

Appendices

Appendix A

Scoping Decision



In the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services for a Route Permit for a High Voltage Transmission Line for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project in West-Central Minnesota

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
SCOPING DECISION**

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

The above matter has come before the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (Department) for a decision on the scope of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to be prepared for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project in west-central Minnesota.

Project Description

On October 22, 2024, Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services (hereinafter the applicants), filed a route permit application¹ with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to construct approximately 91 to 106 miles of 345 kV transmission line using double-circuit capable structures from the Minnesota/South Dakota border, approximately one mile south of Ortonville, Big Stone County, Minnesota, to the existing Alexandria Substation in Alexandria, Douglas County, Minnesota. On December 3, 2025, the Commission found the route permit application to be complete.²

The applicants propose to construct the transmission line within a 150 foot right-of-way using double-circuit capable structures, with a single circuit installed initially and the other circuit remaining open for a future transmission line. The project's steel, monopole structures will be 120 to 180 feet in height with spans ranging from 400 to 1,400 feet. The applicants proposed two possible transmission line routes in each of three regions delineated for the Project: South, Central, and North (Attachment 1, Map 1). The applicants have requested a route width of 1,000 feet, with a few areas requiring a wider or narrower route width.

The Project also includes modifications to the existing Alexandria Substation, southwest of the City of Alexandria, Minnesota and the Big Stone South Substation, in Grant County, South Dakota. In addition, a new fiber optic regeneration station for amplifying and regenerating optical communications between substations is proposed.

¹ Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services. Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project, Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for a High Voltage Transmission Line, October 22, 2024, eDockets Numbers [202410-211322-01](#) (through -07), hereinafter the Route Permit Application.

² Public Utilities Commission, Order, December 3, 2024, eDockets No. [202412-212609-01](#).

The Big Stone South to Alexandria Project (Project) is the western segment of the larger Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks 345 kV Transmission Project. A certificate of need for the Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks Project was issued by the Commission on October 30, 2024.^{3,4}

Project Purpose

The Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks 345 kV Transmission Project is needed to provide reliable, resilient, and cost-effective delivery of energy as the generation resource mix continues to evolve over the coming years.⁵ Specifically, the Project is needed to address reliability issues on the existing 230 kV system in eastern North Dakota and South Dakota and in western and central Minnesota. This existing 230 kV system is at its capacity leading to thermal and voltage issues. The Project would resolve these issues by adding a 345 kV circuit to the system in this area.

Regulatory Process and Procedures

The Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project requires a route permit from the Commission. Route permit applications are subject to environmental review conducted by Department Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff on behalf of the Commission. EERA will prepare an EIS that will inform the Commission's decision on the applicants' route permit application. The EIS preparation process includes scoping for the EIS, preparation of a draft EIS, public comment on the draft EIS, preparation of a final EIS, and a determination of EIS adequacy.

Scoping Process

The first step in preparing the EIS is scoping. The scoping process has two primary purposes: (1) to gather public input on the impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives to study in the EIS, and (2) to focus the EIS on those impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives that will aid in the Commission's decision on the route permit application.

Staff uses the information gathered during scoping to inform the content of the EIS. EERA staff gathered input on the scope of the EIS through public meetings and an associated comment period. This scoping decision identifies the impacts and mitigation measures as well as routing alternatives that will be analyzed in the EIS.

Public Information and Scoping Meetings

Commission and EERA staff gathered input on the scope of the EIS through six public scoping meetings and an associated comment period as summarized below:

³ Northern States Power Company, Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power Company, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency. Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks Transmission Line Project, Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Certificate of Need for a High Voltage Transmission Line, September 29, 2023, eDockets Numbers [20239-199284-01](#) (through -05), hereinafter the Certificate of Need Application.

⁴ Public Utilities Commission, Notice of Certificate of Need for the Big Stone South – Alexandria – Big Oaks Transmission Line Project. October 30, 2024, [202410-211465-01](#).

⁵ Certificate of Need Application, Section 1.3

Date	Location	Approximate Number of Attendees
January 14, 2025	Alexandria	14
January 14, 2025	Glenwood	21
January 15, 2025	Hancock	50
January 15, 2025	Benson	26
January 16, 2025	Ortonville	25
January 16, 2025	Remote-Access	2

The purpose of the meetings was to provide information to the public about the proposed project, to answer questions, and to allow the public an opportunity to suggest impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives for analysis in the EIS.

Approximately 138 people attended the public meetings. Twenty-two persons provided verbal comments.⁶ Commenters asked questions about the potential impacts to farming, personal property and easements, water quality and wells, as well as many comments on wildlife and natural resources. Commenters also noted concerns with topics such as electric and magnetic fields (EMF), stray voltage, frequency interference, human health, among other topics.

Written Public Comments

A comment period, ending on January 31, 2025, provided the public an opportunity to submit comments to EERA staff on potential impacts and mitigation measures for analysis in the EIS.⁷ Written comments were received during this comment period from one federal agency, two state agencies, two local units of government, one labor union, one private company, and 97 community members. All of these public comments have been compiled and can be viewed in eDockets.⁶

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

USFWS comments focused on potential environmental impacts to lands that are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System near the Project. These lands include Waterfowl Production Areas and conservation easement interest lands (habitat easements and wetland easements). The USFWS comments included several alternative routes proposed to minimize potential impacts to these lands.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

DNR comments focused on potential environmental impacts with a list of their preferred routes and recommendations. The comment included two Natural Heritage Reviews that were completed for the Project and suggested that the EIS refer to these reviews and incorporate steps to minimize or avoid impacts to state-listed species or other rare resources, such as calcareous fens, sites of biodiversity significance, and native plant communities. Additionally, DNR requested the EIS analyze lighting, dust control, and erosion control.

⁶ Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project – Scoping comments, eDockets Number [20252-215692-01](#).

⁷ Public Utilities Commission. Notice of Public Information and Environmental Impact Statement Scoping meetings, December 17, 2024, eDockets Number [202412-213102-01](#).

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT)

MNDOT comments focused on potential impacts to scenic byways and requested that impacts to the following three scenic byways be discussed in the EIS: King of Trails Scenic Byway, Glacial Ridge Trail Scenic Byway, and Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway. MNDOT acknowledged their appreciation of extensive early coordination efforts by the applicants.

Lake Mary Township Board

The Lake Mary Township Board's comments focused on potential impacts to property values, agricultural properties, and associated farming activities. The comments also stated their preference for the route to follow existing rights-of-way.

Local 49 of the International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 49 of the International Union of Operating Engineers commented that while this Project would not provide a substantial amount of work for its members, the projects that this Project would induce would benefit heavy equipment operators. The comment requested that the EIS discuss the potential benefits to their members.

Minnerath Investments LLC

The Minnerath Investments LLC's comments focused on potential impacts to gravel mining operations and associated properties in the vicinity of the Project. The comment requests that the EIS include the following: an assessment of the economic impact of the Project on aggregate availability, operational efficiency, and property values; consideration of alternative routes that minimize impacts on industrial operations; and mitigation measures to address any negative impacts on Minnerath Investments LLC's business.

Other Comments

Community members that submitted written public comments expressed concern about a variety of potential impacts associated with the project, including but not limited to: farming operations, property values, multiple transmission lines on a property, human health/EMF, aesthetics, land use, wildlife and associated habitat, water resources, water quality, and noise. Approximately one-half of the comments expressed a preference for, or displeasure with, a routing option proposed in the route permit application. Commentors also proposed multiple route and alignment alternatives for analysis in the EIS.

Applicants' Response to Scoping Comments

EERA staff conferred with the applicants on the alternatives proposed for study in the EIS and reviewed their response to each proposed routing alternative.⁸ The applicants included a list of all of the routing alternatives and whether they believed each should be included in the scope of the EIS along with their justification.⁹

⁸ Minnesota Rule 7850.2500, Subp.3; Applicants Response to Scoping Comments, February 21, 2025, eDockets Number [20252-215667-01](#).

⁹ Ibid. Attachment 1.

Commission Review

On March 19, 2025, EERA staff provided the Commission with a summary of the EIS scoping process.¹⁰ The summary discussed routing alternatives that were proposed during the EIS scoping process and EERA staff’s recommendation to study the applicants’ proposed routing alternatives and 20 additional routing alternatives proposed by the public during the scoping comment period.¹¹ The Commission met on April 10, 2025, to consider EERA staff’s recommendation. On May 1, 2025, the Commission agreed with and adopted EERA staff’s recommendations on the scope of the EIS and included three additional routing alternatives for analysis in the EIS.¹²

Routing Alternatives

Commenters recommended one route, six route connectors, 23 route segments, and six alignment alternatives during the scoping process. Of these, the Commission authorized three route connectors, 12 route segments, and five alignment alternatives be included for study in the EIS (Table 1). These alternatives will be included in the scope of EIS. The Commission added three routing alternatives to the scope of the EIS. These routing alternatives are included in Table 1.

Numbers provided after a commenter’s name in the “Source” column in **Table 1** coincide with the comment number assigned in the index of scoping comments received.¹³

Table 1 Routing Alternatives Included in the EIS Scope

Name	Map	Type	Associated Route	Source
S104	Attachment 1 – Map 2-1	Route Connector	Connects South 1 and South 2 Routes	Pam Rehn #60 and #94
C101	Attachment 1 – Map 2-10	Route Connector	Connects Central 1 and Central 2 Routes	USFWS #48
C102	Attachment 1 – Map 2-7	Route Connector	Connects Central 1 and Central 2 Routes	Lance Mumm #7 Allen Mumm #30
S201	Attachment 1 – Map 2-3	Route Segment	South 2	Brian Hamman #3
S202	Attachment 1 – Map 2-3	Route Segment	South 2	USFWS #48
S203	Attachment 1 – Map 2-3	Route Segment	South 2	Brian Hamman #3
S204	Attachment 1 – Map 2-4	Route Segment	South 1	Roger Schmidt #54

¹⁰ Department of Commerce (March 19, 2025) *Scoping Summary Comments and Recommendations*, eDockets No. [20253-216613-01](#).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Commission Order On Route Alternatives For The Environmental Impact Statement, May 1, 2025, eDockets No. [20255-218416](#).

¹³ Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project – Scoping comments, eDockets No. [20252-215692-01](#).

Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Decision
Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Name	Map	Type	Associated Route	Source
S205	Attachment 1 – Map 2-4	Route Segment	South 1	USFWS #48
S207	Attachment 1 – Map 2-1	Route Segment	South 2	USFWS #48
S208	Attachment 1 – Map 2-2	Route Segment	South 1	USFWS #48
S210	Attachment 1 – Map 2-1	Route Segment	South 1	Cathy Klebofski #33
S211	Attachment 1 – Map 2-4	Route Segment	South 1 and South 2	Commission
C202	Attachment 1 – Map 2-10	Route Segment	Central 2	Loren Boysen #8
C203	Attachment 1 – Map 2-8	Route Segment	Central 2	Don/Michele Greiner #51
C208	Attachment 1 – Map 2-7	Route Segment	Central 2	John/Heidi Beyer #27 Daniel/Becky Beyer #28 Norman Beyer #29
N205	Attachment 1 – Map 2-11	Route Segment	North 1	Neal Kalina #39
N206	Attachment 1 – Map 2-11	Route Segment	North 2	Commission
N207	Attachment 1 – Map 2-11	Route Segment	North 2	Commission
SAA01	Attachment 1 – Map 2-6	Alignment Alternative	South 1 and South 2	Lance Mumm #7 Allen Mumm #30
SAA02	Attachment 1 – Map 2-6	Alignment Alternative	South 1 and South 2	Lance Mumm #7 Allen Mumm #30
SAA03	Attachment 1 – Map 2-5	Alignment Alternative	South 1	Nancy Vollmer #37
SAA04	Attachment 1 – Map 2-2	Alignment Alternative	South 2	David Hovde #20
CAA01	Attachment 1 – Map 2-9	Alignment Alternative	Central 2	Scott Johnson #44

HAVING REVIEWED THE MATTER, consulted with staff, and in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7850.2500, I hereby make the following scoping decision:

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The EIS will describe the project, the existing environment, and the human and environmental resources potentially affected by the project. It will provide information about potential direct and indirect impacts—both positive and negative—resulting from construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The EIS will describe mitigation measures that could reasonably be implemented to reduce or eliminate identified negative impacts. The EIS will identify impacts that cannot be avoided and irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources, as well as permits from other government entities that may be required for the project. The EIS will discuss the relative merits of proposed routes with respect to the routing factors in Minnesota Rule 7850.4100.

Data and analyses will be commensurate with the level of impact for a given resource and the relevance of the information to consider mitigation measures. EERA staff will consider the relationship between the cost of data and analyses and the relevance and importance of the information in determining the level of detail of information to be prepared for the EIS. Less important material may be summarized, consolidated, or simply referenced.

If relevant information cannot be obtained within timelines prescribed by statute and rule, the costs of obtaining such information is excessive, or the means to obtain it is unknown, EERA staff will include in the EIS a statement that such information is incomplete or unavailable and the relevance of the information in evaluating potential impacts or alternatives.

The issues outlined below will be analyzed in the EIS for the project. This outline is not intended to serve as a table of contents for the document itself.

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- A. Description
- B. Purpose
- C. Costs
- D. Schedule

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- A. Certificate of Need
- B. Transmission Line Route Permit
- C. Environmental Review
- D. Other Permits and Approvals

III. PROJECT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- A. Transmission Line Structures
- B. Construction
 - 1. Transmission Line
 - 2. Right-of-Way Requirements
 - 3. Existing Substation Reconfigurations
 - 4. New Regeneration Station
 - 5. Associated Facilities
- C. Operation and Maintenance

1. Restoration and Vegetation Management

IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEISSURES

- A. Environmental Setting
- B. Human Settlements
 1. Noise
 2. Aesthetics
 3. Displacement
 4. Property Values
 5. Zoning and Land Use
 6. Cultural Values
 7. Transportation and Public Services
 8. Radio and Television Interference
- C. Socioeconomics
 1. Environmental Justice
- D. Land Based Economies
 1. Agriculture
 2. Forestry
 3. Mining
 4. Recreation and Tourism
- E. Public Health and Safety
 1. Electric and Magnetic Fields
 2. Stray and Induced Voltage
 3. Emergency Services
 4. Implantable Medical Devices
- F. Archaeological and Historic Resources
- G. Natural Environment
 1. Air Quality
 2. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 3. Climate Change / Climate Resilience
 4. Water Resources
 5. Wetlands and Calcareous Fens
 6. Geology and Soils
 7. Vegetation
 8. Public and Designated Lands
 9. Wildlife and Habitats
 10. Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- H. Use or Paralleling of Existing Right-of-Way
- I. Electric System Reliability
- J. Costs that are Dependent on Design and Route
- K. Unavoidable Impacts
- L. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources
- M. Cumulative Potential Effects

V. ROUTING ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The EIS will evaluate the routes, route connectors, and route segment alternatives proposed by the applicants in their route permit application. The EIS will also evaluate the routes, route connectors, route segments, and alignment alternatives listed in Table 1 and visually depicted in Attachment 1.

VI. IDENTIFICATION OF PERMITS

The EIS will include a list and description of permits from other government entities that may be required for the project.

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE EIS

The EIS will not address the following topics:

- Any routes, route connectors, route segments, or alignment alternatives not specifically identified for study in this scoping decision.
- Project need, including size, type, and timing.
- Policy issues concerning whether utilities or local governments should be liable for the cost to relocate utility poles when roadways are widened.
- The manner in which landowners are compensated for transmission line right-of-way easements.

SCHEDULE

Upon issuance of the EIS scoping decision, preparation of the draft EIS will begin. The draft EIS is anticipated to be completed and made available for review in September 2025. Joint public meetings and hearings, and a written comment period will then occur. Substantive comments on the draft EIS will be responded to and included in a final EIS.

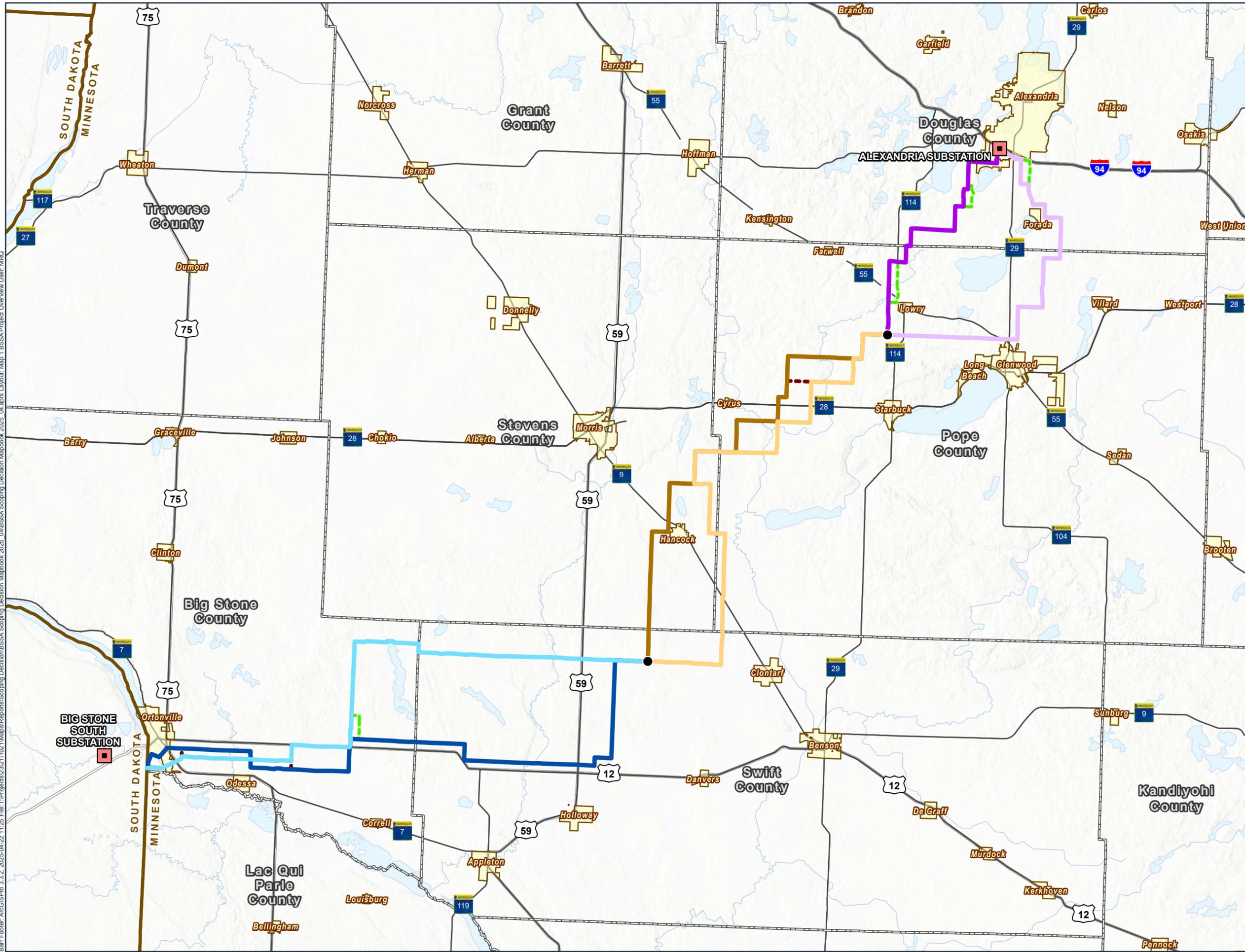
Signed this 6th day of May, 2025

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

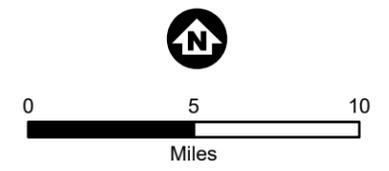


Pete Wyckoff, Deputy Commissioner

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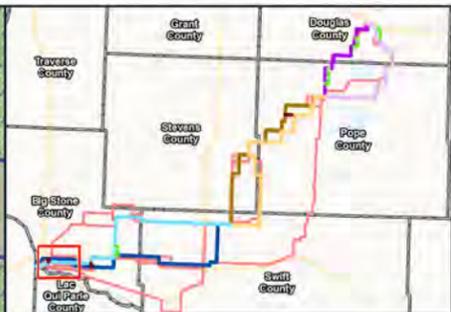
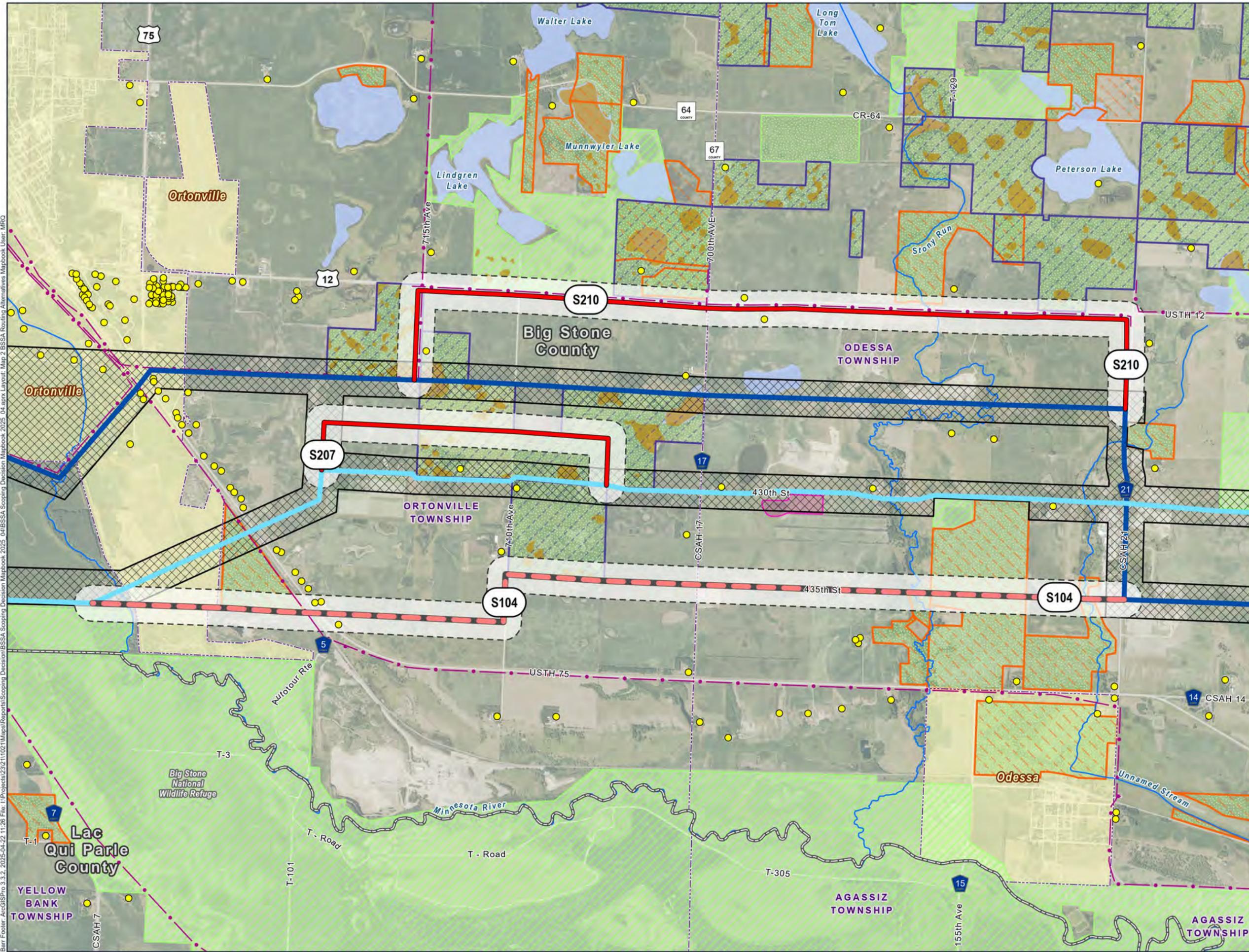
- Major Highway
- ▭ Municipal Boundary
- ▭ State Boundary
- ▭ County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 1
- South 2
- Central 1
- Central 2
- North 1
- North 2
- Alternate Segment
- Connector Segment
- Route Segment End
- ▭ Proposed Project Substation



Project Overview
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

MAP 1

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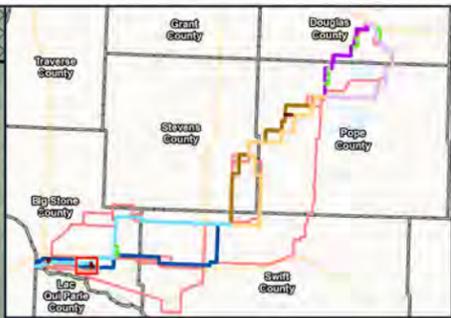
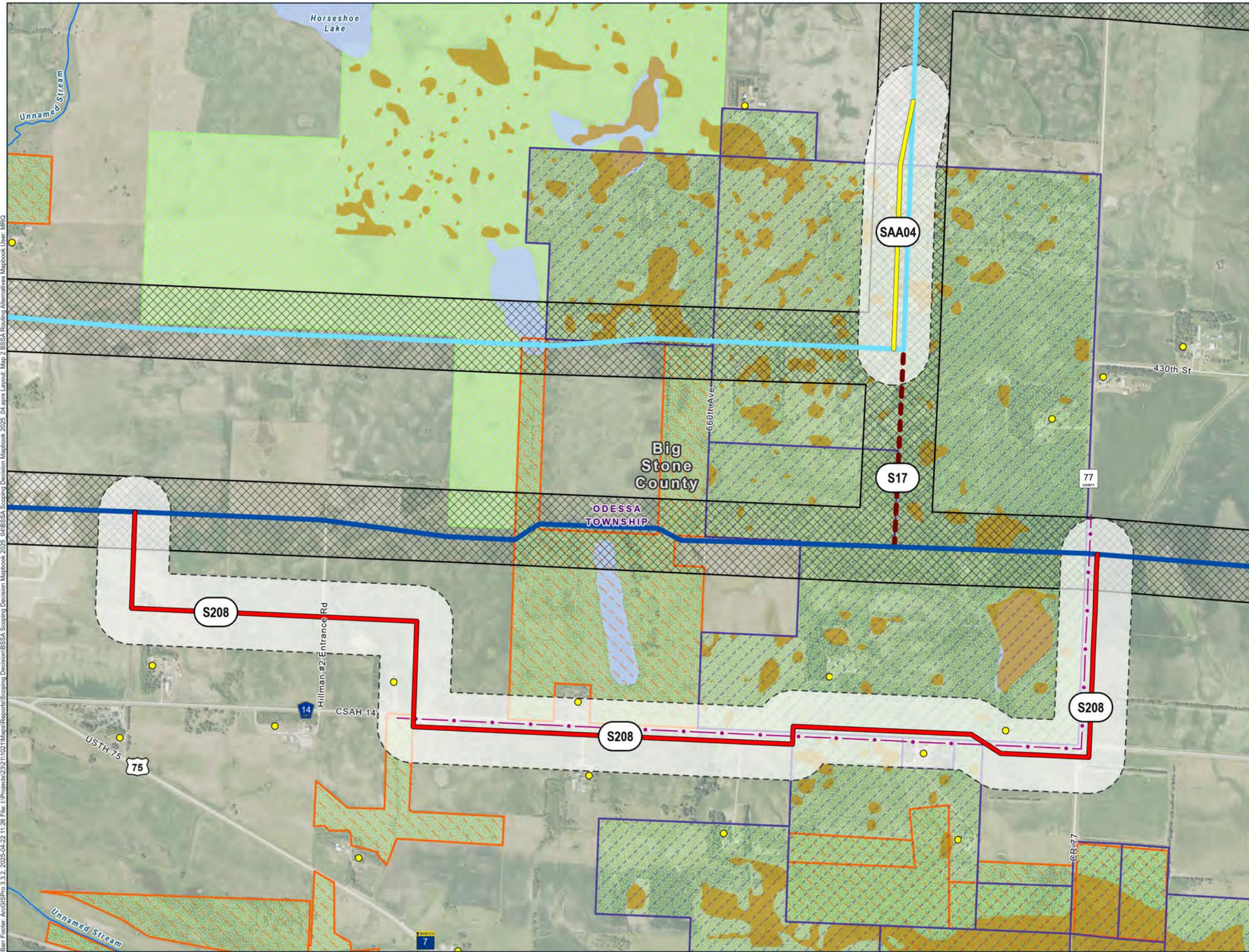
- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
 - South 1
 - South 2
- Route Width**
- USFWS Land Interest**
 - Grassland Easement
 - Wetland Easement
 - Wetland Protected by USFWS Easement
- Scoping Alternatives**
 - Route Connector
 - Route Segment
 - Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
 - Federal Land
 - Federally Managed Land
 - State Land
 - State Managed Land



Routing Alternatives S104, S207, S210 and S16
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

MAP 2-1

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- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 1
- South 2
- Connector Segment
- Route Width
- USFWS Land Interest**
- Grassland Easement
- Wetland Easement
- Wetland Protected by USFWS Easement
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Alignment Alternative
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land

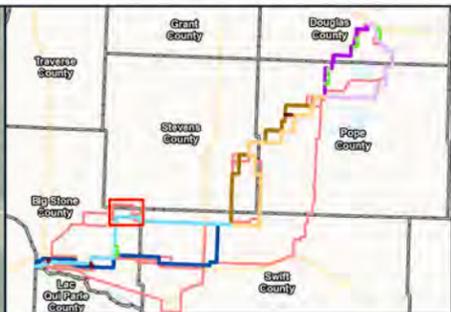
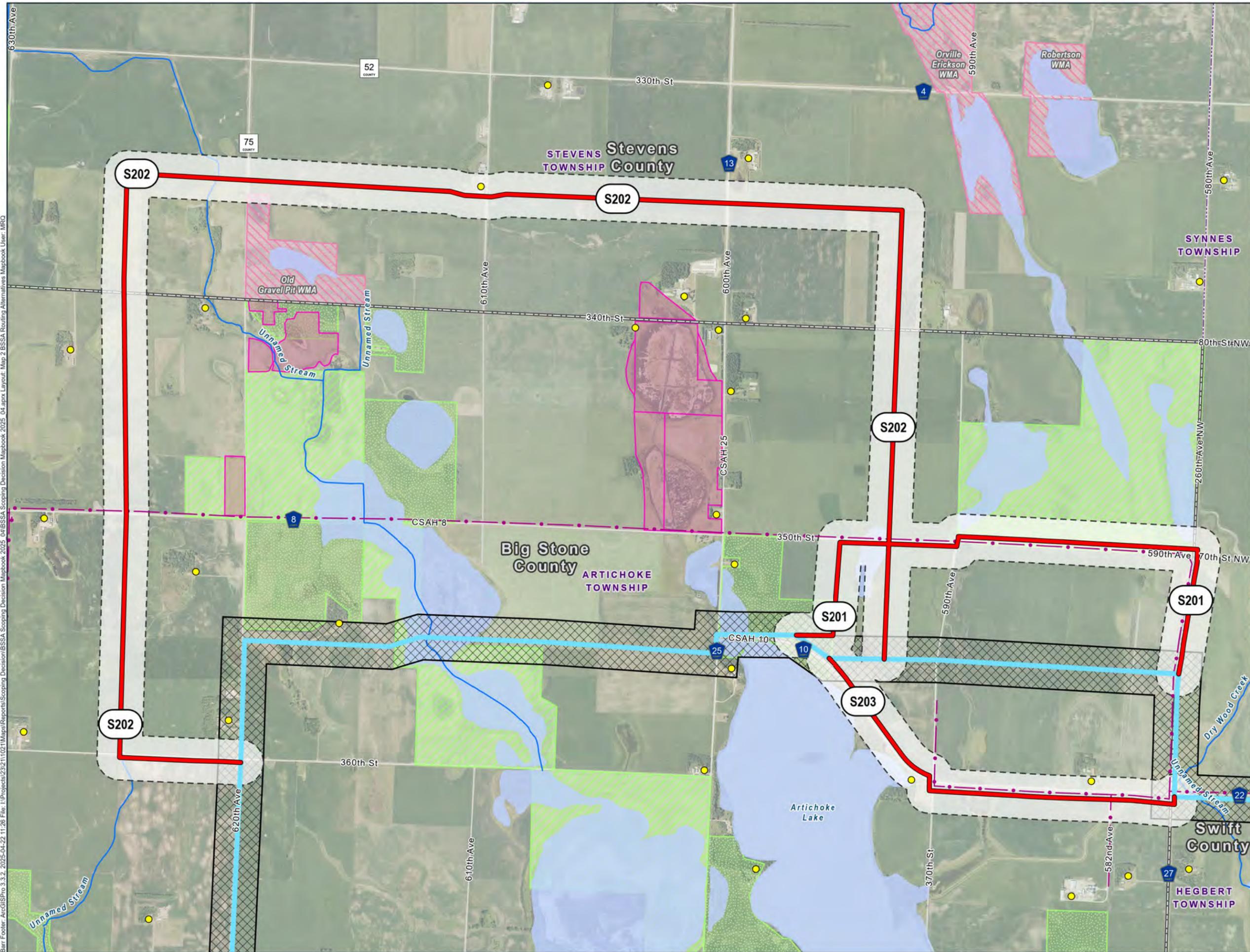


