

## The *EQB Monitor*

520 Lafayette Road North, Saint Paul, MN 55155 - [www.eqb.state.mn.us](http://www.eqb.state.mn.us)  
[EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us](mailto:EQB.Monitor@state.mn.us) - (651) 757-2873

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**Publication Date: April 2, 2018**  
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**Publication Schedule:** Mondays at 8:00 AM  
**Submission Deadline:** [View 2018 Schedule](#)  
Use the [EQB Monitor Submission Form](#)

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### EQB Announcements

#### Citizen Environmental Review Survey

The Environmental Quality Board, which oversees the state's Environmental Review program, is undergoing a continuous improvement project to monitor and improve the effectiveness of Environmental Review. Minnesota citizens who have participated in the Environmental Review process are asked to consider taking 10 minutes to complete the survey at the link below. Engagement in the process may include: reviewed a document, attended a public meeting, wrote a comment, contacted staff, etc.

<http://survey.mn.gov/s.asp?k=151335922389>

**Contact Person:**

Kristin Mroz  
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#### Quick Reference: Environmental Assessment Worksheet Guidance

In addition to the guidance videos featured in the last few EQB Monitors, we also provide a number of written guidance documents including our Quick Reference: Environmental Assessment Worksheet document. You can find it here: <https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/documents/Quick%20Reference%20-%20EAW.pdf>

All of our guidance documents and videos are available on our website, <https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/>, under Environmental Review. EQB staff are also available to answer questions about Environmental Review at [Env.Review@state.mn.us](mailto:Env.Review@state.mn.us) or 651-757-2873.

**RGU Contact Person:**

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## Petitions

The following petition has been filed with the EQB requesting preparation of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). The EQB has assigned the indicated unit of government to review the petition and decide on the need for an EAW.

- Wright County, Delano Sportsmen's Club Trap Ranges Petition
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## Environmental Impact Statement Need Decisions

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

- Benton County, Anderson/Helmin Gravel Pit Expansion, 3-20-18 (1-22-18)
  - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Slip Sediment Remediation, 3-19-18 (2-5-18)
  - City of Rosemount, SKB Environmental Waste Exchange Excavation and Metal Recycling Facilities Development EAW, 3-20-18 (1-22-18)
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## Notices

### Minnesota Department of Agriculture--Notification of Release of Genetically Engineered Organisms

**Project Description:** Betaseed, Inc. filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number 18-NO-24. Notification is for genetically modified CORN, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number 18-073-104n. The counties identified for release include the following: Dakota County-1 locations with up to 25 acres. Project categories include PQ (Product Quality).

For additional information contact Denise Thiede, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 625 Robert St N., St. Paul, MN 55155, 651-201-6531, [denise.thiede@state.mn.us](mailto:denise.thiede@state.mn.us).

**Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU):** Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Plant Protection Division

**RGU Contact Person:**

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# NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING MEETINGS

## In the Matter of the Applications of Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the Huntley to Wilmarth 345 kV Transmission Line in South Central Minnesota

**Docket Numbers:** E002, ET-6675/CN 17-184 and E002, ET-6675/TL-17-185

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) and the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) will hold public information and environmental impact statement scoping meetings on Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC's certificate of need and route permit applications for the Huntley to Wilmarth 345 kV transmission line project on the following dates:

**Mankato: April 17, 2018, 1:00 p.m.**

Courtyard by Marriott  
901 Raintree Road  
Mankato, MN 56001

**Mankato: April 17, 2018, 6:00 p.m.**

Courtyard by Marriott  
901 Raintree Road  
Mankato, MN 56001

**Winnebago: April 18, 2018, 1:00 p.m.**

Winnebago Municipal Center  
140 S. Main St.  
Winnebago, MN 56098

**Mapleton: April 18, 2018, 6:00 p.m.**

Maple River High School  
101 6th Ave NE  
Mapleton, MN 56065

**Bad weather?** To find out if a meeting has been cancelled due to bad weather call 1-855-731-6208 or visit [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc).

### Meeting Information

- Public meetings start on time. Arrive a few minutes early so you have time to sign in, pick up materials, and find a seat.
- Citizens will have the opportunity to offer oral and/or written comments into the record.
- Commission and Department staff will preside over the meeting. Commission and Department staff, as well as staff from Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC, will be available to answer questions about the project and the process.
- The same information will be presented at each meeting.
- Each meeting will last until everyone at the meeting has had an opportunity to speak.
- Comments received at the meeting and during the comment period will be used to develop the scope of the environmental impact statement for this project.

