

1 SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING - 23-200 08-1474  
2 LAKEVILLE - DECEMBER 11, 2023 - 12:00 P.M.  
3 BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
4 AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

5

6 In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of  
7 Need for the Proposed 345 kV Brookings County, Lyon  
8 County and Helena County Hampton Second Circuit Project

8 In the Matter of the Application for a Minor Alteration  
9 of the CapX2020 Brookings - Hampton Route Permit to Add  
10 the Brookings County - Lyon County and Helena - Hampton  
11 Second Circuit Project

12 MPUC DOCKET NOS. E-002/CN-23-200  
13 E-002/TI-08-1474

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15 Holiday Inn  
16 Lakeville, Minnesota

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18 DECEMBER 11, 2023

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STENOGRAPHIC COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

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1 MR. MIKE KALUZNIAK: Good morning.

2 Once again, my name is Michael Kaluzniak,  
3 I'm a staff person with the Minnesota Public  
4 Utilities Commission.

5 We're here to talk about the Brookings to  
6 Hampton Transmission Line and the Second Circuit  
7 that will be placed on it.

8 This is a public information and  
9 environmental report assessment scoping meeting and  
10 I'll explain that in a bit.

11 You'll notice there are two PUC dockets.  
12 The Commission has two separate proceedings that are  
13 being done jointly here, so there are two approvals  
14 required for the Commission and the reason we have  
15 two dockets.

16 One is a certificate of need, which  
17 demonstrates the need for the project, obviously.  
18 Whether it's in the consumer and ratepayers' best  
19 interests. And some of the econometric evaluations  
20 of the project itself. That's 23-200.

21 The second one is a minor alteration  
22 that's required to modify the existing Brookings to  
23 Hampton line, and that's a separate docket,  
24 TL-08-1474. We did that in '09 through '12, I  
25 believe. We were out here having meetings back then

1 as well.

2 So, with that, we're meeting tonight, by  
3 the way, online, there's information on those  
4 meetings in the notice. If you didn't get one of  
5 these, please pick one up at the table. There is  
6 also other information and sign-ups for you as well.

7 We're here to talk about the proposed  
8 project, what it is, where it's going, what it  
9 entails. And in the process for the review of the  
10 certificate of need application and the route  
11 approval through the Commission's minor approval  
12 process.

13 More importantly, we're here to provide  
14 an opportunity for you to participate in developing  
15 the scope of the environmental report for the  
16 project. The certificate of need mandates that an  
17 environmental report be done to assess the human and  
18 environmental impacts of the project, or the  
19 potential environmental impacts, I should say. And  
20 then allow you to comment on the need for it, to  
21 comment on potential impacts of the proposed  
22 project. And then if you have additional methods  
23 that might be used to minimize, mitigate, or avoid  
24 potential impacts, we would like to hear that as  
25 well.

1           Again, just to keep things straight, it's  
2           awful confusing when you see a lot of parties  
3           talking. So, again, I'm with the Public Utilities  
4           Commission. The Commission itself is a five-member  
5           body and I'm a staff person. They meet in public,  
6           we have open meeting laws, all of our meetings and  
7           materials that they use to base their decision are  
8           filed on our website and there is information in the  
9           notice about that as well.

10           After I'm finished here shortly, I will  
11           turn it over to Tim Rogers from Xcel Energy, who  
12           will explain the project in more detail and provide  
13           some more information about what that entails.

14           After that time, Suzanne Steinhauer from  
15           the Department of Commerce here, the Energy  
16           Environmental Review and Analysis unit, who is a  
17           sibling agency to the Commission, I guess you'd call  
18           it, that provides assistance to the Commission in  
19           terms of environmental reviews and other procedural  
20           things with the applications.

21           After that presentation, Suzanne will be  
22           moderating the Q and A here, so we're happy to have  
23           you come out and we appreciate any questions you may  
24           have.

25           Once again, there are copies of the

1 notice and the slides, please take one of those if  
2 you care to. If you aren't on our mailing list, if  
3 you didn't receive a notice in the mail and you'd  
4 like to get future notices, please fill out an  
5 orange card and we'll see that that happens.

