

March 20, 2026

Casey Storey
Xcel Energy
414 Nicollet Mall – 6th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55401

RE: Application Completeness Determination
Northwest Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Line Project – Route Permit Application
Docket No. E002/TL-24-427

Dear Mr. Storey,

On March 6, 2026, Northern States Power Company, d/b/a Xcel Energy, (applicant) filed a route permit application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for the Northwest Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Line Project (project). As required by Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 7, the Commission must determine whether an application is complete and advise applicants of any deficiencies within ten working days of the date an application is received.

On October 13, 2025, Xcel Energy provided Commission Energy Infrastructure Permitting (EIP) staff with a draft of the route permit application for preapplication review as required in Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 6. EIP staff responded to the applicant on November 25, 2025, with recommendations focused on completeness and clarifications that may assist the Commission's review of the application.

The Commission may accept an application as complete, reject an application, or accept an application as complete if missing information is not essential to provide adequate notice and may be obtained from the applicant prior to the initial public meeting.¹

Commission EIP staff have reviewed the filed application for consistency with Minnesota Statute §216I.05. Staff conclude that the route application filed on March 6, 2026, largely satisfies the application content requirements of Minnesota Statute §216I.05, but requests applicants make a supplemental filing no later than April 2, 2026, that includes:

- Documentation that applicants provided project and applicant contact information to members of the “Agency Reps” service list in eDockets not indicated in Appendix B.

Based on review of the submissions filed in this matter, Commission EIP staff have advised me, and I agree, that the route permit application submitted by the applicant is sufficiently complete in accordance with Minnesota Statute §216I.05 to proceed with the public information meeting.

¹ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 7

March 20, 2026

Please contact the EIP project managers, Logan Hicks at logan.m.hicks@state.mn.us, 651-539-1067 or Craig Janezich at craig.janezich@state.mn.us, 651-201-2203, if you have questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sasha Bergman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sasha Bergman
Executive Secretary

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS FILING REVIEW

Northwest Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Project

DOCKET NO. E002/TL-24-427

On March 6, 2026, Northern States Power Company, d/b/a Xcel Energy, filed a route permit application for the Northwest Maple Grove 115 kV transmission line project with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission). As required by Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 7, the Commission must determine whether an application is complete and advise applicants of any deficiencies within ten working days of the date an application is received.

Documents Attached:

- (1) Figure 1. Project Overview Map
- (2) Table 1. Application Completeness Requirements

Introduction and Background

On March 6, 2026, Northern States Power Company, d/b/a Xcel Energy (applicant) filed a route permit application to construct and operate the Northwest Maple Grove project, a 2 mile 115 kV transmission line and new substation in Maple Grove in Hennepin County, Minnesota (project).²

Project Purpose

The applicants state that the project is needed to provide additional transmission capacity to mitigate current capacity issues due to a significant increase in electric demand from new homes, businesses, and neighborhoods in the Twin Cities northwest suburbs, and to improve electric system reliability throughout the region as more renewable energy resources are added to the electric system in and around the region.³

Project Description

The applicants propose constructing a new 2 mile 115 kV double-circuit transmission line between an existing transmission line and a proposed West Maple Grove substation (Figure 1, attached). They seek 100 feet of right-of-way within a route width ranging from 200 feet to 1,000 feet around the proposed substation. The poles utilized for the project will be steel, 80 to 150 feet tall, and placed 400 to 500 feet

² Xcel Energy, *Application for a Route Permit for the Northwest Maple Grove 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Hennepin County, Minnesota*, March 6, 2026, eDockets Number [20263-229026-02](#) (herein after Route Permit Application or RPA). The filing also included a cover letter [20263-229026-01](#); and appendices [20263-229026-03](#), and 20263-229026 (non-public).

³ RPA, p. 1

apart. The replacement of existing 345 kV transmission line structures may also occur to facilitate safe line crossings. The applicant anticipates construction to begin in the fall of 2026 with an in-service date of fall 2028.

