

The *EQB Monitor*

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Publication Schedule: Mondays at 8:00 AM
Submission Deadline: [View 2020 Schedule](#)
Use the [EQB Monitor Submission Form](#)

The *EQB Monitor* is a weekly publication announcing environmental review documents, public comment periods and other actions of the Environmental Quality Board. For more information on environmental review, please visit the [EQB website](#).



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Environmental Assessment Worksheet Need Decision

Hiawatha Campus Expansion Project

The noted responsible governmental unit (RGU) has made a decision regarding the need for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) in response to a citizen's petition.

As the RGU, the City of Minneapolis made the decision to deny the request for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) on the Hiawatha Campus project, in compliance with the requirements in Minnesota Rules (Minn. R.) chapter 4410.1100. However, the City of Minneapolis is voluntarily choosing to initiate a discretionary EAW pursuant to Minn. R. 4410.1000, subp. 3(D) to determine if the project has the potential for significant environmental effects.

Environmental Assessment Worksheet

Otter Tail County: Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail: McDonald Lake Segment, Silent Lakes Segment, and West Segment

Comment Deadline: July 29, 2020

Project Description: The Otter Tail County Highway Department proposes the construction of the McDonald Lake Segment, Silent Lakes Segment, and West Segment of the Perham to Pelican Rapids Regional Trail. The proposed trail is approximately 10 feet wide and 20.75 miles in length running parallel to County Highways 35, 41, and 3, Township Roads 440th Street, 415th Street, 268th Avenue, 410th Street and 260th Avenue, and US 59. The trail will initially provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as biking, jogging/running, hiking, rollerblading, and dog walking. In the future, winter activities may include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and possibly snowmobiling. This EAW's publication date in the EQB Monitor is on Monday, June 22 activating the 30-day comment period. The comment period ends on Wednesday, July 29. Please address comments to the RGU: Otter Tail County Highway Department Charles Grotte, PE County Engineer 505 South Court Street, Suite 1 Fergus Falls, MN 56537 Email: CGrotte@co.ottertail.mn.us

Link to Document: <http://ottertailcountymn.us/project/perham-to-pelican-rapids-trail/>

RGU: Otter Tail County

RGU Contact: Charles Grotte, 218-998-8475, cgrotte@co.ottertail.mn.us

Environmental Impact Statement Need Decision

Nolte Family Irrigation Project

RGU: Department of Natural Resources

RGU Contact: Jill Townley, 651-259-5168, jill.townley@state.mn.us

Date of Determination: June 18, 2020

Determination: Negative (no EIS required)

Link to Document: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/timnolte/index.html>

Pinnacle Project

RGU: City of Chaska

RGU Contact: Liz Hanson, 952-227-7527, ehanson@chaskamn.com

Date of Determination: June 1, 2020

Determination: Negative (no EIS required)

Link to Document: No link to electronic copies of the documents was provided by the RGU. For copies of the documents, see RGU contact information above.

Notices

Notice of Availability - Elk Creek Solar Project Environmental Assessment

**In the Matter of the Applications for a Certificate of Need and LEPGP Site Permit
for the Elk Creek Solar Project**

PUC Docket Numbers: IP7009/CN-19-351 and IP7009/GS-19-495

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis announces the release of the environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed Elk Creek Solar Project located in Rock County.

In order to build the Elk Creek Solar Project, the Applicant must obtain two approvals from the Public Utilities Commission (Commission)—a certificate of need and a LEPGP site permit. The Project requires a certificate of need because it meets the definition of a large energy facility in Minnesota statute, which is any electric power generating plant—including one powered by solar energy—with a capacity of 50 MW or more. The Elk Creek Solar Project falls within the definition of a Large Electric Power Generating Plant in the Power Plant Siting Act and, thus, requires a Site Permit from the Commission prior to construction.

The Environmental Assessment is a written document that describes the human and environmental impacts of the Project and methods to mitigate such impacts. When there are multiple applications before the Commission for a single project, the environmental review required for each application may be combined. The Commission authorized the Department to combine the environmental review required for the certificate of need and site permit; therefore, these applications will be processed jointly using Minnesota Rule 7829.1200 and Minnesota Rule 7850.2800 to 7850.3900.

Documents of interest can be found on the Commission eDockets system at website: mn.gov/puc, select Search eDockets, and enter year (19) and the docket number (351 or 495), and select Search and the Department of Commerce Project Website:

<https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13739/>

If you have any questions about this document, or would like more information, please contact the DOC EERA Environmental Manager: Bill Storm, 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101; Tel: 651.539.1844; e-mail: bill.storm@state.mn.us.