6 With that, I'll turn it over to Tim  
7 Rogers.

8 I'm sorry, I have one more slide here. I  
9 apologize.

10 I explained this briefly before so I  
11 won't go through it in too much detail. Again, we  
12 need a certificate of need and a minor alteration  
13 from the Commission, they need to get it from the  
14 Commission in order to build the project. These are  
15 the laws that are governing the review of the  
16 project itself. The certificate of need is done  
17 under statutes 216B.243 and Minnesota rules 7849.  
18 And the minor alteration, it is a minor alteration  
19 to the transmission line under Minnesota rule  
20 Chapter 7850.

21 As part of that, again, the Commission  
22 has authorized the preparation of an environmental  
23 report in accordance with accepting the application.

24 Just a quick rundown of the process that  
25 the Commission will use to evaluate the record and

1 make a decision on these two requests.

2 The Commission received an application  
3 separately from Xcel on behalf of some of the CapX  
4 partners requesting the certificate of need and  
5 minor alteration. We did have a brief comment  
6 period to see if the application had sufficient  
7 information to proceed with the review. And the  
8 Commission did approve that, as well as providing  
9 direction as to the review process going forward.  
10 They allowed a formal comment and reply comment for  
11 the certificate of need, and the minor alteration  
12 has comments available for you as well.

13 After the environmental report is scoped,  
14 Suzanne and the Department of Commerce will issue a  
15 scoping statement saying that this is what we'll be  
16 looking at within the environmental report. And  
17 these are things we won't be looking at. And then  
18 the report will be developed to have that ready.  
19 After that time, we'll have another notice that will  
20 be going out, we'll probably be back in the same  
21 spot here or somewhere close by, to have a public  
22 hearing in front of an administrative law judge with  
23 the court reporter again, a little bit more formal,  
24 we enter evidence and things like that and develop  
25 the record.

1           And after that point, the comment period  
2 will be open until 10 days after the public hearing.  
3 And the administrative law judge will probably  
4 provide a report sometime within the 30- to 60-day  
5 time period. After the ALJ report comes out, I will  
6 do the Commission briefing paper, where we review  
7 the entire record, including the comments you make  
8 here today, in reaching a decision.

9           So we do appreciate you coming out and  
10 taking the time. And we're happy to answer any  
11 question you may have.

12           Thank you.

13           MR. TIM ROGERS: Thank you, Mike.

14           Hi. I'm Tim Rogers, Manager of Siting  
15 and Land Rights at Xcel Energy.

16           Yeah, Mike, you could toggle to my next  
17 slide, if you like. Maybe a couple in. And I have  
18 my project manager, Tony Wetland here, helping to  
19 answer any questions that you have.

20           So Xcel is the lead applicant on this,  
21 but there are other CapX owners that Mike alluded to  
22 so I needed to acknowledge them.

23           We're asking approval from the Commission  
24 to put a second circuit on the existing structures  
25 that were originally built. So here's a picture you

1 can see, on the left-hand side there's the poles  
2 that are ready for this second circuit that was  
3 originally installed, and on the right is kind of  
4 what the structures will look like with that second  
5 circuit installed.

6 So a circuit is, we'll have three new  
7 lines or three new conductors on it, so that's why  
8 we have three arms. There's two segments that we're  
9 asking for approval. There's a western segment that  
10 goes from White, South Dakota to Milroy, Minnesota,  
11 and then an eastern segment that goes in between the  
12 Helena substation to the Hampton substation. The  
13 total project is about 98 miles long.

14 Okay. You're toggling the wrong way.

15 There is a segment in the middle that is  
16 in purple there that is already built  
17 double-circuit. So back when they installed this  
18 eight or nine years ago, the Commission said we were  
19 okay to put the two double-circuits on in that  
20 middle section, but they thought we should come back  
21 and show the need for when the time is right to put  
22 on the second circuit on each end. And so what  
23 we're finding right now is we've got congestion and  
24 so we're having an inability to deliver this  
25 renewable power to our customers and so now is the

1 time to put on this second circuit.

2 So the western segment here is -- you can  
3 see that we've got some red spots. We're primarily  
4 going to use a bucket truck and a crew to access  
5 some segments, but for the most part we're going to  
6 use a helicopter to string the second circuit so we  
7 won't be building new structures on this western  
8 segment so the impacts will be minimal.

9 Let's see. Our construction, we're  
10 hoping, is Quarter 2 of 2024.

11 And the eastern segment here is we do  
12 have a few areas where we will need to put in some  
13 new structures. And those areas are where we have  
14 to cut in near Trout Lake substation and by the  
15 Airlake Airport. We have to kind of rebuild about  
16 11 different structures to keep it low profile.

