

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
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
the Brookings County - Lyon County and Helena - Hampton
Second Circuit Project

10 MPUC DOCKET NOS. E-002/CN-23-200
11 E-002/TI-08-1474

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13 Holiday Inn
14 Lakeville, Minnesota

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17 DECEMBER 11, 2023
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25 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 STEINHAUER: 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. SHELBI E 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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