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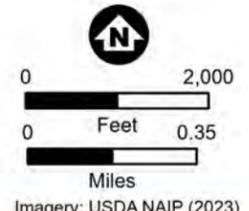
Routing Alternatives
S208, S17, and SAA04
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision

MAP 2-2





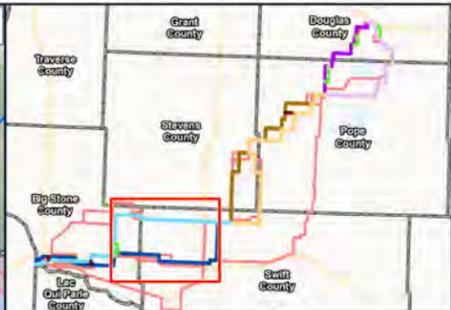
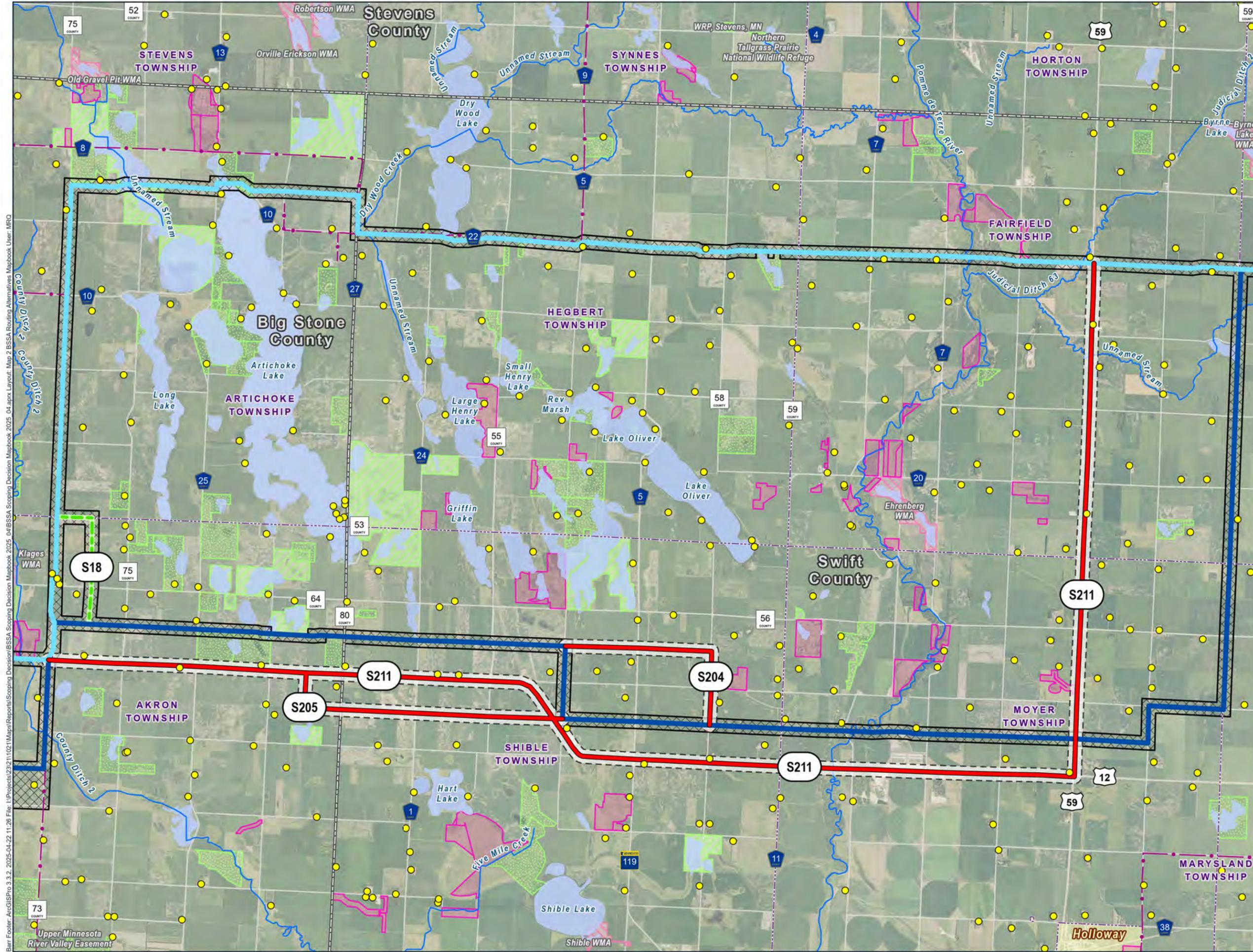
- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 2
- Route Width
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land



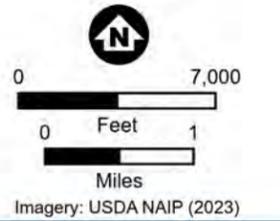
Routing Alternatives S201, S202, and S203
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision

MAP 2-3





- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 1
- South 2
- Alternate Segment
- Route Width
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land
- Joint Federal and State Managed Land



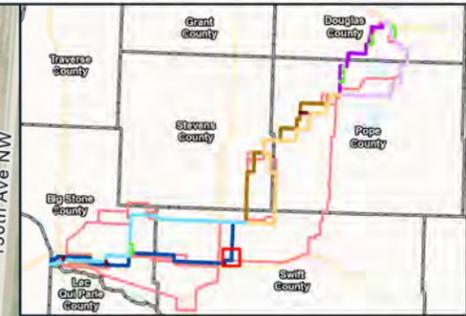
Routing Alternatives
S204, S205, S211 and S18
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision

MAP 2-4

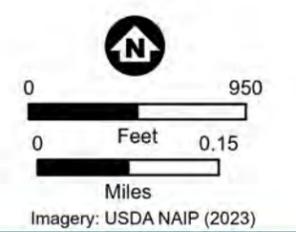


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- Residences
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 1
- Route Width
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Alignment Alternative
- Scoping Alternative Route Width

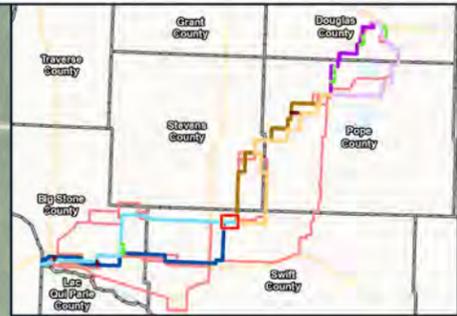
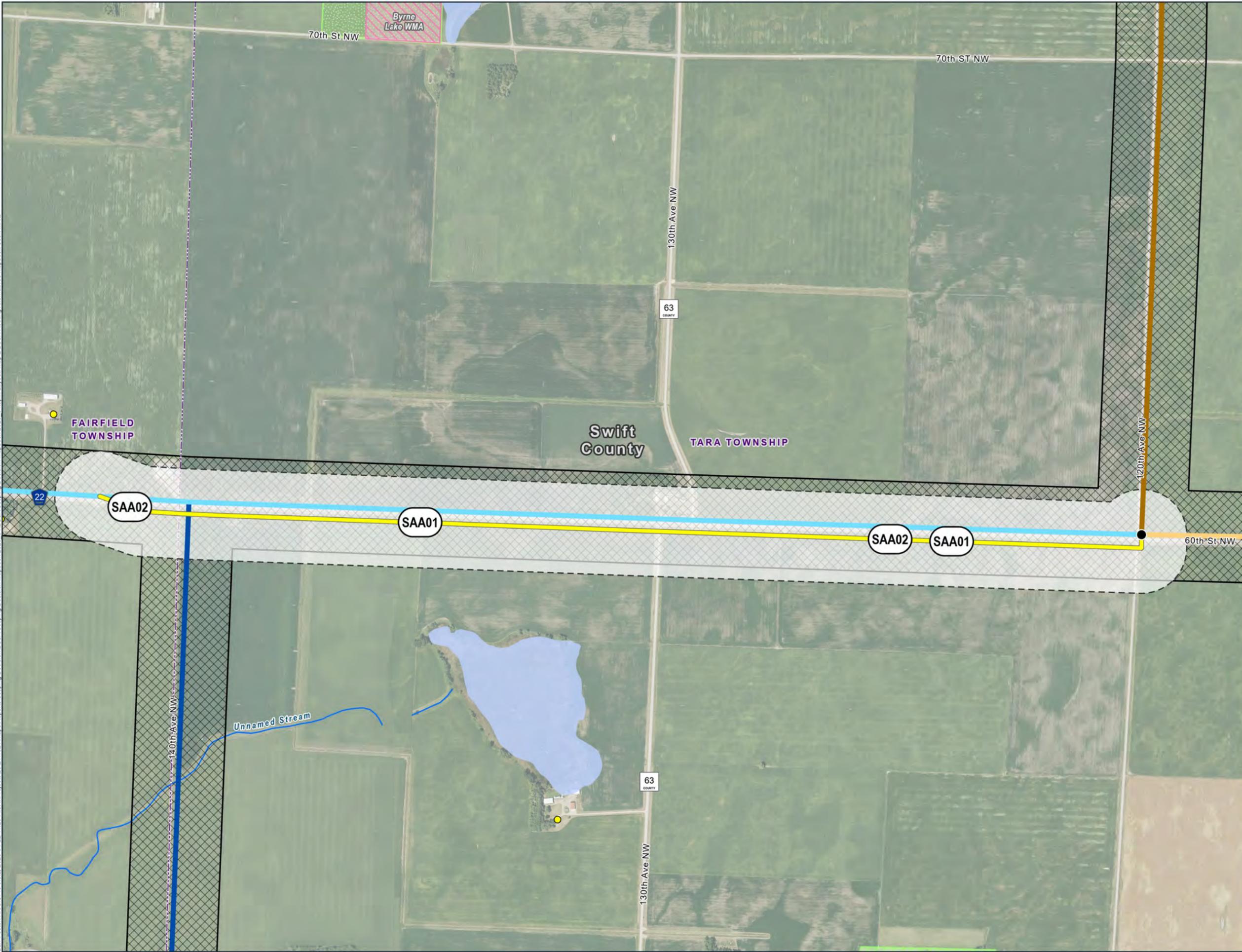


**Routing Alternatives
SAA03**
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

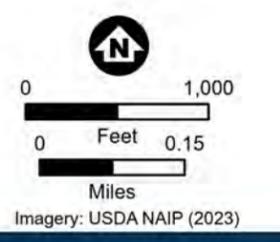
MAP 2-5



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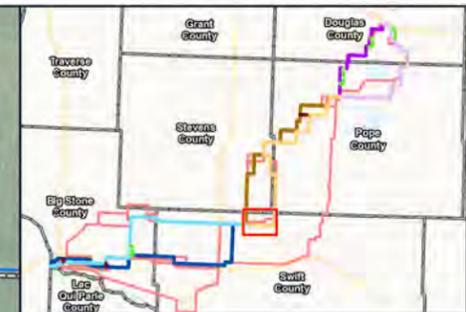
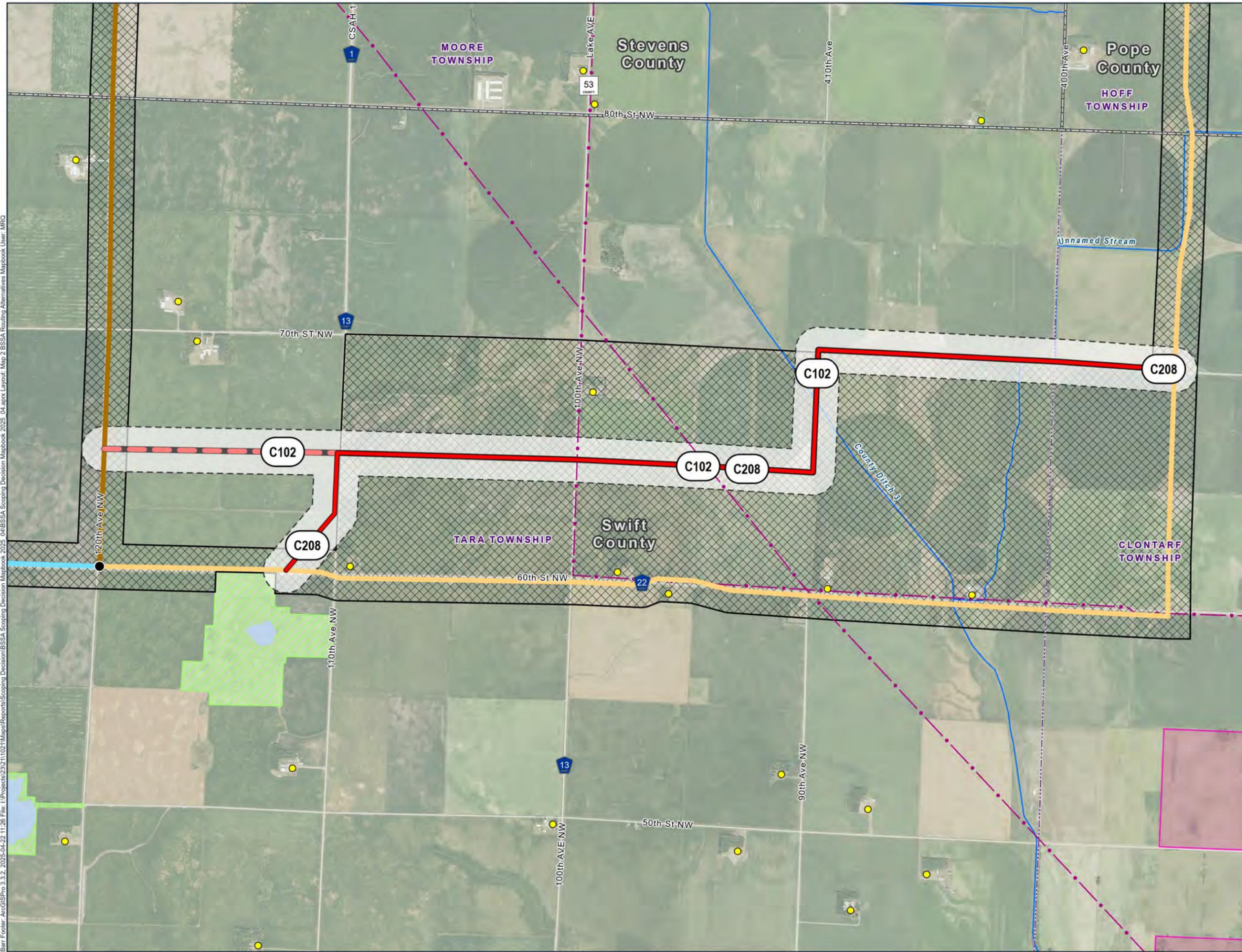
- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
 - South 1
 - South 2
 - Central 1
 - Central 2
- Route Width
- Route Segment End
- Scoping Alternatives**
 - Alignment Alternative
 - Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
 - Federal Land
 - Federally Managed Land
 - State Land



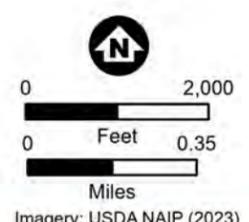
Routing Alternatives SAA01 and SAA02
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision

MAP 2-6

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- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- South 1
- South 2
- Central 1
- Central 2
- Route Width
- Route Segment End
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- State Managed Land



Imagery: USDA NAIP (2023)

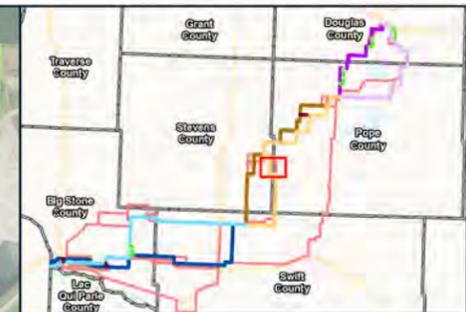
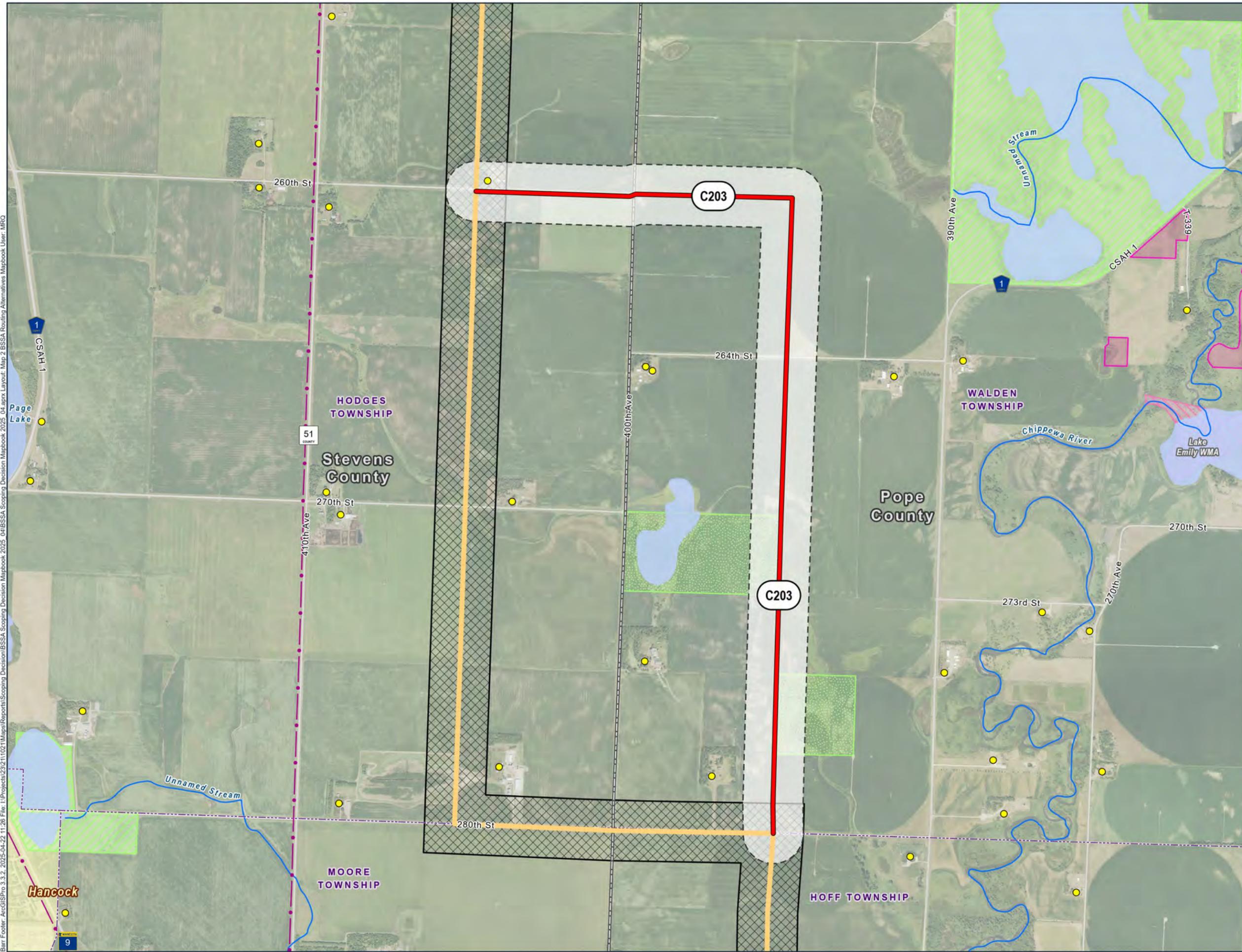
Routing Alternatives C102 and C208

Big Stone to Alexandria Project Scoping Decision

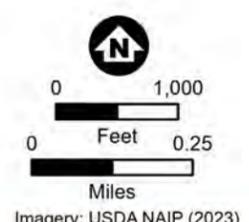
MAP 2-7



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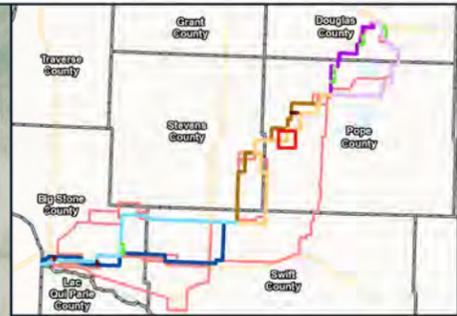
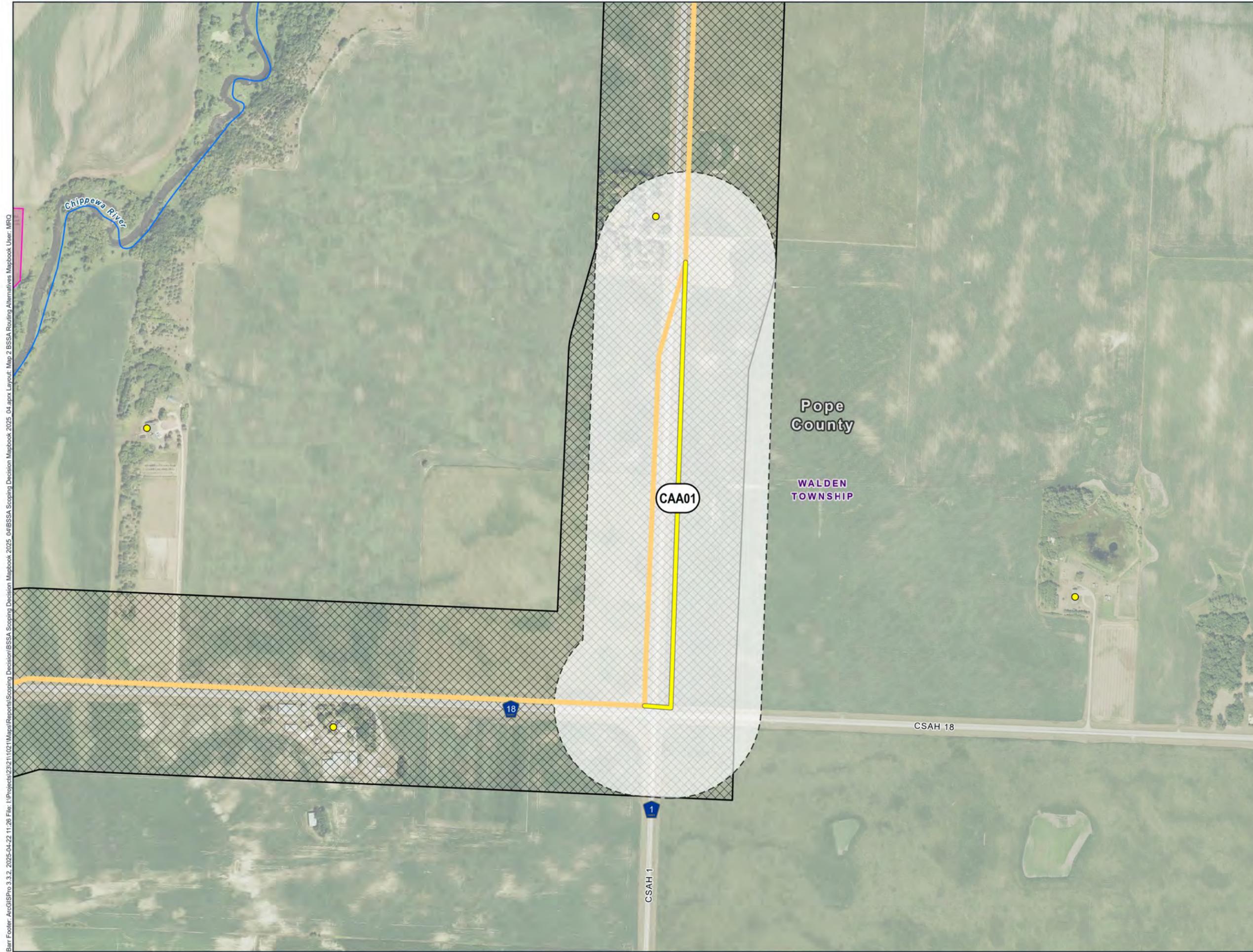
- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- Central 2
- Route Width
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land



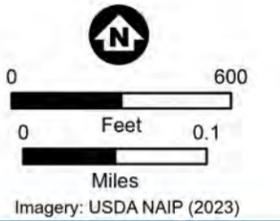
Routing Alternatives
C203
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision
 MAP 2-8



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- Residences
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- Central 2
- Route Width
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Alignment Alternative
- Scoping Alternative Route
- Width
- Land Management**
- State Managed Land

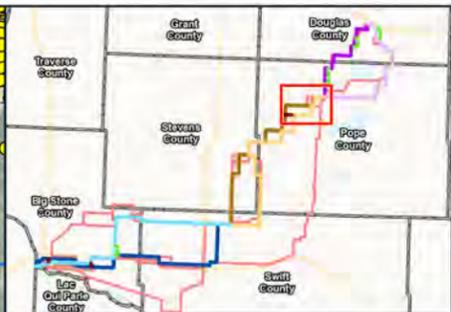
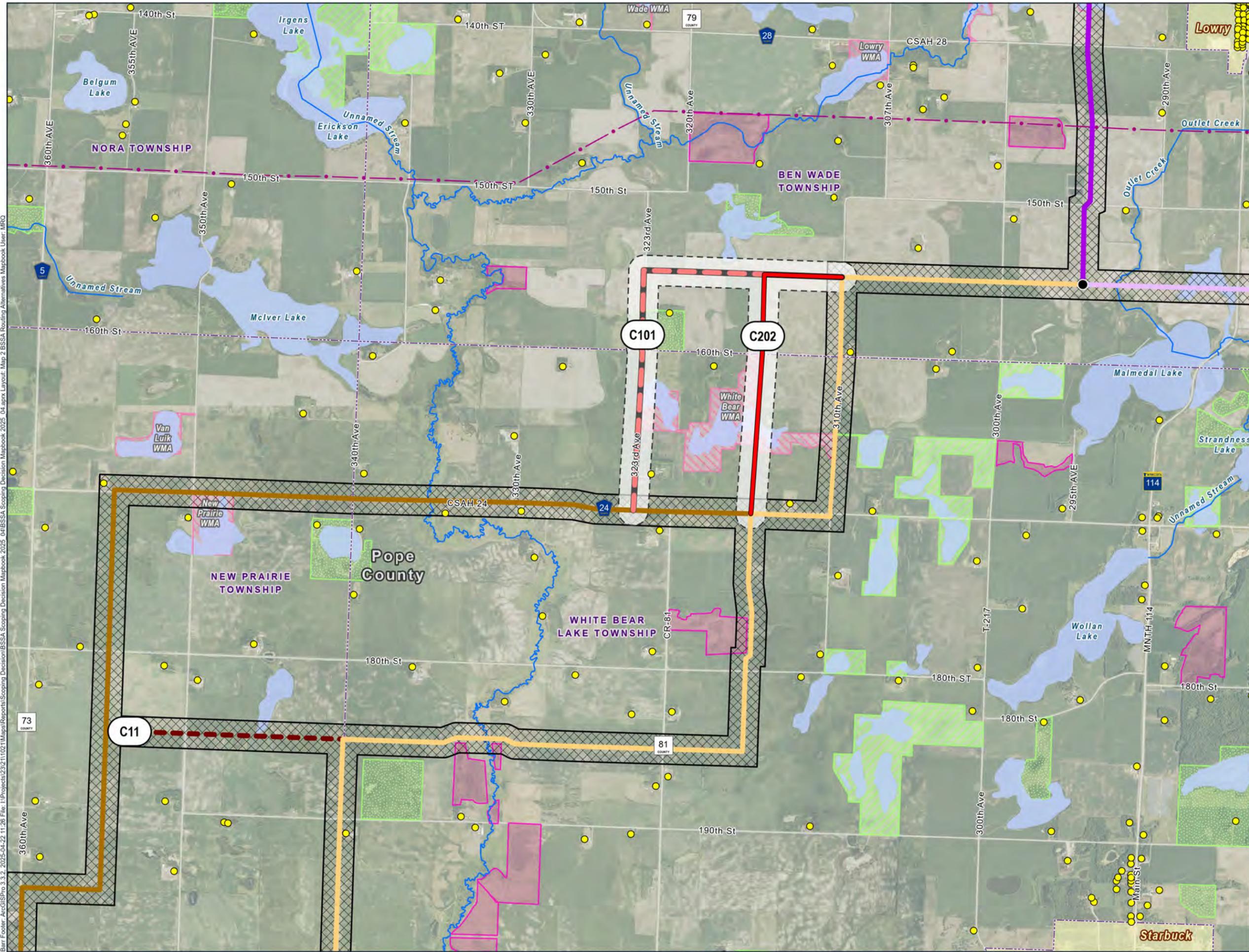


**Routing Alternatives
CAA01**
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

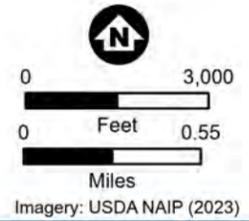
MAP 2-9



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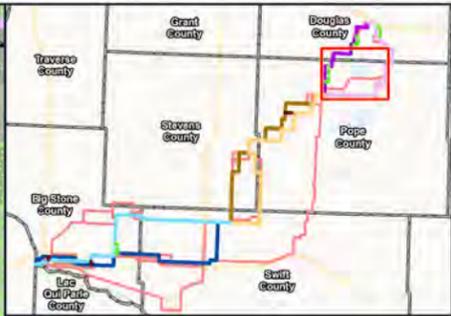
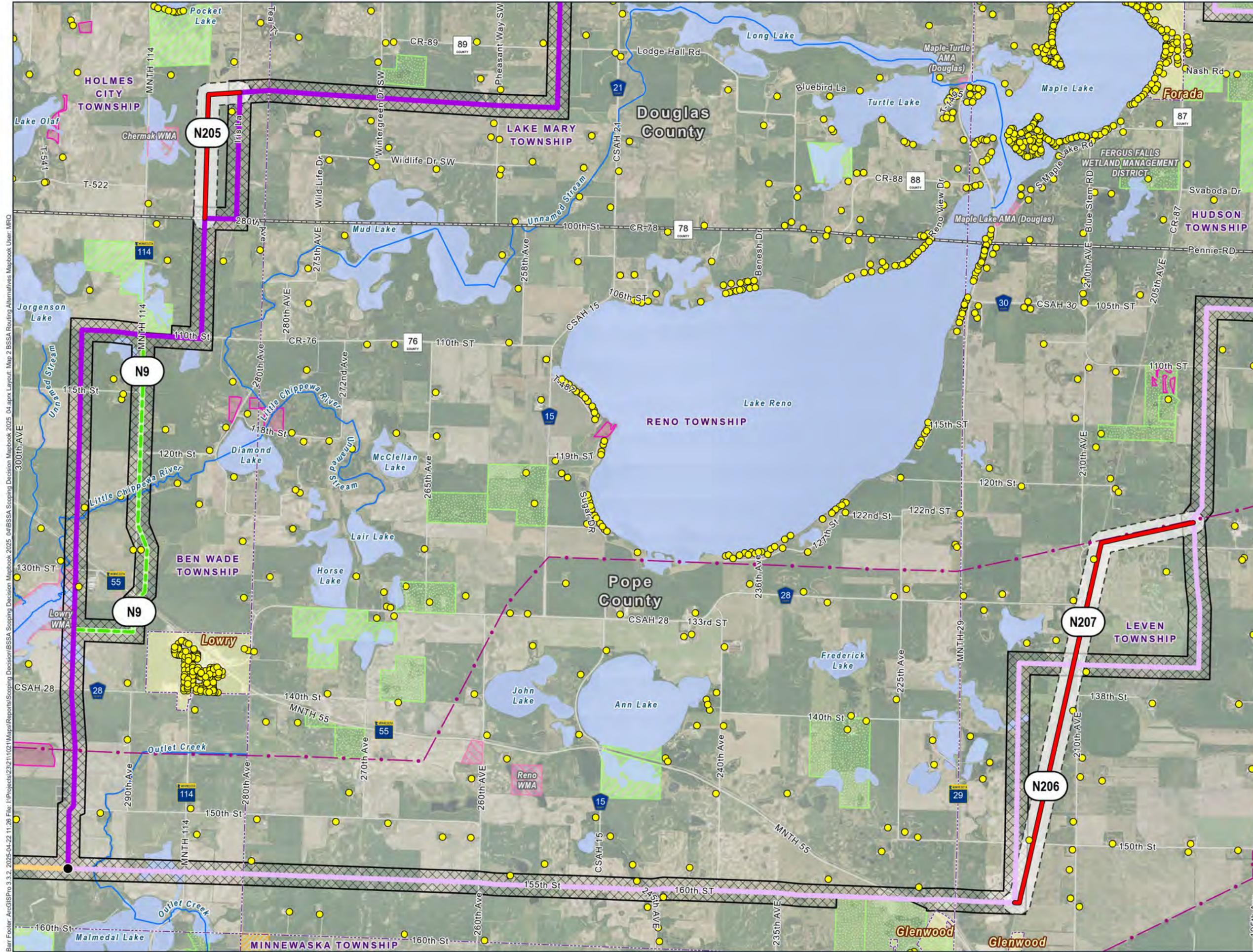


- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- Central 1
- Central 2
- North 1
- North 2
- Connector Segment
- Route Width
- Route Segment End
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Connector
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land

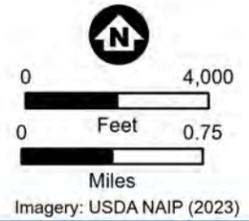


Routing Alternatives C101, C202, and C11
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

MAP 2-10



- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Public Watercourse
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- Central 1
- Central 2
- North 1
- North 2
- Alternate Segment
- Route Width
- Route Segment End
- Scoping Alternatives**
- Route Segment
- Scoping Alternative Route Width
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land
- Local Land



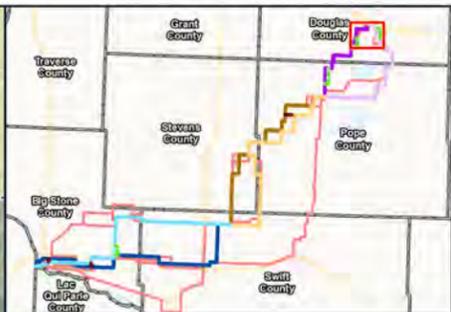
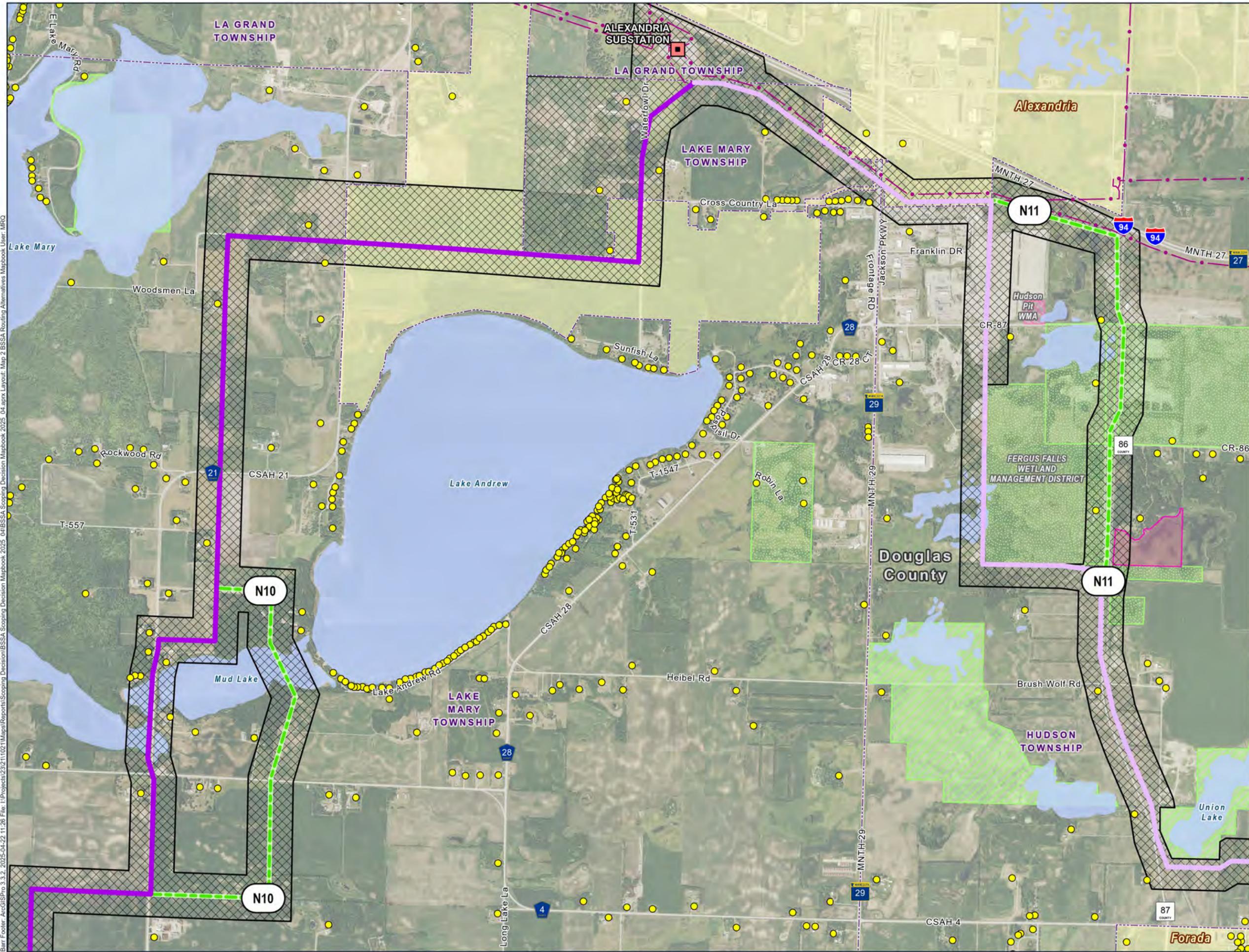
Routing Alternatives
N205, N206, N207, and N9
 Big Stone to Alexandria Project
 Scoping Decision

MAP 2-11

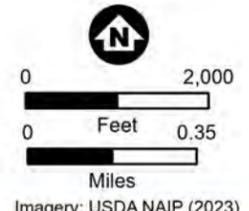


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- Residences
- Public Water Basin
- Existing Transmission Line
- Municipal Boundary
- Civil Township
- County Boundary
- Applicants' Proposed Route Options**
- North 1
- North 2
- Alternate Segment
- Route Width
- Proposed Project Substation
- Land Management**
- Federal Land
- Federally Managed Land
- State Land
- State Managed Land



**Routing Alternatives
N10 and N11**
Big Stone to Alexandria Project
Scoping Decision

MAP 2-12



Appendix B

Draft EIS Comments and Responses

This appendix contains the written and verbal comments received on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project (project), and responses to these comments by Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Energy Infrastructure Permitting (EIP) staff. The draft EIS was issued September 4, 2025. Comments on the draft were solicited through public hearings and a public comment period that ended on October 20, 2025.

A total of 68 written comments were received during the comment period from individuals, agencies, and organizations. Comments on the draft EIS were also received verbally during the public hearings.

Written Comments

Written public comments and EIP's responses to those comments are compiled and presented in the attached comment-response table. Some of the responses include modifications to the EIS, as indicated in the responses. Modifications to the text of the EIS are denoted by a vertical line in the margin next to the text that has been modified.

The comment-response table is arranged by comment ID, which corresponds to the name of the agency, organization, company, or individual commenting. Table A-1 is a comment index, it is alphabetized by the name of each agency, organization, and company first, and then by each individual's last name. The corresponding comment ID that is associated with each name can be used to identify particular comments and responses in Table A-2, the comment-response table.

Verbal Comments

During the draft EIS comment period, the public was invited to provide verbal comments at in-person and virtual public hearings. These hearings occurred in Alexandria (September 30th), Glenwood (September 30th), Benson (October 1st), Hancock (October 1st), Ortonville (October 1st), and virtually on October 2nd.

Comments made on the draft EIS during the public hearings, but not answered during the hearings, are answered in this appendix. These public hearing comments (comment IDs 62-73) and responses are included in this appendix.

Table B-1 Draft EIS Comment Index

Last Name	First Name	Additional names	Organization Name	Comment ID
Minnerath	Grant		Central Specialties, Inc.	11
Thaden	Scott		JENNIE-O Turkey Company	68
Bump	Samantha		Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	47
Hanson	Lee		Morris-Hancock-Glenwood Area Land Owners	59
Green	Chris		Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	4
Weiers	Jason		Ottertail Power Company Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency	3
Brusven	Christina	Bridget Duffus	Ottertail Power Company Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency	7
Kraetsch	Ashley		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	60
Tawes	Robert		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	80
Agnew	Lauren	Jessica Livingston	Vegetation Management Working Group; Commission EIP Staff	46
Anderson	Bill and Marilyn			10
Arnold	Joe			13
Arnold	Julie			79
Behlen	Peter			26
Beyer	John			31
Beyer	Norman			61
Boysen	Loren			17
Buescher	Dennis			39
Charles	Carter and Roberta Ann	Laura J. Busian Schmidt		35
Davis	Jerod			2
Dinsmore	Terry			73
Dosdall	John and Diane	Michael and Stephanie Reese		40
Dosdall	Nancy			69
Edmunds	David			66
Ehrenberg	Heather			36
Erickson	Wayne			78
Fernholz	Mike and Judy			32
Fuoss	Wayne and Cheryl			30
Gaffaney	Kathie			76
Gunnik	Calvin			50
Hage	Heidi			56
Hamann	Wilbur and Mary			27
Haugen	Matt			57
Hillman	Gary			33
Hills	Tom			29
Hills	Tom			62
Johnson	Irma (Trust)			41
Johnson-Warner	Lori			64
Johnsrud	David and Colleen			28
Jord	Steve			63
Kittelson	Marsha			42
Klepel	Marlowe			71
Klepel	Marlowe			75
Knutson	Aaron and Michelle			5
Koch	Kristin, Kendra, and Dawn			18
Koehl	Nathan			52
Koehl	Kevin			55
Kowalzyk	Dennis and Ed			49
Kuehl	Laurie and Phil			14
Larson	Dewayne			1
Larson	Dewayne			19
Maas	Jackie, Paul, Barb			53
May	Gale			72
McDonald	Joy			15
McDonald	Joy			20
Meek	Leslie			12
Meek	Leslie			21
Messner	Ken			51
Nohl	Jon and Gary			48
Nuest	Steve			54
Olson	John			67

Last Name	First Name	Additional names	Organization Name	Comment ID
Otterness	Benita			16
Otterness	Benita and Todd			25
Pearson	Christina			38
Piepenburg	Tracey			65
Piga	Jim			77
Roe	Dalen			70
Schmidt	Ron	Linda Schmidt Family Trust		24
Schmidt	Ron	Linda Schmidt Family Trust		37
Schmidt	Gwendolyn Erickson			74
Schmidtke	Troy			8
Schmidtke	Troy			58
Solve	Jere			43
Stoen	Gregg and Denise			34
Swenson	Tim	Tracy, Theo, and Thaya Swenson		9
Thielke	Marty and Randy			44
Valemer	Nancy			22
Walker	Brent			6
Wiese	Daniel			45
Zahn	Marlin			23

Table B-2 Comments and Responses

Comment ID	Comment	Response
1	<p>In reference to the proposed routes for the BSSA transmission line project, I would prefer the route along County Road 18, instead of the route running north-south along 390th Avenue. I have a center-pivot irrigator on my property and am concerned about it possibly coming into contact with the poles. Also, my cousins, the Mickelsons, own property to the south and they have a dairy barn right near the road, so I think it would be better to keep the line away from that property too. The CR 18 route would likely be far enough away from both my property and their barn.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
2	<p>Please let this serve as formal opposition to the proposed transmission line route which would negatively affect the following parcels near Alexandria, MN: 630001105, 630004050. Both of the properties are owned by Royzzz Real, LLC and were purchased with the intent to build commercial property upon. A geotechnical exploration was completed in preparation for the proposed building site and is attached for documentation purposes. Please submit this for consideration while routes for the proposed transmission lines are being finalized.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. The building site shown in the comment is located within the 1,000-foot route width, not within the 150-foot ROW (where the anticipated alignment is located). The anticipated alignment may move during the route permit determination or within the route width after a route permit has been issued.</p>
3	<p>The DEIS provides a comprehensive evaluation of potential human and environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the Minnesota portion of the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project (Project) and a thorough analysis of all the routing alternatives identified in the Scoping Decision for the Project issued on May 6, 2025 (Scoping Decision). The DEIS confirms the extensive analysis and engagement efforts undertaken by the Applicants in developing the routes presented in the Application and in selecting the Applicants' Preferred Route, as discussed in my Direct Testimony. For example, the DEIS found that impacts are anticipated to be minimal and do not vary significantly based on subregion for impacts on: (1) human settlements (cultural values, human health and safety, environmental justice, land use and zoning, noise, property values, socioeconomics, transportation, and public services); (2) land-based economies (mining, forestry, and tourism); and (3) impacts on the natural environment (air quality, climate, greenhouse gases, geology and topography, floodplains, and groundwater). For other potential impacts identified in the DEIS, a number of proposed mitigation measures are discussed to avoid or minimize impacts, many that are part of standard route permit conditions issued by the Commission and/or commitments the Applicants have already made. The DEIS also reflects that the Applicants' Preferred Route best balances the routing factors that are considered by the Commission and minimizes overall impacts of construction and operation of the Project. Below I discuss a few clarifications to information contained in the DEIS related to relative impacts among the proposed routing alternatives.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p>
3	<p>Question: The DEIS discussion of aesthetic impacts focuses on areas where the Project would be near residences or result in significant tree clearing. Do you have any observations regarding the DEIS analysis of aesthetic impacts? Answer: Yes. Overall, Section 4.3.1 of the DEIS appropriately notes that because aesthetic impacts are subjective, potential impacts can vary widely and are unique to each person. I agree with this characterization and observe that this often means that, when making routing decisions, efforts to minimize potential aesthetic impacts related to transmission projects most often result in shifting these potential impacts from one area to another, rather than minimizing them. The DEIS evaluates three tangible aspects of potential aesthetic impacts: (1) proximity of the proposed alignment to residences; (2) areas where the proposed alignment would add a transmission line to one or more sides of a residential property boundary that already has an existing transmission line parallel to, or crossing it; and (3) areas where tree clearing would be required to construct the line. Several clarifications should be considered when evaluating potential aesthetic impacts.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
3	<p>Question: How have the Applicants worked to minimize aesthetic impacts to residences? Answer: The DEIS identifies that the greatest potential aesthetic impacts may occur where residences are surrounded by transmission lines as well as one residence within 75 feet of the anticipated alignment. The one residence that is within 75 feet of a proposed alignment is along routing alternative SSR03 in Swift County, which was not proposed by the Applicants but was added as a result of the Scoping Decision. On routes that were proposed in the Application, the Applicants worked to increase the distance of the proposed alignment from residents, in some cases by moving the proposed alignment to the other side of the road or behind a grove of trees rather than along a road where practicable. With regard to areas where it is possible that the proposed alignment would add a transmission line to one or more sides of a residential property boundary that already has an existing transmission line parallel to, or crossing it, the Applicants have attempted to minimize this situation. Along the Applicants' Preferred Route, there are only three such areas where this would occur (two along HSR01 in the Central Region and one along a common segment of SSR01 in the Southern Region). Regardless of the route selected by the Commission, the Applicants would work with landowners in an attempt to further minimize these potential aesthetic impacts where practicable.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
3	<p>Question: How have the Applicants worked to minimize aesthetic impacts related to tree clearing?</p> <p>Answer: With respect to tree clearing, there are several sections in the DEIS that appear to attribute greater potential aesthetic and/or surface water impacts at waterbody crossings where there are no existing transmission lines because more tree clearing will be required than at crossings where there are existing transmission lines present. However, this would not necessarily be true in all cases. Where the Project would cross a waterbody along an existing transmission line, the Project's Right-Of-Way (ROW) is not anticipated to overlap with the existing transmission line ROW, but would rather be immediately adjacent to the existing transmission line's ROW. Accordingly, the necessary tree clearing of the Project ROW would be in addition to the already-cleared ROW of the existing line, resulting in a wider cleared area and the creation of more open space for two adjacent transmission lines. Furthermore, all waterbody crossings may not require tree clearing depending on the location. As a result, site specific details should be considered when evaluating waterbody crossings because there are some instances when tree clearing may not be necessary, or there could be smaller impacts where there are no existing transmission lines due to less open space.</p>	<p>Sections 4.2, 5.2.2.1, 5.2.8, 5.3.8, 6.3.2.1, 6.3.8, 7.2.2.1, and 7.2.8 of the EIS have been updated to reflect site-specific details at waterbody crossings. Where applicable, these EIS Sections were also updated to clarify that routes that parallel an existing transmission line over a waterbody crossing would not share ROW. These updates have changed the degree of impact assigned to routes in the relative merits analyses in some cases.</p>
3	<p>Moreover, there are inconsistencies in the DEIS regarding whether the various routing alternatives parallel existing transmission lines at the Minnesota River crossings. There are no existing transmission lines crossing the Minnesota River along the proposed alignment for BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, BSSR10, BSSR11, and BSSR12. However, the DEIS contains at least one instance where it states that these routing alternatives cross the Minnesota River at a location where existing transmission lines are present, and several instances where it states that these routing alternatives cross the Minnesota River at a location where there is no existing transmission line crossing. The Applicants recommend that the Final EIS correct these inconsistencies.</p>	<p>Section 5.2.8 of the EIS was updated to reflect that the proposed alignments for BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, BSSR10, BSSR11, and BSSR12 do not cross the Minnesota River in a location where existing transmission lines are present.</p>
3	<p>Question: Do you have any comments on the mitigation measures discussed in the DEIS?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. The DEIS identifies a number of mitigation measures that are standard route permit conditions contained within previous route permits issued by the Commission. Additionally, the DEIS discusses a number of mitigation measures that the Applicants have already committed to perform for the Project. For example:</p> <p>As discussed in the Direct Testimony of Kevin Scheidecker, the Applicants have committed to design and conduct environmental surveys, including surveys for threatened and endangered species habitat, in coordination with the applicable resource agencies. For example, as discussed in Mr. Scheidecker's testimony, upon the Commission's selection of a final route, the Applicants anticipate expanding the survey area for the threatened and endangered species habitat surveys conducted on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed/owned lands and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) owned lands. The Applicants also plan on conducting migratory bird nesting surveys and eagle/raptor stick nest surveys prior to the start of construction.</p> <p>As discussed in Mr. Scheidecker's Direct Testimony, once a final route is selected by the Commission, the Applicants have committed to conducting cultural resource surveys in accordance with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) recommendations. Additionally, the Applicants have committed to continuing coordination with Tribes on any cultural resources surveys.</p> <p>The Applicants have prepared a draft Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) which describes proposed measures the Applicants will implement to minimize potential impacts to vegetation during and after construction of the Project. The VMP also includes best management practices the Applicants have committed to implementing to minimize the potential for the introduction or spread of noxious weeds and invasive species.</p> <p>The Applicants have also committed to obtaining a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/State Disposal System (SDS) Construction Stormwater Permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, which includes preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP will include measures the Applicants will employ to minimize and/or mitigate the potential environmental impacts of construction.</p> <p>The Applicants have prepared a draft Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan (AIMP), which describes proposed measures the Applicants will implement to minimize potential impacts to agricultural lands during and after construction of the Project. The Applicants revised the draft AIMP and submitted the updated AIMP as Schedule C to the Direct Testimony of Mr. Scheidecker.</p> <p>As discussed in the Direct Testimony of Joshua Humburg, the Applicants have committed to coordinate with county and township road departments to minimize impacts on local roads and highways. We believe that the mitigation measures contained in the standard route permit conditions, together with the proposed mitigation measures the Applicants have already agreed to, will be effective measures to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to resources and address concerns identified in the DEIS.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
3	<p>Question: The DEIS contains several statements that certain sensitive resources (e.g., MBS sites, waterbodies and wetlands) could have higher impacts because they are too large to span (>1000 feet). Are there additional considerations related to spanning these resources you would like to discuss?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. The DEIS assumes that impacts to certain sensitive resources cannot be avoided because the Project has a "1000 foot span length". Consistent with information provided in the Application and later confirmed by the Applicants through a data request, the DEIS says, "[t]he typical spans between structures would be about 1,000 feet but can range from 200 to 1,400 feet." When discussing potential impacts within the DEIS, the average 1,000-foot spans are assumed when 1,400-foot spans could be possible. While each location will require site-specific engineering analysis, adding up to another 400 feet of span length could offer the Applicants a lot of flexibility in structure placement to help avoid impacts by spanning sensitive environmental resources. Once a route is selected by the Commission, the final design of the Project will reflect the Applicants' efforts to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive environmental resources by utilizing these full span lengths where practicable.</p>	<p>The EIS has been updated throughout to reflect a maximum span distance of 1,400 feet.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
3	<p>Question: Do you have any comments on any of the route segment alternatives?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. The DEIS describes route segment S205 as an alternative to a part of routing alternatives SSR03 and SSR04, but the Applicants have incorporated S205 into SSR01 as part of the Applicants' Preferred Route. As discussed in Schedule B of my Direct Testimony, incorporating route segment S205 into SSR01 would reduce the total length of the route resulting in the Project costs being reduced by approximately \$7.35 million. In addition, S205 aligns with USFWS comments, as the Project's ROW avoids USFWS managed/owned lands while the equivalent portion of SSR01 ROW would cross them.</p>	<p>Section 5.3.9 of the EIS has been updated to reflect S205 as a route segment that can be used to modify SSR01, SSR03, or SSR04 as suggested by the commenter. Figure 5-22 in the EIS has been updated to show how S205 could be used to modify SSR01, SSR03 or SSR04.</p>
3	<p>Question: Will the Applicants be providing additional comments on the DEIS?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. The Applicants plan to provide additional comments on the DEIS prior to the public hearings that will include suggested clarifications and minor corrections.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
4	<p>Regarding matters for which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has regulatory responsibility and other interests, the MPCA staff has the following comments for your consideration.</p> <p>401 Certification</p> <p>The Big Stone Project DEIS includes (possible) wetland impacts and required mitigation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 and the State of Minnesota Section 401 Clean Water Act – Water Quality Certification are also included. Currently, there are no additional comments from the MPCA 401 program.</p> <p>We appreciate the opportunity to review this Project. Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit actions by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Project Proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p>
5	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed BSSA Project, which includes a proposed alternate transmission line route that would cross our property. We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed BSSA Project alternate transmission line route, which is currently planned to pass almost directly over our home. As a homeowner and resident of this property, we have the following concerns with having a highvoltage transmission line constructed very near our residence.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The address provided in the comment (63611 440th St. Odessa, MN) is located 2,600 feet from the anticipated alignment of South 1 (BSSR01).</p>
5	<p>Key Concerns:</p> <p>1. Safety and Health Risks</p> <p>The proximity of the line to our home raises concerns about potential fire hazards and possible long-term health effects. These risks are magnified by the fact that the line would be almost directly overhead.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS.</p>
5	<p>2. Property Devaluation and Livability</p> <p>A transmission line over our house would significantly reduce the value of our property and make it difficult to sell or insure. It would also create a constant visual and psychological burden for our family.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
5	<p>3. Unequal Treatment of Public vs. Private Land</p> <p>We are also deeply troubled by the fact that government-owned land — including wildlife management areas and other public holdings — appears to be excluded from the proposed alternate route, while private homes like ours would be directly impacted. This raises a serious question: Why is the protection of wildlife or public land being prioritized over the safety and well-being of human residents? While we understand the importance of environmental stewardship, it is unacceptable to shift the burden of this project onto families and homeowners simply because it is more politically or logistically convenient. It makes sense to put in on already publicly owned land that was already funded by the taxpayers. We respectfully request that the Commission reject any route that places transmission infrastructure near existing homes, ensure that public and private lands are evaluated equitably in the routing process and require the utility to revise its plans accordingly.</p>	<p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
6	<p>In regards to the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission line project, I would like to make a comment. The proposed route will be near my home and I am completely against it. If approved, the negative impact this will have on our quality of life will remain for the rest of our lives. Please do not approve this project. It will have a negative impact on the residents and wildlife in our area.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
7	<p>The Applicants appreciate EIP staff’s thoughtful and comprehensive evaluation and discussion of the potential benefits, impacts, and mitigation measures related to the routing alternatives being considered by the Commission for the Minnesota portion of the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project (Project). The Applicants completed a detailed review of the DEIS and believe it addresses each of the issues and alternatives identified in the Scoping Decision issued on May 6, 2025. The Applicants offer these written comments identifying items that could be updated, corrected, or clarified in the final EIS (FEIS). Additionally, the Applicants provide additional discussion and context on a few items that may be helpful to clarify in the FEIS, as well as to inform stakeholders in advance of the public hearings.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p>
7	<p>UPDATES, CLARIFICATIONS, AND CORRECTIONS</p> <p>The Applicants identified several updates to the content in the DEIS, including:</p> <p>When discussing the Project’s anticipated schedule, the DEIS states that the Applicants anticipate that construction will begin in the second quarter of 2028 and that the Project will be completed between the fourth quarter of 2030 and the fourth quarter of 2031. See DEIS at 2, 16, 55. As noted in the Direct Testimony of Joshua Humburg, the schedule has been updated since the Application was filed, as follows: construction is anticipated to commence in Q2 2028 and be completed by the end of 2030, and in-service operations are anticipated to commence in Q4 2030. Humburg Direct at 10. EIP staff could consider including the updated Project schedule in the FEIS.</p>	<p>The summary, Section 1.1, and Section 3.6 of the EIS were updated to reflect the project schedule.</p>
7	<p>The Draft Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan (AIMP) that was submitted with the Application is included as Appendix K to the DEIS. As discussed in the Direct Testimony of Kevin Scheidecker, the Applicants have revised the Draft AIMP since the Application was filed and the updated Draft AIMP is included as Schedule C to Mr. Scheidecker’s Direct Testimony. EIP staff could consider replacing the Appendix K with the updated Draft AIMP provided with Mr. Scheidecker’s testimony.</p>	<p>Appendix L of the EIS has been replaced with the updated draft AIMP from Mr. Scheidecker’s Direct Testimony.</p>
7	<p>In Section 4.6.1, the DEIS states that “[a]s noted in the route permit application, the applicants notified and engaged with the MIAC and multiple tribes, including THPOs, between April 2023 and July 2024. In addition, the applicants met with the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate THPO in February 2024 to discuss updates to the project. The applicants will continue to engage with the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate THPO and other interested tribes as the project progresses.” DEIS at 126. As described in Mr. Scheidecker’s Direct Testimony, the Applicants have continued to coordinate with Tribes since filing the Application. See Scheidecker Direct at 6. EIP staff could consider mentioning the additional coordination with Tribes described in Mr. Scheidecker’s testimony.</p>	<p>Section 4.6.1 of the EIS was updated to include additional information as described in Mr. Scheidecker’s Direct Testimony.</p>

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7	<p>The Applicants also identified several clarifications and/or minor corrections to the content in the DEIS. These items are listed in the order they first appear in the DEIS.</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>PART 1: The DEIS states that there is only one private airport/airstrip in the Central Region. See DEIS at 9 (“The anticipated alignments of HSR01, HSR02, HSR03, CSR01, and CSR02 are within one mile of a private airstrip...”); DEIS at 99 (“There is one identified private use airport within the ROI, Brown’s Private Airport”); DEIS at 116 (“There is one private airstrip in the project area; it is within one mile of HSR01, HSR02, HSR03, CSR01, and CSR02...”); DEIS at 328 (“One private airstrip, Brown’s Private Airstrip, is present within one mile of all routes in the Hancock Subregion (Map 7-6)”); DEIS at 362 (“One private airstrip, Brown’s Private Airstrip, is present within one mile of both CSR01 and CSR02 (Map 7-6)”); see also DEIS at Map 7-6. However, as described in the Application and Mr. Humburg’s Direct Testimony, during outreach with landowners, the Applicants identified two private airstrips in the Central Region. See Application at 110; Humburg Direct at 20-21. Specifically, there are two airstrips within one mile of routes in the Cyrus Subregion (CSR01 and CSR02): Brown’s Private Airport (or Airstrip) and Charles’ Private Airstrip. Charles’ Private Airstrip is situated in an east-west direction located immediately north of 230th Street (CSAH 10 in Stevens County) and across the road from the Applicants’ proposed alignment of CSR01 and CSR02. EIP staff could consider including the second private airstrip in the FEIS.</p> <p>PART 2: The DEIS states that “[t]he anticipated alignments of HSR01, HSR02, HSR03, CSR01, and CSR02 are within one mile of a private airstrip, which could impede or eliminate aerial spraying operations.” DEIS at 9. While proximity to an airstrip out of which an aerial spraying operation operates is relevant, the proximity to applicable crops is more relevant to potential impacts on aerial spraying operations, as acknowledged elsewhere in the DEIS. See, e.g., DEIS at 117, 328. Accordingly, the Applicants recommend incorporating this clarification into the FEIS.</p>	<p>Part 1: The EIS has been updated in all sections noted by the commenter to add reference to Charles’ Airstrip.</p> <p>Part 2: The summary of the EIS (under land-based Economies) has been updated to clarify that proximity to crops is a relevant component of the project's potential impact on aerial spraying.</p>
7	<p>On page 15, the DEIS states that “[c]rossings of wetlands greater than 1,000 feet are limited to the South Region, and occur most frequently for BSSR11 and BSSR12 with three each. BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, BSSR10, and SSR01/SSR02 all have two crossings greater than 1,000 feet in length.” DEIS at 15. The Applicants note that there are also two wetland crossings slightly greater than 1,000 feet in the North Region – there is a 1,084-foot crossing on N207, and a 1,036-foot crossing on N10. The Applicants recommend correcting this in the FEIS.</p>	<p>The EIS has been updated to discuss wetland impacts by using 1,400 feet maximum crossing spans.</p>
7	<p>The DEIS appears to use a maximum span length of 1,000 feet throughout its analyses. See, e.g., DEIS at 15 (“Wetland crossings longer than 1,000 feet might require one or more structures to be placed in the wetland, ...”); DEIS at 15 (“Crossings of wetlands greater than 1,000 feet are limited to the South Region, and occur most frequently for BSSR11 and BSSR12 with three each. BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, BSSR10, and SSR01/SSR02 all have two crossings greater than 1,000 feet in length.”); DEIS at 225 (“Transmission line structures may be necessary in WPAs for individual crossings greater than 1,000 feet;...”); DEIS at 232 (“The anticipated alignments of all routes would cross sensitive ecological resources that may be too large to span (>1,000 feet),...”); see also DEIS at 116, 232, 238, 240, 241, 245, 286, 290, 291, 297, 308, 339, 341, 342, 375, 376, 398, 404, 407, 408, 438, 442, 445, 449. As noted in the Application, acknowledged elsewhere in the DEIS, and discussed in Mr. Weiers’ Rebuttal Testimony, the maximum design span for the Project’s structures is up to 1,400 feet. See, e.g., Application at 20; DEIS at 42, 182; Weiers Rebuttal at 7-8. The maximum actual span distances will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on a number of site-specific considerations such as terrain and structure location. Accordingly, the Applicants recommend that the FEIS use a maximum span length of 1,400 feet in its analyses rather than 1,000 feet.</p>	<p>The EIS has been updated to discuss wetland impacts by using 1,400 feet maximum crossing spans.</p>
7	<p>Chapter 3: Project and Routing Alternatives Overview</p> <p>In Section 3.1.1.4 of the DEIS, Table 3-5 (Routes, Route Segments, and Alignment Alternatives in the Swift Subregion) states that SAA03 is 1.8 miles long. DEIS at 34. However, in Section 5.3.9.9, it states that SAA03 is 0.5 miles long. DEIS at 314. The Applicants have confirmed that SAA03 is 0.5 miles long. The Applicants recommend that this correction be made in the FEIS.</p>	<p>Section 3.1.1.4 of the EIS has been updated with the correct length for SAA03.</p>
7	<p>The DEIS contains different and outdated structure height ranges. See DEIS at 42 (“The proposed structures would typically range in height from approximately 100 to 160 feet tall; however, where existing transmission lines are crossed, structure heights could be up to 180 feet tall”); DEIS at 63 (“The proposed structures would typically range in height from approximately 120 to 180 feet tall; where existing transmission lines are crossed, structure heights could be up to 180 feet tall”); DEIS at 123 (“The typical height of transmission line structures for the project is 100 to 160 feet”). In the Application, the Applicants indicated structure heights would range from approximately 120 to 180 feet. See Application at 81. However, in a July 2025 response to an information request from EIP staff,² the Applicants provided an update regarding structure types and dimensions which is reflected in Table 3-15 of the DEIS (DEIS at 43). In the update, the Applicants added a monopole structure for the substation terminations that may be 90 feet tall. The Applicants recommend that the text regarding structure heights be updated in the FEIS to specify that structures will generally range from approximately 90 to 180 feet in height.</p>	<p>Sections 3.2.2, 4.3.1.2, and 4.5.3.3.2 of the EIS have been updated to reflect a structure height range of 90-180 feet.</p>
7	<p>In Section 3.4.6, the DEIS states that the Applicants “would inspect the transmission lines from the ground approximately every four years. ... The applicants would also perform necessary vegetation management for the line either through mechanical clearing or herbicide use, in accordance with the VMP as provided in the applicants’ route permit application. Vegetation maintenance generally occurs every four years.” DEIS at 54. However, the Applicants have not committed to such four-year ground inspections and vegetation maintenance intervals. As stated in the Application, the Applicants will inspect the transmission line at least once per year via ground or aerial means (Application at 50), and vegetation management will be performed as set forth in the Vegetation Management Plan. Accordingly, the Applicants request that any references to four-year ground inspections and vegetation maintenance intervals be removed from the FEIS.</p>	<p>Section 3.4.6 of the EIS has been updated to omit reference to the Applicants performing four-year ground inspections and vegetation maintenance intervals and instead reference inspection intervals stated in the route permit application.</p>