17 For the eastern and the western segment  
18 all the construction will stay within the existing  
19 easement so we won't be needing new easements from  
20 landowners.

21 If there are any crop damages during the  
22 construction, we will reimburse the landowners for  
23 the loss of those crops.

24 I think that's it. Tony, any key items I  
25 forgot to mention? It's a pretty basic project

1 here.

2 So if there's any questions, I guess we  
3 go to Suzanne for the next part.

4 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Good afternoon.  
5 Can people hear me?

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Yep.

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I am Suzanne  
8 Steinhauer with the Minnesota Department of Commerce  
9 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis unit.

10 So the Department of Commerce has a wide  
11 range of responsibilities. Most of these are in the  
12 area of consumer protection. We have an insurance  
13 fraud division. We have weights and measures, so  
14 that little sticker when you fill up with gas  
15 showing it's been through an analysis. And also it  
16 is to act as technical advisors to the Commission  
17 and to provide a neutral third-party analysis of  
18 energy facility projects seeking permits from the  
19 Commission.

20 So I think both Mike and Tim went over  
21 the review process. It needs a certificate of need  
22 and a minor alteration to the existing transmission  
23 route permit.

24 And for the purposes of the work that I  
25 do, the difference is that the certificate of need

1 requires an environmental report, which is a high  
2 level review of the potential impacts for the  
3 project and what mitigation measures can be taken to  
4 avoid or minimize those impacts.

5 So any infrastructure project, I'm sure  
6 you guys will know, will have impacts. So system  
7 alternatives are reviewed to compare human and  
8 environmental impacts to see how they would differ.  
9 And one of the system alternatives that we'll look  
10 at is not building this project, which will also  
11 have impacts, they're just different.

12 So the environmental report describes the  
13 proposed project and system alternatives. If you've  
14 had an opportunity, it's not necessary, there's a  
15 sample scoping report that sort of identifies  
16 generally. I think of it as a table of contents for  
17 the environmental report. It'll describe the  
18 project, the construction, the type of structures  
19 that will be used, right-of-way requirements. And  
20 then it will describe alternatives to the proposed  
21 project and then impacts and mitigation measures for  
22 the project as proposed and for the alternatives.  
23 It will also identify strategies to minimize or  
24 mitigate those impacts. And those can be formalized  
25 in permit conditions for the minor alteration.

1           So there are some things that we know  
2 we're going to look at. We have -- by law, we have  
3 to look at impacts to natural resources, which are  
4 air quality, greenhouse gases, vegetation, wildlife,  
5 water resources. We need to look at impacts to  
6 human settlements, noise, aesthetics,  
7 socioeconomics, public services, public health and  
8 safety, and then also land-based economics, which in  
9 this project is going to be mostly, I would imagine  
10 almost exclusively agricultural, there is not  
11 forestry. So those are the type of impacts that we  
12 look at generally. And the purpose of scoping is to  
13 hone those down to identify projects that are more  
14 relevant to the project as proposed to identify  
15 those impacts.

16           There are a couple things that it won't  
17 cover. It won't look at negotiation and contents of  
18 easement agreements and it won't look at  
19 alternatives that weren't specifically identified in  
20 the scoping decision. So the unique characteristics  
21 help inform that analysis. And to identify, as I  
22 mentioned earlier, potential permit conditions. So  
23 the comments help us move from the general to the  
24 specific.

25           So with that in mind, the general

1 framework in mind, I'm going to turn the mic over  
2 pretty soon for comments and questions. I'd ask  
3 that you try to focus your comments on these areas,  
4 potential impacts that you're concerned about and  
5 that you feel the Commission should know more about  
6 or you want to know more about. Strategies to  
7 avoid, minimize or mitigate or other ways the needs  
8 for the project could be met. Unique  
9 characteristics of the proposed route of the  
10 project. Items that are missing or mischaracterized  
11 in the application for the certificate of need and  
12 the minor alteration for the route permit  
13 application and other project-related issues or  
14 concerns.

15 And I'm going to turn this over for  
16 comments in just a minute.

17 There is several ways you can get your  
18 comments into the record. For people who want to  
19 speak, we're accepting verbal comments today at this  
20 meeting tonight and at the online meeting and then  
21 tomorrow evening in Marshall.