Regulatory Process and Procedures

In Minnesota, no person may construct a high voltage transmission line without a route permit issued by the Commission.⁴ Because the proposed project is designed for and capable of operating at a nominal voltage of 115 kV and is 2 miles long, it meets the statutory definition of a high voltage transmission line under the Minnesota Energy Infrastructure Permitting Act and therefore requires a route permit from the Commission.⁵ Because the project is a high voltage transmission line with a capacity between 100 and 300 kV, the route permit application qualifies for Commission review under the Standard Review process described in Minnesota Statute §216I.07.

The project does not require a certificate of need from the Commission because the project is not a large energy facility as defined in Minn. Stat. §216B.2421, subd. 2.

Route Permit Application

Route permit applications for large electric power facilities must provide information about the project such as project ownership, a description of the project and associated facilities, environmental information, and maps.⁶ **Table 1** provides a comprehensive list of information required by statute. Review under the Minnesota Statute 216I Energy Infrastructure Permitting process does not require applicants to propose alternative routes in their permit application. However, if applicants have evaluated and rejected alternative routes, they must describe these rejected alternatives and the reasons for rejecting them in their application.⁷

The Commission must determine whether an application is complete and advise the applicant of any deficiencies within ten working days of the date the application is received.⁸ The Commission may accept an application as complete, reject an application, or accept an application as complete if unincorporated information is not essential to provide adequate notice and may be obtained from the applicant prior to the initial public meeting.⁹ The permitting process begins when the Commission determines that a permit application is complete; the Commission has six months (or nine months, with just cause) from the date of this determination to reach a permit decision.¹⁰

The route permit application must contain an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the applicant. An EA is a document which describes the potential human and environmental impacts of a proposed project and possible mitigation measures. An EA is the only state environmental review document that

⁴ Minnesota Statute 216I.05, subd. 2

⁵ Minnesota Statute §216I.02, subd. 8

⁶ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 3

⁷ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 3 (14)

⁸ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 7

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Minnesota Statute §216I.07, subd. 5

must be prepared for the proposed project under the standard review process.¹¹ Minnesota Statute Chapter 216I outlines the environmental information required in the EA.¹²

Public Information Meeting and Comment Period

Following a determination of whether the application is complete, the Commission must hold at least one public meeting near the proposed project location to explain the permitting process, present major issues, accept public comments on the need for and scope of an addendum to the EA and respond to questions raised by the public. In practice, the Commission holds a remote access meeting in addition to the public meeting near the proposed project. Written comments must be accepted for no less than 10 days after the date of the last public meeting and the Commission must accept comments on potential impacts, alternative routes to be considered, and permit conditions.¹³

Draft Permit and EA Addendum

Following the close of the public comment period, the Commission must prepare a draft route permit including proposed permit conditions. The draft permit does not authorize a person to construct the project.¹⁴

The Commission must also determine whether an addendum to the EA is required and, if an addendum is required, must identify the scope of the addendum.¹⁵ The Commission must prepare an addendum if the Commission identifies other routes or potential impacts for review following the public information meeting and associated comment period.¹⁶ The public may provide comments on the EA and any addendum to the EA at the public hearing and comment period required under Minnesota Statute 216I.07, subd 4.¹⁷

Public Hearing

The Commission must hold a public hearing in the area where the project is proposed after a draft permit is issued, and any EA addendum if prepared.¹⁸ The hearing is typically presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ) from the Court of Administrative Hearings. The Commission may request that the ALJ provide a full report with a summary of public testimony and comments, findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommendations regarding the project.¹⁹

¹¹ Minnesota Statute §216I.07, subd. 3

¹² Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 4

¹³ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 9

¹⁴ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 10(1)

¹⁵ Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 10(2)

¹⁶ Minnesota Statute 216I.07, subd. 3 (b).

¹⁷ Minnesota Statute 216I.07, subd. 4.

¹⁸ Minnesota Statute 216I.07, subd. 4.

¹⁹ Minnesota Statute 216I.07, subd. 4 (c) states the commission must conduct the public hearing under procedures established by the commission and may request that an administrative law judge from the [Court] of Administrative Hearings conduct the hearing and prepare a report.

Staff Review

On October 13, 2025, Xcel Energy provided Commission staff with a draft of the route permit application for preapplication review as required in Minnesota Statute §216I.05, subd. 6. EIP staff responded to the applicant with recommendations focused on completeness and clarifications that may assist the Commission's review of the application on November 25, 2025. The applicants summarized their responses to EIP comments in Appendix C of the filed route permit application.