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7	Chapter 4: Affected Environment, Potential Impacts, and Mitigation Overview In Section 4.3.1.3.2, the DEIS states that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) “recommended site-specific assessments be conducted during project design depicting photo and visual simulations for users of scenic byways to minimize impacts.” DEIS at 64. The Applicants would like to clarify that if site-specific assessments are required by MNDOT in connection with the designated route, the Applicants will work with MNDOT to complete the required analysis.	Section 4.3.1.3.2 of the EIS was updated to add the information suggested by the commenter.
7	In Section 4.3.7.2.1, the DEIS states that “[t]he most time-consuming portion of stringing a line is clipping the new circuit to the structure, which would require the helicopter to hover for approximately 15 minutes.” DEIS at 86. If a helicopter is used for clipping the new circuit to the structure, the length of time it may need to hover would depend upon the particular location and methods used by the contractor. To more accurately reflect what could occur during construction of the Project, the Applicants recommend that the sentence be revised in the FEIS as follows: “The most time-consuming portion of stringing a line is clipping the new circuit to the structure, which would may require the helicopter to hover for approximately 15 minutes at each structure location.”	Section 4.3.7.2.1 of the EIS was updated as suggested by the commenter.
7	In Section 4.3.7.3.2, the DEIS states that “[t]he best option for helicopter noise mitigation would be for the applicants to work directly with homeowners, especially those nearest to the anticipated alignment, and schedule work for when they would be away from their homes.” DEIS at 88. Given the significant resources and coordination involved in construction activities, it has not been the Applicants’ past practice to perform helicopter activities around a homeowner’s schedule. Rather, the Applicants have typically provided notifications to homeowners in advance of helicopter activities so homeowners are aware of when these activities are likely to occur. EIP staff could consider including this additional context in the FEIS.	Section 4.3.7.3.2 of the EIS was updated as suggested by the commenter.
7	In Section 4.5.1.1, the DEIS states that “Identified center pivot irrigation systems are shown on Map 12-1 through Map 12-9.” DEIS at 116. However, center pivot irrigators are shown on Maps 13-1 through 13-9. The Applicants recommend correcting this reference in the FEIS.	Section 4.5.1.1 of the EIS was updated as suggested by the commenter.
7	In Section 4.7.8.3.2, the DEIS states that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “recommended committing to winter tree clearing as a best management practice. The applicants stated that to the extent practicable, they will plan the construction timeline for winter.” DEIS at 165. To better reflect the Applicants’ commitment to comply with this recommendation, the Applicants believe the following clarification is important: “The applicants stated that to the extent practicable, they will plan tree clearing activities the construction timeline for during the winter.”	Section 4.7.8.3.2 of the EIS was updated as suggested by the commenter.
7	Chapter 5: South Region – Potential Impacts and Mitigation In Section 5.2.6.8, the DEIS states that the right-of-way (ROW) “of BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, and BSSR10 would intersect 0.01 acres of the [Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge], and the ROW of BSSR11 and BSSR12 would intersect 0.13 acres of the refuge.” DEIS at 225. The Applicants note a small difference in the acreage calculations depending on the data source. Using the parcel data, the ROW of BSSR02, BSSR04, BSSR06, BSSR08, and BSSR10 would intersect 0.018945 acres of the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge but using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Realty data, there is no intersection of these routing alternatives’ ROW with the refuge. Using the parcel data, BSSR11 and BSSR12 would intersect 0.17744 acres of the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, and 0.059195 acres of the refuge using the USFWS National Realty data.	Section 5.2.6.8 of the EIS was updated to clarify the source of the data used and to state that this overlap with the refuge appears unintentional on behalf of the applicants. Language also discusses how these impacts would be addressed during the route permit decision if the applicable routes were to be permitted, as well as the Commission’s authority to review any changes in the alignment after route permit issuance.
7	In Section 5.3.2.8, Table 5-26 (Swift Subregion, Recreational Resources within Route Width) states that SSR01 crosses 4,144 feet of the Pomme de Terre River State Water Trail. DEIS at 268. The Applicants note that this table presents the linear feet of a resource crossed by the entire route width, not the ROW. Therefore, the Applicants believe it would be informative if the FEIS also presented this information for the ROW rather than the route width. For example, the ROW of SSR01 crosses up to 797 feet of the Pomme de Terre River State Water Trail.	A footnote was added to Table 5-26 (now Table 5-25) of the EIS to indicate the linear feet of the Pomme de Terre River State Water Trail crossed by the ROW. Table 5-26 (now Table 5-25) will continue to represent the route width as the ROI for recreational resources.
7	In Section 5.3.5.3, the DEIS discusses the historic cemeteries mapped within the Swift Subregion route widths. DEIS at 277. The Applicants identified one additional historic cemetery not mentioned in the DEIS. Specifically, SSR03 and SSR04 may contain one historic cemetery within their route widths (24346/Unknown Cemetery). This cemetery has an unknown number of graves. The cemetery is mapped at the PLS Forty level, and its exact location is not known. EIP staff could consider including this additional historic cemetery in the FEIS.	Section 5.3.5.3, Table 5-26, and Table 5-27 of the EIS were updated to include discussion of this cemetery as suggested by the commenter.
7	In Section 5.3.6.11, the DEIS indicates that placement of a transmission structure in a floodplain “would have higher potential to impact the floodplain’s function and management capabilities.” DEIS at 290. However, as discussed in the Application, the potential placement of transmission structures in a floodplain is not anticipated to alter the flood storage capacity of the floodplain due to the small footprint of the individual transmission structure. See Application at 129. Accordingly, placement of a transmission structure in a floodplain is not anticipated to impact its function and management capabilities. EIP staff could consider including this additional context in the FEIS.	Section 5.3.6.11 of the EIS was updated to indicate that if a transmission line structure were to be placed in a floodplain, it is not anticipated to alter the flood storage capacity due to their minimal footprint in comparison to the floodplain.
7	In the “Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat” row of Table 5-37 (Swift Subregion, Relative Merits of Subregion Routes), the DEIS identifies SSR01 and SSR02 with the red circle symbol (indicating potential for greater impacts or the potential for special conditions to be required). See DEIS at 298. However, the discussion in this row on habitat fragmentation appears inconsistent with the earlier analysis on this topic, where the DEIS stated that “[a]ll routes in the Swift Subregion would minimize potential wildlife and habitat impacts associated with habitat fragmentation and/or edge effects by paralleling existing infrastructure rights-of-way, because habitat fragmentation has already occurred in these areas.” DEIS at 284. EIP staff could consider addressing this inconsistency in the FEIS.	The sentence in the EIS quoted by the commenter in Section 5.3.6.8 was intended to be hypothetical, thus the language has been updated for clarity. The same revision was made for the same sentence where it appears in Section 5.2.6.8 and Section 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.

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7	<p>Chapter 6: Central Region – Potential Impacts and Mitigation</p> <p>In Section 6.3.4.1, the DEIS states that “[w]hile not crossed by its anticipated alignment, there are also seven pivot irrigation systems within the route width of SSR02. The anticipated alignment avoids impacts to all of the center pivot irrigation systems because it parallels 230th Street and County Road 18 and does not cross the center pivot irrigation system portion of the agricultural field (Map 13-6-Map 13-7).” DEIS at 362. SSR02 is not in the Cyrus Subregion. The Applicants recommend correcting this reference to SSR02 in the FEIS.</p>	Section 6.3.4.1 of the EIS was updated to reference CSR02 rather than SSR02.
7	<p>In Section 6.3.6.9.2, the DEIS states that “[t]he ROW and route width of CSR01 would intersect a Prairie Conservation Plan prairie core area, while the ROW and route width of CSR02 would intersect a Prairie Conservation Plan prairie core area, a native plant community, and Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked moderate and below. Given the extensive mapping of Prairie Conservation Plan prairie core areas in the Cyrus Subregion, both routes would require the placement of multiple structures within these areas. All other sensitive ecological resources should be spannable by the anticipated alignments for both routes in the Cyrus Subregion.” DEIS at 372. This appears inconsistent with the characterization of impacts on Factor F (Rare and Unique Natural Resources) in Table 6-31 (Cyrus Subregion, Relative Merits of Subregion Routes), where the DEIS states that “[t]he ROW of CSR01 would intersect less than an acre of a Prairie Conservation Plan prairie core area, while the ROW of CSR02 would intersect less than an acre of a Prairie Conservation Plan prairie core area, less than an acre of a native plant community, and approximately two acres of Sites of Biodiversity Significance ranked moderate and below.” DEIS at 381. EIP staff could consider addressing this inconsistency in the FEIS. Additionally, the Applicants have reviewed these areas and anticipate that the Project would be able to span these resources.</p>	Section 6.3.6.9.2 and Table 6-31 of the EIS were updated for consistency and to state the applicants expect these resources to be spannable.
7	<p>In Section 6.4.2.1, the following sentence is missing a complete figure reference: “WBLSR03 has the fewest residences (12) in the ROI, however, a comparable number of residences are present in many routes as shown in Figure 6-.” DEIS at 387. The Applicants recommend correcting this reference in the FEIS.</p>	The reference in Section 6.4.2.1 of the EIS was updated to identify Figure 6-22.
7	<p>In Table 6-46 (White Bear Lake Subregion, Relative Merits of Subregion Routes) in Section 6.4.8, the summary of Agriculture under Factor C (Land-Based Economies) references impacts to recreation instead of agriculture. See DEIS at 411. The Applicants recommend correcting this in the FEIS.</p>	Factor C in Table 6-46 of the EIS was updated to reference agriculture rather than recreation.
7	<p>Chapter 7: North Region – Potential Impacts and Mitigation</p> <p>In Section 7.2.4.1, which pertains to the Alexandria Subregion of the North Region, the DEIS states that “Figure 7-4 summarizes the total acres within the route widths of the Cyrus Subregion routes that have designated soil classifications for prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. Figure 6-16 summarizes the total acres within the route widths of the Cyrus Subregion routes that are designated agricultural land use.” DEIS at 428. The quoted text is relevant to the Cyrus Subregion of the Central Region. The Applicants recommend revising this text in the FEIS to address the Alexandria Subregion.</p>	Section 7.2.4.1 of the EIS was updated to reference the Alexandria Subregion rather than the Cyrus Subregion.
7	<p>In Section 7.2.6.11, which pertains to the North Region, the DEIS states that “[t]he routes have a total of between five and 10 watercourse crossings (Figure 7-8). WBLSR04 crosses the fewest watercourses while WBLSR02 crosses the most watercourses. All of the routes in the Hancock Subregion cross one watercourse classified as impaired. PWI watercourses crossed in the White Bear Lake Subregion include the Little Chippewa River.” DEIS at 448. The quoted text is relevant to the Central Region. The Applicants recommend revising this text in the FEIS to address the North Region.</p>	Section 7.2.6.11 of the EIS was updated to reference Alexandria Subregion routes rather than White Bear Lake Subregion routes.
7	<p>Chapter 9: Unavoidable Impacts and Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources</p> <p>The DEIS includes a number of “potential” impacts in the lists of unavoidable adverse impacts associated with construction or operation of the Project. See DEIS at 472-473. It is unclear how potential impacts can be classified as unavoidable if there is only the potential of having an impact. EIP staff could consider clarifying or revising as needed in the FEIS.</p>	Section 9.1 of the EIS was updated for clarification.
7	<p>Maps</p> <p>Additional clarification is needed for Maps 7-1 through 7-9 of the DEIS. The legends of Maps 7-1 through 7-9 of the DEIS indicate that pink lines show where a route is “following railroad or road.” It is unclear if this means a route is paralleling a railroad or road, as the legend also indicates paralleling existing transmission lines (blue line). It is also unclear whether paralleling for purposes of this map series means ROW sharing (or outside of the railroad or road ROW). Additionally, note (1) of these maps states that “[n]ot all ROW sharing and paralleling combinations are shown.” It is unclear what ROW sharing and paralleling is not shown, and why not. EIP staff could consider clarifying or revising as needed in the FEIS.</p>	Maps 7-1 through 7-9 of the EIS were updated to clarify the legend. The words “sharing” and “following” were removed and replaced with “paralleling” for consistency. Locations of ROW sharing are not known as that would be finalized after a route is selected and would be determined through further coordination efforts by the applicants with applicable road authorities or other utility owners. Maps 7-1 through 7-9 show where routing alternatives parallel existing infrastructure (transmission lines, railroads, roads) as well as where routing alternatives parallel division lines (property boundary, field, or section lines).
7	<p>Potential for Displacement</p> <p>The DEIS notes the following with respect to displacement: “Throughout the project there are non-residential structures present within the ROW that could potentially remain if the activities taking place in these buildings are compatible with the safe operation of the line. There are 11 non-residential structures (for example, agricultural outbuildings or animal production structures) within the ROW of the various routing alternatives.” DEIS at 7. The Applicants note that due to the route widths requested, the ROW would likely be able to be adjusted within the route width to avoid displacement. See, e.g., DEIS at 267-268. Additionally, if a route impacting these non-residential structures were to be selected by the Commission, the Applicants would work with the landowners on a case-by-case basis to address if a potential displacement is necessary. Accordingly, these non-residential structures could remain if their use and proximity to the line are compliant with the National Electric Safety Code (NESC) and safe operation of the line. EIP staff could consider incorporating this additional explanation into the FEIS.</p>	The EIS summary and Section 4.3.3 have been updated as suggested by the commenter.