22 So information is in the notice and it's  
23 in the comment form. You can contact me at any  
24 time, you can give me a call, you can send me an  
25 email. But if we talk about it, that's not going to

1 be part of the record that the Commission sees when  
2 it's evaluating it. So getting your comments  
3 verbally into the record tonight, and we'll take  
4 written comments through January 3rd.

5 If you don't want to speak in front of a  
6 crowd and you would prefer to write your comments,  
7 that's fine. If you speak today and have another  
8 question, you can send in comments by the 3rd of  
9 January. You can comment directly online through  
10 the fillable form on our website, on the Commerce  
11 website. You can mail, fax, or email comments by  
12 January 3rd. There's a comment sheet that you don't  
13 have to use, we provide them because sometimes it's  
14 useful. It has all the contact information and so  
15 if you want to grab one for later, you can do that.

16 So just a quick reminder about sort of  
17 the comment etiquette tonight -- this afternoon. If  
18 you have questions about the project or the review  
19 process, I'd encourage you to ask them today. We  
20 have folks here who should be able to answer those  
21 questions. If you are looking at issues, we want to  
22 make the report that it has any mitigation measures.

23 We have a court reporter here, Janet is  
24 here, and it's really important that we have a  
25 record. We are keeping a record of our

1 conversation. They can only record one speaker at a  
2 time. We really want to make sure we have an  
3 accurate record so one person at a time, please.  
4 Before you start, please take a minute to state and  
5 spell your name for the record. And so if you  
6 forget, I'll remind you, and that's fine.

7 Please limit your initial comments to  
8 five minutes so we make sure everybody that wants to  
9 say something has an opportunity, and then we'll  
10 circle back. I think there were one or two people  
11 who signed up and I'll start with those people and  
12 then open it up.

13 And then the last thing is, please  
14 maintain respect for others here. People can have  
15 differences of opinion about the proposed project,  
16 the Commission wants to know that before their  
17 decision, and that's why we want to hear from  
18 anyone.

19 So I'm going to put the mic over here and  
20 then just ask if you could speak into the mic so we  
21 have an accurate record.

22 MR. MARK HENRY: Okay. I'm pretty loud,  
23 I don't need a mic, but --

24 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: It's easier for  
25 the reporter if you have a mic.

1 MR. MARK HENRY: I am Mark Henry,  
2 M-A-R-K, H-E-N-R-Y, Castle Rock Township.

3 First off, I've got a document for you  
4 gentlemen. This is an ordinance that we enacted in  
5 2009 in Castle Rock to deal with these kinds of  
6 projects and the effects on our roads. At that  
7 time, I believe CapX took us to court and lost, so I  
8 wouldn't go down that path again.

9 All it is is about dealing with road  
10 issues, regulating traffic. And I think you're  
11 going to find that a number of townships in this  
12 area adopted this. We paid for it, they got it for  
13 free.

14 So it comes down to routing, usage. You  
15 know, and I don't see it as being as big an impact  
16 this time because we're not dealing with poles and  
17 everything, but still you're going to be asked to  
18 deal with that, okay.

19 I'm one of the other-side-of-the-roaders.  
20 I'm still trying to figure out how this thing got  
21 through by stealing the townships' right-of-ways.  
22 My township, 1858, for a period of roughly 50 years  
23 after that the roads were put in place through road  
24 orders. And basically what that was was people came  
25 in and petitioned the board, asked for a road. The

1 road -- the township would send a surveyor out, lay  
2 the road out. There would be a legal description of  
3 the road. At the end of the day, the people that  
4 gave up easement for the road, that's what they are,  
5 they're 66-foot right-of-ways, would be recognized  
6 in the road order.

7 So I'm trying to figure out -- and the  
8 thing is that, you know, we have say over the local  
9 public utilities, that service, like Xcel. But I'm  
10 trying to figure out how this thing was able to  
11 attach itself to the road.

12 I was one of the  
13 other-side-of-the-rovers, meaning I wasn't even  
14 part of the process of condemnation. They would buy  
15 80 feet of right-of-way from my neighbor, they would  
16 mention them in the condemnation, but Mark Henry on  
17 the other side of the road, and there's an easement  
18 there, but I'm not even mentioned. And the legal  
19 description of the right-of-way is 150 feet. So  
20 they would set their power pole just outside of the  
21 easement, the town's easement.