Staff have reviewed the application and believes that its comments on the draft application and supporting materials were generally addressed in the application filed on March 6, 2026. Staff recommend that applicants make a supplemental filing no later than April 2, 2026, that includes:

- Documentation that applicants provided project and applicant contact information to members of the “Agency Reps” service list in eDockets not indicated in Appendix B.

EIP Staff Recommendations

Staff recommend that:

- The Commission find the application sufficiently complete in accordance with Minnesota Statute §216I.05 to proceed with the public information meeting, but that the applicants make a supplemental filing no later than April 2, 2026, that includes:
 - Documentation that applicants provided project and applicant contact information to members of the “Agency Reps” service list in eDockets not indicated in Appendix B.

Figure 1. Northwest Maple Grove Project – Overview Map

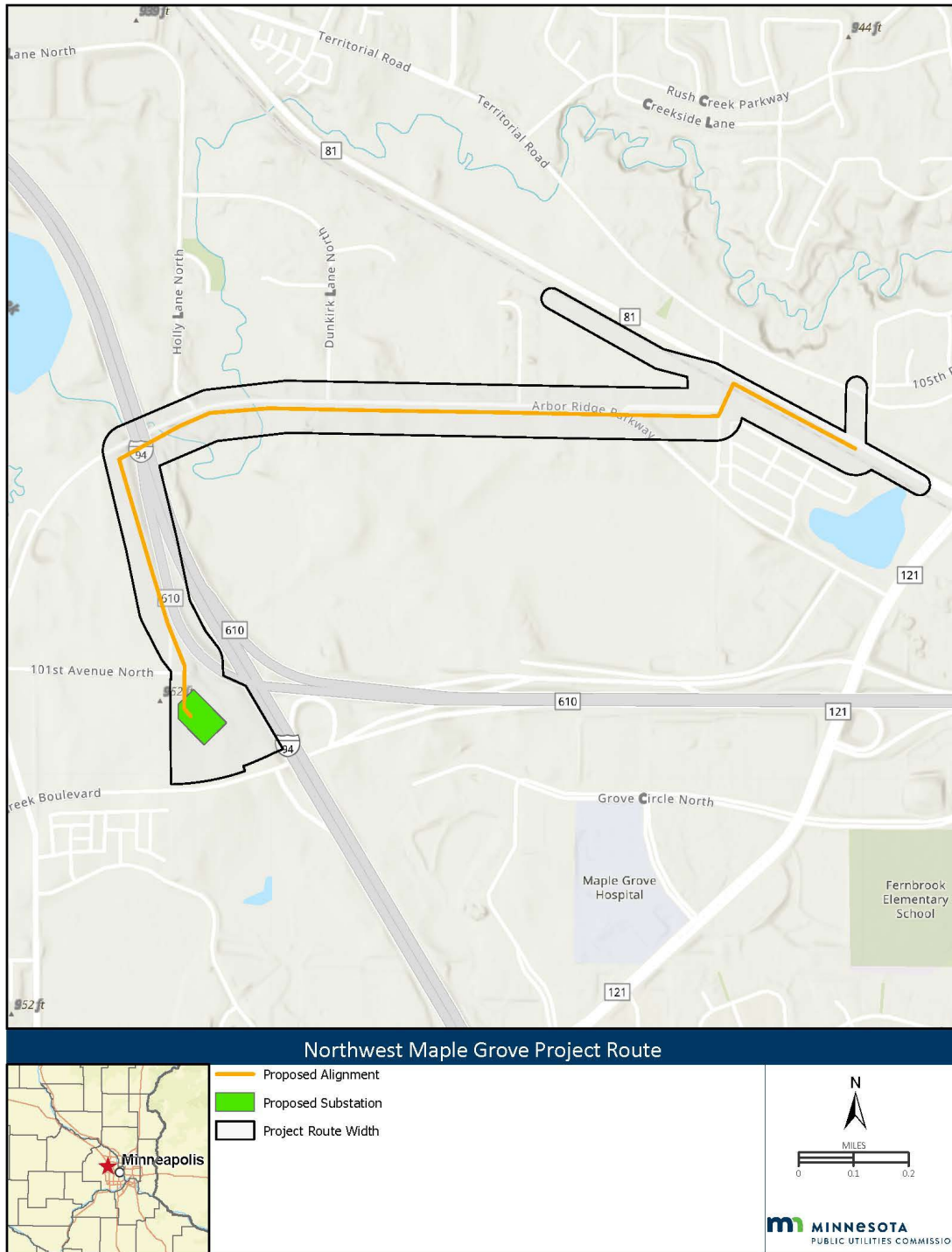


Table 1. Application Completeness Requirements

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Project ownership	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(1)	1.2
Meets staff expectations. The project will be jointly owned by Northern States Power Company, d/b/a Xcel Energy.		
Permittee name	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(2)	1.3
Meets staff expectations. Xcel Energy will be the permittee.		
Project description	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(3)	3.2
Meets staff expectations. Applicant incorporated EIP staff recommendations for including details of the proposed substation.		
Environmental information, generally	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(4) and subd. 4(a)	Section 7
See resource-specific discussions.		
Identification of Property Owners	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(5), as described in 216I.05, subd. 8 (3)	Appendix K
Meets staff expectations; Appendix K provides a list of landowners.		
Maps	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(6)	Map 1-13
Meets staff expectations. Staff believe that the maps in the body of the application are legible and provide useful illustrations of the proposed project and the alternative routes considered.		
Existing ROWs	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(7)	3.5
Meets staff expectations.		
Project design, including required ancillary facilities	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(8)	3.3
Meets staff expectations. Applicant incorporated staff recommendations of creating a separate design section and including more details on the proposed substation.		

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Project cost	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(9)	Table 3-4
Meets staff expectations.		
Design for expansion	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(10)	3.3
Meets staff expectations.		
Site or ROW acquisition, construction, maintenance, & restoration	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(11)	3.5 and Section 6
Meets staff expectations. Applicant addressed comments from staff and included more information on construction and operation procedures.		
Other Permits	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(12)	2.4