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7	<p>Potential Impacts to Irrigators</p> <p>In Section 4.5.1.2, the DEIS discusses potential impacts on irrigators, including a statement that the transmission “structures could also potentially impede or eliminate the use of irrigation systems such as center pivot irrigation systems, either by necessitating reconfiguration of an irrigation system to accommodate structures or by reducing crop revenue because all or a portion of a field could not be irrigated using the same practice.” DEIS at 117. The DEIS also references a public comment that “a transmission line may limit future irrigation options if a farmer wants to upgrade their current center pivot irrigation systems to newer methods, such linear irrigation and corner system irrigation.” DEIS at 117. As discussed in the Application and in Mr. Humburg’s Direct Testimony, the Applicants have and are continuing to coordinate with irrigator-owners to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to irrigators. Potential impacts to irrigators may be avoided and/or minimized by a number of measures, including selecting route segments that avoid areas with irrigators, incorporating into the design pole placement to minimize impacts to irrigator operations, working with landowners to modify systems, and providing educational materials related to safe operations near transmission lines. See Humburg Direct at 17. The Applicants have proposed routes, including the Applicants’ Preferred Route, that minimize impacts to center pivot irrigators currently in use. It is unlikely that the Project would ever completely “eliminate the use of irrigation systems,” as the irrigator would still be able to cover at least some of the area even with the transmission line present. Additionally, the routing alternatives are primarily sited along the edges of agricultural fields and property lines to limit potential impacts to the operation of current and future center pivot irrigators. If the Project is routed through areas with irrigators, the Applicants have committed to placing structures in locations that would minimize impacts to the irrigators in coordination with landowners. See Humburg Direct at 18. EIP staff could consider incorporating this additional explanation into the FEIS.</p>	<p>Sections 4.5.1.2, 5.3.4.1, and 6.2.4.1 of the EIS have been updated to clarify that the applicants have stated complete elimination of irrigation systems is unlikely.</p>
7	<p>Potential Impacts to Drinking Water</p> <p>The DEIS references concerns raised in public comments regarding drinking water contamination in areas with sandy soil, and states that “[i]f contaminant from the project were to reach the Odessa [Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA)/Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA)], which has a vulnerability ranking of Moderate-High, it is likely that contamination would reach the public water supply intake” and “[i]mpacts could be significant.” DEIS at 148. As discussed in the Application and in the DEIS, the Applicants will use best management practices to avoid and/or minimize the risk of contamination during construction and maintenance of the Project. For example, the Applicants will conduct soil borings as part of geotechnical analyses and evaluate water levels at structure locations within the identified Odessa WHPA prior to construction. See DEIS at 150 and Application at 143. The Applicants will coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Health and other relevant agencies to identify potential impacts, avoidance strategies, and/or specific mitigation measures (e.g., spanning/structure placement, foundation installation options) as applicable. See Application at 143. Additionally, during construction, the Applicants would store materials including fuel and gasoline in sealed containers to prevent spills, leaks, or other discharges to soil and groundwater in accordance with a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that the Applicants will prepare for the Project. See DEIS at 150 and Application at 141.</p>	<p>The EIS included all of the BMPs listed by the commenter in Section 4.7.5.3.2 except for MDH coordination. Section 4.7.5.3.2 of the EIS has been updated to reference the missing BMP.</p>
8	<p>I am submitting this letter as a supplement to my prior public comment (Docket # 20251-214451-01) on the Application for a Route Permit for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV Transmission Project. I am a property owner in White Bear Lake Township in Pope County, and my property will be affected by the choice of route for the Central Segment of the project.</p> <p>I have reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as well as the filed comments and other input on route selection. I am writing in support of selection of a route permit generally following what the Applicant proposed as Route Central 1 (as laid out in Appendix D-2 to PUC Application). More specifically, I support a route permit following either White Bear Lake Subregion Route 01 (WBLSR01) or White Bear Lake Subregion Route 04 (WBLSR04).</p> <p>My support for this route option is based upon the reasons presented by the Applicant and considered in the EIS (including, inter alia, shortest route length, lowest cost, greatest co-location, minimization of impact to natural resources including both wildlife and areas of environmental concern, etc.). These route options (WBLSR01 and WBLSR04) are clearly to be preferred under the totality of the criteria for route selection, and I strongly urge the PUC to adopt either of these options in the final approved transmission line route.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
9	<p>We recently reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement that was released by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. We would again like to express our opposition to this project. Our property is located at 22501 150th St Glenwood MN in Section 36 of Reno Township, Pope County MN which is located on Route 2 of the Northern Segment of the proposed transmission line project.</p> <p>In 2021, we purchased our home and eleven acres surrounding it. We completely remodeled the home and have made many improvements to the property. We have put our entire life savings in to this property to make it our own with the intentions to raise our two children ages seven and nine. We spent over five years searching for a place that would enable us to raise our family in a location where we can explore wildlife, produce our food, enjoy recreational activities, and appreciate the solitude of the countryside.</p> <p>Our property is located within approximately 1300 feet of the proposed Route 2 of the Northern Segment of the Big Stone South to Alexandria proposed transmission line. As a result, the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line project has the potential to negatively affect our family's health, our family's financial well-being, as well as negatively affect the many unique attributes of our property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
9	<p>In reviewing, the handout that was distributed at the meeting and drafted by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission it indicates that researchers continue to investigate possible mechanisms for how low frequency Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) may cause indirect biological effects. It is my educated interpretation that because there is only just over a century of the use of transmission lines the implications of EMF on human health may not be evident as of yet.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety, including EMF, are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. An EMF Supplement is provided in Appendix J.</p>
9	<p>Next, as mentioned above we have invested a significant amount of time, money and energy in to our property. With the proposed Route 2 of Northern Segment being in such, close proximity to property, our property values will decrease and thus decreasing our financial wellbeing.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
9	<p>Lastly, our home faces south and currently has an unobstructed view of the gently rolling hills on Reno Township. Large double circuit steel transmission poles with a height between 120-180 feet and spaced every 400-1400 feet would most definitely undesirably affect our view. Not only would our view be negatively affected, but also more our goal of raising our young family and enjoying the solitude of the countryside would be greatly diminished because of the undesirable noise pollution that high voltage transmission lines emit.</p> <p>For your reference, I have attached a map and two photographs of our property in relation to the proposed Route 2 of the Northern Segment of the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line project. The map was utilized to estimate the distance from our property line on the South side of our property to the proposed location of Route 2 of the Northern Segment. The first photograph is taken from the approximate location of proposed Route 2 of the Northern Segment would be and looking to the North at our property to the North. The second photograph exhibits the view from our property facing South to where the structures of the proposed Route 2 of the Northern Segment would be. As you can see because of the unique configuration of our property, our main view from our home would be greatly diminished with the placement of Route 2 of the Northern Segment.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS.</p>
9	<p>Our young family's health, our property values, as well as our view and the many unique characteristics of our property would be negatively impacted by the proposed Route 2 of the Northern Segment of the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line. In addition, considering cost as a factor it is evident that Route 2 of the Northern Segment would require more distance and related costs than Route 1 of the Northern Segment. In conclusion, I strongly urge you to consider Route 1 of the Northern Segment, rather than Route 2 of the Northern Segment of the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line project.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
10	<p>My husband and I are reaching out to ask that you please consider putting the 345-kV Transmission line down along Highway 12 in western Swift County. We are located along County Road 22, which is the other option for that transmission line. There are already 2 transmission lines along that stretch of road as well as the Fairfield substation which is across the road from our property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
10	<p>There is so much wildlife not to mention all the streams, sloughs and rivers along County Road 22. Why would you upset their natural habitat just to put up power lines? We have been fortunate enough to watch bald eagles sitting in trees by our home. What a wonderful sight to behold!</p>	<p>The EIS discusses potential impacts and mitigation measures associated with the natural environment, including wildlife and water resources. Chapter 4 discusses potential impacts and mitigation generally, while Chapters 5 through 7 discuss potential impacts based on geographic region.</p>
10	<p>We know that we are told all of the time that this is progress. Along with progress comes change, but sometimes it isn't the best for the greater good. We know that you are counting on energy from wind and solar to power your line. We believe that you are making a huge mistake by not putting more of an effort into clean coal and nuclear energy. That we feel is the future for our energy needs.</p>	<p>The Public Utilities Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota (reference (1)). The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. Thus, it is not within the scope of this EIS to examine whether the project is needed or whether other system alternatives such as clean coal or nuclear energy would be more prudent. In addition, Minnesota Statute § 216B.1691, which became effective in 2023, requires all electric utilities to generate or procure 100 percent of electricity sold to Minnesota customers from carbon-free sources by 2040.</p>
10	<p>It has also been rumored that regardless of how any of us in Swift County feel the MN PUC will do exactly as it pleases and no amount of input will matter. We sure hope that isn't true otherwise we have wasted a lot of time and energy to let you know how we feel. Once again we just ask that you PLEASE give it a lot of thought before you decide where that power line will go.</p>	<p>The Commission's permitting process is intended to develop a robust record to inform decision-making on the route permit and the route. This process includes public involvement and commenting that is incorporated into the record, which is reviewed by Commission staff and Commissioners before making regulatory decisions. Thus, the route permitting process and public participation informs the Commission's decision-making.</p>
11	<p>I had submitted this letter to you in January of this year. I was reviewing the public comments on the eDocket and didn't find it there. Our stance has not changed since I sent this last but I thought I should resubmit to make sure I am covered.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p>
11	<p>The route that impacts us as a company the most as route ASR02. If this ASR02 route is chosen, we would prefer route option N11. But both of these routes go through properties that we use for equipment staging and aggregate production as stated in my initial letter and we believe route ASR01 would be better suited for the project which you have indicated as the preferred route through your presentation.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
11	<p>This letter constitutes a formal comment on the proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Minnerath Investments LLC owns three properties that will be directly affected by the proposed North 2 route. One of these properties serves as our main corporate office, pit, and equipment staging area. Furthermore, we operate out of the Maas gravel pit in Big Stone County, where our operations will also be impacted. We work closely with Central Specialties Inc., one of the larger road construction companies in the Midwest, and these properties are critical to our operations as gravel pits for public road construction projects.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
11	<p>The proposed transmission line will significantly impede our ability to conduct business on these properties. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced Aggregate Volume (Maas Pit):** The placement of the transmission lines will restrict access to significant portions of our gravel deposits at the Maas pit, directly reducing the volume of aggregates available for extraction. This reduction in available materials will negatively impact our ability to compete for bids on public road construction projects, as our pricing will be less competitive due to higher material costs or the need to transport materials from more distant locations. - Increased Costs (Aggregate Relocation):** Central Specialties, Inc. currently has a large volume of aggregate stockpiled within the proposed transmission line's right-of-way on our corporate office property. Relocating this substantial stockpile will incur significant costs for our company, including handling, transportation, and potential storage fees. - Increased Costs (Staging Area Mitigation):** Our corporate office property's staging area represents a significant investment due to substantial grading and development costs. The proposed transmission line's route directly impacts this staging area, requiring us to acquire additional land, perform further grading, and reconfigure the layout to accommodate the transmission lines and maintain operational efficiency. These mitigation efforts will result in considerable unplanned expenses. <p>Increased Costs:** The loss of access to raw materials within these pits will force us to purchase aggregates from other sources, increasing our raw material costs. This increased cost will make our bids less competitive and potentially preclude us from securing contracts. Furthermore, the presence of the transmission lines may necessitate additional safety measures and operational adjustments, further adding to our expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on Corporate Operations:** The transmission line's proximity to our main corporate office and staging area poses potential safety concerns and may disrupt daily operations. The presence of large transmission towers and lines could also limit the maneuverability of heavy equipment, impacting efficiency and potentially creating safety hazards. - Diminished Property Value:** The presence of the transmission line will negatively impact the market value of our properties. This devaluation will affect our company's assets and could limit future development or sale opportunities. We anticipate a significant reduction in the value of these properties due to the encumbrance created by the transmission line easement. <p>We are concerned that the proposed route has not adequately considered the significant impact on our business operations and the long-term economic consequences for our company. We believe that alternative North 1 routes would minimize the impact on active gravel pit operations and other industrial uses.</p> <p>We urge the Department of Commerce to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a thorough assessment of the economic impact of the proposed transmission line route on businesses like ours, including the impact on aggregate availability, operational efficiency, and property values. 2. Explore and require the consideration of alternative routes that minimize impacts on existing industrial operations, especially active gravel pits and staging areas crucial for public infrastructure projects, including the Maas pit. 3. Require the applicant to provide appropriate mitigation measures to address the negative impacts on our business, including compensation for the loss of aggregate resources, increased operational costs, and diminished property value. 	<p>The EIS discusses this specific operation (MNDOT ASIS Number 21059) in Section 7.2.4.3, where it details that impacts to daily operations of the commercial aggregate would be significant if ASR02 were constructed. Section 4.5.3.3.2 further details that impacts to mining can be avoided by prudent routing, that is, choosing an alignment for routes that would avoid or increase distance from mining resources.</p>
12	<p>I would strongly prefer the Central 2 option. I live in White Bear Lake township on 40 acres. I am not a farmer and this is my primary and only residence. The Central 1 line would go directly across the road from me (County Road 24) and will impact not only the visual environment but also potentially affect the sale value of my house. The Central 2 line would be 1.5 miles south of me and is my preferred option.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
13	<p>I am a farmer and landowner in Swift County, MN. I would strongly encourage routing the transmission line through the middle of sections on ¼ lines to minimally impact farm operations. If it is absolutely necessary to route the line along a road, it would be much less of an obstacle to farm around for the rest of our lives if the poles could be set on the edge of the right of way and, not out in the fields. A transmission line out in a field would significantly reduce the property's value.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
13	I am not a fan of having structures involuntarily placed on property I own, but I understand the necessity of public utilities. I do disagree with routes being changed to accommodate recreational activities such as aviation, especially when they negatively impact a person's occupation that they depend on to make a living. I would recommend removing any changes made to accommodate recreational activities, such as aviation.	Comment noted.
14	I am a landowner in the proposed Central Region segment of the BSSA 345 kV Transmission Line Project. Our farm is in Pope County, Walden Township, specifically the SE ¼ of Section 30 and the NE ¼ of Section 31 on which center pivot irrigation systems have been operating since 1974(Sec 30) and 1976 (Sect 31). An alternate route to the TL 23-160 project was submitted Jan 30, 2025 by someone who is not the landowner. It stated no irrigation systems or disruption to farming would occur by running the TL north through Sections 31 and 30, which needs to be clarified. As a landowner in Section 31 and 30 we oppose the alternate route C203 for the following reasons: Disruption to farming operations utilizing center pivot irrigation. Irrigation is necessary for our soil and land to facilitate best farming practices and to provide competitive and consistent crop production. Route C203 would prevent our operation from the full benefit of the systems we have in place & prevent the use of articulating corner systems, maintenance and updates as needed.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Table 6-16 in Section 6.2.9.1 compares potential impacts to center pivot irrigation systems between C203 and its equivalent.
14	Disruption to function, access and maintenance to a 3,000 foot-long drainage ditch on the west edge of our farm in Section 31 running north into part of Section 30. The structure is contoured and designed to control excess water coming from the west from adjacent landowners who's land takes on water originating from Page Lake in Steven's County. The drainage structure situated on our land must remain structurally intact to prevent flooding onto our cropland after spring snow melt and above average rainfall throughout the growing season.	The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction. The permitted route provides the permittee with flexibility for minor adjustments of the alignment and right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions. The applicants are expected to work with landowners to ensure landowner needs are met and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts.
14	The alternate route C203 would create a permanent and unnecessary decline in our land value and a negative impact on rentability. Other farmers in the area without the TL on their land would have an unfair advantage. Because of the power poles and lines, 150 ft ROW and the proposed construction route widths of 1,000 feet the landowner faces the loss in tillable and irrigated acres resulting in lower production and income. Aerial crop spraying of our fields would be negatively affected with proposed power lines and poles.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
14	The alternate route C203 forces us to abandon a new building plan approved by Pope County Board via Pope County Land and Resource Management in February 2024. Due to health & safety concerns we would not proceed with a new structure in the NE corner of Section 30 off of 264th Street. We have concerns being that close to a 345 kV power line running 24/7.	Based on the description provided (NE corner of Section 30 off of 264th St.), the proposed building site would be over 2,000 feet away from C203. As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, human healthy and safety impacts are expected to be minimal and electric fields/EMF levels dissipate rapidly outside the transmission line ROW.
14	Additional concerns that need to be addressed are the Construction Stage Areas & Laydown Yards typically 20-30 acres in size. The amount of compaction? The reclamation process after the project is complete? Where would these be located for the C203 route?	As noted in Section 3.4.1 of the EIS, agreements may be obtained from certain landowners for additional access and/or temporary construction or staging areas. Section 3.4.5 summarizes the restoration and cleanup procedures for the project. Impacts to soil, including compaction, are discuss in Section 4.7.10 of the EIS.
15	I am commenting on the North 1 segment. This segment has rich farmland that is a great asset to the state and people of Minnesota.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
15	North 1, map 5, on Iris Lane SW goes right in front of the homestead site. This will devastate the property value of the home. It is rich with wildlife and a beautiful, serene area.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics and wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.7.8 of the EIS, respectively.
15	All of Art's field have thousands of dollars of tiling that have been put in to improve the land over many, many years.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture, including drain tile, are discussed in Section 4.5.1 of the EIS. The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.
15	I am also concerned about the health factors being so close to the farm site. Reports don't give the long-term effect on your health.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS.
15	If this line ends up going on this segment, I propose turning the line before the homesite. Going to the east of Iris Lane, at the back of the Art's fields, would be a more reasonable alternative. It could turn before ever getting to the home site.	Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process.
15	We will be losing farm acreage if you go in front of the house or the back of the field. This is a long-term loss of farm rent. The transmission lines will make it harder for the renter to plant and harvest the crops.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.
15	I recommend the alternative route, North 2.	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
16	This letter is in regards to the North 1 Big Stone Power Line alternate route proposal (Docket number E017, ET10/TL-23-160) affecting the south end of 12326 Iris Lane SW, Lowry MN, a multi-use property that has been developed for the past 8 years in conjunction with government agencies.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.
16	<p>In 2017 when we purchased the acreage which was being used as mostly tillable land, we begin working with Shawn Papon, Wildlife Biologist at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, to create a multipurpose area: upland habitat, aquatic habitat, non-profit retriever and pointing hunt club training and events areas, and agriculture land managed by baling and mowing but still conducive to wildlife.</p> <p>The U.S. Fish and Wildlife surveyed the land, proposed areas that could hold water and could be used for both larger open ponds and smaller sheet water ponds as well as other areas for upland habitat development. They then actively sought a cost share partnership with Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation District through Douglas County which supplied additional funds for the development, such as the pond and sheet pond over which the powerline/right of way would directly go. When the project was completed and paid for by U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District, and us, approximately 17 water areas were developed for wildlife on both the agricultural land and the farm site. The property is adjacent to the Pocket Lake Waterfowl Production Area and has become an extension of that for wildlife. The land is used by migratory birds for nesting (ducks, swans, geese, herons, etc.) in addition to other animals, such as eagles, song birds, red tail hawks, deer, and pheasant. Currently, the property has no utilities visible except for the highline wire across the road.</p> <p>After USFWS completed their projects, we have continued to manage and develop the property. When constructing the ponds, all tile was removed and natural spillways or culverts were installed to connect the main pieces of water. At our own cost, we dug a 125 ft. well so that in drought years or dry periods, adequate water levels in ponds can be maintained.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.</p> <p>As was done during draft EIS development, staff searched publicly available data sources to confirm if the commenter's property is considered actively managed USFWS land. The land's current status as a federal, state, county, local easement, agreement, or the like that would preclude development or influence other impact types analyzed in the EIS could not be verified with existing data sources (Appendix E). Although the commenter's land may have previously been involved in one of these programs, because it's status is not currently maintained the terms of the agreement are no longer enforced, the land would not hold the same protected status and cannot be considered as such in the EIS analysis.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
16	<p>Once developed, the property was also conducive for retriever and pointer training and events during the summer months. The Professional Retriever Training Association also supplied a grant for fencing on the property to ensure dog safety. Currently, we host 7 events per year for non-profit hunting and retriever clubs, which include Vikingland Retriever Club, Coastal Bend Retriever Club, and American Pointing Labrador Association. In 2025, we hosted over 1200 canine entries from around the country. The construction, presence, and maintenance of the powerline would render the property unusable for events: the entire property is used for these non-profit events, especially the South end (see attached photo). For the last 8 years, we have invested into this land to create a pristine property that is a wildlife haven but serves as one of the premier dog event venues in the United States. Federal, state, county, and local organizations have been involved in its development by advising, constructing, cost sharing and supplying grants.</p>	<p>Mitigation offered by standard conditions in the route permit (Appendix C), such as requirements 5.2.21, 5.3.14, 5.3.9, and 5.3.7, are expected to avoid or minimize impacts to the commenter's property. The land's current status as a federal, state, county, or local easement, agreement, or the like that would preclude development or other impact types could not be verified with existing data sources (Appendix E). Although the commenter's land may have previously been involved in one of these programs, because it's status is not currently maintained the terms of the agreement are no longer enforced, the land would not hold the same protected status and cannot be considered as such in the EIS analysis.</p>
16	<p>We are asking that the proposed powerline route involving our property not be the route chosen since it would affect property that has been developed for wildlife and non-profits and is valuable beyond just market value to the environment and community.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
17	<p>I would like C202 route over WBLSR01 and WBLSR04 because of not being close to my neighbors homes. I'm affected with the line being on my property in all 3 options. I would think people have more priority over birds, animals, and insects.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
18	<p>Prefer SAA04. On our property, we have had eagles nesting, flocks of turkeys, numerous fox and deer populations. In the fall flocks of geese land. Have not seen an actual nest this year but they circle above the two house sites. Have small dogs so am aware of their presence. They also nest to the west and east of our property. This will go right behind the houses, splitting the fields, it is the most productive soil on this property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p>
19	<p>I prefer route CSR02 over CSR01. CSR01 would go over my farm and my cousin's dairy farm. Concerned with impacts to my cattle.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Impacts to cattle are discussed in Section 4.4.4 of the EIS.</p>
20	<p>I am Art Isackson's daughter and POA. I briefly met you at the Alexandria meeting. Art's homestead and land I am mostly concerned about is on Map 5 on Iris Lane SW. The purple line on the map runs right in front of the century farm homestead. If it is decided on this route, which I am totally against, we would prefer the line to go further east at the back of his fields. If it is right on Iris Lane, the property value of the homestead would be devastating. Nobody wants to look out their living room window and see the huge transmission towers.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
21	I strongly prefer the central 2 line simply because the central 1 line will be directly across from my residence. I do not farm but have a home in the country on 40 acres. I believe central 2 will impact fewer home sites.	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
22	Prefer go on west side of SAA03.	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
23	There are three Zahn properties along County Hwy 14; all within two miles on the north side of Hwy 14. We are against the line going along Hwy 14. We have a nice view of the MN River valley and don't want a tower in front of my house - Marlin, co-owners Jason and Tristan Zahn 66794 440th St. County Hwy 14 which is my home as long as we live. We are on the north edge of the MN River valley scenic route; it would be an eye sore. Who would want a tower in front of their house with view like we have?	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS.
23	We have plans for a family cemetery at my residents; close to the Hwy 14 right of way. These bluffs on which we live were Native American camp grounds. I have found and am still finding artifacts.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning archaeological and historic resources are discussed in Sections 4.6, 5.2.5, 5.3.5, 6.2.5, 6.3.5, 6.4.5, and 7.2.5 of the EIS. Section 4.3.6.2 of the EIS discusses implications for future development. Future plans that are currently happening or are reasonably likely to occur with construction or operation schedules that would overlap the project's or are otherwise foreseeable within the environmentally relevant area are discussed in Chapter 10 of the EIS. A plan or project is considered reasonably likely to occur if a basis of expectation has been laid such as obtaining a local permit, discussion of the development in local plans or zoning, and the like. Additionally, this basis of expectation must have sufficiently detailed information available about the future project to contribute to the understanding of cumulative potential effects. Future projects that are not considered reasonably likely to occur cannot be evaluated in environmental review documents.
23	US Hwy 12 would be a good route, away from people and not zig-zagging across farmland. It has to be less expensive too.	Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
24	Why do you have these hearing in the fall when this is the busiest time for landowners and farmers trying to harvest. I believe this is in your plan hoping people don't show up.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Hearing dates are set at the beginning of the route permitting process through an order issued by the Administrative Law Judge (eDockets No. 20252-215747-01). Dates are based on timing for each step in the process dictated by Minnesota Statute and Rule, and are generally sequential from the date the applicants filed their application (October 2024). The hearing dates were set on February 24, 2025, at a time when future conditions for agriculture that would occur in Minnesota could not be entirely predicted. Hearing dates are also based on when the draft EIS could be completed and issued (September 2025). The draft EIS needs to be available for review by all parties before the public hearings.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
24	It was stated earlier that US Fish and Wildlife and DNR would not allow any transmission on their property. I have talked to some officials and they told me this is not true. Yes it may take up to 2 or 3 years of legal work but it can be done. If in the beginning of the proposal project maybe by now it could have been completed with the US fish and Wildlife on an easement and wouldn't have to go through some and the middle of landowner property.	While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.
24	In my first written comment letter I knew nothing about that this was to be a perpetual easement contract. This completely changes everything. In my live oral comments I used an example of \$50,000 dollars I neglected to say that's per acre now with the word perpetual in easement contract. I don' think \$100,000 dollars per acre is even justified. Why do I say this: this easement contract is for the life of the land and earth. As stated in my previous letter one proposal is going right through the middle of our family farm. This will limit any future endeavors or expansions for myself my grandchildren or heirs. You can not put a price on that.	Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS. Individual landowner agreements are outside the scope of this EIS.
24	Some say: we are not going through your farmstead or your backyard. Well guess what my whole family farm is in my backyard. Like I stated earlier center pivot irrigation is in the plan. We have already put down test holes also in the past years we raised and fed out a lot of livestock. So down the road or in the future if my children or grandchildren take over our family farm and want to get back in the livestock industry then what?	Routing alternatives BSSR01, 04, 06, 08, 09, and 11 traverse your property; the remainder do not. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.
24	As far as the people making these routing decisions like Minnesota public utilities commission, Otter Tail Power Co., Missouri River Energy, judges and whoever else I really believe they don't have any concept, farming knowledge or experience of what a farmer landowner has to go through and the present and future hardships this will create for future generations with this transmission line.	Comment noted.
24	If this project goes or wherever it goes I propose if BSS-A is going to force landowners with a perpetual easement contract that BSS-A pay all of the federal and state income taxes that the landowner will be liable for on the easement payment, that's only fair because landowners are forced to comply with. I also propose that BSS-A pay the landowner a yearly fair market value cash rent per acre as long as the transmission poles and line are on the landowners property for the inconvenience and hardship it will cause.	Individual landowner agreements are outside the scope of this EIS.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
24	<p>We have a family farm of 240 acres we have lived and farm all our lives to make this a better family farm so we can pass this farm on to our children and next generation only to have the big power companies the big cities and government come in and destroy everything we have worked for. To start with in the beginning BSSA and Ottetail said they would follow existing rights-of-ways for proposed routes and not to disrupt private and farm land and would reroute any lines that would cause hardship. One proposal is going right through the middle of our family farm you have no idea of the hardship this will cause.</p>	<p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p> <p>The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
24	<p>With the proposal of a 345 kilovolt line tell me this: why is it that Fish and Wildlife and the DNR and Minnesota owned public land will not let big power lines cross or be installed on their property and we as farmers and landowners are supposed to? Why is it that scientist - engineers - government officials and etc. can't explain the problems with stray voltage and interference of all kind and medical and health concerns both for humans and livestock. How many times have you driven by power lines and lost signal and interference and static on radios and other devices.</p>	<p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety and electronic interference are discussed in Sections 4.4 and 4.3.4 of the EIS, respectively.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
24	Each transmission pole is a monopole with 90'-150' structure and big base - what an eye sore. This will completely ruin and destroy the beauty of the landscape.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS.
24	I think the open house meetings you had earlier were just a formality to satisfy the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, the OTP and the MRES. I think all along they new which routes the where planning and not telling the people that live out here.	The Commission's permitting process is intended to develop a robust record to inform decision-making on the route permit and the route. This process includes public involvement and commenting that is incorporated into the record, which is reviewed by Commission staff and Commissioners before making regulatory decisions. Thus, the route permitting process and public participation informs the Commission's decision-making.
24	I would like to know if the CEOs and the heads of these departments and the people that make these decision would feel and react to if an organization wants to put in a walking or bicycle trail right through the middle of their backyard.	Comment noted.
24	The Biden administration and the democrats has a goal of net solar and battery powered grid by 2035 - this was in the farm journal May-June 2024 issue. If the big cities need all this power why don't they put up power plants - solar farms near where they need them along with wind turbines. No because the people by the big cities don't want them so let's go out to rural Minnesota and destroy their way of life and farming.	The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.
24	Some but not all of the hardship this will cause: value of the family farm decreased tremendously. Center pivot irrigation - we have plenty of water we have center pivots 1 mile away looking to install in future. How are we supposed to farm around these monopole with 120 foot sprayers, 24-36-48 row planters and they are getting bigger. Custom applicators airal spraying very limited have to come back with ground sprayer. What about weed problems next to monopoles. Flying drones for farming of mapping - weed scouting - soil and crop deficiency. Water - storm and hail damage. What about interference with GPS - auto steer. 2-way radios - cell phones. Cash rent going down and farming ability.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming and electronic interference are discussed in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.3.4 of the EIS, respectively.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
24	What about increasing the building site increase or expand a livestock feeding lot it will completely limit future expansion	Section 4.3.6.2 of the EIS discusses implications for future development. Future plans that are currently happening or are reasonably likely to occur with construction or operation schedules that would overlap the project's or are otherwise foreseeable within the environmentally relevant area are discussed in Chapter 10 of the EIS. A plan or project is considered reasonably likely to occur if a basis of expectation has been laid such as obtaining a local permit, discussion of the development in local plans or zoning, and the like. Additionally, this basis of expectation must have sufficiently detailed information available about the future project to contribute to the understanding of cumulative potential effects. Future projects that are not considered reasonably likely to occur cannot be evaluated in environmental review documents.
24	BSSA coordinating with landowners - work with you to resolve questions and concerns agreements and monetary offer based on fair market value (yeah right). There is no way you can put a fair market value on this. As mentioned previously this is a life time for me and my children and estate for any and all future endeavors.	Comment noted.
24	Has any consideration been given for taxes on capital gains. Most of the land owners will have to pay between 40 and 50% of the payments for taxes that doesn't leave the land owner very much. BSSA must pay the landowner value many times over.	The manner in which landowners are compensated for transmission line right-of-way easements is outside of the scope of the EIS as detailed in Appendix B of the EIS.
24	Put the transmission line underground or better yet maybe the Trump administration will intervene and stop the project. I have talked to my children about this project because someday they own and farm this land after I am gone they are completely devastated by this proposal of running this powerline right through the middle of our family farm. I and my family want nothing to do with this. It will completely limit any future endeavors. As you can tell I am devastated by the fact your considering a 345-kilovolt transmission line right through the middle of our family farm. Akron TWP Sec 20 Big Stone County.	Comment noted.
25	Our property is listed as an alternate route on the Big Stone South to Alexandria adjacent to the Art Isackson property at 12326 Iris Lane. We are requesting that the route not go on the southern property border as proposed.	Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
25	<p>We currently use the property for income other than just agriculture. We also own Thunderstruck Retrievers. The property is used to host dog events and training for multiple non-profit retriever clubs attended by both amateur and pro dog trainers; we host over 1200 dog entries per year throughout the summer months. Since 2017, we have spent a lot of time and money developing the land to fit the needs of dog trials/tests: restoring wetlands, building mounds, planting a variety of vegetation, installing a well to fill the pond system as needed, adding roads, etc. Construction and maintenance of the powerline project would make the land unusable for a lot of these events because of the distance required to run dogs, as well as the need for fields to be visually clean of non-natural objects and the need for parking on the edges of the property.</p> <p>Dog handlers and trainers from around the United States attend. The one comment we always hear is that it is one of the most beautiful host properties around the country because there are no utilities and it is all rolling farmland with the farmsites spread out over the landscape.</p> <p>I am attaching photos of an event using the south end of the property adjacent to Isackson's, the ponds on that end of the property as well as an alternate proposed route that would be on the far east side of Isackson's as requested by the family so the line does not run directly in front of their house.</p>	<p>The commenter's property is on the boundary of the anticipated alignment of route N205 on the property's south boundary. N205 is a route segment of ASR01, which if permitted, would be near but not on the commenter's property. The commenter has been contacted by the Commission and they stated route preference for ASR02. Vehicles can continue to park near the commenter's property underneath the project transmission line regardless of where it is routed. The anticipated alignment of N205 would cross Iris Lane, not parallel it, thus no alignment is expected to interfere with roads utilized by the commenter's business.</p> <p>The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.</p> <p>The permitted route provides the permittee with flexibility for minor adjustments of the alignment and right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions. The applicants are expected to work with landowners to ensure landowner needs are met and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts. In accordance with requirement 5.3.7 of the route permit, the permittee shall consider input pertaining to visual impacts from landowners or land management agencies prior to final location of structures, rights-of-way, and other areas with the potential for visual disturbance. Additionally, according to requirement 5.3.7, the Permittee shall use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the Transmission Facility during construction and maintenance. Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process.</p>
26	<p>I'm writing about the Bigstone to Alexandria transmission line that is going to probably go through my land. I'm especially focusing on the plan that goes south of Hwy 12 and will go across my land on Section 17 of Shible township.</p> <p>As the public hearings were right in the middle of harvest, I wasn't able to attend, but heard from a person who was there that this route seemed to be the preferred route for the line. Please reconsider.</p> <p>If the line goes through any of the proposed routes around highway 12 I will have it go through four of my properties. On all except the one south of 12 the lines will be on field boundaries minimizing the impact on my farming. The line south of 12 will go right through the middle of my fields, making farming them much more difficult since I'll have towers to go around right in the middle of the fields. My neighbors to the west and east will have the same problems, and the neighbor to the east will see \$200,000.00 to \$300,000.00 of new irrigation systems made useless.</p> <p>Please be more considerate of the landowners whose land you will be affected and make it as unintrusive as possible.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
26	<p>Please use this letter as opposition to the line south of Hwy 12.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
27	<p>We have many tile lines in this piece of land that empty into the road ditch along the township road 140th Avenue NW. Some of this tile is concrete tile and concrete tile can be easily damaged by the heavy equipment that is going to be used to build the power line. We also have French Tile intakes in the field. We prefer not to have the powerline go here. The power line would not be conducive to aerial sprayers either.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
27	<p>The huge powerlines will not add value to the farmland. It will reduce the value and quality of land and crops where the equipment has traveled on the land. Build an electrical power plant closer to where it will be used in the metropolitan area.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p> <p>The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.</p>
28	<p>As Land owners in New Prairie Twp. Section 1 and White Bear Lake Twp. Sections 5 & 6 I wish to convey my concerns regarding this proposed 345-kv transmission line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most important part of the project is to place all structures right next to the road ROW to avoid devaluing our land forever and to minimize obstructions to our family business. - Where there are existing lines, something must be done to ensure these are not out in our field and still next to the road ROW. Placing them further in our field would devalue our land tremendously, would impede on future conservation practices, and there is no compensation that would cover placing structures out in our field to have to farm around forever. This would also put an easement out in our field where we would lose control over future possible business possibilities. These easements need to be put next to the road ROW. - We have existing utility lines on our parcels. If these would cause the structures to be placed out in our field a different route has to be chosen where this problem does not exist. 	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
28	If the route is chosen that affects our parcels working with the landowner on structure placement is important for the management of our property. It also must be done with future conservation practices in mind.	The anticipated alignment of the route as depicted in the EIS is the alignment the Commission will base its route decision-making on; however, if a route permit is received, the applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment. The permitted route provides the permittee with flexibility for minor adjustments of the alignment and right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions. The applicants are expected to work with landowners to ensure landowner needs are met and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts.
28	We should still get the payment for the full 150' of easement even if the structures are placed directly next to the road ROW.	Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.
28	It is important for the MPUC and the utility companies to engage county commissioners and township boards now to ensure they are ready to work with the utility companies and landowners to allow overhang into the road ROW. We need to be ensured that we will not lose our rights for structure placement after the MPUC has made the final routing decision.	If a route permit is issued, it would supersede and preempt zoning restrictions, building, and land-use regulations promulgated by local units of government (Minnesota Statute § 261E.10). Depending on final design, local permits and approvals could still be required for the project. The applicants must obtain all local approvals necessary for the project that are not preempted by the Commission's route permit, such as approvals for the safe use of local roads. Other approvals and/or crossing agreements may be required where project facilities cross an existing utility such as a pipeline, driveway, road, or railway. The need for such approvals will be determined after the final route is selected, and the applicants have indicated that these approvals would be obtained after a route permit has been issued by the Commission.
28	We want to have tile located and avoided but if it is damaged we need the ability to work with our tile contractor that installed the original tile.	The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.
28	The public hearings were held during harvest when the majority of people your trying to work with cannot attend a very important hearing.	Hearing dates are set at the beginning of the route permitting process through an order issued by the Administrative Law Judge (eDockets No. 20252-215747-01). Dates are based on timing for each step in the process dictated by Minnesota Statute and Rule, and are generally sequential from the date the applicants filed their application (October 2024). The hearing dates were set on February 24, 2025, at a time when future conditions for agriculture that would occur in Minnesota could not be entirely predicted. Hearing dates are also based on when the draft EIS could be completed and issued (September 2025). The draft EIS needs to be available for review by all parties before the public hearings.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
29	I would like to have the corner pole in the sw corner of my property moved to the north so we do not have to clear cut my woods as I have deer stands there if they go north to the clearing no trees would have to be cut. I will attach a drawing and I would like to have someone come out and I will show them thank you	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. The anticipated alignment of the route as depicted in the EIS is the alignment the Commission will base its route decision-making on; however, if a route permit is received, the applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment.
30	I, Wayne Fuoss & Cheryl Fuoss are representing the Eileen H. Schwarz Revocable Trust. We are writing to express our opposition the to the Power line running directly through the center of the Eileen Schwarz Trust farm land located south of Highway 12, (S205). This farm has been in the family for over 100 years. The power lines would not allow the installation of irrigation if needed in the future. Also due to the negative effect the power poles would cause to the farming operations. It is difficult to understand why the power company would like to go so far south when there are other routes further north that should be used.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.
30	We are not totally against the power line. Our first choice would be for the line to run along the Northwest corner of the Schwarz land (SSR01) This could run along the property dividing lines and would pose a significantly less hinderance to property owners since a portion of this land is not tillable. The other option would be to run directly along Hwy 12 (SSR04) A pole could be placed on the corner of Hwy 12 and 250th Ave. SW., which is county road 1. If the power line ran down the Hwy 12 corridor, it would impeded less on farm land.	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
31	I live and farm within the project area, specifically the Hancock Sub-region.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.
31	1)Aesthetics-Table 6-14: *Half as many people are affected by HSR03 (8) as HSR01 (17) *Less pinch points/boxed in people by HSR03 (2) as HSR01 (3) Much more emphasis needs to be placed on keeping the line away from as many humans as possible . It should be THE most important factor in determining this line placement. I disagree with the color shading value. HSR03 should be green as it is much less invasive to humans. 2 to 1! How can that have an equal rating as HSR01? There is a clear difference in human exposure that is not being shown with this color chart in Table 6-14. The routes are not remotely equal as the shading seems to indicate.	HSR03 would box in two residences on three sides of their property with existing transmission lines, thus is not suitable to be rated as having negligible to minimal impacts. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
31	<p>2)Agriculture-Table 6-14 Why does irrigation have a separate bullet point? Where is tile mentioned? We utilize both of these water management systems in our operation. How would the powerline affect irrigation if the powerline is placed on property lines? Tile systems cross property lines quite often, Irrigation follows property lines. It is much harder to pinpoint location of tile lines underground, than it is to see where an irrigator moves above ground. The powerline could be erected and not disturb a single irrigator from its current and future usefulness if property lines are followed. I guarantee, you WILL destroy tile lines on the western route during construction. There is more \$\$ invested in tile on the HSR01 route than irrigation on the HSR02, 03 route. The irrigation argument is fabricated. Money and lawyers have completely overstated the validity of this point. Don't be blinded by credentials. Common sense needs to be used here. Above ground (can be seen) equipment (irrigators) and obstacles are much easier to deal with and plan for than below ground (cannot be seen) obstacles (tile). Crushed tile may not show up for years. Tile WILL be destroyed with this project. Irrigators will not. Again the color shading value of green for HSR01 completely ignores the millions of underground feet of tile installed on that route. The chart is completely flawed saying that HSR01 has less impact on agriculture than either HSR02, 03.</p>	<p>The summary discussion in table 6-14 is intended to focus on the impacts that most influenced the rating of each route. The assessment as a whole did not ignore impacts to drain tile and other items mentioned by the commenter, rather, impacts had already been determined to be minimal due to mitigation that will be required in the route permit to compensate landowners or repair damaged drain tile. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming, including drain tile and center pivot irrigation, are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS. The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to avoid, promptly repair, or replace all drainage tiles broken or damaged during all phases of the Transmission Facility's life unless otherwise negotiated with the affected landowner.</p>
31	<p>3)Table 6-17 Human settlement-Aesthetics This summary seems to be incorrect. Route Segment C208 is seemingly being blamed for boxing in a residence that is referenced in figure 6-5 which is not even on that route. Figure 6-5 shows a residence being boxed in by route HSR01, not segment C208. Does this change the numbers in 'Aesthetics' that I mentioned above? Does HSR01 actually box in 4 residences now and HSR03 only box in 1? What is correct? Figure 5-14 is also mentioned as a map that shows where 4 pinch points occur. Figure 5-14 is a completely different area of the project.</p>	<p>The reference to Figure 6-5 and one residence within Table 6-17 of the EIS was incorrect and has been updated to instead reference Figure 6-6 and two residences. C208 would box in two residences that have two boundaries with existing 115 kV and 230 kV transmission lines as shown in Figure 6-6. These residences would be subject to significant aesthetic impacts. The reference to Figure 5-14 in Table 6-17 was incorrect and has been updated to instead reference Figure 6-6. Figure 6-6 shows the four pinch points referenced in Table 6-17.</p>
31	<p>4)HSR03 Why is there an HSR03 at all? I support HSR02 using the C208 segment. The only difference between use of HSR03, and HSR02 using C208 segment, is that western 1 mile in section 9 which abruptly cuts 2 parcels of land in half for no reason. You shouldn't cut through parcels of land that are farmed contiguously. In fact, that western mile in the HSR03 plan moves the powerline closer to 2 more residences than HSR02 using the C208 segment. Human exposure should be the highest priority!! Completely unnecessary. Scrap HSR03 and utilize the common sense route of HSR02 with the C208 segment to lessen human exposure as much as possible and not unnecessarily cut through parcels of land. In fact, my wife and I own land included on the C208 segment that we are willing to allow the powerline to follow its property line. This is the obvious route to reduce exposure to humans as much as any other route in your plan.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS. Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping comment period and some of those alternatives were accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS. Rationale for alternatives that were accepted and those that were not accepted are listed in the Department of Commerce's March 19, 2025 Scoping Summary Comments and Recommendations, eDockets No. 20253-216613-01.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
31	<p>5)HSR01 This route is too close to the feedlot that my family raises bred heifers in. Our supplier has stated that he will no longer utilize our facilities as they would be too close for his comfort for his breeding stock in fear of complications from either stray voltage or magnetic field issues. This will cause direct and significant economic hardship for my families farming enterprises.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning stray voltage and livestock are discussed in Sections 4.4.4 and 4.5.1 of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety, including EMF, are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. An EMF Supplement is provided in Appendix J.</p>
31	<p>6)Farming It is essential that poles are erected as close to roadways and property lines as possible to reduce their impact on farming procedures. Equipment is big and getting bigger. A pole 20 feet out in the field is a huge detriment to efficiency and profitability that can never be changed. Please keep poles tucked in tight to existing boundaries.</p>	<p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p>
31	<p>In summary, human exposure should be the top priority to any utility project like this one. The route affecting the least people is the best route. That route, in this case, is HSR02 using the C208 segment. I'd rather the route was miles away from everyone, but that doesn't seem to be an option. We've been given a poor choice. I urge the commission to lessen human exposure as much as possible, wherever possible. Please consider the areas of concern I have listed above.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
32	<p>We strongly oppose the BSSA transmission line to come down Waterfowl Drive. Waterfowl Drive is the only access to our farm. We don't like the idea of having to drive under a high voltage line every time we leave or return to our home. We plan in the future to sell our building site and feel the line would greatly de-value our property and be a deterrent for anyone to purchase to property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p>
32	<p>We've also had honey bees on our farm for the 50 years we have lived here. They would practically be right under the line.</p>	<p>Sections 4.5.1.1 and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS were updated to include reference to the commenter's apiary. As discussed in Section 4.5.1.1, information was requested from the Minnesota Apiary Registry and, per the data received in June 2025, there are no registered beekeeping operations within the route widths of any routing alternatives. Based on the data in the MDA's DriftWatch map in August 2025, there are likewise no registered beehives within the route width.</p>
32	<p>Please consider another route. The little area they plan to put the tower is just a few 100' from our home.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
33	We do not want the line to go thru are field and over our driveway. It would seem to be better to go north or south of 430th St. There are seven homesteads along that stretch of 430th St.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
34	ASR01 in Ben Wade section #14 route goes between us and our neighbor's homes. We're concerned about the line being in close proximity to homes. Human's safety should be a high priority and we wonder about the electrical effect on our health.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.
34	WBLSR01 in New Prairie has a route across the field. If there is a tower on the south property line and it spans the field it would be workable. Also WBLS04 could possibly run on the south side of Hwy 24. There is already a double pole transmission line in our field along the Hwy. We have a lot of drain tile on that farm and the 3 of them go right up to the right of way. Losing control of a nice open field we've spent years and dollars to accomplish to be cut up is not fair to my family and the investment we've made in it. Aerial application will be difficult. Huge drop in land value if it gets cut up with a line. An annual payment should be considered also. We've been researching to purchase a private wind generator to install between our Bin Site and the highway on the edge of that wetland. It would be a nice investment for the Bin Site.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming, including drain tile and center pivot irrigation, are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. The anticipated alignment of the route as depicted in the EIS is the alignment the Commission will base its route decision-making on; however, if a route permit is received, the applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment. Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.
35	I'm writing on behalf of Carter and Roberta Ann Charles, whose address is 23495 400th Avenue, Cyrus, Minnesota 56323, to object to and comment on the Big Stone to Alexandria (BSSA) Transmission Line ("Transmission Line"). This letter shall confirm, reiterate, and supplement the comments made by Mr. Charles at the public hearing held on October 1, 2025, regarding the Transmission Line.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.
35	The private runway located on my clients' property was built in the early 1980s. Since acquiring the property and until his retirement, Mr. Charles used the runway in the operation of his crop spraying business. Since Mr. Charles retired from his crop spraying business, my clients have leased the runway to another business for crop spraying purposes. Throughout my clients' ownership of the property, the runway has been, and continues to be, used as a means of income for my clients. In addition, my clients have used, and continue to use, the runway for personal purposes. If the Transmission Line is constructed along the currently proposed route, the Transmission Line will significantly interfere with my clients' historical and current use of their property, not only rendering the use of the runway located on their property unsafe to my clients, others using the runway, and the public, but also rendering the runway, and my clients' property, useless for its intended purpose. Given this, my clients object to the route of the Transmission Line as currently proposed.	Sections 4.3.11.3, 4.5.1 and 6.3.4.1 of the EIS were updated to identify and discuss Charles' Private Airstrip.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
35	<p>Following the public hearing on October 1, 2025, Mr. Charles was approached by someone who said there was an alternate route for the Transmission Line, but that such alternate route had not been published or shared with the public. It's my clients' understanding that such alternate route would not interfere with the runway located on their property, and would therefore not impact their use of their property.</p> <p>If there is an alternate route for the Transmission Line that would not interfere with the runway, and would therefore not impact my clients' use of their property, such alternate route should be published, shared with the public, and considered by the decisionmaker.</p> <p>Further, if such alternate route would avoid a taking of my clients' property, such alternate route should be established as the route for the Transmission Line.</p> <p>If no alternate route for the Transmission Line has been proposed, the developers of the Transmission Line should be required to propose an alternate route (or, alternate routes) for the Transmission Line that will not interfere with the runway, will not impact my clients' use of their property, and will not result in a taking of my clients' property.</p>	<p>All alternate routes were made public in the EIS scoping decision and analyzed in the draft EIS. No other routes are under consideration other than those analyzed publicly in the draft EIS.</p>
36	<p>As a property owner along United States Highway 12, I am writing to memorialize my preferences for the route chosen for the Big Stone South Alexandria ("BBSA") Southern Route proposed by Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services (Applicant). I have an interest in the following parcels located in Shible Township in Swift County, Minnesota which will be affected by the Applicant's preferred route, SSR01, in the proposed Swift Subregion Routes - SSR01, SSR02, SSR03 and SSR04: 16-0036-000, 16-0040-000, 16-0083-000, 16-0085-000, 16-0087-000</p> <p>A point that is important to me in selecting a route is that the fewest number of others are negatively impacted by the selected route. Although SSR01 impacts the smallest number of residences and buildings, we also need to consider the other uses of the land that are impacted by the route.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
36	<p>SSR01 impacts the largest number of farm land; thus, it should not be the first choice for the route. My preferred route is SSR02 for the smaller impact it has on farmland and the smaller cost. As an initial matter, SSR01 affects the most Prime Farmland and is the most expensive Swift County Southern Route option. Based on those facts alone, it is unclear why this would be the preferred route. Secondarily, and as stated in BSSA Draft EIS, "The use and paralleling of existing ROW is considered by the Commission when determining the most appropriate route for the project." Applicant's preferred route, SSR01, follows existing infrastructure the least.</p> <p>Regarding this fact, I would like to also point out an incorrect foundational assumption made by Applicant when creating SSR01. There are no section roads on our property, nor are there breaks or trees between fields. It seems this notion was accepted when planning, but in reality, the roads and breaks do not exist and the transmission lines for the Applicant's preferred route would cut through the middle of our most Prime Farmland. This would hold true for our neighbors as well. In fact, SSR01 cuts through the highest amount of Prime Farmland in any of the proposed routes. I feel the same issues apply to S205 as a route segment. As it is unclear if the power cooperative we use is even a part of the project, we may not even share in the benefits of this project and we, and our neighbors, would still pay a substantial price to do so.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
36	<p>As a matter of record, I would like to comment that I received late notice of this project. I recently inherited the property referenced above and although constructive service was effectuated earlier in the year, I did not receive actual service until September of this year. In addition, some of the parcels which would be affected were not included in my notice.</p>	<p>The mailing list used for notice is based on a property's county tax records in accordance with State law. Due to the commenter's recent inheritance, it is expected that all notices prior to their inheritance were sent to the addresses provided in the previous landowner's information in the property's county tax records. Depending on which notice the commenter received, the project map may have been generalized and pointed to additional information on the Commission's website, or the project was at a point in the process where that information was not available yet.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
36	The current route preferred by Applicant, SSR01 (as well as alternate segment S205), is not the most cost effective, damages the most Prime Farmland, and is not the route with the least environmental impact. There are alternative routes which will disturb fewer acres of farmland, cost less and follow established infrastructure. I ask the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to consider and adopt one of the routes, preferably SSR02 which will have less of an overall impact on my and my neighbors' property.	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.
37	Please review and look at my 2 comment letters and my 2 oral testimonial given at the public hearing in Ortonville, MN at the Sioux Historic Pavilion on January 16, 2025 and October 2, 2025.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.
37	One proposal is going right through the middle of our family farm. I can not stress enough the hardship this will cause for myself, my children, my grandchildren, and future heirs and generations. You can not go right through the middle of our family farm.	Comment noted.
38	My family's farm is on one of the proposed routes. I am hoping to convince someone to please not put these massive poles Infront of our property or anywhere near our farm. We are very close to the road, and this would ruin one of the reasons we moved out here 5 years ago. The view we currently have is something out of a book with wildlife all around. I fear these poles so close to our home will be detrimental to the wildlife that inhibit our farm and surrounding areas.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.
38	Also, we are starting a family and have 2 very young children with hopes for more. Who's to say they will not get curious about these monster telephone poles and want to cross the road if we look away for a moment. Not only that - but no one really knows the kind of impact high voltage poles have on a human when they are in such close proximity. Some studies have shown an increase in childhood leukemia from high voltage wires - so that is very concerning for us.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS.
38	Another thought is if we should ever want to sell our property, I believe this would bring the value down on our home tremendously. We will be dealing with these poles and any issues they have for many years to come and never be compensated for it since they would go across the road from us.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.
38	I am proposing you do not place any poles near our home on County Road 18 and use a different route. Perhaps instead of coming up by our home - you could place the poles somewhere along the road (240th Ave) T-62 over to 390th Ave then up to (210th Ave) T-70. Then you would only potentially be affecting Solvie Slough and not the Solvie Waterfowl Production Area that backs up to our property. This would then still be a safe space for birds, deer, pheasants and any other wildlife that frequent this spot. You would also be much farther away from the other two farms this may affect instead of almost right on top of our farm. We hope you will take what we have said into consideration. I have attached a photo where I have highlighted in blue where I am suggesting the poles go.	Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision. Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.
39	I feel that the 2 south route can cause more harm to more people than the north routes. The one south line goes through my neighbors cattle field and within a pretty close to my property. I hope you will take this into consideration.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
40	<p>I am writing to reiterate my support for the proposed power line route, the preferred route that runs from Central 1 that stays west of Hancock and misses most, if not all, of the irrigation systems on my land and my neighbors' lands.</p> <p>As discussed at our recent meeting in Hancock, MN, this preferred route aligns best with the area in regards to farming with the use of irrigators on our fields.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
41	<p>I am a property owner along the proposed Big Stone to Alexandria transmission line. I am writing to object to the Applicant's proposed route through Ben Wade Township. In particular, I strongly object to the use of North Route 1, Segment N2. A better option within North Route 1 is the use of Segment Alternative N9. (Ultimately, North Route 2 is the preferred route for the entire project, but I will only address North Route 1 in this communication.)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
41	<p>North Route 1, Segment N2 dissects and harms pristine farmland. North Route 1, Segment Alternative N9 runs along an existing State Highway 114 public corridor. Therefore, to follow current guidance to place power lines within existing corridors when possible, Segmental Alternative N9 is the only feasible option.</p> <p>Additional compelling reasons to eliminate Segment N2 from consideration are its many negative environmental and agricultural impacts. As has been documented in the project review process, N2 has greater negative environmental and agricultural impacts than N9. Per your document, "Segment Alternative N9 would result in fewer impacts to residences within 301-500 feet and less acres of impacts to upland forest, non-forested wetlands, agricultural land, and introduce one less waterbody crossing along the proposed length." These are clear and decisive reasons to use Segment Alternate N9. (See Table 2, Comparison of N9 to N2, page 6 of 10.)</p> <p>The Applicant stated that Segment Alternative N9 was not their preferred option due to cost. This is NOT a valid reason to override existing rules and guidance. Additionally, this is not a valid reason to overlook the overwhelming mitigating environmental, wetland, and agricultural benefits of using Segment Alternative N9. The additional cost the Applicant speaks of is approximately one quarter of one percent of the project.</p> <p>Let me restate that - one quarter of one percent of the total project. (Roughly \$2,000,000 of an \$800,000,000 project per the Applicant's documents.) This is insignificant to the Applicant to say the least. However, it is not at all insignificant to the farmers who will bear the real and high cost of farming around utility poles every single year for the life of this transmission line. It seems like it would be simple to go around power line poles; it is not. It is time consuming, difficult, and costly for farmers. Don't put a one time one quarter of one percent cost to the Applicant ahead of an ongoing, significant, and detrimental cost for every farmer along North Route 1, Segment N2. Do the right thing; eliminate N2 as an option and select Segment Alternative N9.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p> <p>Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS.</p>
41	<p>As background, my farm property has been in our family for almost seven decades. Our farm will be significantly and forever harmed if the power line is put on our prime farmland as proposed by the Applicant. The negative and severe agricultural impacts can't be overstated and shouldn't be ignored. I can't state this enough - a preferred option (Segment Alternative N9) using an existing public corridor is available and recommended due to its mitigating environmental and agricultural attributes and the guidance that when possible the route shall utilize an existing public corridor. Route Segment Alternative N9 would not disrupt previously unhindered farmland. Conversely, Segment N2 will cause irreparable agricultural harm - power line poles cause a significant problem forever. Segment N2 should not even be under consideration when an existing public corridor with fewer environmental and agricultural impacts is available and identified as a viable option.</p> <p>In conclusion, to mitigate significant and lasting environmental, aesthetic, agricultural, and financial harm, the power line must not be placed on our farmland as proposed in North Route 1, Segment N2. Segment N2 must be eliminated from consideration. As was stated at a public meeting on this project earlier this year, the power line should at all times be placed in a way to mitigate agricultural, environmental, and aesthetic harms. Therefore, the line must not follow North Route 1, Segment N2. If North Route 1 is selected in lieu of North Route 2, Segment Alternative N9 must be used to mitigate the agricultural, environmental, aesthetic, and financial harm caused by Segment N2. Again, please do the right thing and eliminate N2 as an option and select Segment Alternative N9 for the many reasons stated above.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
42	<p>Route SSR03 and SSR04 literally runs across the backyard of our farmsite. We are very concerned for our health and farming operation with 21st century farm equipment and technology. Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arching and jumping electricity so close to the farmsite. Safety of daily life. - Power line would run over the driveway to farmsite. Line being hit by farm equipment. - The loss of property value and limited locations on farmsite of future structures. House, sheds, gardens, landscape. - The loss of 35 year old evergreens planted to protect farmsite from snowstorm and wind. - Maintenance of power structure and lines. The chemical drift could damage fruit trees. Inconvenience of equipment and time of maintenance so close to farmsite. <p>We ask the commission to choose one of the other routes.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The applicants are expected to work with landowners to ensure landowner needs are met and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts. In accordance with requirement 5.3.7 of the route permit, the permittee shall consider input pertaining to visual impacts from landowners or land management agencies prior to final location of structures, rights-of-way, and other areas with the potential for visual disturbance. Additionally, according to requirement 5.3.7, the Permittee shall use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the Transmission Facility during construction and maintenance. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
43	<p>This project and the path of the line could effect our lives to the negative for years and generations to come. We own and operate land along county road 18. Our three greatest concerns are. #1how close will the lines come to the home of Lennie and Marlyas Solvie as they reside close to cty rd 18. Number 2 if the path for the line is on the north side of the road we have center pivot irrigation system that comes to cty rd 18 and makes a complete circle. We will never agree to shorten the system or have it come up against a pole so it can't make a complete circle. Either of these situations would decrease the value of our property and make farming more difficult. The third concern is if it is near our hog finishing barn on the north sided of the road what will the effect be on our hogs. Death loss rate of gain etc. We feed almost 11,000 head along cty rd 18. We understand that you calling this a region project but the benefit is not to us only the problems. Please look else where</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The anticipated alignment of the route as depicted in the EIS is the alignment the Commission will base its route decision-making on; however, if a route permit is received, the applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures related to the proximity of the project to residential properties are discussed in Section 4.3.1 and 4.3.3.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning stray voltage and livestock are discussed in Sections 4.4.4 and 4.5.1 of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
44	My brother and I own 4 parcels of land along your northern route. County Hwy 22 in Swift County, Section 18 Fairfield, Section 12 Fairfield, Section 18 Tara, Section 8 Tara. We already have electric poles on 3 parcels. We don't need any more poles. We have tile lines along the right of ways of this proposed route - we also use aerial spraying for chemical and fungi spraying - our applicators don't like to fly by the poles that high. In our view use the proposed southern route.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture, including drain tile and aerial spraying, are discussed in Section 4.5.1 of the EIS. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
45	I'm not in favor of the proposed powerline or the wind towers that will go along with them. People should be a priority. A lot of homes are and will be built along Highway 12. There are 3 homes of the people, who are on the township board that have driveways to enter hwy 12. People like to live on blacktop roads. We don't need any other reason not to live in our area.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.
45	SSR04 and SSR03 would go right over my century farm homestead. It should not be allowed. Land is on both sides of hwy 12, Akron township sections 10 and 15, it would limit my potential to build anything in my yard or across the road. There are 2 tile lines coming out of field in Sec 10 that need to be unaffected to prevent flooding. I just lost land to DOT for the highway 12 rebuild. The land also included the ditches which should be reserved for future expansion of hwy 12 not for poles. I live in my house full time, and have all my life 64 years. I'm worried about health effects of EMFs.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture, including drain tile, are discussed in Section 4.5.1 of the EIS. Should the applicants need to build the project in Highway 12 ROW or MNDOT interest areas associated with Highway 12, they would need to coordinate with MNDOT to obtain the appropriate permissions. The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety, including EMF, are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. An EMF Supplement is provided in Appendix J.
45	One of the original routes 1 or 2 would be better for the people along hwy 12 and not limit future growth. There are other options. It would devalue my property.	Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
46	PUC EIP staff, on behalf of the interagency Vegetation Management Planning Working Group (VMPWG), respectfully submits comments on the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) proposed by Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, through its agent, Missouri River Energy Services (collectively referred to as "the applicants"). The VMPWG has reviewed the draft VMP for the proposed Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project (Project) included as Appendix J of the Route Permit Application filed October 22, 2024. The VMPWG does not recommend any action by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) at this time, but is providing comments to facilitate transparency in the record as the VMPWG works with the applicants to arrive at a VMP that is adequate to meet pre-construction compliance filing requirements.	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
46	<p>Overall, the plan for site restoration and implementation appears to be achievable and includes seed mix selection and management strategies that can meet the route permit conditions of vegetation management that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the number of trees to be removed in selecting the right-of-way specifically preserving to the maximum extent practicable windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snow fences, and vegetation in areas such as trail and stream crossings where vegetative screening may minimize aesthetic impacts, to the extent that such actions do not violate sound engineering principles or system reliability criteria. • Remove tall growing species located within the transmission line right-of-way that endanger the safe and reliable operation of the transmission line. • Leave undisturbed, to the extent possible, existing low growing species in the right-of-way or replant such species in the right-of-way to blend the difference between the right-of-way and adjacent areas, to the extent that the low growing vegetation that will not pose a threat to the transmission line or impede construction. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>The VMPWG is committed to working with applicants and permittees to ensure that site restoration is successful and meets the objectives laid out in the management plan. The VMPWG provides these specific comments on the plan and recommends that the applicants address these comments in their pre-construction VMP submittal:</p> <p>Management Sections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VMPWG recommends the applicant define project “management sections” based on the different vegetation communities that planned for restoration along the route (e.g., residential turfgrass, inslopes, pollinator habitat, stormwater ponds, wetlands etc.). 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Site Description and Existing Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site description should include a discussion of the variety of land use and land types along the HVTL route, including any state-enforced management or restrictions. • The applicants are advised to add a section that describes the existing ecologically sensitive areas with the route, including but not limited to high value biological resources, protected species and native plant communities, conservation areas, and DNR managed lands. • The VMP must comply with applicable Minnesota Department of Natural Resources requirements related to state-listed endangered and threatened species in accordance with Minnesota’s Endangered Species Statute (Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (Minnesota Rules, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134). The applicant must keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of Department of Commerce or Commission staff. • In addition to state-listed and endangered species, consider the following sensitive areas in your environmental setting section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Crossing lands with tribal interest. o Lands with cultural or historic interest. o Identify calcareous fens and rare natural communities under WCA. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Rare and Sensitive Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VMPWG requests the applicant identify and address any rare species or sensitive resources within the proposed route. The following information should be included in the environmental setting section of the VMP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A conservation planning project report from MN DNR Minnesota Conservation Explorer tool (https://mce.dnr.state.mn.us/) to identify conservation areas of concern along the proposed route. o The rare species requirements from DNR Natural Heritage Review. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Vegetation Clearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project clearing should be designed to avoid impacts to bats, nesting birds, and migratory birds in preparation for route-specific permit conditions and avoidance measures. The applicant is advised that coordination with DNR may be necessary to ensure impacts are appropriately avoided. The VMP should include additional detail about tree removal timing and anticipated acreage to minimize impacts and comply with avoidance plans. The VMP should include species-specific identification and monitoring to ensure consistency with applicable avoidance measures (e.g., NHIS or USFWS) or special permit conditions. • The applicant should clarify if any mitigative strategies will take place to reduce the impacts of tree removal. (e.g., providing brush piles for wildlife habitat, following guidance for seed mixes under wire area, harvesting forage/hay as a management tactic with landowner agreement). • The applicant should limit vegetation clearing in sensitive habitats. When vegetation clearing is necessary in sensitive habitats, the applicant should use habitat-appropriate removal methods to avoid and/or minimize the impacts of clearing. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Erosion and Sediment Control BMPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project erosion control BMPs shall be limited to ‘bio-netting’ or ‘natural netting’ types and specifically shall not include products containing plastic mesh netting or other plastic components to reduce potential impacts to wildlife. The applicant is encouraged to continuously align project design to be consistent with DNR’s wildlife-friendly erosion control standards. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Herbicide Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herbicide should be applied as a spot treatment to limit the likelihood of spray drift. If broadcast spray applications are anticipated, the applicant should include a plan in the VMP to prevent herbicide spray drift from entering existing native plant communities, sensitive areas, or landowner properties. • The applicant should provide additional information regarding herbicide use, including herbicide type, surfactant rate, and frequency. 	Comment noted.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
46	<p>Restoration and Establishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify if cover crops or temporary seed mixes will be integrated into permanent seed mix, or if it is largely planned for pre-seeding. Include more information on temporary stabilization methods. It is recommended to follow DNR recommendations related to wildlife friendly erosion control, and the avoidance of plastic materials or chemical treatments. As previously stated, erosion control blankets should be limited to natural netting. It is also recommended to avoid the use of mulch materials that contain plastic or weeds. Certified weed-free mulch can be purchased, and wood or straw mulch is a wildlife friendly choice. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Seed Mixes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VMPWG encourages the applicant’s intended use of diverse, native perennial seed mixes in the route to the maximum extent possible, such as within landowner-approved pollinator vegetation, as they provide maximal wildlife and ecosystem benefits. Additionally, the VMPWG appreciates the use of BWSR and MnDOT seed mixes, and recommends that seed mixes should be considered to address site-specific needs. Project seed mixes should be chosen with the following considerations, with the acknowledgement that they may not be applicable to the management sections that are restored to agricultural or residential lawn use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant species should be consistent with the surrounding vegetation, and both seed mixes and management should be tailored to geography, native ecosystem, and soil type. The applicant is advised to consider the effects of sunlight exposure, moisture levels, topography, and climate resilience on plant establishment when selecting seed mixes. The applicant should utilize native seed mixes when appropriate or required by permit. Native seed mixes should be used on borders with Native Plant Communities, Minnesota Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance, and/or sensitive natural areas. Transmission line routes can provide habitat and act as dispersal corridors for wildlife, and the applicant is encouraged to promote the creation and restoration of wildlife habitat along the route. The applicant is advised to coordinate with the VMPWG to review seed mix changes or substitutions for re-seeding. DNR shall be consulted for approval of seed mixes to be used on state lands, adjacent to state lands, or in sensitive habitats with state protected species. EIP staff and partner agencies request that the applicant provide a list of species substitutions for each seed mix. The applicant can work directly with EIP, BWSR, and DNR or use the seed substitution list provided by BWSR. The goal is to ensure that the ecological niche and guild of a plant species is retained when substitutions are necessary. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Vegetation Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation management methods should be timed to avoid impacts to ground-nesting birds, bats, pollinators, and other wildlife. Vegetation management methods should also be tailored to the specific management section and the appropriate land use type, such as the management of pollinator vegetation vs. turf grass. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Monitoring and Inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VMPWG recommends that monitoring and inspections be conducted by a qualified, third-party monitor with sufficient botanical experience in identifying native plants, native plant communities, invasive species, and non-native species typical of Minnesota. The applicants should describe the monitoring plan for areas where seeding and erosion control measures have been implemented. The monitoring plan should define the threshold upon which reseeded measures will be needed. The applicant is advised to coordinate with the VMPWG to review seed mix changes or substitutions for re-seeding. An annual monitoring report allows for revisions to the project VMP based on any shortcomings or challenges experienced during implementation. The VMPWG recommends the adoption of an annual reporting approach to keep the VMP “alive” and on track for successful implementation and long-term success. The contents of annual monitoring reports should be defined, and a submission protocol should be established within the VMP. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>Updates to the Vegetation Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VMPWG understands that the applicants are still finalizing aspects of the VMP and requests that they continue to coordinate with EIP and other state agencies as the VMP is finalized prior to construction. 	Comment noted.
46	<p>In summary, EIP staff recommends that the applicants continue to coordinate with the VMPWG as it finalizes the vegetation management plan, including the identification of existing rare and sensitive resources, refinement of the installation, management, and monitoring plans to fit the anticipated goals and objectives, and an updated monitoring and inspection reporting plan. The VMPWG looks forward to the successful site restoration of the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Project. The VMPWG will provide additional review and recommendations to the Commission as part of its pre-construction compliance review.</p>	Comment noted.
47	<p>The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kilovolt (kV) Project, proposed by Otter Tail Power Company and the Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Applicants) and offers the following comments:</p>	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.
47	<p>Routes Recommendations South Region Big Stone Subregion Preferred Route: BSSR03</p> <p>Both routes cross over the Minnesota River, where it is designated as a State Water Trail, and the Minnesota River State Trail, which runs parallel to the river. The northern route in this Subregion at the Minnesota River crossing reduces impacts to state-listed species, native plant communities, and recreational assets by following existing transmission lines and roadways. Utilizing this route’s existing crossing over the Minnesota River will reduce the physical and visual impacts on the recreational trails, sensitive species and riparian area. Therefore, this northern route is preferred.</p>	Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.

