

FACTORS CONSIDERED BY THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION FOR TRANSMISSION LINE ROUTE PERMITS

The Power Plant Siting Act requires the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) to locate transmission lines “in an orderly manner compatible with environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources” that minimizes “adverse human and environmental impact(s)” while ensuring electric power reliability (Minnesota Statutes, section 216E.02).

Minnesota Statute, section 216E.03, subdivision 7(b) identifies considerations that the MN PUC must take into account when designating transmission line routes. In determining whether to issue a route permit for a high-voltage transmission line, the MN PUC will consider the following factors of Minnesota Rules, part 7850.4100:

- A.** Effects on human settlement, including, but not limited to, displacement, noise, aesthetics, cultural values, recreation, and public services.
- B.** Effects on public health and safety.
- C.** Effects on land-based economies, including, but not limited to, agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining.
- D.** Effects on archaeological and historic resources.
- E.** Effects on the natural environment, including effects on air and water quality resources and flora and fauna.
- F.** Effects on rare and unique natural resources.
- G.** Application of design options that maximize energy efficiencies, mitigate adverse environmental effects, and could accommodate expansion of transmission or generating capacity.
- H.** Use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries.
- I.** Use of existing large electric power generating plant sites.
- J.** Use of existing transportation, pipeline, and electrical transmission systems or rights-of-way.
- K.** Electrical system reliability.
- L.** Costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining the facility which are dependent on design and route.
- M.** Adverse human and natural environmental effects which cannot be avoided.
- N.** Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources.

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