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MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

EQB Monitor, December 3, 2024

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board sent this bulletin at 12/03/2024 12:00 PM CST



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Announcements

2024 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report

We are happy to announce that the 2024 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report is now available! The interagency pollinator protection team updated the scorecards to communicate the progress we are making toward our pollinator protection goals. Additionally, the report includes pollinator-related action highlights from state agencies, and a section on new findings from pollinator-related research.



Visit our [pollinator webpage](#) to learn more and download a copy.



Environmental review project notices

EQB publishes environmental review notices provided by responsible governmental units. For more information on a project undergoing environmental review, click on the individual project links below. You can also find information about active projects in your community on the [Environmental Review Projects Interactive Map](#).

[Larson Quarry Expansion](#)

Location (city/township; county): Grey Cloud Island Township; Washington

Process: EAW

Step: EAW available

End of comment period: January 17, 2025

Project description: Holcim-MWR, Inc. proposes to expand their existing limestone quarry, known as the Larson Quarry, to the east onto an adjacent 148-acre property that they own located east of County Road 75. The Larson Quarry and expansion area is in Grey Cloud Island Township, Washington County, Minnesota. No change in quarry operations or production levels is proposed. The expansion will extend the life of the mine by 20-25 years.

Location of public documents: Park Grove Library, 7900 Hemingway Ave S, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Public meeting date, time, location: January 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Grey Cloud Town Hall, 9910 Grey Cloud Island Dr. S, St. Paul Park, MN 55071

Responsible governmental unit and contact: Washington County, [Daniel Elder](#), 651-430-4307

[Lower Knowlton/Munger Trail Culvert Replacement](#)

Location (city/township; county): Duluth; St. Louis

Process: EAW

Step: EAW available

End of comment period: January 2, 2025

Project description: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Louis River Restoration Initiative, proposes the Lower Knowlton/Munger Trail Culvert Replacement project located in Duluth, Minnesota. The project proposes to replace a concrete box culvert with a bridge, at the location where the Willard Munger State Trail (Munger Trail) crosses Knowlton Creek. The proposed bridge will enhance the hydrological function of Knowlton Creek and will allow for aquatic and terrestrial organism passage under the Munger Trail.

[Lower Knowlton/Munger Trail Culvert Replacement project link provided by RGU](#)

Location of public documents: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155

Responsible governmental unit and contact: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, [Becky Horton](#), 651-259-5122

[Nelson Mine Backwaters Project](#)

Location (city/township; county): Cottage Grove; Washington

Process: EIS

Step: Draft EIS

End of comment period: January 17, 2025

Project description: Holcim – MWR, Inc. (formerly known as “Aggregate Industries”) currently mines land leased from a private landowner on Lower Grey Cloud Island in Cottage Grove, Washington County, MN, and processes materials nearby. The existing facility will exhaust its current reserves in approximately four years. Holcim is proposing to shift mining operations over a 20 to 25-year period to adjacent private property located in the backwaters area of the Mississippi River between Lower Grey Cloud Island and barrier islands created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The proposed project would allow Holcim to continue use of their mechanical dredge, processing facilities and barge system to supply the Twin Cities and other local markets with construction quality natural aggregate.

[Nelson Mine Backwaters Project project link provided by RGU](#)

Location of public documents: City of Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway South, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Public meeting date, time, location: December 19, 2024, 7:00 p.m., Hero Center, 10125 85th Street South, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

Responsible governmental unit and contact: City of Cottage Grove, [Emily Schmitz](#), 651-458-2874

[Xcel Energy Competitive Resource Acquisition](#)

Location: St. Paul, Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Goodhue, Lyon, Murray, Redwood, Stearns

Process: Alternative review

Notice title: Availability of Environmental Report

Notice description: The Minnesota Department of Commerce has prepared an environmental report (ER) for proposal under consideration in Xcel Energy's Competitive Resource Acquisition. The ER evaluates the following alternatives: Xcel Energy's Lyon County facility, a new 420 MW natural gas plant in Lyon County; Xcel Energy's Sherco battery energy storage system (BESS) facility, a new 300 MW BESS in Sherburne County; DESRI Renewable Energy Development's North Star BESS, a new 50 MW or 80 MW BESS in Chisago County; Invenergy's Lake Wilson facility, a new 150 MW solar and 95 MW BESS in Murray County; Invenergy's existing 357 MW Cannon Falls Thermal Energy Center in Goodhue County; National Grid Renewables' Plum Creek facility, a new 230 MW wind and 150 MW BESS in Redwood, Murray, and Cottonwood counties; Onward Energy's existing 357 MW Mankato Energy Center and new 14 MW BESS in Blue Earth County; a no-build alternative.