Comment ID	Comment	Response
47	<p>Unfavorable Routes: BSSR02/BSSR04/BSSR06/BSSR08/BSSR10 and BSSR11/BSSR12</p> <p>The DNR strongly discourages selecting the southern routes that cross an area Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) identified as a site ranked as High biodiversity significance that contains rock outcrop communities with ephemeral pools and multiple state-listed species. The DNR has confirmed these communities support multiple state-protected species, including one of Minnesota’s three remaining populations of ball cactus (<i>Escobaria vivipara</i>), a state-listed endangered species. The DNR is concerned that construction activities, including structure foundations and right-of-way (ROW) maintenance activities, will irreparably impact the rock outcrop communities and the rare species within them. Impacts to potential habitat may result in take of endangered or threatened species. Minnesota’s Endangered Species Statute (Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (Minnesota Rules, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of threatened or endangered species without a permit. Additionally, the ephemeral pools within the rock outcrops are designated as rare natural communities (RNC) under the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). WCA Rules (Minnesota Rules 8420.0515, subpart 3) state that a wetland replacement plan for activities that modify a RNC must be denied if the local government unit determines the proposed activities will permanently adversely affect the RNC.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The EIS discusses state-protected endangered species, including the ball cactus in this area, in Section 5.2.6.9.1. Sections 4.7.9.1.3 and 5.2.6.9.2 of the EIS were updated to include information on rare natural communities. Section 5.2.6.9.2 of the EIS was updated to discuss potential impacts and mitigation related to construction and ROW maintenance for rock outcrop communities and hydrological features. Staff propose special permit conditions 6.10 and 6.11 to address potential impacts to rare natural communities in coordination with the DNR, and have updated the draft route permit accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Unfavorable Routes: BSSR11/BSSR12</p> <p>The DNR strongly discourages selecting these routes that cross directly over the Stony Run Calcareous Fen Complex. Calcareous fens are a rare and legally protected wetlands. This particular fen exists within a protected complex of prairie and wetland habitats with multiple state-protected plants. Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.223, states that calcareous fens may not be filled, drained, or otherwise degraded, wholly or partially, by any activity, except as provided for in a management plan approved by the commissioner of the DNR. If this route is selected, the DNR would need to determine whether an alteration to the fen community is necessary. If so, the Applicants would need to develop a Calcareous Fen Management Plan for which there is no assurance that future DNR approval would be granted. The DNR strongly recommends finding an alternative, as this route is unlikely to be successful in permitting.</p>	<p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>Impacts to calcareous fens were discussed in 5.2.6.8 and 5.2.6.12, including the potential for a calcareous fen management plan. The impact intensity to the calcareous fens was denoted as significant in Table 5-16 for BSSR11 and BSSR12 for the Commission's consideration when designating a route.</p>
47	<p>Swift Subregion Preferred Route: S201 The DNR prefers S201 over S203 as S201 follows an existing transmission line ROW and is farther from Artichoke Lake to minimize impacts to waterfowl.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
47	<p>Central Region Hancock Subregion Preferred Route: HSR01 The DNR prefers route HSR01 as it routes the Project farther from the Chippewa River and rare resources.</p> <p>Cyrus Subregion Preferred Route: CSR02 The DNR prefers route CSR02 as it avoids Noordmans Wildlife Management Area (WMA).</p> <p>White Bear Lake Subregion Preferred Route: WBL503 The DNR prefers route WBL503 as it is farthest from White Bear and New Prairie WMAs.</p> <p>Unfavorable Route: C202 The DNR discourages selecting route C202 as it crosses through White Bear WMA.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
47	<p>North Region Alexandria Subregion Preferred Route: ASR02 The DNR prefers route ASR02, as this route would minimize bird impacts and impacts to WMAs. ASR01 is routed between Mary and Andrew Lakes, both Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance, which is a common flight path for birds.</p> <p>Unfavorable Route: N10 The DNR discourages selecting route N10 as it creates a new crossing of Mud Lake, a public water, and is closer to Andrew Lake, increasing bird and lake impacts.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
47	<p>Impact Mitigation Natural Heritage Reviews Two Natural Heritage Reviews (MCE 2024-00481 and MCE 2024-00815) have been completed for this project. These reviews do not include the routes identified during the scoping process.</p> <p>State-listed Species The DNR recommends including a special permit condition that the Applicant will comply with applicable requirements related to state-listed endangered and threatened species in accordance with Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (Minnesota Rule, parts 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134), similar to TL-23-388.</p> <p>This includes following the conditions listed in the Natural Heritage letters to minimize or avoid impacts to state-listed species and other rare resources that have the potential to be impacted by the Project and needs to be addressed in the EIS. In particular, the following species have been documented in the vicinity of the Project, and avoidance measures are required.</p> <p>Plant Species Multiple state-listed plant species, including species that are exclusively found in rare remnant native prairie and rock-outcrop habitats, have been documented in the vicinity of the project, and avoidance measures are required.</p> <p>Bird Species Loggerhead Shrikes and Henslow's Sparrow have been documented in the vicinity of the project and avoidance measures are required.</p> <p>Prairie Butterflies Dakota skippers have been documented in the vicinity of the project and avoidance measures are required.</p>	<p>Commission staff believe special permit conditions should address authorities that are not already regulated within Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895 and Minnesota Rules 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134. Additionally, Commission staff believe the recommendations outlined in the Natural Heritage Reviews (MCE 2024-00481 and MCE 2024-00815) that are related to state-listed species and the other listed rare resources are largely covered by other standard and special permit conditions already in the draft route permit, such as the proposed special condition 6.4 for the VMP, or otherwise regulated through other governmental agencies such as the MPCA's stormwater programs or WCA requirements. Any specific recommendations from the Natural Heritage Reviews that are not regulated requirements nor covered in standard or special conditions would need to be specified by the DNR for Commission consideration during the route permit decision. While impacts to state-listed species or other rare resources have the potential to occur, those potential impacts and associated mitigation are discussed throughout the EIS. For example, the applicants have committed to the following when applicable: conducting rare species surveys with a qualified surveyor, developing a native prairie protection plan, and developing avoidance plans with the USFWS and DNR. Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.6 to conduct survey of state-listed species in consultation with the DNR and to file those surveys with the Commission prior to construction and have updated the draft route permit accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Calcareous Fens Stony Run and Ortonville calcareous fens have been documented in the vicinity of the Project. The DNR requests a special permit condition, similar to TL-23-159, that the Applicant must work with the DNR to determine if any impacts will occur during any phase of the project. The applicant must receive a no-effect determination from the DNR before proceeding to ensure and confirm that the avoidance measures are sufficient to protect Stony Run calcareous fen. Where potential impacts to the calcareous fens may be unavoidable, and the Commissioner determines that the impacts are necessary, the Applicant must develop a Calcareous Fen Management Plan in coordination with the DNR, as specified in Minn. Stat. § 103G.223. The potential for an aquifer breach and its impacts to calcareous fens should be addressed in the EIS.</p>	<p>Section 4.7.12.3.2 incorporates mitigation measures related to calcareous fens, the need for applicant coordination with the DNR and the possible requirement to develop a Calcareous Fen Management plan.</p> <p>Section 4.7.5 discusses aquifer breaches.</p> <p>Section 4.7.12.2 of the EIS has been updated to direct readers to Section 4.7.5 and to describe how an aquifer breach could impact calcareous fens.</p> <p>Section 5.2.6.12 of the EIS has been updated to include uncontrolled groundwater flow from an aquifer breach.</p> <p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.5 for calcareous fens and have updated the draft route permit accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities Several MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities have been documented throughout the project. Of particular concern, the project has the potential to impact multiple native prairie and rock outcrop native plant communities. The Natural Heritage letters address actions to mitigate disturbance to these ecologically significant areas, which includes avoiding native prairie. Mitigation measures such as avoidance and developing a prairie protection plan in areas with potential native prairie impacts should be addressed in the EIS.</p> <p>The Natural Heritage Review letters are based on the Applicants' proposed route and are valid for one year. Any project changes would require an updated review to ensure rare resources are identified and any potential impacts are mitigated.</p>	<p>Section 4.7.9.3.2 of the EIS incorporates these mitigation measures as they were written in the Natural Heritage Review letters.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
47	<p>Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition requiring coordination with USFWS regarding avoidance of and/or any potential requirements for permitting the incidental take of federally protected species.</p>	<p>Commission staff believe any required USFWS coordination that would need to occur for the project is adequately regulated by condition 5.5.2 in the draft route permit. Before construction, the applicants will be required to provide documentation as part of the pre-construction meeting (condition 9.1) of any requirements for permitting the incidental take of federally protected species.</p>
47	<p>Avian Flight Diverters</p> <p>Incorporating avian flight diverters into transmission line design minimizes the likelihood of bird collisions attributed to visibility issues. The DNR supports the draft permit condition requiring the Applicants to use avian flight diverters and to coordinate with the DNR to determine optimal placement after the route is finalized. This includes incorporating adequate spacing of conductors and grounding devices in accordance with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee standards to minimize the risk of electrocution to raptors with larger wingspans that may simultaneously come in contact with a conductor and grounding devices.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
47	<p>Vegetation Management Floodplain</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition to minimize vegetation removal at stream crossings to the extent practicable. Vegetation clearing within a floodplain, especially tree removal, can greatly destabilize the riverbank and surrounding area. If the riverbank is destabilized, erosion issues will likely contribute to sedimentation to the river, negatively impacting the water quality and the river ecosystem. This can also lead to pole stability issues and create long-term maintenance challenges.</p>	<p>Commission staff believe permit condition 5.3.10 partially regulates the reduction of vegetation near stream crossings. In addition, Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 for the VMP that includes language suggested by the DNR to, "maintain floodplain vegetation to the extent feasible," and have updated the draft route permit accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Tree Clearing Timing</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition requiring the Applicants to avoid tree removal from June 1 through August 15. This minimizes impacts to bats, including the federally endangered northern long-eared bat, during the maternity roosting season when pups are unable to fly.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 for the VMP that includes language suggested by the DNR to, "address the timing of vegetation removal to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species," and have updated the draft route permit accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Vegetation Management Plan</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition requiring continued coordination with the Vegetation Management Plan Working Group to refine the Project's Vegetation Management Plan (VMP). The DNR requests approval authority for seed mixes used on state lands, areas adjacent to state lands, and sensitive habitat areas with state-listed species. The VMP needs to specifically address the timing of vegetation removal, maintaining floodplain vegetation to the extent feasible, herbicide use, and minimizing impacts to sensitive areas, including but not limited to, MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance, DNR Native Plant Communities, and state-managed lands.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 for the VMP that includes language suggested by the DNR in the draft route permit and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Wildlife-Friendly Erosion Control</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition, similar to TL-22-415, requiring the Applicants to use "bio-netting" or "natural netting" types of erosion control. Wildlife-friendly erosion control alternatives help prevent birds, mammals, reptiles and fish from getting entangled, potentially resulting in their injury or death. We also recommend avoiding products containing plastic mesh netting or other plastic components, including hydro-mulch, as the plastic in these products do not completely decompose and accumulates in the environment.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of this special condition 6.3 in the draft route permit and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Facility Lighting</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition, similar to TL-22-415, requiring the Applicants to utilize downlit and shielded lighting with minimal blue hue to reduce harm to birds, insects, and other animals.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of this special condition 6.1 in the draft route permit and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>Dust Control</p> <p>The DNR recommends including a special permit condition, similar to TL-22-415, requiring the Applicants to avoid dust control products containing calcium chloride or magnesium chloride during construction and operation. These types of products do not break down and accumulate in the environment to levels that can be toxic to plants and wildlife.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of this special condition 6.2 in the draft route permit and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>DNR Managed Land and Trails Wildlife Management Areas</p> <p>Wildlife management areas (WMAs) are part of Minnesota's outdoor recreation system and are established to protect those lands and waters that have a high potential for wildlife production, public hunting, trapping, fishing and other compatible recreational uses. They are the backbone of the DNR's wildlife management efforts in Minnesota and are key to protecting wildlife habitat for future generations; providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching; and promoting wildlife based tourism. For areas within the right-of-way and route width, potential impacts to recreation and/or the state's ability to manage the land for its intended purpose (such as constraints on the use of prescribed fire for habitat management). Vegetation management within and near WMAs should be specifically addressed in VMP.</p>	<p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 in the draft route permit that includes language suggested by the DNR and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
47	<p>Trails State Trail</p> <p>The Project crosses the Ortonville Segment of the Minnesota River State Trail which connects the City of Ortonville to Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge. State trails are designated with an assigned purpose (Minnesota Statutes, section 85.015). To maintain the recreational value of this trail, vegetation removal along the trail should be minimized to the extent feasible. The DNR recommends a special permit condition to minimize vegetation removal to the extent practicable to preserve the aesthetic conditions at these crossings. Vegetation management in this area should be addressed in the VMP.</p>	<p>Commission staff believe aesthetic impacts are adequately regulated by draft route permit condition 5.2.7 which requires the Permittee to use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal, and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the project during construction and maintenance.</p> <p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 in the draft route permit that includes language suggested by the DNR and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>State Water Trail</p> <p>The proposed route alignments cross the Minnesota River and Pomme de Terre River in areas they are designated as state water trails. State water trails are designated for their historic, recreational, and scenic value (Minnesota Statutes, section 85.32). To maintain the recreational value of these trails, vegetation removal along the river should be minimized to the extent feasible. The DNR recommends a special permit condition to minimize vegetation removal to the extent practicable to preserve the aesthetic conditions at these crossings. Vegetation management in these areas should be addressed in the VMP.</p>	<p>Commission staff believe aesthetic impacts are adequately regulated by draft route permit condition 5.2.7 which requires the Permittee to use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal, and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the project during construction and maintenance.</p> <p>Commission staff support inclusion of a special condition 6.4 in the draft route permit that includes language suggested by the DNR and have updated it accordingly as shown in Appendix C.</p>
47	<p>DNR Permitting Water Appropriation and Work in Public Waters</p> <p>A DNR Water Appropriation Permit is required for all users withdrawing more than 10,000 gallons of water per day or 1 million gallons per year. A DNR Public Waters Work Permit is required for all projects involving development activities below the ordinary high water level in public waters and public waters wetlands. Both permits can be applied for in the MNDNR Permitting and Reporting System (MPARS).</p> <p>Crossing Public Waters and State Lands</p> <p>The DNR oversees the administration of designated public waters and state lands, including WMAs, to ensure these resources are managed for the public's collective interest. A Utility License Application must be completed to obtain a license to cross these protected areas.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
48	<p>Our farm has concerns with the proposed route of the BSSA transmission line. One of the proposed routes directly cuts through three of our crop productions fields and does not follow a roadway, property line or any other established corridor. If this route is chosen it will have a negative financial and efficiency impact on our farming operation.</p> <p>The three fields are identified in green on the attached map labeled Nohl's Fields. From this map you can see the boundary to each of the fields. With the proposed route, the transmission line would go east on County Road 8 to where County Road 1 meets County Road 8. From there the line turns north and cuts directly through all three of our fields.</p> <p>Our farm would be negatively affected from this proposed route in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Efficiency loss- efficiency would be lost in having to farm around the structures that would be placed in our fields. -Safety concern- there is a higher likelihood of an accident caused from farm equipment hitting or running into the structures when they are placed in the middle of farm fields -Crop protection options lost - crops could be detrimentally affected from losing the option to have these fields sprayed with aerial application equipment as pilots would not want to fly in the vicinity of these power lines -Pattern tile damage - all three of these fields are pattern tiled. Damage to the pattern tile system would be probable with the equipment needed to build the structures and from the installation of the structures themselves -Land use options - if this line is routed through these fields, the options for using the land to build on are, in all likelihood, forever changed 	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.</p>
48	<p>We propose an alternate route (see attached map labeled Alternate Route) where the transmission line continues running straight north where it meets County Road 8. The transmission line would still be on our land but on the edge of the field. This route follows an established roadway and does not split any fields.</p>	<p>Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
49	<p>Big Stone County, the land of D&B Kowalzyk. This land is in the north half of Section 17 of Odessa Township. There are about 320 acres on the north half. There are about 40 acres of land in the SE quarter, a total of 400 acres.</p> <p>There is a gravel pit or mine in NW quarter on the south end. Gravel is under the ground, north of the pit to highway 12. Also there are pockets of gravel throughout the rest.</p> <p>The Highlines will cause a real problem to their property, the remaining acres are farm land and some pasture.</p> <p>The technology of farming has changed in the last ten years and will change that much faster in 5 years.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aggregate mining and this specific gravel pit (Minnesota Aggregate Source Information System Number 06042) are discussed in Section 5.2.4.3 of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p>
49	<p>The value of this land will go down \$1000 to \$2000 per acres because of the High-lines, that is \$400,000 to \$800,000 hit on the land.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p>
49	<p>Also Stony Run Creek is there. The road to the pit is there. So on the east bank houses and cabins can be built on the east side of the creek. There is room for about 5 of them. Also Highway 12 and County Rd 21 crosses on the road giving access to more lots for housing.</p> <p>This decision will affect the land for 50 years or forever, that is a very long time.</p>	<p>Section 4.3.6.2 of the EIS discusses implications for future development. Future plans that are currently happening or are reasonably likely to occur with construction or operation schedules that would overlap the project's or are otherwise foreseeable within the environmentally relevant area are discussed in Chapter 10 of the EIS. A plan or project is considered reasonably likely to occur if a basis of expectation has been laid such as obtaining a local permit, discussion of the development in local plans or zoning, and the like. Additionally, this basis of expectation must have sufficiently detailed information available about the future project to contribute to the understanding of cumulative potential effects. Future projects that are not considered reasonably likely to occur cannot be evaluated in environmental review documents.</p>
50	<p>Please, Please for once use some common sense and run the east portion of the Minnesota Line along Highway 12 in the right of way.</p> <p>This simple solution will save many thousands of dollars from all the twists and turns now proposed.</p> <p>Also it would reduce the anger of putting all the poles and lines on private property.</p> <p>Nothing wrong with saving tons of money - nothing wrong with not making people angry.</p> <p>Do the sensible thing.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p> <p>Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
51	<p>We oppose the use of HSR01 for the BSSA transmission line. We adamantly oppose the BSSA transmission line crossing our property. Our homestead property lies on HSR01 (440th Avenue) in Moore township of Stevens County; the route line is currently drawn across the driveway on the western edge of our property.</p> <p>We reviewed the online route maps, and it appears the HSR01 affects more—possibly twice as many —homeowners as HSR02. Shouldn't avoiding homes be a primary consideration in route choice?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
51	<p>We are very concerned about the health and safety effects of the transmission line. We have five children ranging from three to twelve years of age. Children also come to our home for weekly piano lessons, and we often host guests with children for meals and evenings. They play in the yard and grove, ride their bikes on the driveway and road, and our children (naturally!) spend many hours in our home.</p> <p>While some household appliances produce higher levels of EMF than will be experienced from the transmission line, the usage time for a hair dryer or electric razor is a very small part of each day. EMF from the transmission line will be present 24-7-365.</p> <p>A transmission line across the road is still close enough to have health and safety concerns. We use our gravel road for walks, stroller rides, and/or bike rides most days (weather permitting). If Route HSR01 is selected, the entire road will likely be within 75 feet of the transmission line; we will be exposed to the higher levels of EMF every time we use it to walk, ride bikes, or drive.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety, including EMF, are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. An EMF Supplement is provided in Appendix J.</p>
51	<p>We purchased this property so that we could have space for “child-raising” projects: livestock, strawberries, etc. We currently have a strawberry u-pick patch on the eastern section of our property. If we need to move or expand it to the western section of our property, will our customers want to come pick strawberries with the transmission line above their heads or buzzing across the road?</p>	<p>As discussed in Section 4.3.7, once operational, potential impacts from noise are anticipated to be minimal.</p>
51	<p>If the transmission line crosses our property, it will disturb the windbreak planted to keep snow from drifting across our driveway...winter after winter.</p>	<p>The permitted route provides the permittee with flexibility for minor adjustments of the alignment and right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions. The applicants are expected to work with landowners to ensure landowner needs are met and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts. In accordance with requirement 5.3.7 of the route permit, the permittee shall consider input pertaining to visual impacts from landowners or land management agencies prior to final location of structures, rights-of-way, and other areas with the potential for visual disturbance. Additionally, according to requirement 5.3.7, the Permittee shall use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the Transmission Facility during construction and maintenance.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
51	<p>We attended the Minnesota PUC's hearing at the Hancock Community Center. A landowner commented that the power company prefers using HSR01 because of a \$24 million savings versus HSR02. Assuming the statement is correct, \$24 million is a substantial savings. Consider, though, the millions of dollars landowners have invested in their real property that will be affected by this transmission line.</p>	<p>Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
51	<p>Rural property in Stevens County is a substantial investment. It is difficult to replace. The transmission line will decrease property values, limit land use options, and create health and safety concerns. Again, we believe avoiding home sites should be a primary concern in route selection.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
52	<p>I am writing this email in regards to the BSSA Powerline potentially passing through a piece of ground that I own in Shible Township, NW Quarter of Section 13. One of the proposed routes runs along the west side of the quarter and then along the south side. I am writing to express my concern about the impact that this powerline will make on the productivity of our ground, our field operations, and the permanent damage that the construction and existence will cause to our land that we are farming to support our business, family, and livelihoods. Placing this powerline along this route in our field would decrease our efficiency of field operations, resulting in higher costs to our operation. The location of this powerline would also reduce our field acreage and therefore resulting in a reduction in the production of any crop we could have grown on land that we own.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS. The Draft Route Permit (Appendix C of the EIS) requires the permittee to fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage sustained during construction.</p>
52	<p>Another concern that I have for the construction of this powerline is the concern for any wildlife in the area. There is an 80 of CREP land on the north side of our quarter that the proposed route will run by. I have also sighted a bald eagle on our quarter which potentially has a nest in the abandoned farm site on our quarter of ground. The BSSA Powerline would negatively affect any and all wildlife development in these areas.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning conservation easements are discussed in Sections 4.7.6, 5.2.6.6, 5.3.6.6, 6.2.6.6, 6.3.6.6, 6.4.6.6, and 7.2.6.6 of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
52	<p>It is likely that I am going to be asked to sign a lifetime easement for this powerline and the operating entities to have access to ground that I own. If the route is selected to go across our ground and I am forced to sign this easement, I will be expecting fair compensation that coincides with the lifetime of the easement. This means it would only be fair, that if I am expected to sign a lifetime easement for my ground, I should receive either of the two options below:</p> <p>a) Lifetime royalties for the product passing through the line that is on my ground b) Lifetime rent for the acres under the easement at market cash rent adjusted yearly with inflation.</p> <p>A one time payment for the acres under easement does not coincide with a lifetime easement.</p> <p>Both of these options are fair options for not only myself but ALL landowners that will have the Powerline crossing the ground that they own. It is no different than them using their ground to produce something on it before the powerline. Only now someone else is using their ground to produce/transfer a product and they should be able to participate in what their ground is being used for.</p>	<p>Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.</p> <p>Individual landowner agreements are outside the scope of this EIS.</p>
52	<p>My recommendation or alternative is to adopt one of the above mentioned forms of compensation or choose a different route like the route that runs tight along Highway 12. Keep the powerline along the main highways and off out of the middle of the countryside.</p>	<p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p>
53	<p>The present plan is scheduled to go on 430th St in Odessa Township/Big Stone County/MN. There is a 4 mile stretch with 7 farm sites with families living on them. 6 of these homes are very close to the road. We are very upset with this plan for the following reasons: We are farmers and we will have to work around these towers and lines out in our fields. We have big machinery and the lines and towers will create problems.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p>
53	<p>Stray voltage for human health and animal health. We have a herd of cattle here and eagles that visit.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning stray voltage are discussed in Sections 4.4.4 and 4.5.1.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning stray voltage and livestock are discussed in Sections 4.4.4 and 4.5.1 of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.</p>
53	<p>Jackie is very concerned about the effects on the water table on the farm site and fields. She also believes it will devalue the land. She and her husband started on this farm and now we have a third generation farmer in the family. This farm is very important to the entire family and its not fair that we have no say in what is happening to it. We paid for it, worked it and paid taxes on it all these years and now we have no control on what will be done to our family legacy. There are two bodies of water that will need to be worked around.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p> <p>The EIS discusses potential impacts and mitigation measures associated with groundwater in Section 4.7.5.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning surface water are discussed in Section 4.7.11.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response																					
53	<p>Paul turned in another plan that would go on 435th St with no homes and not the corners with big poles needed. Also the bodies of water will need to be worked around. He has not heard anything back on that.</p> <p>We know it needs to go somewhere, but don't understand why it has to go where it affects so many people, when there are alternatives.</p>	<p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning surface water are discussed in Section 4.7.11.</p> <p>Alternative routes were proposed during the scoping period, and those alternatives accepted by the Commission for further study in the EIS are listed in the scoping decision. Additional alternatives are not accepted at this stage in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>																					
54	<p>As a landowner/manager of several parcels in the proposed corridor i prefer the Applicant's preferred route through the central part of the Applicant's proposed transmission line that was presented in public hearings in January 2025. This route affects the least amount of irrigation systems.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>																					
55	<p>Attention to the PUC, specifically- Jason Weiers, Jenna Ness, Sam Lobby, Ottertail Power Co. and others involved in the BSSA project.</p> <p>It has come to my attention that there is a comment period for the proposed BSSA line to which I am now responding. The proposed line, Central 1 HSR01 & HSR03 and South SSR01-SSR02-SSR03, will pass directly through the counties and property our organizations own and operate ag production businesses in. I think there needs to be consideration given to the route that has been chosen and the viability of different routing with less impact on population and livestock production for the project.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>																					
55	<p>Here are some quick facts on the routes being proposed based on 2024 population data and 2022 ag census data.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2023-2024 & 2025 est Population</th> <th>2022 Ag Census Data MPCA Animal Units</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Traverse County</td> <td>3134</td> <td>16000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Big Stone County</td> <td>5067</td> <td>18000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grant County</td> <td>6108</td> <td>13000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Swift County</td> <td>9615</td> <td>61000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stevens County</td> <td>9954</td> <td>117000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pope County</td> <td>11495</td> <td>41000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It appears there are alternative routes with less impact on Population and Livestock Production. The commission needs to reanalyze the route being presented. The current routing affects the highest populated counties and the highest livestock production counties.</p> <p>If the commission does issue or grant permission to the proposed route there needs to be additional consideration given to the following items.</p>		2023-2024 & 2025 est Population	2022 Ag Census Data MPCA Animal Units	Traverse County	3134	16000	Big Stone County	5067	18000	Grant County	6108	13000	Swift County	9615	61000	Stevens County	9954	117000	Pope County	11495	41000	<p>The data provided by the commenter is focused on animal feedlots for each County the project routes through, and does not consider all types of agricultural impacts. Impacts to residents and agriculture were not assessed on the county level as the EIS determined the local vicinity and the route width, respectively, were appropriate geographical areas where the project might exert influence as the basis for assessing potential impacts (Section 4.1.2).</p>
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Comment ID	Comment	Response
55	<p>#1-Perpetual Easement-Perpetual Payments- The proposal is asking/forcing landowners to accept a one-time payment for a perpetual easement that is "never ending or changing". First, let's discuss the "ask/force" comment. On the proposed project, the State of MN is backing the project with unlimited resources, (taxpayer funded), vs the limited resources of the landowner. Landowners have the option of hiring lawyers to address concerns, however the recourse on this is limited. The mediation or court may address concerns, receive appraised valuations on ag land and the landowner may be paid a "premium" on his ag land easement. That is the ask/force issue I am concerned with.</p> <p>I think there needs to be consideration given to perpetual payment for the perpetual easement. This should be based off electricity purchased/transferred through the BSSA line and paid annually to the landowners that are impacted and have given a perpetual easement. This would be in addition to a one-time upfront payment for the easement based off commercial real estate valuations of the land/easements. Leading to my next point.</p> <p>#2. Commercial Real Estate Valuation vs Ag Land Valuation- Consideration needs to be given to the landowners for a commercial real estate value. Local commercial real estate has been sold for over \$25,000 per acre with other commercial real estate in the proposed project area listing for far above those \$/ac numbers. This is a commercial project with a 50-80-year life span. Make the perpetual payments match the lifespan of this commercial project with an inflation inflator to the payments.</p> <p>#3. Rural Electrical Rates-Consideration needs to be given to rural development and promotion. The majority of the electricity generation and carrying capacity of the BSSA will be utilized in large population centers in the eastern portion of the state, specifically the 194 corridor and Twin Cities Metro area. The counties, populations and landowners that are being affected by the BSSA line should receive a discounted rate on their electricity usage. This would promote rural development and population growth in out state MN. If I am not mistaken, the MN PUC has full regulation on this and has control over rates that could be charged to REA's that service our local communities. Thank you for your time and considering the alternatives and improvements to the BSSA project.</p>	<p>Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.</p> <p>Individual landowner agreements are outside the scope of this EIS.</p>
56	<p>I am part owner of land in Shible Township in Swift County (16-0036-000, 16-0040-000, 16-0083-000, 16-0085-000, 16-0087-000) which is part of the preferred route (SSR01) and part of a segment (S205). Because I was not an owner of the property until August, I only received notice of this project in September so I have not had much time to prepare my comments. I ask the Public Utilities Commission to consider and adopt one of the alternative routes which will occupy fewer acres of farmland and/or follow more roads. I hope that an alternative route will be chosen, SSR02, because of these issues.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
57	<p>My father in law Dru Tosel has been in contact with you about Ottertail Power Company proposed power line through a farm that we own and the impacts it will have on irrigators, tile line, and proposed future residences to be built in that section. Attached are two maps. The second attached map shows the proposed 5 irrigators to be installed in Section 16-121-43 (2 are currently installed), and the first map shows the current irrigator's rotation, water lines currently installed on the property, and tile lines currently installed on the property. There are more tile lines being installed this week on the property.</p> <p>Please review and let me know that you received it. I also own the Northeast Quarter (NE1/4) of Section 10-121-43, which I understand may be impacted if the power line is put along the southern boundary of said property. This will impact future irrigation, future tile lines, and currently installed tile lines. I oppose any tile lines being installed on/or along my Northeast Quarter (NE1/4) of Section 10-121-43.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Impacts to center pivot irrigation and drain tile are discussed in Sections 4.3.8.2, 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. Additionally, identified center pivot irrigation systems are shown on Map 13-1 through Map 13-9. Future planning for center pivot irrigators can be coordinated with the applicants to ensure landowner needs are met or to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts.</p>
57	<p>Yes please make part of record. The second map has 4 circles, but the one has a highway running through it so it would be two irrigators (one on each side). We had never raised any concerns regarding this project before because never proposed to cross/border any property we own.</p>	<p>Impacts to center pivot irrigation and drain tile are discussed in Sections 4.3.8.2, 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. Additionally, identified center pivot irrigation systems are shown on Map 13-1 through Map 13-9. Future planning for center pivot irrigators can be coordinated with the applicants to ensure landowner needs are met or to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts.</p>
57	<p>I just want to make sure it is in the record. We currently have the irrigators set up for corner systems as well so almost the entire section of 16-121-43 south of highway 12 will be irrigated in the future. So any power lines going on/across section 16-121-43 will have huge impact on irrigation and drainage tile.</p>	<p>Impacts to center pivot irrigation and drain tile are discussed in Sections 4.3.8.2, 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. Additionally, identified center pivot irrigation systems are shown on Map 13-1 through Map 13-9. Future planning for center pivot irrigators can be coordinated with the applicants to ensure landowner needs are met or to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
58	<p>I am submitting this letter as a supplement to my prior public comments (Docket # 20251-214451-01) on the Application for a Route Permit for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV Transmission Project. Specifically, I want to address the public comment of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regarding their preferred routes for the power line. While the DNR has clearly considered the impact of the project upon the flora and fauna of the region, their stated rationale for selection of a route in the White Bear Lake Subregion is lacking in support. The DNR’s recommendation, in its entirety, is, “The DNR prefers WBSL03 as it is farthest from White Bear and New Prairie WMAs.”</p> <p>This statement ignores that all of the studied routes approach the White Bear WMA, with proposed optional route segments either skirting the WMA or crossing it (e.g., C101, C202, and original route segment C6). It also ignores that WBSL03 would approach the Little Chippewa River Waterfowl Production Area and the Pope County Waterfowl Production Area, essentially trading the impact on the White Bear WMA for impacts on two WPAs.</p> <p>And, as to the New Prairie WMA, the Applicant has emphasized that its preferred route over that section of the Central Region (WBSL01/WBSL04) would be located to minimize impact on the WMA. The Applicant’s proposed route maximizes colocation of utilities, minimizes length and cost, and is preferable over WBSL03.</p> <p>As a side note, the Applicant has provided its own recommendation as to the preferred route near the White Bear WMA, and I fully support their position on minimizing the impact on the White Bear WMA (i.e., supporting either segment C6 or C101, and rejecting C201 and C202)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
58	<p>Again, my support for this route option is based upon the reasons presented by the Applicant and considered in the EIS (including, inter alia, shortest route length, lowest cost, greatest co-location, minimization of impact to natural resources including both wildlife and areas of environmental concern, etc.). Route options WBSLR01 and WBSLR04 are clearly to be preferred under the totality of the criteria for route selection, and I strongly urge the PUC to adopt either of these options in the final approved transmission line route.</p>	<p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
59	<p>I am submitting this comment to the Commission on behalf of the Morris-Hancock-Glenwood Area Landowners and/or Irrigation Farm Owners. My office has been representing this group of 20+ landowners in the Central region of the proposed project. This area is a heavily concentrated area of irrigation land, and the location of the route is crucial for these property owners.</p> <p>The current Applicants’ Preferred Route, as presented at the public in-person hearings September 30 through October 2, 2025, is the best option proposed for this group at this time. We agree with the Applicants’ balance of the routing factors and feel that this route minimizes those impacts.</p> <p>In addition to this route choice, we rely on the fact that an Agricultural Impact Mitigation (AIMP) was developed and presented within the Applicants’ direct testimony as a guideline to use during the construction of the project and expect that the AIMP will in fact be used. In the AIMP, the Applicants provide that they will consult with the Landowners prior to and during construction to ensure that additional property damage or interference with landowners' access or use of their property will be minimized.</p> <p>We appreciate the Commission’s attention to our concerns and wish to go on record supporting the Applicants’ Preferred Route with respect to the Central region.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
60	<p>Our comments include notes of clarification on the information presented in the draft document.</p> <p>-As it seems the document refers to Service Waterfowl Production Area interests broadly as “WPA”, and there is no discussion of conservation easement types, we would like to clarify that there will be different restrictions based on Service interest types (fee, wetland easement, habitat easement, etc.).</p> <p>-...Waterfowl Production Areas (p. xxxi)</p> <p>-...Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge (p. 11, para. 3)</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The EIS has been updated to correct Waterfowl Protection Areas to Waterfowl Production Areas in the acronym list, clarify wildlife refuges as national in the Public and Designated Lands section of the EIS Summary, and clarify that WPAs will have different restrictions based on USFWS interest type (Section 4.7.6).</p>
60	<p>We feel that there would be additional cumulative impacts when factoring the wind farms and solar farms that will be developed as a result of this transmission line. (p. 12)</p>	<p>Section 4.3.6.2 of the EIS discusses implications for future development. Future plans that are currently happening or are reasonably likely to occur with construction or operation schedules that would overlap the project’s or are otherwise foreseeable within the environmentally relevant area are discussed in Chapter 10 of the EIS. A plan or project is considered reasonably likely to occur if a basis of expectation has been laid such as obtaining a local permit, discussion of the development in local plans or zoning, and the like. Additionally, this basis of expectation must have sufficiently detailed information available about the future project to contribute to the understanding of cumulative potential effects. Future projects that are not considered reasonably likely to occur cannot be evaluated in environmental review documents.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
60	It is not clear if hunting was considered under the “Land-Based Economies” category. We wonder if there might be any studies showing whether the presence of transmission lines and their associated infrastructure has deterred people from hunting in post-construction areas. (p. 59)	Hunting was not discussed in the EIS under land-based Economies because no registered hunting businesses were identified near the project. Hunting is discussed in the EIS under Cultural Values, Recreation, Socioeconomics, Tourism, Public and Designated Lands, and Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat.
60	<p>We would like it to be noted that outdoor recreation is a part of the culture within the project area. Many forms of outdoor recreation require blocks of intact habitat. For all of the counties listed, the Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuge tracts are significant to year-round outdoor recreation. They also contribute to the aesthetic beauty of the area. (p. 69).</p> <p>Right-of-way clearing does not increase recreational opportunities; it just changes the type of recreation as well as the type of wildlife species present. Right-of-way clearing can also have a negative impact on the availability of habitat and overall abundance of wildlife depending on the timing and frequency of clearing. (p. 92)</p> <p>We feel that it would be important to evaluate outdoor recreation within its own category, as opposed to combining it with tourism. (p. 114)</p>	<p>Recreation and tourism are discussed separately in the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning recreation are discussed in Sections 4.3.9, 5.2.2.8, 5.3.2.8, 6.2.2.8, 6.3.2.8, 6.4.2.8, and 7.2.2.8 of the EIS. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning tourism are discussed in Section 4.5.4.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.7.8, 5.2.6.8, 5.3.6.8, 6.2.6.8, 6.3.6.8, 6.4.6.8, and 7.2.6.8 of the EIS.</p>
60	We appreciate the description of how land management could be hindered on Wildlife Management Areas and feel that this this should also be applied to Waterfowl Production Areas. (p. 152)	Section 4.7.6.2 of the EIS was updated to include language describing how the project could hinder land management activities on WPAs.
60	<p>Minnesota is in the Mississippi Flyway. (p. 160)</p> <p>Grassland Bird Conservation Areas and Important Bird Areas aren't always preserved or managed as public lands. They are designations used to help identify areas likely to have high concentrations of birds for planning purposes. We would like to suggest including the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan (as mentioned in the Rare and Unique Natural Resources section) in the Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat section as well. The core/corridor/Strategic Habitat Conservation focal areas are also about prairie-dependent wildlife and their habitat, not just prairie plant communities. (p. 160)</p> <p>Another wildlife impact to consider is that some grassland obligate birds avoid otherwise good habitat if there is vertical structure present (typically trees). Having utility poles along the edge or bisecting grasslands will permanently fragment or effectively shrink the area of available habitat for some species. (p. 161)</p> <p>We would like to suggest creating an overlay the Grassland Bird Conservation Areas, Important Bird Areas, public land, core areas, etc. to see if any of the route alternatives cross fewer areas. It seems that Figures 5-17 were attempting to explore this factor, but it's not clear how each of the lines were assessed in those figures. (p. 226)</p>	<p>The EIS has been updated in Section 4.7.8.1 to include accurate information for the Mississippi Flyway, in Section 4.7.8.1 to discuss the Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan and to reference discussion in Section 4.7.9.1.3, and in Section 4.7.8.2 to add impact discussion on grassland bird habitat.</p> <p>Table 5-9 already represents the information the commenter asked to be displayed in a bar graph format.</p>
60	The draft document indicates that the landscape around the proposed solar facility is agricultural but does not specify the vegetation component of the actual solar farm site location. Some solar farms maintain little to no value to grassland birds or birds in general as the rows are mowed. (pg. 479)	Section 10.5 of the EIS was updated to add additional information about the landcover types in the Fern-Roth Solar Farm project area.
61	I am commenting on the proposed powerline running from Big Stone to Alexandria, specifically the Hancock sub region which I live and farm on. I attended the Hancock public meeting held on October 1st. I listened and watched as the Ottertail spokesperson presented their plan and also their preferred route to the people in attendance. Their preferred route in my specific sub-region is labeled HSR01. Now this particular route happens to expose over twice as many people to the powerline as the other option in the Hancock Sub-region. I couldn't help but wonder why would they pick that route? Well, it turns out it saves them \$24 million. That's a hefty sum for sure, but apparently well worth the savings to expose the extra people it crosses paths with. I would hope the commission could see why they would choose this route over the other. I believe it is purely financial.	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS. Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
61	<p>I also believe the reason all of these routes were chosen in the first place is because of Fish and Wildlife lands/wetlands. The routes weave around these parcels like they are gold, but cut straight through the seemingly 'wide open corridors' of farmland. Lands that have been cleared and drained for generations creating these 'wide open corridors'. I'm sure it's a developers dream to see such 'open land', created of course by the farmer. It appears we have tiled our way right into the plans of utility companies such as Ottertail. Had we left the lands 'untouched', where could they place this powerline? If developers are going to use the generations of work done to open up these lands, then the people that opened up these lands need to be very well compensated for such a project. Without their efforts, no such project could ever be built. What is the true worth in that? It's a little ironic that we as farmers apply for permits and get ok's from government agencies to improve the land, and then government agencies turn around and decide we've done a good enough job to then plop down a powerline in these 'wide open' areas. As if they just naturally occurred. I urge citizens on all routes to realize the true benefits you have given this project. Without them, they would be cut off from their ultimate goal of reaching the Twin Cities. And then, God forbid, they'd have to build the power plants near the people that require the power. Now, they can just use your lands to get the power to where they need it and feel good about all the wonderful Fish and Wildlife lands that can never be touched by such a project. PUBLIC lands. That do NOT serve the PUBLIC in this case.</p>	<p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.</p>
61	<p>My frustration level is at 10 with this project. As I know it is with many people on these routes. This is really the best we can do? There are no good choices. All I hope is the commission keep people as a top priority in their decisions as to where this powerline goes. The routes with the least people on them are the best. If only there were lands without any people. Come to think of it, does anyone live on Fish and Wildlife lands? Huh. Makes one wonder what really matters.</p>	<p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
62	<p>My only concern is -- well, I have two. There's a proposed, I think it's marked N-10, I don't like that one at all. Because the problem I have, it goes through or over my woods. And I was told that they were going to clear cut underneath that woods of 150-foot wide. The purpose of this woods is I deer hunt in there and I don't want to clear cut the woods. So I don't like that option and that option is close to my house. If they do the west option, which I'm more in favor of, they still are going to clear cut 75 feet. If they would go 75 feet farther to the west, they're in over a field. Karen Ronning's (phonetic) field, they're going from the west to the east and then turning north, 75 feet of hers and 75 feet of mine. And I'm just saying, if they go 75 feet farther to the west they wouldn't have to clear cut any trees and I wouldn't -- all my deer stands are on that west side. So that's my -- I agree we need power and I just don't want it there. Or leave my trees.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The anticipated alignment of the route as depicted in the EIS is the alignment the Commission will base its route decision-making on; however, if a route permit is received, the applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment.</p>
63	<p>We live at 1329 Cross Century Lane. So one of the proposed comes through my property. We already have the CapX 2020 transmission line. We also have another transmission line through there. Previous comments indicate they probably don't cross transmission lines, so that puts this line potentially very close to my house. Like Tom and probably many other property owners who deer hunt their property, we also pheasant hunt, and right now currently I've got 250-foot right-of-ways that are getting clear cut on a pretty regular basis. I'm not a big fan of the restoration work that was done after the project. It was not restored. That burden was put on me. And then the ongoing maintenance I guess I have concerns with as well. In the sense that I think they need to sharpen up their tape measure a little bit because they tend to cut much wider than the 150 feet that they're allowed. It seems like every year or every other year it gets wider and wider. So some selfish reasons for sure. But I think my property taxes keep going up and the usability of my property keeps going down. So not in favor of that route.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Construction and maintenance procedures including survey marking the right-of-way, right-of-way clearing, and site restoration are discussed in Section 3.4 of the EIS.</p>
64	<p>I'm speaking to the same circumstance that Mr. Johnson just spoke to, but we are in the same area. That is Fenway's township, North Route 1, we prefer North Route 2. However, if North Route 1 is selected, we need to ensure that alternate segment N-9 is used, not segment N-2. Mr. Weiers spoke earlier about the need to both parallel to existing corridors. Highway 114 is next to the corridor. That is the alternate segment, segment N-2. That is farm property. We talk about this pristine farm property that produces the food that you eat. I know that at one point you had commented that you were choosing section -- or segment N-2 because it was less expensive. That is not a valid reason. This cost is minuscule in comparison to the large project and you can make that by charging a penny to your customers' bills, so cost is not legitimate in this case. I do want to quote one of your documents. It says, and I quote, segment alternative 9 would result in fewer impacts to residences within 301 to 500 feet and less acres of impacts to upland forest, nonforested wetlands, agricultural lands, and introduce one last water body crossing along with the proposed lengths, end quote. So, in my mind and in hopefully the PUC's mind, those are clear and decisive reasons to use segment alternative N-9 and not to use segment N-2.</p> <p>Again, bisecting farm property is detrimental for years to come. It impacts farmers' costs, ability to use large equipment. If you have an existing public corridor you should be using that corridor. So, I'm strongly advocating for the use of the alternate segment, the short segment. Again, cost should not be the factor that overrides destroying farm property. So, please consider that option again, the use of the alternate segment N-9, not segment N-2.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Cost is one of 14 factors the Commission considers when making a decision on a route permit per Minnesota Rules 7850.4100 and as discussed in Section 2.2.1 of the EIS. The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
65	<p>Route segment N-11, as indicated, that's a new portion of the route, has four homes, four more homes that will be affected by this line by the new segment. My house is technically not in there, but it goes right through my place, right through my homestead. Instead of my house may not be within the 500 feet, but the place is, and that's why I don't want the alternative route. I would prefer the original route. And it's actually ASR-02 that is seven miles long.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
66	<p>So as far as the other, property value of the property, because who is going to want to live close to it? So it's going to -- it should be worth a lot more to the people that it's going on. And then I think I've heard a one-time payment, they're not going to be making money on this every year just like the last one that was put up, and why wouldn't it be a yearly payment for whoever owns the property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.</p>
67	<p>Originally when this came through, part of the original plan was to go through the back of my property a half mile away from my house. Now the plan, alternative plan ASR-02 goes directly over my front yard. I'm not happy about that going over my front yard. I have a lot of concerns, too many to list tonight, but what will that do to my family's health, to my property values? That's just two questions. So, I prefer it would go over ASR-01.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H. Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>
68	<p>I'm here on behalf of the JENNIE-O® Turkey Company, and I'm going to talk about a little quarter mile piece on one of the routes that affects our business. We're on Highway 12 about two miles west of Highway 59. We have our JENNIE-O® farm there. It's got about 100,000 turkeys at any one time at that spot. The closest building is about 90 feet off the road. Most of the build is -- the next closest buildings are about 165 feet. Generally, we're in favor of the project. We're quite a user of power and recognize the need for the addition. Our biggest concern is that the route width of SSR-03 and SSR-04 run right through the middle of our farm, so the potential disruptions to our activities could be significant. As you may or may not know, security is huge on the turkey farm where we're fighting avian influenza right now at a number of our farms and that will continue to grow as the fall goes on and the migratory birds keep going. So that having additional people on the farms would be very problematic to us. Now, we note that nothing can't be overcome, but it would be quite an undertaking to get everybody bio security certified and bio secure every day that they may be on the site. And then we have quite a bit of infrastructure there as far as barns and all of the facilities that go through with that, too, which would be problematic to moving. Which on your preferred route goes just to the north of that site, so we -- I believe it's been taken into consideration, but we did want to get it into the record.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. The applicants work with landowners to ensure access to property meets landowner needs and to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts. The applicants have the flexibility to work with landowners and move the alignment anywhere within the route width upon additional approval with the Commission. The route width is generally 500 feet on each side of any alignment. In accordance with requirement 5.2 of the route permit, permittees will be required to notify landowners prior to entering or conducting maintenance within their property, unless otherwise negotiated with the landowner.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
69	<p>And our farm is part of the route 2, and it's slaying our farm into two pieces. And it's been in the family for over 100 years. And we see no reason why it should be split, and when it goes up it would be within about 100 yards of our house. Our house has siding on it and we don't know how the electrical lines would react. And I don't feel I should have to do this. Also, in Minnesota law it states that utilities need to have 80 percent of their electricity generation be carbon-free by -- 80 percent by 2030, and 100 percent by 2040. And I believe that the plant at Big Stone is a coal plant, and that is not carbon-free. So I don't understand how this would work with being what the state law is. And the state law has already been through the court system and the court system has approved it. Also, we have irrigators, and it would affect the irrigators that we have. And our land is tiled, and as far as I know, there's no way to tell where the tiling goes, that you can find it with anybody who is trying to determine its location, whether it's five feet deep or 30 feet deep into the land. And I would like to suggest that instead of running lines through our farmland and avoiding wetlands and whatever else, you build the power plant by where the electricity is needed.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety, including EMF, are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS. An EMF Supplement is provided in Appendix J. The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture, including drain tile and center pivot irrigation, are discussed in Section 4.5.1 of the EIS.</p>
70	<p>I see Marlowe is here, and I know he's talked about, you know, that typically your lines don't go through like public land, like Fish and Wildlife land or DNR land because it's not permitted. But it seems kind of unfair that, you know, the private landowners are, you know, that this is put through their land, but it's not considered in those kind of properties. And I'm on the township board, too, and we got a tilt payment, which is a payment in lieu of taxes, and it's \$1.41 for all the land in our township, and I'm, like, it's really a joke that, you know, they don't replace that, you know, tax.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
71	<p>I'm a landowner that is proposed -- one of these proposed lines goes right through, and Ron was talking about it. And I talked to these two people before. I have been involved with this farm. My relatives homesteaded that land and I have been involved with it ever since then. And you're going to ruin that legacy that they built because you're going to take away all of my rights as a landowner. I can't -- they can come into that land any time they want and do whatever they want. And I don't understand why Fish and Wildlife and DNR land is more important than private landowners' land. I mean, if they say they're going to disrupt some bird or frog or mouse or whatever on their land, well, that thing is the same thing on my land. And I just -- it just baffles me how our landowners' and private citizens' rights are ignored. Fish and Wildlife and the DNR can say nope, we don't want you, and you don't really argue with them. But you come to the private landowners and use eminent domain and say it's going to be here and you don't have no choice. And I -- Ron made the comment about, like my son, and he has children that want to farm. Well, how is that going to affect this? And this has been in our family for years and years and now we have to have this happen to us. And I have two 40-acre parcels that are affected by this line that are absolutely native prairie, they have never had anything done to them except cattle on them grazing and haying. And that, you're going to go in there and set poles and tear that land up and save artificial native prairie that they're re-seeding, when I have 40 acres or 80 acres of this right under your proposed power line? So, I just -- Otter Tail has the opportunity to set a precedent here that private landowners have some rights above what the government has and that we should be able to maintain our farms and our future for our children. So, I don't know, there's all kinds of wildlife involved in this, but we have eagles flying around out there and that should be protected. So, please do what's right, Otter Tail, protect private landowners' rights.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p>
72	<p>One of the first questions I had when I first got the information from BSSA about this route is why are we as landowners being sacrificed for a line that doesn't have diddly to do with us? We're talking Alexandria and points beyond. We will get absolutely nothing out of this. And all of us as landowners here have blood, sweat, and tears in our land. And I know that the representative will say we'll be reimbursed, but we'll be reimbursed with whatever the so-called fair going rate is at that time. Especially if it goes to eminent domain. And I'm sure it will, because I can tell you right now I will not cooperate in any way, shape, or form with this route. To me it looks totally unacceptable. I have your map and you told us how this was not going to affect land. Well, you got it going through right in the middle of my patches here. And obviously you probably think, well, that's not a big deal, because it's only a four-acre patch. Well, that's a big deal to me. As I said, we got blood, sweat, and tears, and we have some rights. Especially for a line that, my God, it's just out of our area. And what recourse do we have? I'm sure OTP will go through legal channels and we'll get our land condemned and then we get paid. I'm just going to say I'm not signing anything. Send me to jail. I refuse to cooperate.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Project will interconnect generation to serve the entire system in the Upper Midwest, not solely the metropolitan area. The Commission determined on October 30, 2024, that the project is needed to avoid adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the people of Minnesota. The Commission also determined the project will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health. The project was studied, reviewed, and approved by MISO as part of its 2021 Transmission Expansion Plan report, and is one of 18 transmission projects needed across the larger interconnection grid to address reliability and capacity issues as well issues concerning the addition of renewable resources on the existing 230-kV system in western and central Minnesota, eastern North Dakota, and South Dakota.</p> <p>Compensation is discussed in Sections 2.6, 3.3.2, and Appendix F of the EIS.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
73	<p>First of all, the address of our property, which falls along the proposed segment called South 2 is 35496 620th Avenue in Correll, Minnesota, just west of Artichoke Lake. So the statement is follows: We want to make it clear that running a 345,000-volt transmission line down our driveway across our land just 400 feet or less from our home would place an unnecessary and unfair burden on our family. Safer, more reasonable alternative routes exist that follow public roads and keeps the line well over 2,000 feet from our house. This line would not just be an eyesore, it would cast a shadow of worry over our daily lives. Research has raised concerns about health effects from living so close to such massive power lines. The risks include adult and childhood leukemia and female infertility. While there are numerous studies with a range of conclusions, they do not add up to zero risk. Even though a debate exists, the fact remains, if there is any chance of increased risk to children and families, why take it when other viable routes avoid that risk entirely? Beyond health, the presence of a 150-foot tower near our house would certainly harm property value. It would make our property harder to sell, damage its beauty, and change the character of the place we have called home. We were recognized as a Centennial Farm years ago, and we now approach 150 years as a single continuous family on this land. In fact, we settled on the land even before the land was officially deeded to us from the U.S. government under the Homestead Act of 1862. We should not be forced to accept such lasting harm when numerous clear alternatives exist, many that follow public corridors instead of cutting through private land. This decision comes down to fairness and common sense. If the project can meet its goals while avoiding serious impacts on our property and my family, it should do so. We ask you to reject the route of South 2 across our land and reject -- or -- and choose an alternative route, preferably along public corridors where it belongs.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning property values are discussed in Section 4.3.8. A Property Value Supplement is provided in Appendix H.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning human health and safety are discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics are discussed in Sections 4.3.1, 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS.</p> <p>The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>The Commission is charged with selecting transmission line routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. Minnesota Statute 216E.03, identifies multiple factors that the Commission must consider when designating transmission line routes, including minimizing environmental impacts and minimizing human settlement and other land use conflicts. The Commission must weigh and consider all of these factors when deciding on whether to issue a route permit and where the route should go, rather than a singular factor, which is informed by all impact types that are assessed in the EIS.</p>
74	<p>I'm objecting to the "T127-R38" Big Stone South Route. I am co-family owner of "Erickson/Wayne H/etal" cited on the proposal map of this proposed route. I would prefer the alternate route, "T126-R38", that would follow Hwy 129 from Glenwood to Alexandria. Our family has owned and operated family farming activities both in the direct path and adjacent (visual) for almost 140 years. This line would have a severe negative impact, both economically and emotionally, on my family and associated relatives, now and in the foreseeable future.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
75	<p>Yes sir this is Marlowe Klepel from odessa MN I'm calling about the proposed auto power line from Big Stone County to South Dakota to Alexandria the line that they have proposed BSSR08 goes right through farmers tillable land splitting it up and it goes through through two I have 240 acre tracts of actual native prairie that has never been touched and they will they will be going through them we're right on the edge of them and causing damage to them the preferred route that farmers would like is BSSR03 and if that one doesn't work I guess we would we would go with BSSR05 but 03 is the preferred route and it takes away the splitting of farmland the farmer's field and it and it goes away from the native prairies that I have. I would appreciate your help with this sir it's a very touchy issue we have proposed this other line that stays right on the edge of the lines and the thing that really bothers me is that fish and wildlife says they can't go on the highway right of way along their land so I thank you for your help sir and if you have any questions 320-815-5717 thank you and I appreciate your help.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Your route preference has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.</p> <p>While many routing alternatives exist that avoid public lands, there are multiple routes that may be permitted that do cross public lands (Appendix G). For example, most of the routing alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion cross USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. While routing through public lands is possible, it takes more coordination and time with potential permitting through State and Federal agencies that may impose additional conditions to mitigate impacts. Thus, the applicants tended to propose routing alternatives that avoid public lands where feasible.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning sensitive ecological resources, such as native prairie, are discussed in Section 4.7.9 generally and in Section 5.2.6.9 for the Big Stone Subregion.</p>
76	<p>Our property is located in Leven township Pope County S2 Sec 9 T126 R37. The proposed powerline would interfere with our tile lines, farming our land and aerial spraying on our property. There is already the pipeline that goes to the tanks in Alexandria and another powerline that crosses our property. We farm our property and do not need any more utilities to be on our property.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning agriculture/farming are discussed in Sections 4.5.1, 5.2.4.1, 5.3.4.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.4.1, and 7.2.4.1 of the EIS. The applicants' AIMP, approved by MDA, is provided in Appendix L of the EIS.</p> <p>Potential impacts and mitigation measures concerning aesthetics for specific residences are discussed in Sections 5.2.2.1, 5.3.2.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.3.2.1, 6.4.2.1, and 7.2.2.1 of the EIS. These Sections also detail areas where residences would be boxed in by the project in combination with existing transmission lines, or where residences would be near a pinch point where the project and existing transmission lines intersect. The EIS states these residences would be subject to significant aesthetic impacts. The Commission will have this information when making a route selection for the project should they decide to issue a route permit for the project.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
76	Also why add miles of powerline and cross State Hwy 29 twice? Why didn't the proposed powerline go in a more direct line from Big Stone to Alexandria?	The Commission must determine the least impactful route for the project that minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring electric power system reliability and integrity. A project going through the Commission's route permitting procedures must make specific findings that the Commission has considered locating a new transmission line route along an existing transmission line ROW or parallel existing highway ROW and, to the extent these are not used for the route, the Commission must state the reasons why (Minnesota Statute § 216E.03). An overview of use or paralleling if existing ROW is in Section 4.2 of the EIS. Lastly, engineering design must be taken into consideration when designating which routes are feasible, which is influenced by topographic, soil conditions, depth to groundwater, and many other factors.
77	The preferred route for the big stone transmission makes little sense. The best option is plan B down 29 where there is already a line established. It makes no sense to go through miles of farmland. Even those at the Glenwood mn meeting couldn't defend the preferred route and said the second choice was valid. What are you thinking?	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
78	The Erickson Family Farm has been in our family since 1885. I am now part owner of that land and am the 4th generation to have owned and farmed that land along Woodsmen Ln, SW Alexandria, MN. I remember my father telling stories about clearly that land for farming one acre per year using a team of horses! The proposed route #T127-R38 would decimate this beautiful farm forever, because it goes along Woodsmen Ln SW. Therefore, I suggest you use a route that runs along Highway 29 and missed all this beautiful lake views and wonderful ag land!	Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process. Your route opposition has been noted for consideration in the route permit decision.
79	<p>Thank you for taking the time to listen to me yesterday evening, 10/2/25, regarding the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345-kV Transmission Line Project concerns. As stated in the meeting, we did not receive any documentation regarding our land parcel involvement until 2 weeks ago. The notice of being 'served' in the letter dated February 25, 2025, was included in a folder left at 2550 30th Street SW, Appleton, MN 56208, an address that is neither my primary residence nor currently occupied. While some related documents for myself, trustee, were correctly delivered to my Edina address, the critical communication regarding service was directed to an unsuitable location. This folder was left by Mr. Luke Hoss with a letter dated June 30, 2025, I know the folder was not there the week prior as I was at the house myself as well as a caretaker stopping by the house daily. The folder contained a Mr. Hoss' letter, a letter from Samantha Cosgriff, 2 parcels under consideration, information on the BSSA Transmission Line, and the prehearing order. I also received a letter in the mail at my primary residence at 6805 Saint Patricks Lane, Edina, MN 55439, from Mr. Hoss, again dated June 30, 2025, 2 weeks ago, with 3 parcels that were being considered for the line and information on the BSSA Transition Line, but nothing on the prehearing order and nothing about the other 2 parcels which are also owned by the trust 50/50. There are several things wrong here: 1) I should have been notified about ALL 5 parcels as I am the Trustee of them all and why didn't my letter include the prehearing information like the folder left at the house, 2550 30th Street SW, Appleton, MN 56208? 2) The notification of the prehearing was dated in February. I spoke to Mr. Hoss on the phone in June and he made no mention of that. I asked him where he thought it would be and he said didn't know yet and it didn't sound like they knew the parcels yet. 3) Mr. Hoss was told by our caretaker that no one lived at the farm when he left the folder filled with paperwork, which included the prehearing and parcel information, but he still left it there and didn't follow up with anyone regarding who to contact. He could have contacted me regarding who to contact, he had spoken to me before. He knew the prehearings were coming up and time was/is running out. 4) We feel blindsided by this information as we haven't been given adequate information, and the information we have been given is piecemeal at best, nor have we been given time to digest and research this regarding our land and its involvement due to improper notification. 5) All of these letters included in the mailings and folder are dated months ago, but yet we received them 2 weeks ago? Mr. Hoss spoke to me on the phone in June, he knew how to get in touch to get me the information.</p> <p>Despite established mail forwarding and the demonstrated ability of other legal, governmental, and business entities to easily contact us regarding the property, no effective effort appears to have been made to ensure proper notification in this instance. We are left to assume that this failure to appropriately contact us is directly related to our significant landholdings, which stand to be substantially impacted by this transmission line venture. This land has been in our family for over 150 and it seems that every few years there is a "project" the highway department needs to take more of our land away for. A few years back it was for a snow fence that was to stop snow from collecting on highway 12. I have lived in that location for almost 50 years and have NEVER seen snow collect between Big Stone County Road 25 and Swift County Road 1 and block highway 12 even once, but we had to sell for that anyway. I realize that highway 7 isn't a great option for a route to Alexandria, but there needs to be other alternatives than highway 12 for every project.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and for participating in the permitting process.</p> <p>The Commission and the applicants have been in contact with the commenter to explain the process and the mailing list. The Commission has ensured the preferred address was added to the mailing list.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
79	<p>I also have concern over a statement that was glazed over in the prehearing last night. I heard the statement, “and possible future expansion”. Does this mean that there is possibility that in the future, after this is complete, this transmission line could be widened even more and more of our land could be taken from us again?</p> <p>I appreciate you taking the time to address our concerns of not being notified properly on the possible transmission line route. If we have more than 5 parcels involved, please let me know. I have attached everything I have received thus far, not including what I received per the email notification signup I got on months ago.</p>	<p>“Possible future expansion” refers to installing a second circuit on the transmission line that would be built if this project is issued a permit. The structures for this project would be pre-built with the capability to add this second circuit and would remain empty on that one side of the structure. While the applicants can build the structures that way if they get a route permit for this project, they would need to go through the permitting process with the Commission again to install the second circuit. However, an increased right-of-way would likely not be required, thus, possible future expansion is not expected to further widen property easements that result from the project.</p>
79	<p>Hi Jenna, I so appreciate all of your research. You state the first mailing went out in October 2024 to the 2550 30th Street, Appleton address and then the 2nd was mailed in April but the mailing address was updated between October and April to 6805 Saint Patricks Lane, Edina, and the third mailing went to the Edina address and that never reached me either. The address changes shouldn't have mattered because the mail from 2550 30th street, Appleton, MN 56208, was forwarded to 6805 Saint Patricks Lane, Edina, MN 55439, in September 2024. I should have received it all regardless. I received ALL the bills that were to be paid from 2550 30th Street, Appleton. The funny thing is that I WAS receiving the BSSA postcard flyers that one gets from signing up to be on the email notification list just fine. It doesn't make sense.</p> <p>I also respectfully and politely decline the statement that the folder of the notice of public hearings containing the land parcels was dropped off in June 2025 at the 2550 30th street residence as well as receiving the letter at 6805 Saint Patricks Lane, Edina in June. We did not receive either of them at either of those locations until the end of September. It's quite coincidental that both locations received them at the same time and my caretaker at the 2550 30th street residence can attest to seeing the folder being dropped off in September and speaking with Mr. Hoff. I have even tried calling Mr. Hoff after the fact and he hasn't returned my call. Nothing can be done now so I will move on from that. We are fairly certain we have been notified of all the land, but here are the other parcels to be sure. I realize 2 of the properties are totally out of the scope/area, but I grabbed all the parcel numbers. 16-0087-000; 16-0090-000; 16-0160-000; 16-0161-000; 16-0083-000; 16-0085-000; 16-0086-000; 16-0036-000; 16-0040-000.</p>	<p>The Commission and the applicants have been in contact with the commenter to explain the process and the mailing list. The Commission has ensured the preferred address was added to the mailing list.</p>
79	<p>A few quick questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would the roads that would be needed initially to build these towers need to be permanent or can they be turned back into tillable acreage? 2. Would we have to sell or could we consider a long term leasing option? 	<p>This comment has been forwarded to the applicant who has been in contact with the commenter. Individual landowner agreements are outside the scope of this EIS.</p>
80	<p>Please continue to consult with our Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system (https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/) as you progress through the planning phases for the most up-to-date species list, determination keys, and conservation measures. Species that are either federally protected or proposed for protection may occur in the project area (e.g., northern long-eared bat, tricolored bat, Rufa red knot, Dakota skipper, monarch butterfly, Suckley's cuckoo bumblebee, and western regal fritillary, as referenced in the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement).</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
80	<p>The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) manages numerous units of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) within the proposed route alternatives of the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project Area (i.e., Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge). In addition to National Wildlife Refuges, FWS manages Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) which include fee title lands (WPAs) and conservation easement interest lands (habitat, wetland, and Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) easements). Conservation easements are lands where FWS has worked with landowners to purchase and permanently protect upland and/or wetland habitat on private property to provide benefits to migratory bird populations.</p> <p>A map of FWS land interests can be accessed at https://gis-fws.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/fws::fws-national-realty-boundaries/about. This data layer depicts land and water administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in North America, U.S. trust territories and possessions categorized by the type of legal interest the agency possesses or administers. These lands are managed through the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act (16 USC668 dd), and proposed uses of these lands cannot be allowed unless they are compatible (Compatibility Policy 603 FW2) with the purposes for which the unit was established. Our goal is to work with you to identify route alternatives that completely avoid or minimize impacts to federal interest lands managed by the FWS. We recommend that you coordinate route alternatives with the FWS Project Leader responsible for administering NWRS lands within the geographic area of the project. Individual contact information is listed below the signature line of this letter.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
80	<p>The Big Stone South-Alexandria Project Area occurs within a sensitive area for migratory birds (i.e., the Lac Qui Parle-Big Stone Important Bird Area). We recommend consulting with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird database (https://ebird.org/home) and Birdcast website (https://birdcast.info) for more robust and real-time data on bird occurrence and timing/composition/estimated altitude of bird migration throughout the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project Area. While incidental take is not prohibited under the MBTA, we believe that siting and design concessions could avoid or minimize impacts of the project to migratory birds. We have attached a list of best management practices to this letter.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
80	<p>If the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project may impact bald or golden eagles, we would encourage you to obtain an eagle take permit. Eagle take permits are voluntary, and Otter Tail Power Company/Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency/Missouri River Energy Services must assess its own risk of impacts to eagles. The most up-to-date information on the permitting process (including eligibility requirements for “General” and “Specific” permits) can be found on the Eagle Incidental Take Permits for Powerlines webpage: https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management/power-linepermits.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
80	<p>We recommend siting the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project to minimize habitat fragmentation by adhering to existing developed Rights-of-Way (ROW) to the greatest extent possible.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The EIS discusses following existing rights-of-way in Sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, and 7.2.1. Minnesota Rule 7850.4100 requires the Commission to consider the use or paralleling of existing rights-of-way, survey lines, natural division lines, and agricultural field boundaries. Minnesota Statute 216E, subdivision 7(e), states that the Commission must consider routing a high voltage transmission line along an existing high voltage transmission line or highway right-of-way and to the extent these are not used it must state the reasons why.</p>
80	<p>We recommend preservation and enhancement of native plant communities, especially for re-vegetation of areas disturbed within new and existing ROW and associated facilities, to ensure on-going protection of native plant communities and pollinator species: For temporary and permanent habitat restoration/abatement, use only native and local (when possible) seed and plant stock. Pollinator-favored plants can be found on this list: https://www.fws.gov/media/plants-favored-rusty-patched-bumble-bee. Consider creating vehicle wash stations prior to entering sensitive habitat areas to prevent accidental introduction of non-native plants. Because pollinators are dependent on flowering plants for nutrients and energy, especially in the summer, we recommend mowing at a rate or height that does not reduce a significant number of flowering plants for foraging pollinators (for additional recommendations, please review this document: https://www.fws.gov/media/conservation-management-technical-assistance-rustypatched-bumble-bee). If possible, we recommend that any mowing or ground disturbance during construction or maintenance not take place until after the native plant communities have stopped flowering.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