Notice of Public Hearing - Buffalo Ridge Wind Energy

Issued: June 19, 2020

In the Matter of the Applications of Buffalo Ridge Wind Energy, LLC for a Certificate of Need and a Site Permit for the Buffalo Ridge Wind Project in Lincoln and Pipestone Counties

PUC Docket Numbers: IP-7006/CN-19-309, IP-7006/WS-19-394

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number: 82-2500-36550

Date: July 22, 2020

Time: 6:00 PM*

*The hearing will end when all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded or at 9:00 PM, whichever comes first.

To find out if a meeting is canceled call 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold a remote-access public hearing on the applications of Buffalo Ridge Wind Energy, LLC (BRW or Applicant) for its proposed 109 megawatt (MW) Buffalo Ridge Wind Project. **Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the remote-access public hearing will replace the standard in-person hearing. Similar to an in-person hearing, the remote-access hearing will provide interested persons the opportunity to: (1) provide comments regarding the need for the proposed project; and (2) ask questions and provide comments on potential issues to be considered by the Commission in its decision-making process or included as a condition in the final site permit.**

How to Attend the Hearing

To participate, follow the directions below to access the hearing over the telephone to listen and/or provide verbal comments (audio only). If you are also interested in accessing the video portion of the meeting, follow the directions below to view the presentation over the internet (video only – no audio). **You must, at a minimum, join the hearing by telephone if you are interested in listening to the hearing and/or in providing verbal comments on the proposed project.** Written comments may also be submitted during the comment period following the hearing using the methods described in this notice.

Join the hearing by telephone

Phone: 1-800-374-0221

Conference ID: 8095449

An operator will assist you.

Join the hearing by internet (video only – no audio)

Navigate on your computer to: <https://tinyurl.com/yajkf3dq> or <https://minnesota.webex.com>

Event Number: 146 134 2629

Event Password, if needed: MPUC

Please contact Charley Bruce, Public Advisor (contact information provided below) if you have questions on how to participate or have trouble accessing the hearing.

Information on the application review process and documents related to the proposed project including materials from the public hearing, the certificate of need and site permit applications, and the environmental report are available on the Department of Commerce website at: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13711/> and the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc, select *eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (309) for the certificate of need, or (394) for the site permit, and select *Search*.

Project Description

In July 2019, Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC submitted applications (revised on February 21 and May 5, 2020) to the Commission to construct and operate a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS) in Lincoln and Pipestone counties. In order to construct the Buffalo Ridge Wind Project (Project), the applicant must be granted a certificate of need and a site permit from the Commission.

The proposed project would entail construction of 40 wind turbines with a combined nameplate capacity of 109 MW. The project would also include a collector substation, transformers, collection lines, an operation and maintenance building, permanent meteorological tower(s),

and gravel access roads. The project footprint would occupy approximately 17,609 acres of land southeast of the city of Lake Benton and west of the city of Tyler in Lincoln County. The total projected impact to land (cultivated, pasture, vegetation, open land) would be approximately 37.5 acres, after completion of restoration activities. The project impact on land would be higher during construction.

The applicant has indicated that the Project is intended to assist Great River Energy in meeting its renewable energy goals.

Public Hearing Process Information

The purpose of the public hearing is to obtain public input on the proposed project and compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the certificate of need and site permit applications. The **Honorable Barbara J. Case, Administrative Law Judge** will administer the hearing and will provide the Commission with a report that includes findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the project. The public hearing and written comment period afford interested persons the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant and agency staff and to offer oral and written comments on the merits of the proposed project, on the environmental report, and on conditions to be considered for inclusion in a site permit. The public hearing is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. § 216E.04 and Minn. R. 7850.3800.

Minnesota Statutes and Rules: The certificate of need application is reviewed under Minnesota

Statute 216B.243 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849. The LWECS site permit is reviewed under

Minnesota Statute 216F and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7854. Minnesota Statutes and Rules are available at www.revisor.mn.gov.

Eminent Domain: The applicant does not have eminent domain authority to acquire land necessary for the project. All leases or easements secured to acquire land for the project are voluntary.

Written Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **August 3, 2020, by 4:30 p.m.** Please include the docket numbers (19-309, and/or 19-394) in all communications. *Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.*

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

- Is the proposed project needed and in the public interest?
- What are the costs and benefits of the proposed project?
- What are the environmental and human impacts of the proposed project and how can these impacts be addressed?
- Should the Commission issue a certificate of need and a site permit for the project?
- Are there any other project-related issues or concerns?

Comments may be submitted by any of the following means:

Online: Visit mn.gov/puc, select *Comment* and follow the prompts.

Email: publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us.