Project description: Northern States Power Co., d/b/a Xcel Energy (Xcel) has petitioned the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to initiate a competitive resource acquisition process to acquire up to 800 megawatts (MW) of firm dispatchable generation. The Commission requested that the Department of Commerce prepare an Environmental Report (ER) for the proceeding. This ER examines the potential human and environmental impacts of seven proposals supported by the settling parties and a no-build alternative.

Location of public documents: Minnesota Department of Commerce, 85 7th Place East St. Paul, MN 55101

Responsible governmental unit and contact: Minnesota Department of Commerce, [Suzanne Steinhauer](#), 651-539-1843

General notices

Notices published in this section may be required under Minnesota Statute or Rule.

Notice of Environmental Assessment Scoping Decision

Notice description: PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) has issued the scoping decision for the environmental assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the proposed Birch Coulee Solar Project. The EA will be prepared by the Department's Energy Environmental Review and Analysis staff and will address the potential human and environmental impacts of the project. The scoping decision identifies those issues that will be studied, as well as those that will not be addressed.

Link to additional information: [Notice of Environmental Assessment Scoping Decision additional information](#)

Contact: Minnesota Department of Commerce, [Lauren Agnew](#), 651-539-1838

Public input sought on draft recommendations for a temporary regulatory framework for permitting gas resource development

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, on behalf of the state's Gas Resources Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC), invites input on draft recommendations and statutory language that would create a temporary framework to regulate development of

gas resources like hydrogen or helium in Minnesota.

The GTAC includes staff from the DNR, Pollution Control Agency, Environmental Quality Board, Department of Health, and Department of Revenue. The multi-agency committee was tasked with drafting recommendations and potential statutory language for a temporary regulatory framework to govern gas development projects.

If enacted by the legislature, the temporary regulatory framework will be in place while state agencies write permanent rules to ensure that the development and management of gas resources within Minnesota are environmentally sound, protective of human health, and beneficial to the state and local communities. The 2024 directive requires the DNR submit GTAC's recommendations and statutory language to the legislature by January 15, 2025.

Public input opportunities

The release of GTAC's draft recommendations today marks the start of a 21-day public input period from Dec. 2 to Dec. 23. Anyone interested in gas resource development in Minnesota can review the recommendations put forth by GTAC on the [state's GTAC website](#).

Input may be submitted by:

- Completing a form on the state's [GTAC website](#)
- Emailing input to GTAC@state.mn.us
- Mailing input to Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources; ATTN: GTAC; 500 Lafayette Road N, Box 45; St. Paul, MN 55155-4045

The GTAC agencies will host two in-person public meetings to provide an overview of the draft recommendations, answer questions, and collect input.

The first in-person public meeting is 6-9 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 12, at Giants Ridge Main Chalet, 6325 Wynne Creek Dr, Biwabik, MN 55708.

The second in-person public meeting is 6-9 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 17, at the Eagan Community Center, 1501 Central Pkwy, Eagan, MN 55121.

GTAC will consider all input received during the public input period and, if warranted, revise the draft recommendations by the end of December. The DNR will then submit a report to the state legislature outlining the GTAC's recommendations and proposed statutory language by January 15, 2025.

More information about GTAC, draft recommendations, and proposed statutory language are available on the [state's GTAC website](#).

Please send any additional questions to GTAC@state.mn.us

Fish kill reports

Minnesota Duty Officer reports pertaining to fish kills are summarized in the following table, in accordance with 103G.216, REPORTING FISH KILLS IN PUBLIC WATERS, Subd. 2 Reporting Requirement. These reports were received via the Minnesota Duty Officer prior to the submission deadline for this edition of the EQB Monitor. They represent the raw data/information provided by callers. For more information regarding fish kills in Minnesota see the [Department of Natural Resources](#). Call the Minnesota Duty Officer at 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798 to report fish kills.

No fish kill reports were received since the last publication.

Submit a notice to the *EQB Monitor*

The *EQB Monitor* is a weekly publication announcing environmental review documents, public comment periods and other actions of the Environmental Quality Board. The *EQB Monitor* is published every Tuesday at noon. Submissions to the [EQB Monitor](#) are due by 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday one week prior to the intended publication date. Please see the [EQB Monitor schedule](#) for more details.

To submit a notice for publication:

[Access the EQB monitor submission service](#)

Questions? Contact EQB by phone at 651-757-2873 or email us at EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us.

For more information on environmental review, please visit the EQB website or contact us at env.review@state.mn.us.



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Email: Env.review@state.mn.us | Phone: 651-757-2873



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