Comment ID	Comment	Response
80	<p>Optional Best Management Practices to Avoid or Minimize Impacts to Migratory Birds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Big Stone South-Alexandria Project will include tree-clearing activities, we request that you evaluate and disclose impacts to all forest-dwelling species of federal interest and include associated conservation measures to minimize risk, impacts, and adverse effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend limiting forest clearing activities to occur outside of the migratory bird nesting season (March 1 – August 31) and summer occupancy period for Northern Long-eared Bat (April 15 – September 30). If clearing must be completed within the bat occupancy season, we recommend surveys be conducted to avoid or minimize take of federally protected species. • We recommend development of an Avian Protection Plan to reduce avian risk of electrocution, collision, and death, as well as bird-caused power outages. We recommend inclusion of the following guidelines from the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure adequate clearance, design structures should, at a minimum, provide at least 60 inches of horizontal separation between energized conductors and/or energized conductors and grounded hardware and 48-60 inches of vertical separation. - Avoid siting lines in areas where birds concentrate (i.e., wetlands, stream crossings, historic staging areas, roosts, and nesting colonies). - Install visibility enhancement devices (e.g., marker spheres, spirals, suspended devices, bird diverters) placed in varying configurations, depending on the line design and location; large diameter wire may also increase line visibility. - If a “problem pole” is identified (i.e., documented avian collision, electrocution, problem nest material, or high risk of avian mortality), we recommend retrofitting the pole by: 1) covering jumper wires, conductors, and equipment; 2) discouraging perching in unsafe areas (e.g., perch guards); 3) reframing; 4) replacing a structure; or 5) providing safe alternatives for perching and nesting (e.g., nesting platforms). - When collisions cannot be reduced by another method, such as line marking or managing surrounding lands, the configuration of an existing line can sometimes be changed to minimize collisions. Options for changes might include: 1) lowering the height of the lines (e.g., below the tree line); 2) changing the wire diameter; 3) bundling wires; 4) using spacers to improve visibility; 5) rearranging wire configuration (e.g., converting from vertical to horizontal); 6) changing the structure type to increase its visibility; or 7) decreasing span length (e.g., by adding a pole mid-span). - Consider construction, placement, and monitoring of nest boxes for cavity-nesting populations, as well as bats and flying squirrels. • We recommend limiting any increase in lighting of native habitats during the avian breeding season through the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To the maximum extent practicable, limit construction activities to the time between dawn and dusk to avoid illumination of adjacent habitat areas. - If construction activity time restrictions are not possible, use down shielding or directional lighting to avoid light trespass into wildlife habitat. To the maximum extent possible, while allowing for public safety, low intensity lighting should be used. - Eliminate the use steady burning lights on tall structures (e.g., greater than 200 feet in height). 	Comment noted.