Meets staff expectations. Applicant created a Regulatory section and incorporated the information there, per staff recommendations.		
Certificate of Need Requirement	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(13)	2.1
Meets staff expectations; a Certificate of Need is not required for the project.		
Other sites or routes considered	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(14)	Section 4
Meets staff expectations.		
Additional information required by rule	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(15)	7.3.1
Meets staff expectations. Applicants provided information clarifying that the project avoids the prohibited routes identified in Minn. R. 7850.4300.		
Tribal coordination	216I.05, subd. 3(b)(16)	Appendix B
The Applicant followed up with all tribes that have yet to be reached with an additional email, as well as a phone call. The log of communication is listed in Appendix B		
Preapplication Coordination (LGUs)	216I.05, subd. 5 (1)	Appendix B
Meets staff expectations. Local Governmental Units were properly notified on May 9, 2025, and June 30, 2025, via email as documented in Appendix B.		

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Preapplication Coordination (State Technical Resource Agencies)	216I.05, subd. 5 (3)	Appendix C and 1.8.2
<p>Does not meet staff expectations. Prior to providing staff with a draft application, the applicants contacted state and federal agencies. In its comments on the draft application, staff requested that applicants ensure that notice was provided to the “Agency Reps” service list in eDockets.</p> <p>Staff recommends use of the “Agency Reps” contact list to ensure consistency for both applicants and agencies across projects. As noted in staff comments on the draft permit, each State Technical Resource Agency identified in this service list will determine its preapplication coordination procedures.</p> <p>Staff request the applicants provide documentation in a supplemental filing no later than April 2, 2026, that project and applicant contact information is provided to the following members of the “Agency Reps” service list in eDockets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dean.hunter@state.mn.us (Dean Hunter, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry); • execdir@swrdc.org (Jame Trusty, Southwest Regional Development Commission); • sa.property@state.mn.us (Alan Whipple, Minnesota Department of Revenue); and • jonathan.wolfgram@state.mn.us (Jonathan Wolfgram, Office of Pipeline Safety). 		
Environmental setting	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(1)	7.2
Meets staff expectations.		
Human settlement, generally	216I.05, subd. 4(2)	7.3
See resource-specific discussions.		
Aesthetics	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2)	7.3.4
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Cultural Values	216I.05, bud. 4(a)(2)	7.3.8
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have made minor modifications to this section to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Displacement	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2)	7.3.2
Meets staff expectations. The project will not require displacement of any homes or businesses. Applicants made minor modifications to this section to improve clarity.		

