



EQB MONITOR

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Submittal Deadline: January 13, 2014
Submit to EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us



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EQB Meetings are regularly scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month, which can be found on the [EQB Calendar](#). There may be additional special meetings as well. [Meeting minutes, packets, and agendas](#) are posted on the [EQB website](#).

- [EIS Need Decisions](#)
- [Environmental Assessment Available](#)
- [Notices](#)
- [2014 EQB Monitor Publication Calendar](#)

Notice: EQB Extends Comment Period for “Tools to Assist Local Governments in Planning for and Regulating Silica Sand Projects”, Draft Model Standards and Criteria for Silica Sand Activities

The EQB has extended the period for public comments on “Tools to Assist Local Governments in Planning for and Regulating Silica Sand Projects”.

In response to requests from various stakeholders for additional time to review the document, **the comment period has been extended to January 27, 2014**

This document was prepared to fulfill the legislative requirement to prepare model standards and criteria for mining, processing, and transporting silica sand. The December 13, 2013 “Tools” document is a draft. Its release signaled the start of a public comment period.

The document can be viewed and downloaded from:

http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/documents/Tools%20for%20Local%20Govt%20draft%20DECEMBER%2013_2013.pdf

Comments can be submitted via e-mail to: silicasand.eqb@state.mn.us

Hard copy comments also can be submitted to: Jeff Smyser, Environmental Quality Board, 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

EIS Need Decisions

The noted responsible governmental unit has determined the following project does not require preparation of an EIS. The dates given are, respectively, the date of the determination and the date the EAW notice was published in the EQB Monitor.

- Olmsted County, 125th Street NW Corridor Preservation Project, December 17, 2013 (September 16, 2013)
- Hennepin County, Reconstruction of CSAH 101 from CSAH 5 to US Highway 12, December 17, 2013 (October 14, 2013)

Environmental Assessment Available

Project Title: Pleasant Valley 161 kV Transmission Line and 34.5/161 kV Substation Project, located in Mower County.

Project Description: This Project falls under Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850.5300 Subp. 2. C. local review of transmission projects ranging between 100 to 200 kV. Mower County agreed to act as the lead local unit of government with jurisdiction to approve the Project, and an Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently available for the Project. Pleasant Valley Wind LLC (Pleasant Valley) is seeking authorization to construct a 161 kV transmission line and a substation for the Pleasant Valley Wind Project. The substation will be in Section 20 of Sargeant Township; the transmission line will connect the substation to the existing Great River Energy Pleasant Valley Station in the NW ¼ of Section 19 of Pleasant Valley Township. Pleasant Valley is evaluating two potential routes for the proposed transmission line, only one of which will ultimately be constructed. The transmission route will either be along County Road 1 (310th Street) between 640th Avenue and 680th Avenue in Sargeant Township, or along 320th Street/325th Street between 640th Avenue and 680th Avenue.

Copies of the EA, which documents the purpose and need of the project, along with the anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts, are available for public review beginning January 6, 2014 at the Auditor's office in the Mower County Government Center, 201 1st Street NE, in Austin MN and at the Public Works/Environmental Services Office at the address below. The EA can also be viewed on Mower County's website, at http://www.co.mower.mn.us/files/Public-Works/Pleasant%20Vally%20Trans-Sub%20Project/FINAL_PleasantValley_EA_12202013_compiled.pdf. Comments may be submitted to Angie Knish at the Environmental Services office, at the address or email below.

Comment Period Deadline: January 16, 2014

RGU: Mower County

Contact Person: Angie Knish
Mower County Public Works / Environmental Services
1105 8th Avenue NE,
Austin, Minnesota 55912
angiek@CO.MOWER.MN.US
507-437-9560

Notices

MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a Pipeline Routing Permit for the Laskin Energy Center Natural Gas Pipeline Project in Hoyt Lakes – Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: E015/GP-13-978

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will hold a public information meeting on the Minnesota Power Laskin Pipeline Project on January 22, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Hoyt Lakes Municipal Building, 206 Kennedy Memorial Dr., Hoyt Lakes MN 55750.

Meeting Information:

- Staff from the Public Utilities Commission, Department of Commerce (DOC), and Minnesota Power will provide information on the project and be available to answer questions about the project and the process.
- Citizens will have the opportunity to offer oral comments, written comments, or both into the record.
- Citizens who have questions, but do not want to ask questions orally, may submit questions in writing.
- The meeting will last until everyone has the opportunity to offer comments or ask questions.

Topics for Public Comment:

- Does this proposed project have a significant impact on humans or the environment?
- If not, should the Commission grant or deny the process exemption requested by Minnesota Power?
- Should any specific permit conditions be placed on this project?

Comment Period: The comment period continues after the public meeting. The initial comment period ends **February 5, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.** The reply comment period ends **Friday, February 14, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.** The Commission requests that the Applicant file proposed Findings of Fact within the time allotted for initial comment period and requests that the DOC file its technical analysis, comments and recommendations, including any proposed permit conditions, within the time allotted for reply comments .

Submit Public Comments: E-mail to PublicComments.PUC@state.mn.us.

Persons without e-mail access may send by U.S. mail to Burl Haar, Executive Secretary, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul MN 55101-2147. Please include the Commission's docket number (13-978) in all communications.

Project Description: Minnesota Power proposes to build a natural gas pipeline:

- Approximately 5,900 feet long
- From the Northern Natural Gas Pipeline to Minnesota Power's Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota
- With a diameter of 10.75 inches
- Operating under pressure up to 1480 pounds per square inch (psig)
- With a requested route width of between 250 and 1,400-feet to provide flexibility for the designation of the centerline and construction right-of-way.