22 They paid for 80 feet of right-of-way,  
23 they would incorporate 80 feet of right-of-way they  
24 paid for, but 66 feet that I'll use the term they  
25 acquired from the township. And then I'm one of the

1 other-side-of-the-roaders. They took four feet out  
2 of my front yard that I never even got paid for. So  
3 I have kind of an issue with all of that. It's not  
4 just me, it's everybody on this road, all up and  
5 down this road, that's what they did. I still  
6 wonder how that was accomplished. We have say over  
7 public utilities in our right-of-way, but we had no  
8 say over this.

9 I would have no issue with this project  
10 if they would have paid for the right-of-way, but  
11 half of you didn't. That's my -- excuse me, I'm a  
12 little passionate. That's my interpretation of it.

13 By the way, I went and testified to the  
14 PUC about this ten years ago. I could tell the  
15 Judge had a lot of consternation, but nothing came  
16 from it. I guess those are my primary comments.

17 If you need any help with this next year,  
18 I do the road maintenance in the township, and I'm  
19 going to work with you gentlemen, don't get me  
20 wrong. But I do have kind of an issue with the way  
21 this was done originally.

22 By the way, I sleep 100 feet from this  
23 damn thing. And we're being inundated now with  
24 people that want to put up solar panels, recently we  
25 were approached about 300-some acres going into the

1 city of Farmington so there could be a data shed. I  
2 don't know, that's outside of my route.

3 I'm done. Oh, any questions?

4 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

5 So I have one question for you that's a  
6 technical question, and I think the Commission staff  
7 would like to respond to some of your comments. You  
8 gave Mr. Rogers a copy of the road --

9 MR. MARK HENRY: If you go to our  
10 website, yep, 2009-2.

11 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Do you want that  
12 to be part of -- do you want me to enter that into  
13 the record?

14 MR. MARK HENRY: I wanted to bring that  
15 today. It's online if anybody needs to see it. And  
16 all it does is it -- we went through the MN Can  
17 project, and what we ended with is walking down the  
18 road, people at picnic tables having lunch, people  
19 coming from every direction in the town.

20 So if they need to bring supplies in, we  
21 want to say, okay, use this road only. That sort of  
22 thing. That's all it's about. It's not trying to  
23 impede them or stop them, it's about us trying to  
24 have control. And if we have a road that is  
25 generally maybe a problem, the subgrade is not

1 really well, we don't want you using that. We just  
2 want you to work with us and be a partner.

3 The other comments I made are kind of  
4 personal.

5 MR. MIKE KALUZNIAK: Thank you.

6 I just wanted to point out that the  
7 Commission under Minnesota law does not have any  
8 involvement with the actual easements themselves and  
9 any condemnation proceedings. The Commission, in  
10 issuing a transmission line route permit, provides a  
11 corridor in which an applicant is entitled to build  
12 the structures themselves. The final location of  
13 which is sited after the Commission's permit through  
14 consultation with the Department of Commerce. So we  
15 don't deal directly with anything related to the  
16 actual administration of the easements themselves.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAEUER: Now I'm just  
19 going to -- I think we're small enough to go by a  
20 show of hands. If there is anybody else who has  
21 comments or questions, this is a good time to ask  
22 them and we'll try our best.

23 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Hello. I'm Ed O'Brien,  
24 O-B-R-I-E-N. 24525 Dodd Boulevard.

25 The transmission line will go right by

1 our property. We did get involved with the easement  
2 issue.

3 My question, I have two questions. One  
4 is is this an additional 345 thousand watt circuit  
5 on the poles that are 345 thousand watt circuits?  
6 So it's 700, roughly? Correct?

7 MR. TIM ROGERS: It's an additional 345  
8 kV circuit. You're correct.

9 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Okay. Because I know  
10 the permit was for 345, but now they're adding in  
11 another 345.

12 MR. TIM ROGERS: Correct.

13 MR. ED O'BRIEN: That was the first  
14 question.

15 Next question was occasionally we've had  
16 huge explosion noise. Is that created by something  
17 with the power lines unloading or something?  
18 Because it's actually rattled the dishes in my  
19 wife's counters. And nobody knows where it's coming  
20 from. And it seems like it's when there is  
21 humidity, because that's the only time we hear the  
22 vibration from the lines, is when it's like humid  
23 out and you get some humming through the lines. Is  
24 that going to be doubled also?

