

Minnesota Connection Project

MPUC Docket No.

E-002/TL-22-132

Public Comment Opposing the Proposed Amended Route

To the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission:

I respectfully submit this comment in strong opposition to Xcel Energy's request to amend the Approved Designated route permit for the Minnesota Energy Connection Project in Gales Township of Redwood County.

I was raised in Section 20 of Gales Township and have farmed, since the early 1980's, the land adjacent to the south of the proposed route amendment. My proposed amended route opposition comments are to give voice for my grandchildren who represent the 7th generation of the Hook Family to call Gales and Amiret Township home and for fellow neighbors who will be living in close proximity to a 345-kV transmission line if the amended route is enacted.

1. False statement in Section 3.1 : "Passersby on County Rd. 4 will likely not observe a change to the viewshed resulting from the Project based on proximity of the Proposed Amended route to existing distribution line structures"

There will be a distinct difference in the viewshed on the north side right of way on Co.Rd. 4 due to the presence of the tall, multi lined 345kV transmission towers(90'-160' per Xcel). The Designated Approved transmission route travels ½ mile north of the amended route with a much better viewshed for the 3 residences and safety for passersby on Co. Rd. 4. Furthermore, there will be more costs incurred to the Xcel project as they will have to move the mile of existing Redwood Electric Coop line to the south right of way of Co.Rd. 4 and bury the electric line along our property. Xcel has already spent millions burying existing Redwood Electric lines by choosing to route the transmission line along County Rd. 4 instead of electing to approve the first proposed route for MECP.

2. False statement in Section 3.2: “The residence is also within 500 feet of the Designated Route and the Proposed Amended Route does not change the distance between this residence and the route.

The stated residence, using Beacon, measures 1900 feet away from the Designated route. Xcel’s measurement is a gross misrepresentation as the Designated route is nearly 4 times farther away and a much better route to mitigate transmission line electromagnetic fields, safety and viewshed. The Bents family home is 700+’ from the amended line and the Johansen family home is 800+’ from the proposed amended line. However, Johansen’s driveway access to Co. Rd. 4 will be right next to the proposed amended line with direct electromagnetic exposure when waiting for the school bus and the mail service.

Simply stated, the proposed amended transmission route puts three family residences in close proximity to the powerline while the Approved Designated route provides a minimum 1900’ buffer safety from electromagnetic fields with improved viewshed for residences and passersby.

3. Section 2.1 Stated need for proposed amended route

The Designated Route 175 mile double-circuit 345kW transmission line will traverse watersheds, vegetation/trees, biodiverse areas, drainage ditches, grid tiled farmland, terraces and a variation of terrain as depicted in the July 1, 2025 Xcel route permit packet maps.

1) Our farming operation will navigate the Designated transmission line on the north and west border in Section 29 of Granite Rock Township (Redwood Co.) where we farm 146 acres with shallow, complete pattern tile that flows to a drainage ditch/wetland.

2) Our farming operation will navigate the Designated transmission line on the west border of Section 20 of Amiret Township (Lyon Co.) where we farm 126 acres with shallow, complete pattern tile that flows into a waterway/wetland/CRP buffer.

3) Our farming operation will navigate the Designated transmission line on the north border of Section 13 in Amiret Township (Lyon Co.) where we will have to mitigate stray voltage in an electric fenced, rotational grazing and watering system, Xcel will have to remove trees to construct the transmission line and virgin, native soil will be impacted by the construction process.

The proposed amendment has a stated “want” but not a verifiable “need” as our family, as well as countless landowners, have the same comparable, sensitive grid tiled land, wetland drainage, tree removal requirement, unique fence and water system for livestock and farmable terrace structures along the 175 mile

transmission route that would merit and deserve “wanting” to ask for an amended transmission line route.

So why haven’t we asked for the same amendments or reconsiderations from Xcel and the MPUC??

The answer is clear because the Approved Designated Route was properly vetted through research and open public input. The Approved Designated route was an open, public decision, while the proposed amendment is a personal “want” that values tile and trees over the “need” to protect families, neighbors and human safety.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request the Commission to:

- 1) Deny Xcel Energy’s request for a transmission route amendment in Gales Township as they have failed to provide a valid need when compared to other similar land and landowners, submitted inaccurate support data and do not recognize/value the human impact of moving the transmission line from the Approved Designated route where there is zero human interaction.
- 2) Require Xcel to implement the Approved Designated route in Gales Township of Redwood County as it was properly researched and planned with all agencies and stakeholders contributing in a public forum.

Finally, I ask that you would uphold the mission of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to improve the lives of All Minnesotans by ensuring Safe, Reliable and Sustainable utility services and deny this amendment request.

Sincerely,

Tom Hook
Hook Farms
2 JayVee Lane
Garvin, Mn. 56132