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Environmental Justice Impacts	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2); 216I.05, subd. 11(a)(3)	7.3.7
Meets staff expectations. The project is not located in an a statutorily defined environmental justice area.		
Land Use and Zoning	216I.05, subd. 11(a) (2)	7.3.1
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section by putting a land use map and making edits for clarity.		
Noise	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2)	7.3.3
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts due to construction.		
Public Services and Transportation	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2)	7.3.10 and 7.3.12
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Recreation	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2)	7.3.9
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Socioeconomic Impacts	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2); 216I.05, subd. 11(b)(14)	7.3.5
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Property Values	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(2); 216I.05, subd. 11(b)(14)	7.3.6
Meets staff expectations. While impacts to the value of individual properties are influenced by a complex interaction of factors and cannot be predicted, applicant has added information summarizing studies on potential impacts to property values from transmission lines and provided a discussion of mitigation measures.		
Public health & safety including EMF	216I.05, subd. 11(b)(1) (Decision Criteria)	7.4
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section to include a table of common EMF sources.		

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Land-based economics, generally	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(3)	7.5
See resource-specific discussions.		
Agriculture	216I.05, subd. 4(3); 216I.05, subd. 11(b)(5) and (9); see also Minn. R. 7850.4400, subp. 4.	7.5.1
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Forestry	216I.05, subd. 4(3)	7.5.2
Meets staff expectations. The project will not impact commercial forestry operations.		
Mining	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(3)	7.5.4
Meets staff expectations. The project will not impact mining operations.		
Tourism	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(3)	7.5.3
Meets staff expectations. The project is not expected to impact tourism resources.		
Archaeological & historic resources	216I.05, subd. 4(4)	7.6 and Appendix B
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to include archaeological survey information, as well as update Appendix B to include discussions with SHPO.		
Natural environment impacts - generally	216I.05, subd. 4(5)	7.7
See resource-specific discussions.		
Air quality	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(5)	7.7.1
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Geology and Groundwater	216I.05, subd. 4(a)(5); 216I.05, subd. 11(b)(1)	7.7.4

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Meets staff expectations. The project is not anticipated to impact subsurface geology or topography. Applicant separated out geology and groundwater into a separate section, per staff request.		
Soils	216I.05, subd. 11(b)(1) and subd. 11(b)(5)	7.7.6
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Surface waters (including stormwater, floodplains, and wetlands)	216I.05, subd. 4(5); 216I.05, subd. 11(b)(1)	7.7.5
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has separated discussion of surface waters on type, per staff request. Applicant has also added delineated wetlands to Map 12.		
Vegetation	216I.05, subd. 4(5)	7.7.7
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures. Additionally, they have added information on noxious weeds.		
Wildlife	216I.05, subd. 4(5)	7.7.9
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures. Applicant has also added discussion of impacts to wildlife caused by associated facilities.		
Rare and unique resources	subd. 4(8)	7.7.8
Meets staff expectations. Applicants have modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures.		
Greenhouse gases	216I.05, subd. 4(6)	7.7.2
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures. Applicant has also separated Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change into their own sections.		
Climate change resilience	216I.05, subd. 4(7)	7.7.3
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has modified this section from the proposed draft to clarify potential impacts and mitigation measures. Applicant has also separated Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change into their own sections.		
Unavoidable Impacts	216I.05, subd. 4(9)	7.8

Topic	Statutory Requirement	Location in Document
Meets staff expectations.		
Irretrievable and Irreversible Impacts	216I.05, subd. 11(b)(11)	7.9
Meets staff expectations. Applicant has added wetlands and land use to this section.		
Cumulative Potential Effects	216I.05, subd. 11(a)(2) and (b)(2)	Section 8
Meets staff expectations.		
Mitigation Measures	216I.05, subd. 4(10)	Section 7
See resource-specific discussions. Mitigation measures were added throughout the various resource sections.		