25 MR. TIM ROGERS: Yeah, we're going to

1 look into that. In our minor application, we've  
2 looked at noise. And there will be -- there are  
3 calculations that show noise increase. But you're  
4 correct, that the more humid it is, the more  
5 crackling that you'll hear.

6 But I would like you to talk to some of  
7 our engineers just to understand a little bit more  
8 about what's going on. Rattling dishes in the  
9 kitchen doesn't sound right. So I think you should  
10 talk with our technical --

11 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Yeah. 'Cause we had  
12 neighbors calling, too, saying, hey, what happened,  
13 what was that? And it isn't frequent, don't get me  
14 wrong, but occasionally it's happened. And it's  
15 like, what was that? You know, dogs barking in the  
16 garage, like what the hell, what went on. I was  
17 just curious if that could be coming from the lines.

18 MR. TIM ROGERS: Yeah. The magnitude,  
19 I'm not sure. But, yep, if you've correlated it  
20 with really humid or a rain weather, yeah, it could  
21 be the line that exhibits that type of situation.  
22 I'm not sure about explosions, though.

23 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Well, we've never seen  
24 anything, it's just been the noise.

25 MS. SHELBY O'BRIEN: And the vibration.

1 MR. ED O'BRIEN: And, again, I thought if  
2 the neighbor was blowing a rock out of a farm field  
3 or something, but nobody's done anything like that  
4 in the neighborhood.

5 MR. TIM ROGERS: If it's appropriate, I'd  
6 like you to talk with some of our engineers. Or we  
7 could address that now, but I don't think we're  
8 going to have an answer right now.

9 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: If Xcel has  
11 engineers who you'd like to talk to, I think that's  
12 good, they can lead you through that. We have the  
13 comment, we'll try to look into that and ask Xcel  
14 for more information for that.

15 MR. TIM ROGERS: And my engineer, Ben  
16 Gallay -- come on up, Ben. Thank you.

17 MR. BEN GALLEY: Ben Gallay, G-A-L-L-A-Y.

18 So I guess -- so certainly  
19 explosion-wise, there's nothing on the line  
20 operating that can cause a concussive force, so  
21 there's nothing that could cause little vibrations,  
22 little rattling noises, the humming noise you're  
23 hearing. The corona discharge effect, as Tim was  
24 mentioning, is typical. It does fluctuate with  
25 humidity in the operation of power lines. But

1 that's a 50 Hertz crackling, humming noise that  
2 usually dissipates within a few hundred feet of the  
3 power lines. But it certainly can't cause any  
4 movement of objects around.

5 The net effect of adding the second  
6 circuit, with noise it's not completely additive.  
7 When you have a loud noise in the area, they don't  
8 double if you go up say just a few kicks. For  
9 example, 40 decibels with what you're hearing today,  
10 it might go up to 42 or 43 decibels with the second  
11 circuit, they are essentially the same level of  
12 noise, you just hear it twice, and they can hear  
13 double that. I think that I caught what I heard.

14 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Yeah. And it was more  
15 of a question if that explosion could have come from  
16 the power lines, you know.

17 MR. BEN GALLAY: When you first mentioned  
18 it, I thought back when it was originally installed,  
19 they did use some explosive splices and dead end  
20 sleeves that were used across the line. Those did  
21 cause a force and people were notified when they  
22 were going to happen, et cetera. But that's not an  
23 ongoing activity, that was just during the install  
24 of those lines so they could string longer and  
25 longer sections so we didn't disturb as many

1 property owners. So there's nothing a line can do  
2 in its operation over the last decade that can cause  
3 an explosion.

4 MR. ED O'BRIEN: So there could be some  
5 more just for installation.

6 MR. BEN GALLAY: I won't completely  
7 exclude it because of materials, supplies a decade  
8 ago, they didn't have the same amount of the string  
9 without the explosive use. And it's better for  
10 everybody and less disturbing so that would be the  
11 reason.

12 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Thank you.

13 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Any other  
14 comments or questions?

