

April 12, 2021

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

RE: Docket No. 20-828.

Mr. Seuffert:

As commissioner of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation, I represent a state agency that serves the people of northeastern Minnesota. Our service area encompasses 13,000 square miles which includes 53 cities, 134 townships, 14 school districts and portions of four tribal nations. Many of our communities in northeastern Minnesota are served by MN Power, and I strongly support the proposed solar project at the Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes.

The Hoyt Lakes project is a proposed 10 MW project located on MN Power-owned property and represents an estimated \$17.4 million investment. The project will utilize area engineering firms and Minnesota-made solar panels manufactured by Mountain Iron-based Heliene Inc. Heliene is located within the agency's service area. Based on construction estimates the project will provide 31 full-time-equivalent jobs for six months, and ongoing local tax revenue of \$18,000 per year for the estimated 35-year life of the project. At a time when the economy is still suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, this project proposes significant construction jobs in 2021 paying prevailing wages.

Additionally, the solar project proposed at Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes represents a reinvestment in a community that has experienced loss of employment and property taxes due to the re-missioning of coal-fired power generation. Most importantly, this project will enable MN Power to meet its Solar Energy Standard obligations.

Communities in northeastern Minnesota appreciate the great corporate citizenship of MN Power and what investments they bring to our region.

On behalf of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation, I support this project and ask that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission grant its approval.

Sincerely,



Mark Phillips  
Commissioner