The proposed route is located one mile west of Hoyt Lakes and traverses a developed area with existing infrastructure, including road and transmission line rights-of-way. The pipeline is expected to be placed immediately next to an existing transmission line easement for much of its length. The majority of land (63 percent) crossed by the Project is owned by Minnesota Power, with the remaining 37 percent owned by the City of Hoyt Lakes. A total of 13.5 acres of land will be disturbed for the construction of the pipeline. The project calls for a 100-foot construction right-of-way consisting of a 70-foot temporary right-of-way and a 30-foot permanent right-of-way.

Process Information: Before the project can be built, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) must approve a route permit. Minnesota Power's process exemption application was accepted as complete by the Commission in December 2013. The Commission's exemption process takes about 90 days.

The public information meeting is intended to provide information on the permitting process and to compile information to assist the Commission in determining whether to grant or deny the partial exemption application. In deciding whether to grant or deny the partial exemption, the Commission will consider comments filed, the record from the public information meeting, and the information contained in the application relevant to the criteria for a partial exemption. If the Commission grants a partial exemption, it will issue a pipeline route permit. If the Commission denies the partial exemption, Minnesota

Power has requested that the Commission continue processing its application under the full pipeline route procedures.

Eminent Domain: If issued a route permit by the Commission, Minnesota Power may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project.

Department of Commerce Project Website:

<http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33624>

Full Case Record: All documents filed in this docket are available on the Commission's website at www.puc.state.mn.us, select "Search eDockets," enter the year (13) and the docket number (978), select "Search."

Public Libraries: The route permit application is available at the following public libraries:

- Hoyt Lakes Public Library, 206 Kenney Memorial Drive, Hoyt Lakes MN 55750
- Duluth Public Library, 520 West Superior St. Duluth MN 55802

Minnesota Statutes and Rules: This project is being reviewed under Minnesota Statute 216G and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7852, available at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/>.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to Commission staff, Tricia DeBleeckere at tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us or at 651-201-2254.

Metropolitan Airports Commission, Capital Improvement Program

On December 16, 2013, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) recommended that no further environmental review of the 2014-2020 Capital Improvement Program was warranted based on the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AOEE) for Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. This determination was made following a public hearing held on November 4, 2013 and close of the 30-day public comment period on November 13, 2013. No oral or written comments were received. You may find the Hearing Officers' Report regarding the AOEE at the following link: <http://metroairports.org/Airport-Authority/Metropolitan-Airports-Commission/Public-Meetings/Other-MAC-Meetings.aspx>

Notice of the public comment period and public hearing was published in the EQB Monitor of October 14, 2013.

Notice of Availability of Environmental Report

In the Matter of the Application of Stoneray Power Partners, LLC for a Certificate of Need for a 105 MW Wind Project in Pipestone and Murray Counties PUC Docket Number: IP-6646/CN-13-193

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff has completed an Environmental Report (ER) for the proposed 105 MW Stoneray Wind Farm (Project). The ER analyzes the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed Project and alternatives to the Project. Electronic versions of the ER and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the Department's Energy Facilities website at <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33153>.

Additionally, project documents are available on the Commission's eDockets system; enter the year "2013" and the number "193" at <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>.

The ER, along with the Certificate of Need and Site Permit applications, is also available at:

Meinders Community Library
1401 7th St SW
Pipestone, MN

Paper copies of the Environmental Report may be requested from EERA staff (listed at the end of this notice).

Project Description: The proposed Stoneray Power Partners, LLC (Stoneray) Project site encompasses 29,500 acres and is located in Rock and Burke townships in Pipestone County and Chanarambie and Cameron townships in Murray County. Stoneray proposes to install up to 62 wind turbines for a nameplate capacity of 105 MW. Four turbine types are under consideration which range from 1.7 to 3.2 MW per turbine.

Associated facilities to the project include a project substation, collector and feeder lines, access roads, meteorological towers and an operations and maintenance building.

The Applicant's goal is to complete the construction of the project and achieve commercial operation by December 2014.

PUC Review Process: The Project is a "large energy facility" as defined in Minnesota Statute 216B.2421, Subd. 2, and a Certificate of Need from the Public Utilities Commission is required for such a project under Minnesota Statute 216B.243. Stoneray Power Partners, LLC, filed a Certificate of Need application for the Project on April 29, 2013. On July 24, 2013, the Commission issued an Order accepting the application as substantially complete. EERA held a public scoping meeting in Lake Wilson on August 14, 2013; The Department of Commerce Deputy Director released the Scope of the ER on September 6, 2013.

A public hearing on the Certificate of Need and the Site Permit will be held in Lake Wilson on January 14, 2014. See the notice at eDockets no. 201312-94785-01.

Project Contacts: For more information about the environmental review, contact David Birkholz. For other questions about the Project, contact Tracy Smetana.

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Tracy Smetana
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(This document can be made available in alternative formats; i.e. large print or audio tape by calling (651) 539-1530.)

Notification of Releases of Genetically Engineered Organisms

File Number	Company	Crop	Project	County
14-NO-001	Dow AgroSciences	corn	herbicide tolerant, insect resistance	Brown, Cottonwood, Fillmore(2), McLeod, Otter Tail, Pope, Renville, Sibley, Stearns, Wilkin
14-NO-002	Dow AgroSciences	corn	herbicide tolerant, insect resistance	Brown, Fillmore(2)

2014 EQB Monitor Publication Calendar

The 2014 EQB Monitor Publication Calendar can be viewed at: <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/resource.html?id=18987>