

November 20, 2017

Mr. Daniel Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
350 Metro Square Building
121 East Seventh Place
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

Via electronic filing

RE: In the Matter of the Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund (RDF) Annual report, Tracker Account Tune-up, and Request for 2018 Rider Factor

Docket No. E-002/M-17-~~172-712~~

Dear Mr. Wolf,

Attached is the letter I submitted as my comment to the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Crown Hydro Project. In it, I call attention to state legislation, which I authored, authorizing the development of a Whitewater Trail in the St. Anthony Falls portion of the Mississippi River. More specifically, I call attention to how the present proposal for the Whitewater Trail Project places the Trail along the west side of the River, which became the ideal location for the Trail after the closing of the Upper St. Anthony Lock.

Because the Crown Hydro project might preclude the best siting of the Whitewater Trail, I urged the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to adopt the No Action option as the preferred alternative. Two recent developments have strengthened my opposition to the Crown Hydro project and, particularly, the further use of Renewable Development Fund (RDF) grant monies in connection with the project.

First, legislation was passed this past legislative session to address situations where RDF funds remain allocated for a project even though the project has not advanced to fruition after many years. For Crown Hydro, that time period is now over 15 years, yet over \$3 million in grant monies have not been dispersed because of Crown Hydro's failure to meet the siting and construction deadlines for the project set out in the grant contract. In the meantime, the Whitewater Trail project is still a possibility and it has become increasingly clear just how much the Crown Hydro project is incompatible with the preferred siting and use of the Trail.

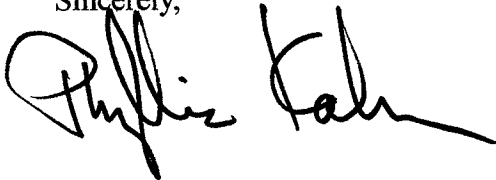
Second, I'm also aware of a recent project, called "The Falls," which has broad community support and is consistent with current plans for the area, but cannot co-exist with the Crown Hydro project. Notably, The Falls Project is also complementary to the Whitewater Trail project. Again, the further use of RDF funds to support the Crown Hydro project, based on circumstances existing 15-plus years ago, is not justifiable when the use of such funds would directly interfere with other, more recent projects which are proceeding with a combination of public and private funding and *are consistent with the current vision for the Central Riverfront.*

For these reasons, I urge you to notify Crown Hydro that the PUC will not disperse any further funds in connection with the now antiquated Crown Hydro project.

Please consider this letter and attachment as my comment in response to your request for comments regarding action the PUC might take relative to the further use of RDF funds for the Crown Hydro project.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phyllis Kahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Phyllis" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kahn".

Phyllis Kahn
115 West Island Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55401

cc: Nancy Lange Chair
Dan Lipschultz Vice Chair
Matt Schuerger Commissioner
John Tuma Commissioner
Katie Sieben Commissioner

Phyllis Kahn
State Representative
District 60B
Hennepin County



Minnesota House of Representatives

COMMITTEES:
LEAD, LEGACY FUNDING FINANCE
STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE
WAYS AND MEANS
LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMISSION

November 2, 2016

Honorable Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20426

VIA Electronic Filing

Re: Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for Crown Hydro Docket No. P-11175-025

Dear Ms. Bose:

The Crown Hydro EA identifies Recreational Resources including an urban whitewater trail: "The recreation areas in the vicinity of the proposed project provide multiple opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the riverfront area in an otherwise urban and highly developed landscape. In 2012, the Secretary of the Interior designated the 72-mile Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, including the stretch of the Mississippi River in the St. Anthony Falls, a National Water Trail. In 2014, the Minnesota Legislature designated the area along the Mississippi River in the St. Anthony Falls area in Minneapolis as an urban whitewater trail." (EA page 58)

In fact, the Minnesota Legislature first passed legislation, which I authored, creating the Mississippi Whitewater Trail in 1998, at the same time authorizing acceptance of money from public and private sources for the project:

Minn. Stat. §85.0156 MISSISSIPPI WHITEWATER TRAIL.

Subdivision 1. Creation. An urban whitewater trail is created along the Mississippi River in the St. Anthony Falls area in Minneapolis. The trail must be primarily developed for whitewater rafters, canoers, and kayakers.



Subd. 2. Commissioner's duties. (a) The commissioner of natural resources must coordinate the creation of the Whitewater Trail by placing designation signs near and along the river and must publicize the designation. (b) In designating the Mississippi Whitewater Trail, the commissioner must work with other federal, state, and local agencies and private businesses and organizations interested in the trail.

Subd. 3. Gifts; donations. The commissioner of natural resources is authorized to accept, on behalf of a nonprofit corporation, donations of land or easements in land for the Whitewater Trail and may seek and accept money for the trail from other public and private sources.

History: 1998 c 401 s 26; 1Sp2003 c 13 s 3

For many years, I have advocated for this unique recreational opportunity in an urban area. Supporters of whitewater recreation envisioned much more than a "trail". We imagined a destination whitewater complex. Several cities have constructed successful whitewater parks, including Augsburg, Germany; South Bend, Indiana; Boise, Idaho; Columbus, Georgia and Wausau, Wisconsin. Wausau Whitewater Park turned this small Wisconsin town into a recreational sports destination.

We originally studied placement on the East side of the river because the West side would have interfered with barge traffic. With the lock closing and the end of barge traffic, we are now able to consider the potentially superior location for the whitewater park on the West side of the river. In 2011, I received an update on the Whitewater Park Project from the Minnesota DNR. At that time, there was still a \$10 million federal earmark for the project.

The EA recognizes the value of the recreational opportunity offered by a whitewater experience in the city and recommends several environmental measures including:

"Work with interested parties and resource agencies, including the Corps, the Park Service, Minnesota DNR, and the Park Board, to establish a portage route through the project area to support the designated canoe and whitewater route." (EA page 81)

Unfortunately, the Crown project might preclude the ideal location for the whitewater park on the West side. I urge the Commission to adopt the No Action alternative. The potentially significant impacts on maximizing the recreational possibilities of the long planned for whitewater park must be studied.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments on the Draft EA for Crown Hydro.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phyllis Kahn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Phyllis Kahn
State Representative