

Jason Pierskalla, Thursday 6/6/2024

Regarding responsible route evaluation for Xcel 345 kV powerline project

Hello, I am Jason Pierskalla, citizen property owner, father, husband and agricultural homestead owner and CRP management and community member, I am writing to address the Xcel 345 kV Powerline project from Becker/Sherco plant. (Including PUC Docket Number E-002/CN-22-131, E-002/TL-22-132 and others associated with them).

The blue route established by Xcel and approved by MN PUC is projected to run through my property dividing it in half. The current blue route as it continues to be officially proposed, presents significant adverse effects for myself and my family, my community, and the environment concerning the land on which I live and manage.

I received an email message from Minnesota Public Utilities Commission executive secretary Will Seuffert on 6/5/24, which identified a Notice of Comment Period on the merits of the certificate of need application.

The 3 topics for comment and my responses to these are as follows:

1. Should the commission grant a certificate of need for the proposed project?

No-there are other feasible more efficient energy sources that have demonstrated a significant decrease in pollution from traditional energy sources such as coal burning plants. Natural gas plants and improved nuclear energy processes have developed a cleaner and efficient source for energy. In fact, MN PUC and Xcel energy have added a request for natural gas sources with this project in the past 6 months, which signals the limited efficiency of the solar and wind sources inherent to this project. In that regard, MN PUC cannot uphold safe, reliable and affordable energy for Minnesota. There are real safety concerns with High Voltage Power Lines, particularly with Human Health and prolonged exposure. Decreased efficiency and inconsistent weather limits reliability. This may be why the natural gas options was added back into the plans. Affordability is most immediately impacted by efficiency of energy production and lack of availability, especially at peak times. In a society of green conservation, we are encouraging greater energy consumption and dependence (computers/AI) for our daily lives and our infrastructure (Water treatment, energy distribution, communication). Disruption to our reliance will cause damage on many levels, Health, Economic and Security among major considerations. This will have a significant financial impact, not only from initial costs and direct rate increases, but to the community at large with disruptions and the consequences that they entail.

Furthermore, there are unspoken costs of ongoing maintenance and replacement of windmills, solar panels and batteries. The batteries in

particular may need environmentally sensitive treatment, which is costly both from an economic and green environment and climate management standpoint.

2. If granted, what additional conditions or requirements, if any, should be included in the certificate of need?

****Protection of Human Health**-the best mitigation is distance and foliage-in any instance of impacting a residence, Mitigation measures should be agreed upon to the safety and satisfaction of the impacted resident. This may include additional home constructs, addition of foliage, but Most importantly, Distance from the EMF source itself.

***Economic protection to community preservation**-mitigating and avoiding changes to the character and properties of individual homesteads and communities. Taking the time to do it right and do it best as this is a major and permanent change in both instances.

***Respecting and accounting human rights, citizen rights, and constitutional rights.** Respecting the cultural heritage and human dignity of the affected inhabitants.

***Recognizing the ongoing risk to health, as well as the loss of land, agricultural opportunity and economic loss.** *(including the years of labor creating a flourishing Natural Habitat on our homestead).*

***Providing compensation for these forced sacrifices of life** (including health effects from EMF), liberty (land ownership and agricultural opportunities in a desired community) and the pursuit of happiness (realizing a life's work dream, no matter how elaborate or simple, with a homestead.)

3. Are there any other issues or concerns related to this matter? Yes

In answer to number three, please review my comments below as they were updated 6/6/24. I also note, that the general media portrayal of green energy is not entirely truthful and I might venture to say falsely advertised. First, for the reasons noted above about limited efficiency, affordability and reliability. Additionally, many visual and audible advertisements show a symbiotic relationship between solar farms and agriculture, with flowers and foliage, and sheep grazing among the solar panels, and other natural wildlife sounds. I have not yet encountered such situations here in central MN and beyond with existing infrastructure. I have not seen the agricultural economic benefits demonstrated, nor have I seen the practical or economic benefits to the consumer. Below is the revision of prior comments:

The Human Health effects of high voltage power lines on my family are of critical importance. There is a known Electromagnetic Force emitted from these powerlines, especially at closer proximities. According to Orgone Energy article "What is a Safe Distance to Live From Power Lines?", there is 96mG (milligauss) directly under tower. 0.5 to 1 mG is the max safe limit where you live and reside. There have also been risks for electric shock and arcing. A discharge from high voltage transmission lines is capable of killing and setting fires. A risk to human health is noted in research reviews, including cancer causing effects, especially in children. As noted in the British Medical Journal study, "Childhood cancer in relation to distance from high voltage power lines in England and Wales: a case control study," children with a birth address in the proximity of power lines were twice as likely to develop leukemia as those who do not live near power lines. Just as with other carcinogenic agents, there is an increased risk with chronic prolonged exposure to the nonionizing radiation produced by high voltage power line electromagnetic fields.