15 MS. SHELBIE O'BRIEN: I guess I do have  
16 one. I'm sorry.

17 I'm Shelbie O'Brien, that's  
18 S-H-E-L-B-I-E, then O'Brien, O-B-R-I-E-N.

19 My question, I don't know if it relates  
20 to here, but I just want to get it in the records.

21 All the letters say this is being done to  
22 reduce costs. And we've kind of heard the same  
23 thing when the poles went in and the lines went in  
24 the first time, but after they were in we  
25 experienced rate increases on our electric bills.

1 And so I just want to make sure that when you say  
2 reduce costs, we're not going to see the same kind  
3 of thing happening again. That's my only comment.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. MARK HENRY: I had one more question.

6 Has there been any study on health? I  
7 mean, I sleep next to 345 thousand volts, now we're  
8 going to double that. What's the study? I mean, is  
9 that normal? They won't allow cattle to be  
10 underneath this thing, but I can sleep by it. It's  
11 not just me, it's everybody on this route. So now  
12 we're going to double this, so what's that effect  
13 going to be?

14 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: So thanks. That  
15 is a very valid question that we get all the time.

16 What I can -- and I can't definitively  
17 say absolutely not. What I can say is that health  
18 issues that have been raised for at least 40 years,  
19 maybe closer to 50, are related to electromagnetic  
20 fields. The conductors do generate both electric  
21 fields and magnetic fields. There have been studies  
22 about health impacts, both for people who work in  
23 the industry, the linemen, as well as residents  
24 nearby.

25 We do look at those studies. They

1 haven't been updated for a while because there  
2 hasn't really been any conclusive determination of  
3 what the biological mechanism is. So there are  
4 health standards that are particularly related to  
5 the people that work with the lines in substations  
6 that are exposed to electricity. There are also  
7 some sort of general public health standards.

8 The Commission, in their permits, has an  
9 electric field standard. Those are going to be --  
10 all of those will be electric and magnetic fields,  
11 they are going to be much higher when you're right  
12 under the line. We are lucky in Minnesota, I guess,  
13 that we have -- we don't place transmission lines  
14 over people's homes.

15 So it's a valid question and I'm sorry I  
16 can't answer that better.

17 Xcel, do you want to say anything?

18 MR. TIM ROGERS: Jacques?

19 MR. JACQUES HARVIEUX: So the state of  
20 Minnesota -- Jacques Harvieux, Minnesota Public  
21 Utilities Commission, public advisor on this  
22 project.

23 There was a work group that was put  
24 together in the early 2000s. And Suzanne mentioned  
25 that not a lot of research has been done since that,

1 but in the state itself, a work crew was put  
2 together with the Department of Health, the Public  
3 Utilities, and the Department of Commerce to study  
4 EMF. And like you say, the most dangerous it's  
5 going to be would be standing right underneath it.  
6 But at the same time, the research that they  
7 conducted found that the -- that any of their  
8 correlation was nonconclusive, they couldn't find an  
9 exact match between anything that was coming off EMF  
10 and going to the body. The type of electric and  
11 magnetic field that comes out of a transmission line  
12 is considered what is called nonionizing, but when  
13 x-rayed there is something that would be a high  
14 ionizing field, for example. So that means that  
15 under that technicality it is not part of the units.

16 MS. BARBARA ROUSSEAU: I want to know how  
17 big the circle of impact.

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Could you speak  
19 into the mic and please identify yourself for the  
20 reporter so we have a record?

21 Thank you.

22 MS. BARBARA ROUSSEAU: Anyway, Barbara  
23 Rousseau, R-O-U-S-S-E-A-U. Do you need the address,  
24 too?

25 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: No.

1 MS. BARBARA ROUSSEAU: I was wondering,  
2 you talk about the most effect of standing  
3 underneath. How big is the aura and does it get  
4 double or more when we're increasing the power?

5 MR. JACQUES HARVIEUX: No. And I should  
6 have worded that differently 'cause what I should  
7 have said is the most amount of EMF that would reach  
8 you upon contact would be if you're standing  
9 underneath the transmission line, but it doesn't  
10 mean it's dangerous.

11 MS. BARBARA ROUSSEAU: But if I live 100  
12 feet -- he's 200 feet, I'm 100 feet, is there still  
13 an impact?

14 MR. JACQUES HARVIEUX: What I'm saying is  
15 there isn't really any effect.

16 MS. BARBARA ROUSSEAU: Okay.

17 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: It dissipates  
18 very rapidly with distance. So the applicants have  
19 modeled those electric and magnetic fields, and by  
20 the time you get to the edge of the right-of-way  
21 that's going to be less than your household  
22 appliances.