US Mail: Public Advisor, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

121 7th Place East, Suite 350

Saint Paul, MN 55101

Important: Comments will be made available to the public via the Public Utilities Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

How to Learn More

Department of Commerce Project Website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13711/>

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 or 651-201-2246 with the docket number (19-309 for the certificate of need or 19-394 for the site permit application), your name, mailing address and email address.

Subscribe to the Docket: Receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter at eFiling.com, or go to mn.gov/puc, select *Comment*, and follow the prompts. *Note - subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website - mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (309) for the certificate of need, or enter the year (19) and the docket number (394) for the site permit application, select *Search*.

Community Locations: The certificate of need and site permit applications, the environmental report, and the draft site permit are available at these locations:

Note: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic your local library may be closed or have limited hours.

- Lake Benton Library, 110 East Benton Street, Lake Benton, MN 56149
- Meinders Community Library, 1401 7th Street SW, Pipestone, MN 56164
- Tyler Public Library, 230 North Tyler Street, Tyler, MN 56178

Project Contacts

Public Utilities Commission Public Advisor

Charley Bruce - publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us, 651-201-2251

Public Utilities Commission Energy Facilities Planner

Cezar Panait – Cezar.Panait@state.mn.us or 651-201-2207

Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager

Larry Hartman – larry.hartman@state.mn.us, 651-539-1839 or 1-800-657-3794

Ray Kirsch – raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us, 651-539-1841

Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC Project Contact

Danell Herzig – Project Development Manager – danell.herzig@nexteraenergy.com or 561-304-6548

If any reasonable accommodation is needed so that you may fully participate in these meetings, for example sign language or large print materials, please contact the Office of Administrative Hearings at 651-361-7900 (voice) at least one week before 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.

Notice of Availability of Revised Environmental Report - Buffalo Ridge Wind Project

Issued: June 29, 2020

In the Matter of the Application of Buffalo Ridge Wind Energy, LLC for a Certificate of Need for the Buffalo Ridge Wind Project in Lincoln and Pipestone Counties

Docket Number: IP-7006/CN-19-309

The Minnesota Department of Commerce has issued a Revised Environmental Report (ER) for the proposed Buffalo Ridge Wind Project. The ER analyzes the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives to the project.

The Revised ER can be viewed on the Department's website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13711/>. It can also be viewed through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's website: <http://mn.gov/puc>. Select "eDockets," enter the year ("19") and the docket number ("309"), and then select "Search."

The Revised ER will also be available for review at the public library in the cities of Lake Benton, Tyler, and Pipestone.

Project Description

Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC (Buffalo Ridge Wind) is proposing to construct a 109 megawatt (MW) wind farm in Lincoln County and Pipestone County, Minnesota. The Buffalo Ridge Wind project

would consist of wind turbines and associated facilities, including access roads, communication lines, underground electrical collector lines, a meteorological tower, a staging and construction laydown area, an operation and maintenance facility, and a project substation. Buffalo Ridge Wind anticipates that the project would consist of up to 40 wind turbines varying in size from 2.52 to 2.82 MW.

Process Information

In order to construct the proposed Buffalo Ridge Wind project, Buffalo Ridge Wind must obtain two approvals from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) – a certificate of need and a site permit. Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is responsible for conducting environmental review for certificate of need applications submitted to the Commission. EERA staff has prepared the above-noted ER to meet this responsibility.

The ER evaluates the potential human and environmental impacts of the project and alternatives to the project. The ER will be used by the Commission in deciding whether to issue a certificate of need for the project.

How to Learn More

- Department of Commerce website: <http://www.mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>
- Full Case Record. See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website, <http://www.mn.gov/puc>. Select "eDockets," enter the year ("19") and the docket number ("309"), and then select "Search."
- Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate. Contact docketing.puc@state.mn.us, 651-201-2204, with the docket numbers (19-309), your name, mailing address, and email address.
- Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notifications when new documents are filed in the project docket, go to the Commission's website, <http://www.mn.gov/puc>, select "Subscribe," and follow the prompts.

Project Contacts

Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager

Larry B. Hartman – larry.hartman@state.mn.us, 651-539-1839 or 1-800-657-3794 or

Ray Kirsch – raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us, 651-539-1841 or 1-800-657-3794

Public Utilities Commission

Charley Bruce, Public Advisor – charley.bruce@state.mn.us, 651-201-2251

Cezar Panait, Staff Analyst – cezar.panait@state.mn.us, 651-201-2207

Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC

Danell Herzig – danell.herzig@nexteraenergy.com, 561-304-6548

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

Links to environmental review documents were provided by the RGU. In the event that the link does not work, you may contact the RGU directly to request either a paper or electronic copy of the documents. If you are not able to connect with the RGU, please email EQB staff at Env.Review@state.mn.us, call 651.757.2873, or visit our [website](#).



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