

March 12, 2021

Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary
MN Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: Docket No. 20-828.

Mr. Seuffert:


As the executive director for the Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) I speak on behalf of the organization that represents 55 communities, townships and public-school districts located in the Taconite Assistance Area of Northeastern Minnesota. Many if not most of our cities are served by MN Power and we stand in support of the proposed solar project at the Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes.

The Hoyt Lakes project is a proposed 10 MW project located on MP –owned property and represents an approximately \$17.4 million investment. The project has made use of area engineering firms and will install Minnesota-made solar panels manufactured by Mt. Iron-based Heliene Inc. Based on construction estimates the project will provide 31 FT-equivalent jobs for six months, and ongoing local tax revenue of \$18,000 per year for the estimated 35-year life of the project.

Additionally, the solar project proposed at Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes represents reinvestment in a host community that has experienced loss of employment and property taxes due to the re-missioning of coal-fired power generation. Timing is also important – these projects propose significant construction in 2021, at a time when the economy is still suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic and will enable Minnesota Power to meet its Solar Energy Standard obligations early.

On the Iron Range, our communities appreciate the great corporate citizenship of MN Power and what they bring to our communities through community engagement and investments in our region. This solar project at the Laskin sight is another example of MN Power staying in our community even though the power plant has been repurposed. Once again on behalf of RAMS and the 78,000 residents we represent, we support this project and ask that the MN Public Utilities Commission approve the project.

Sincerely,


Steve Giorgi/Executive Director
Range Association of Municipalities & Schools

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