23 MR. ED O'BRIEN: Ed O'Brien.

24 I thought of a second question, or a  
25 third question. I'm sorry to bother you again.

1           But I know that the line, when they got  
2 the easement, was 150 feet. And I believe it's 75  
3 feet from the pole on each side. And if I'm not  
4 correct -- and this may not be a question you can  
5 answer.

6           But we have some trees that are outside  
7 of that 75 feet and we were informed that they may  
8 need to do some removals. And I said, but it's  
9 outside the 75 feet from the center of the pole.  
10 Because I was going to plant some additional trees  
11 on my property, but the answer I got was those trees  
12 that we may have to remove are in what they call the  
13 impact line with, you know, they're an impact  
14 distance, whatever that is. But nobody could tell  
15 me what is the impact distance.

16           So if I'm going to plant a tree 80 feet  
17 or 85 feet from the center of the pole, does that  
18 mean someday they're going to maybe want to come and  
19 cut that tree down? I'm just trying to find out  
20 what that impact zone is that they've never said.

21           MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: So I can try to  
22 answer from the aspect of the permit. So the  
23 permit, if the permit is amended, or the permit is  
24 altered as requested by Xcel, it will identify sort  
25 of the extent of the impact. We normally think of

1 that as being the easement, that is a legal  
2 restriction on the land. If the applicants want to  
3 extend the impact beyond the easement, they would  
4 need to identify those areas so that they could be  
5 permitted also.

6 And I don't know. Does Xcel want to say  
7 anything?

8 MR. TIM ROGERS: Yeah.

9 Thanks, Ed. I'm not sure about your  
10 specific situation at your home, but we do have to  
11 consider these danger trees. So whoever you talked  
12 to, it might be they might have been alluding to the  
13 fact that there's a large tree outside the easement  
14 that dies and it's at risk of falling into the wires  
15 and then they would have to take that tree. So  
16 that's the situation where someone might have said  
17 we may have to take a tree that's outside the  
18 easement, it's a tree that risks falling into the  
19 lines.

20 And so I don't know if, Chris Berglund,  
21 if you have much more to add to that.

22 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Come on up.

23 MR. CHRIS BERGLUND: I'll come up.

24 Chris Berglund, B-E-R-G-L-U-N-D, Xcel  
25 Energy.

1                   So essentially what --

2                   So if you're going to plant a new tree,  
3                   and let's say the power line is 50 foot away, and  
4                   you plant a 100-foot tree, and that can maybe fall  
5                   on the line and it's looking in bad shape, that  
6                   would be considered a danger tree.

7                   MR. ED O'BRIEN: I wouldn't plant in the  
8                   area, but if I'm outside the easement area, should I  
9                   be restricted on what type of tree I plant if I'm,  
10                  say, 85 feet from the pole?

11                  MR. CHRIS BERGLUND: There is probably no  
12                  concern if you're 85 feet from the line, unless  
13                  you're going to get a Redwood that grows to 250 feet  
14                  tall.

15                  MR. ED O'BRIEN: Okay. I just was  
16                  curious why they consider possibly taking some trees  
17                  and they were outside, but they didn't, they just  
18                  said we may have to. They called it the danger zone  
19                  that that tree might be in. And so what's the  
20                  danger zone? They didn't give me an answer.

21                  MR. CHRIS BERGLUND: Okay.

22                  MR. ED O'BRIEN: And it was a mature tree  
23                  and they felt it was a hazard.

24                  MR. CHRIS BERGLUND: Okay. Thanks.

25                  MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Other questions,

1           comments?   Comments, going once?   Twice?   And three  
2           times?

3                        So I'll conclude the formal meeting  
4           portion of the formal comment period, but we'll be  
5           around.   And I think Xcel will be around if you have  
6           questions pertaining to your particular issues, they  
7           are just happy to take those questions, but they  
8           won't be part of the record.   And you're welcome to  
9           log on tonight if you think of anything else, and  
10          written comments are due by January 3rd.

11                      Thank you.

12                      MR. JACQUES HARVIEUX:   If you need a  
13          comment sheet, they're over here.

14                      (Matter concluded at 12:46 p.m.)

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