The blue powerline route runs within 250-500 feet of my house subjecting my family to ongoing and unavoidable health risks, both physical and mental: including Cancer, Cardiac arrhythmias, pacemaker interference, anxiety, insomnia and depression, among others. This will have direct impact on our home and homestead where we live, work and recreate. The walking trail that we use daily will expose the entrance and exit with magnetic fields, while other portions will be directly beneath the 345 kV powerlines and their electromagnetic fields. Managing CRP land, working our garden and orchard, or working within and around the house, or even sleeping, eating and living daily activities will subject us to chronic ongoing close proximity exposure to greater EMF forces and electrocution risks with arcing. These are only some aspects of our home life that will be continually negatively impacted in numerous other ways by this Nonmodifiable risk factor that will result from the 345kV High Voltage Power Line. These legitimate EMF risks from high voltage power lines have been recognized by Occupational health agencies as well. Because of the dangers associated with EMF from high voltage powerlines, Occupational exposure guidelines are in place to keep employees safe including the American Conference of Governmental and Industrial Hygienists and the International Commission on Nonionizing Radiation Protection. It stands to reason that the EMF and arcing risks are not limited to those working with powerlines during work hours, but present an even greater exposure risk to Resident landowners, including my family, that will be subjected to longer persistent nonmodifiable EMF exposure introduced into our residence.

This project will cause immediate and lasting environmental damage. It will cause permanent irreversible change to the landscape, forcing the removal of wildlife habitat and mature forest, as well as CRP land with native prairie vegetation designated for environmental preservation. Personal investments in trees planted for reforestation and other wild vegetation will be destroyed. The type of landscape and habitat under and around these powerlines on my property would be drastically changed. No step to complete an Environmental Study was initiated to fully evaluate impacts on the animals and vegetation currently native to my homestead. It would likely also affect our avian livestock. Stray voltage has been noted to create a problem with turkey poults "The Effects of Stray Voltage on Turkey Poults" from Avian Diseases. Many animals, wild

and domestic would be affected. Nesting pheasants, owls, eagles and hawks, ground squirrels and mice, deer and fox, sandhill crane, blanding's turtle and snakes and frogs would be just some of the local animals detrimentally impacted by this route.

This information has been previously noted to PUC and Xcel Project managers, including in a recent report April 2024 per Andrew Levi, where it was acknowledged in an abridged manner that my primary concern was "Trees." As noted in paragraphs above, family health is paramount issue, among many others listed here. To limit the evaluation of this portion of the route to "Trees" is an oversimplification of a complex and permanent change to our homestead and the surrounding human and natural community.

The blue route, as it has remained unchanged on published maps, will also cause the undue economic burden. On my homestead, it will cause loss of CRP land and status, loss of agricultural status, loss of current and future agricultural opportunities.

It will decrease property value and actual disproportionate loss of land based on its current route (while no official surveying information has been provided, the established map notes a route that divides our family's 40 acre property in an arcing fashion that is estimated to take 15 to 20 percent of our land, or possibly more depending on its path). This serves to jeopardize my family financially and has already created undue stress and anxieties. This has been particularly true as correspondence and communication from MN officials and Xcel energy staff have been indicating that collaboration from homeowners to best address route placement would be welcome, that submitted route adjustment recommendations would be considered. While communications have occurred, meaningful route adjustment to address my expressed concerns and needs have had no actionable acknowledgement. See feasible alternate route map submission (Appendix A) and my other entries into public comments. Please note that even as I have revised this comment as of 6/6/24 from 6 months ago, no potential changes to the blue route through my property have been presented on the official project map (see project map from correspondence from PUC 6/5/24 regarding open comment period for affected landowners and citizens).

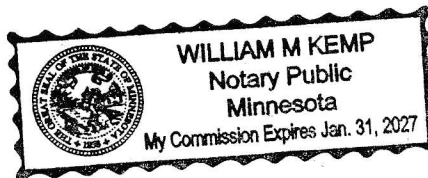
I have been informed by participating parties and stakeholders (MN PUC, MN Dept of Commerce, Xcel Energy), that input on alternative routes was encouraged and welcomed. Some venues of communication have been afforded. I have been making repeated efforts from commenting in MN PUC open forums to writing to officials of the above parties and even of the legislature. I expressed concerns and have provided alternate suggestions on multiple occasions for the past year, since learning of the map route and its projected impact. I am concerned that the officially recognized map remains Unchanged as the blue route has included in the final 2 route choices now approved by the MN PUC, despite the known submitted concerns and alternate routes. The routes I considered in my map (Appendix D) take into consideration improved human safety with increased distance to decrease the health risks of exposure and preserves areas of forestation and perennial vegetation vital to conservation, (including acres of land designated to the USDA CRP program).

This project is being developed in haste at the expense of evaluation of best practices for mitigating exposure to damaging health effects, permanent environmental change, and local and personal economic loss. If the project must proceed, then we need to explore additional potential alternate routes to address the current and future Health and community needs of our affected Minnesota Citizens. I am requesting this in the interest of responsible, safe future energy management.

Jason Pierskalla

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6/6/24



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