

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING MEETINGS

Issued: December 17th, 2024

In the Matter of the Application for a Route Permit for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV Transmission Project in West-Central Minnesota

Docket Number: E017, ET10/TL-23-160

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) and Minnesota Department of Commerce will hold Public Information and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Meetings on the route permit application submitted by Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services (Applicants) for the Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line Project (BSSA Project), a new approximately 91- to 105-mile 345-kilovolt (kV) double-circuit capable transmission line from the Minnesota-South Dakota border to the existing Alexandria Substation near Alexandria, Minnesota. Only a single-circuit will be installed initially. The BSSA Project would be located in portions of Big Stone, Swift, Stevens, Pope, and Douglas counties.

The BSSA Project also includes expansion of the existing Alexandria Substation, expansion of the existing Big Stone South substation, and construction of a new fiber optic regeneration station. The BSSA Project has been divided into three segments for the purposes of analyzing route options:

• **South Segment:** Approximately 38.8 to 41.9 miles of single-circuit 345-kV transmission line from the Minnesota-South Dakota border approximately one mile south of Ortonville, Minnesota to a point in Tara Township, Swift County, Minnesota.

• **Central Segment:** Approximately 34.4 to 38.5 miles of single-circuit 345-kV transmission line from a point in Tara Township to a point in Ben Wade Township, Pope County, Minnesota.

• **North Segment:** Approximately 18.1 to 25.1 miles of single-circuit 345-kV transmission line from a point in Ben Wade Township to the existing Alexandria Substation near the city of Alexandria, Douglas County, Minnesota.

The Applicants are generally requesting a 1,000-foot route width to allow for flexibility in routing. The final right-of-way width would be approximately 150 feet.

The BSSA Project is the western segment of the Big Stone South—Alexandria—Big Oaks 345 kV Transmission Project, which was granted a Certificate of Need by the Commission on October 30, 2024 (Docket CN-22-538). The Big Stone South—Alexandria—Big Oaks 345 kV Transmission Project was studied, reviewed, and approved by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan (MTEP21) Report. As indicated in the MTEP21 Report, the Big Stone South—Alexandria—Big Oaks 345 kV Transmission Project is specifically needed to address regional reliability issues on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota and eastern North Dakota and South Dakota. This includes providing additional transmission capacity to mitigate current capacity issues and accommodate the addition of renewable resources.

In-Person Meetings

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, January 14 th , 2025	10:00 a.m. (doors open pre-meeting hour) 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (formal meeting)	Broadway Ballroom 115 30th Ave E Alexandria, MN 56308
Tuesday, January 14 th , 2025	5:00 p.m. (doors open pre-meeting hour) 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (formal meeting)	Lakeside Ballroom 180 S Lakeshore Drive Glenwood, MN 56334
Wednesday, January 15 th , 2025	10:00 a.m. (doors open pre-meeting hour) 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (formal meeting)	Hancock City Hall 662 6th St Hancock, MN 56244
Wednesday, January 15 th , 2025	5:00 p.m. (doors open pre-meeting hour) 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (formal meeting)	Benson Northside Elementary School 1800 Nevada Ave Benson, MN 56215
Thursday, January 16 th , 2025	10:00 a.m. (doors open pre-meeting hour) 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (formal meeting)	Sioux Historic Pavilion 1073 Lake Shore Dr Ortonville, MN 56278

**** In the event of a cancellation due to weather, the dates, times, and locations above will shift to the following week on Tuesday January 21 in Alexandria and Glenwood, Wednesday January 22 in Hancock and Benson, and Thursday January 23 in Ortonville. The virtual meeting will be held on January 16 regardless of potential weather cancellations.****

Online Meeting via WebEx

Date: Thursday, January 16th, 2025

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. or until there are no more questions or comments.

Join by WebEx (Webinar) Link:
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=maf-10526d9647e274f92b2571aa5e42ad>

Webinar Number: 2493 141 1515

Webinar Password: MnPUC! (667820 from phones)

Join by Phone: 1-855-282-6330 Toll Free

Access Code: 2493 141 1515

If you are joining the meeting via WebEx and would like to ask a question or make a comment during the designated portion of the meeting, use the chat or raised-hand functions to send a message to the meeting moderator. If you are joining the meeting by phone, press *3 on your phone. When it is your turn to speak, your line will be unmuted, and you will be able to ask questions and provide comments. Additional information and instructions are available at: <https://mn.gov/puc/activities/meetings/webex/>

Meeting Information

The purpose of the meeting is to: (1) provide information about the proposed project and the state's permitting process; and (2) provide an opportunity to participate in developing the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement to be developed on the project.

Doors will open one hour prior to each in-person meeting to provide attendees an opportunity to review the application, maps, and other materials for the proposed project and ask questions of state staff and the Applicants. **During this time, comments made by attendees will become a part of the record for Commission consideration only if the attendee submits the comment in writing.** Forms will be available for this purpose. There will not be a pre-meeting hour for the virtual meeting held on Thursday, January 16th at 6:00 p.m.

State staff and the Applicants will make presentations during the meeting. State staff will explain the permitting and environmental review processes, and the Applicants will provide an overview of the proposed project. Following the presentations, attendees will have the opportunity to offer oral and written comments for the record. The meetings will end when all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded, or at the scheduled end time of the meeting, whichever occurs first. The information presented will be the same at all in-person and online meetings.

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these meetings, please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. To find out if a meeting is canceled due to bad weather or other call 1-855-731-6208 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **Friday, January 31, 2025, by 4:30 p.m.** Please include the docket number in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Topics for Comment

- *What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the EIS?*
- *Are there any methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS?*
- *Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered in the EIS to address or mitigate potential impacts associated with the proposed project?*
- *Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS?*

Submit Comments

Online: <https://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>
Email: jenna.ness@state.mn.us
U.S. Mail: Jenna Ness
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101

Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission and the Department of Commerce do not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Additional Information

Minnesota Statutes and Rules. This project is being reviewed under Minnesota Statutes chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules chapter 7850. The rules and statutes are available for review at: www.revisor.mn.gov

Review Process. Information on the review processes for certificates of need and site and route permits for large electric power facilities is available on the Commission's website at: <https://mn.gov/puc/activities/energy-facilities/>

Filing Requirements. Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are also encouraged to use eFiling: mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *Go to eDockets* and follow the prompts.

Full Case Record. See all documents filed in this matter via the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *Go to eDockets*, enter the docket number (23-160), and select *Search*.

Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/subscriptions>, select *Subscribe to Dockets*.

Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email eservice.admin@state.mn.us or call 651-201-2246 with the docket number (23-160), your name, mailing address, and email address.

Department of Commerce Website:
<https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/web/project/15867>

Contacts

Public Utilities Commission
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Department of Commerce
Jenna Ness, Environmental Review Manager,
jenna.ness@state.mn.us or 651-539-1693

BSSA Transmission Project
Jason Weiers, Manager, Transmission Project Development,
jweiers@otpc.com or 218-739-8311

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651-296-0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email consumer.puc@state.mn.us for assistance.



Big Stone South to Alexandria

Project Overview Map

