADDIX ELLING  
Registered Professional Reporter

	<p><b>area (5)</b> 11:14,15;12:3,6; 13:5</p>	<p><b>Cedar (1)</b> 12:10</p>	<p><b>consider (2)</b> 4:5;5:23</p>	<p><b>11:3</b></p>	
<p><b>A</b></p>	<p><b>able (1)</b> 8:21</p> <p><b>actually (2)</b> 9:2;12:1</p> <p><b>addendum (4)</b> 5:24;8:25;9:6; 13:10</p> <p><b>additional (4)</b> 8:7;9:8,18;14:4</p> <p><b>Additionally (1)</b> 8:16</p> <p><b>address (1)</b> 8:18</p> <p><b>addressing (1)</b> 7:18</p> <p><b>adjourned (1)</b> 15:10</p> <p><b>Administrative (8)</b> 3:7,11,12,21,24; 4:3;6:4,23</p> <p><b>adopted (1)</b> 6:21</p> <p><b>Again (1)</b> 12:15</p> <p><b>agencies (1)</b> 7:12</p> <p><b>agency (1)</b> 3:22</p> <p><b>agenda (1)</b> 6:15</p> <p><b>agreement (3)</b> 10:25;11:1;12:9</p> <p><b>agreements (2)</b> 12:19,21</p> <p><b>ahead (1)</b> 3:20</p> <p><b>ahold (2)</b> 10:1,5</p> <p><b>aiming (1)</b> 13:23</p> <p><b>ALJ (1)</b> 9:22</p> <p><b>along (4)</b> 11:18;12:19;13:1,1</p> <p><b>alternative (1)</b> 9:9</p> <p><b>analysis (2)</b> 9:8,10</p> <p><b>ANDERSON (2)</b> 10:8,9</p> <p><b>Applicants (5)</b> 3:17;5:13;6:18;9:2, 7</p> <p><b>Application (10)</b> 3:2;5:1,11,15,17; 6:1;9:4;10:16;13:7,17</p> <p><b>approved (1)</b> 11:13</p> <p><b>April (2)</b> 6:12;7:10</p>	<p><b>around (1)</b> 12:11</p> <p><b>assessment (5)</b> 5:12,24;9:3;13:8,10</p> <p><b>assigned (1)</b> 4:25</p> <p><b>assistance (1)</b> 6:3</p> <p><b>Associated (3)</b> 3:5;6:11;12:14</p> <p><b>attention (1)</b> 7:19</p> <p><b>Avenue (1)</b> 11:19</p>	<p><b>cemetery (4)</b> 9:18;12:7,10;13:4</p> <p><b>CEZAR (7)</b> 4:20,22;8:4;9:2,12; 10:1,6</p> <p><b>change (1)</b> 11:1</p> <p><b>Chapter (4)</b> 4:10;13:7,12,16</p> <p><b>chose (1)</b> 6:2</p> <p><b>Christa (1)</b> 3:10</p> <p><b>Christy (1)</b> 10:13</p> <p><b>circled (1)</b> 11:14</p> <p><b>circumstances (1)</b> 15:2</p> <p><b>cities (1)</b> 7:11</p> <p><b>click (2)</b> 8:19,19</p> <p><b>closely (1)</b> 12:22</p> <p><b>closes (1)</b> 6:12</p> <p><b>coming (3)</b> 8:24;10:7;15:3</p> <p><b>comment (4)</b> 6:11;7:9;14:10,20</p> <p><b>comments (14)</b> 3:18;4:5;6:6,13; 7:13,15,16,18,19; 9:24;14:8,24;15:6,7</p> <p><b>Commission (20)</b> 3:16;4:2,5,19,23; 5:7,21;6:2,14,24;7:1, 21;8:6;9:5,11;10:20; 11:14;13:11;15:4,8</p> <p><b>Commission's (2)</b> 4:7;9:21</p> <p><b>company (2)</b> 4:14;10:19</p> <p><b>completed (2)</b> 9:3,8</p> <p><b>concluded (1)</b> 15:11</p> <p><b>condition (1)</b> 12:8</p> <p><b>conditions (5)</b> 7:24;9:15,16,18; 13:13</p> <p><b>conduct (1)</b> 9:22</p> <p><b>conflicts (1)</b> 7:6</p> <p><b>connect (1)</b> 11:2</p> <p><b>conserve (1)</b> 7:3</p>	<p><b>consideration (1)</b> 4:8</p> <p><b>considerations (3)</b> 6:20,21;7:24</p> <p><b>construction (1)</b> 13:24</p> <p><b>consumerpuc@statemnus (1)</b> 7:16</p> <p><b>contact (1)</b> 9:25</p> <p><b>copies (4)</b> 5:6,7,10,13</p> <p><b>copy (1)</b> 5:5</p> <p><b>corner (1)</b> 11:20</p> <p><b>Cottonwood (2)</b> 10:21;11:11</p> <p><b>counsel (1)</b> 10:15</p> <p><b>Counties (1)</b> 10:22</p> <p><b>County (2)</b> 3:5;11:11</p> <p><b>couple (2)</b> 9:21;13:23</p> <p><b>Court (7)</b> 3:7,11,21,23;6:4; 14:10,11</p> <p><b>covered (1)</b> 6:21</p> <p><b>covering (1)</b> 6:9</p> <p><b>Cox (1)</b> 10:14</p>	<p><b>director (2)</b> 10:9,13</p> <p><b>discuss (2)</b> 10:4;11:16</p> <p><b>discusses (1)</b> 13:12</p> <p><b>Docket (4)</b> 3:6,8;8:13,18</p> <p><b>dots (1)</b> 11:11</p> <p><b>draft (7)</b> 5:7,8,22;9:1,12,13; 12:8</p>
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