### Submit Comments

Please focus your comments on information that will help answer the following questions:

What human and environmental impacts of the proposed transmission line should be studied in the environmental impact statement prepared for this project?

Are there specific methods to mitigate these impacts that should be studied in the environmental impact statement?

Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be studied to mitigate these impacts?

Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, instead of the proposed transmission line? If so, what alternatives to the project should be studied in the environmental impact statement?

**Comment Period: Until Friday, May 4, 2018**

Please include the docket numbers (17-184 and 17-185) in all communications.

**U.S. Mail:**

Ray Kirsch, Environmental Review Manager  
Minnesota Department of Commerce  
85 7th Place East, Suite 280  
St. Paul MN 55101

**Email:** [raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us](mailto:raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us)

**Online:** [mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities](http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities)

**Fax:** 651-539-0109

**Important:** Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's and the Department's websites, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Personally identifying information is not edited or deleted from submissions.

**Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC propose to:**

- Build approximately 50 miles of new 345 kV transmission line from the Wilmarth substation in Mankato, Minnesota to the Huntley substation, near Winnebago, Minnesota.
- Make necessary modifications to the existing Wilmarth and Huntley substations to accommodate the new 345kV transmission line.

Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC indicate that the proposed project is needed to relieve congestion on the electric transmission grid in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa.

**Process Information**

The proposed Huntley to Wilmarth 345 kV transmission line project requires two approvals from the Commission – a certificate of need and a route permit. Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC filed certificate of need and route permit applications with the Commission in January 2018. The Commission subsequently determined that the applications were complete and initiated an environmental review and hearing process. This process will take about 12 months to complete, culminating in Commission decisions on the certificate of need and route permit applications.

The Department will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project. The EIS will analyze the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives to the project, as well as methods to mitigate potential impacts.

The EIS will be issued in draft form so that it can be improved through public comment. The Department will hold public meetings to solicit comments on the draft EIS. The Department will respond to the timely, substantive comments on the draft EIS and will include comments and responses in a final EIS.

Public hearings will also be held in project area after the above mentioned meetings are held and comments on the draft EIS have been received. The hearings will be presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ). Citizens will have the opportunity to speak at the hearings, ask questions, and submit comments. The ALJ will use the EIS, the hearings, and the entire record to write a report for the Commission. The report will include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommendations regarding the project. After receiving the ALJ's report, the Commission will make final decisions on a certificate of need and route permit for this project, expected in mid-2019.

**Eminent Domain:** If issued a route permit by the Commission, Xcel Energy and ITC Midwest LLC may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project.

**How to Learn More**

**Department of Commerce Website:**

<http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>

**Full Case Record:** See all documents filed in these dockets via the Commission's website – [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select Search eDockets, enter the year (17) and the docket number (184 or 185), and select Search.

**Project Mailing List:** Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate (meetings, comment periods, etc.). Contact [docketing.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:docketing.puc@state.mn.us), 651-201-2204, with the docket numbers (17-184 or 17-185), your name, mailing address, and email address.

**Subscribe to the Dockets:** To receive email notifications when new documents are filed in the project dockets, go to the Commission's website, [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select Subscribe, and follow the prompts. \*Note - subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

**Public Libraries:** The certificate of need and route permit applications are available at the following libraries:

- Blue Earth County Library, 100 East Main Street, Mankato, MN 56011
- Lake Crystal Public Library, 100 E Robinson Street, Lake Crystal, MN 56055
- Mapleton Public Library, 104 1st Avenue NE, Mapleton, MN 56065
- Muir Library, 36 Main Street N, Winnebago, MN 56098
- North Mankato Taylor Library, 1001 Belgrade Avenue, North Mankato, MN 56003

### **Project Contacts**

Public Utilities Commission Public Advisor

Charley Bruce – [publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us), 651-201-2251 or 1-800-657-3782

### **Public Utilities Commission Energy Facilities Planner**

Tricia DeBleekere – [tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us](mailto:tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2254

### **Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager**

Ray Kirsch – [raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us](mailto:raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us), 651-539-1841 or 1-800-657-3794

### **Applicant Contacts**

Thomas Hillstrom – [thomas.hillstrom@xcelenergy.com](mailto:thomas.hillstrom@xcelenergy.com) or 1-855-839-8865

Tim Tessier – [tessier@itctransco.com](mailto:tessier@itctransco.com) or 515-639-3327

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these meetings (e.g., sign language or large print materials), please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the meeting.

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](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us) for assistance.

**Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU):** Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

### **RGU Contact Person:**

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