Appendix C

Draft Route Permit

STATE OF MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

ROUTE PERMIT FOR
[PROJECT NAME]

A HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES

IN
[COUNTY]

ISSUED TO
[PERMITTEE]

PUC DOCKET NO. [Docket Number]

In accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850 this route permit is hereby issued to:

[Permittee]

[Permittee] is authorized by this route permit to construct and operate [Provide a description of the project authorized by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission].

The high-voltage transmission line shall be constructed within the route identified in this route permit and in compliance with the conditions specified in this route permit.

Approved and adopted this ____ day of [Month, Year]

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Will Seuffert,
Executive Secretary

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Complaint Handling Procedures for Permitted Energy Facilities

Attachment 2 – Compliance Filing Procedures for Permitted Energy Facilities

SAMPLE PERMIT

1 ROUTE PERMIT

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) hereby issues this route permit to [Permittee Name] (Permittee) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850. This route permit authorizes the Permittee to construct and operate a [Provide a description of the project as authorized by the Commission] ([Project Name, if applicable], henceforth known as Transmission Facility). The high-voltage transmission line shall be constructed within the route identified in this route permit and in compliance with the conditions specified in this route permit.

1.1 Pre-emption

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216E.10, this route permit shall be the sole route approval required for construction of the transmission facilities and this route permit shall supersede and preempt all zoning, building, or land use rules, regulations, or ordinances promulgated by regional, county, local and special purpose governments.

2 TRANSMISSION FACILITY DESCRIPTION

[Provide a description of the Transmission Facility as authorized by the Commission]

The Transmission Facility is located in the following:

County	Township Name	Township	Range	Section

2.1 Structures

[Provide a detailed description of the structures authorized by the Commission]

2.2 Conductors

[Provide a detailed description of the conductors authorized by the Commission]

The table below details specifics on the various structure and conductor types as presented in the route permit application.

Line Type	Conductor	Structure		Foundation	Height	Span
		Type	Material			

2.3 Substations and Associated Facilities

[Provide a detailed description of the associated facilities and substations as authorized by the Commission]

3 DESIGNATED ROUTE

The route designated by the Commission is depicted on the route maps attached to this route permit (Designated Route). The Designated Route is generally described as follows:

[Provide detailed description of the authorized route including the route widths and any other specifics relevant to each segment. Also include a reference to the relevant route map to be attached to the route permit.]

The Designated Route includes an anticipated alignment and a right-of-way. The right-of-way is the physical land needed for the safe operation of the transmission line. The Permittee shall locate the alignment and associated right-of-way within the Designated Route unless otherwise authorized by this route permit or the Commission. The Designated Route provides the Permittee with flexibility for minor adjustments of the alignment and right-of-way to accommodate landowner requests and unforeseen conditions.

Any modifications to the Designated Route or modifications that would result in right-of-way placement outside the Designated Route shall be specifically reviewed by the Commission in accordance with Minn. R. 7850.4900 and Section 10 of this route permit.

4 RIGHT-OF-WAY

This route permit authorizes the Permittee to obtain a new permanent right-of-way for the transmission line up to [number] feet in width. The permanent right-of-way is typically [number] feet on both sides of the transmission line measured from its centerline or alignment.

The anticipated alignment is intended to minimize potential impacts relative to the criteria identified in Minn. R. 7850.4100. The final alignment must generally conform to the anticipated alignment identified on the route maps unless changes are requested by individual landowners and agreed to by the Permittee or for unforeseen conditions that are encountered or as otherwise provided for by this route permit.

Any right-of-way or alignment modifications within the Designated Route shall be located so as to have comparable overall impacts relative to the factors in Minn. R. 7850.4100, as does the

right-of-way and alignment identified in this route permit, and shall be specifically identified and documented in and approved as part of the plan and profile submitted pursuant to Section 9.1 of this route permit.

Where the transmission line parallels existing highway and other road rights-of-way, the transmission line right-of-way shall occupy and utilize the existing right-of-way to the maximum extent possible; consistent with the criteria in Minn. R. 7850.4100, and the other requirements of this route permit; and for highways under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the procedures for accommodating utilities in trunk highway rights-of-way.

5 GENERAL CONDITIONS

The Permittee shall comply with the following conditions during construction and operation of the Transmission Facility over the life of this route permit.

5.1 Route Permit Distribution

Within 30 days of issuance of this route permit, the Permittee shall provide all affected landowners with a copy of this route permit and the complaint procedures. An affected landowner is any landowner or designee that is within or adjacent to the Designated Route. In no case shall a landowner receive this route permit and complaint procedures less than five days prior to the start of construction on their property. The Permittee shall also provide a copy of this route permit and the complaint procedures to the applicable regional development commissions, county environmental offices, and city and township clerks. The Permittee shall file with the Commission an affidavit of its route permit and complaint procedures distribution within 30 days of issuance of this route permit.

5.2 Access to Property

The Permittee shall notify landowners prior to entering or conducting maintenance within their property, unless otherwise negotiated with the landowner. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of [the Minnesota Department of Commerce \(Department of Commerce\) staff](#) or Commission staff.

5.3 Construction and Operation Practices

The Permittee shall comply with the construction practices, operation and maintenance practices, and material specifications described in the permitting record for this Transmission

Facility unless this route permit establishes a different requirement in which case this route permit shall prevail.

5.3.1 Field Representative

The Permittee shall designate a field representative responsible for overseeing compliance with the conditions of this route permit during construction of the Transmission Facility. This person shall be accessible by telephone or other means during normal business hours throughout site preparation, construction, cleanup, and restoration.

The Permittee shall file with the Commission the name, address, email, phone number, and emergency phone number of the field representative at least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting. The Permittee shall provide the field representative's contact information to affected landowners, local government units and other interested persons at least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting. The Permittee may change the field representative at any time upon notice to the Commission, affected landowners, local government units and other interested persons. The Permittee shall file with the Commission an affidavit of distribution of its field representative's contact information at least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting and upon changes to the field representative.

5.3.2 Employee Training - Route Permit Terms and Conditions

The Permittee shall train all employees, contractors, and other persons involved in the Transmission Facility construction regarding the terms and conditions of this route permit. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.3.3 Independent Third-Party Monitoring

Prior to any construction, the Permittee shall propose a scope of work and identify an independent third-party monitor to conduct construction monitoring on behalf of the ~~Department of Commerce~~ Commission. The scope of work shall be developed in consultation with and approved by the ~~Department of Commerce~~ Commission. This third-party monitor will report directly to and will be under the control of the ~~Department of Commerce~~ Commission with costs borne by the Permittee. ~~Department of Commerce~~ Commission staff shall keep records of compliance with this section and will ensure that status reports detailing the construction monitoring are filed with the Commission in accordance with scope of work approved by the ~~Department of Commerce~~ Commission.

5.3.4 Public Services, Public Utilities, and Existing Easements

During Transmission Facility construction, the Permittee shall minimize any disruption to public services or public utilities. To the extent disruptions to public services or public utilities occur these shall be temporary, and the Permittee shall restore service promptly. Where any impacts to utilities have the potential to occur the Permittee shall work with both landowners and local entities to determine the most appropriate mitigation measures if not already considered as part of this route permit.

The Permittee shall cooperate with county and city road authorities to develop appropriate signage and traffic management during construction. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of [Department of Commerce staff](#) or Commission staff.

5.3.5 Temporary Workspace

The Permittee shall limit temporary easements to special construction access needs and additional staging or lay-down areas required outside of the authorized right-of-way. Temporary space shall be selected to limit the removal and impacts to vegetation. The Permittee shall obtain temporary easements outside of the authorized transmission line right-of-way from affected landowners through rental agreements. Temporary easements are not provided for in this route permit.

The Permittee may construct temporary driveways between the roadway and the structures to minimize impact using the shortest route feasible. The Permittee shall use construction mats to minimize impacts on access paths and construction areas. The Permittee shall submit the location of temporary workspaces and driveways with the plan and profile pursuant to Section 9.1.

5.3.6 Noise

The Permittee shall comply with noise standards established under Minn. R. 7030.0010 to 7030.0080. The Permittee shall limit construction and maintenance activities to daytime working hours to the extent practicable.

5.3.7 Aesthetics

The Permittee shall consider input pertaining to visual impacts from landowners or land management agencies prior to final location of structures, rights-of-way, and other areas with the potential for visual disturbance. The Permittee shall use care to preserve the natural landscape, minimize tree removal and prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the Transmission Facility during construction and maintenance. The Permittee shall work with landowners to locate the high-voltage transmission line to

minimize the loss of agricultural land, forest, and wetlands, and to avoid homes and farmsteads. The Permittee shall place structures at a distance, consistent with sound engineering principles and system reliability criteria, from intersecting roads, highways, or trail crossings.

5.3.8 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control

The Permittee shall implement those erosion prevention and sediment control practices recommended by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Construction Stormwater Program. If construction of the Transmission Facility disturbs more than one acre of land or is sited in an area designated by the MPCA as having potential for impacts to water resources, the Permittee shall obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System Construction Stormwater Permit from the MPCA that provides for the development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that describes methods to control erosion and runoff.

The Permittee shall implement reasonable measures to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction and shall employ perimeter sediment controls, protect exposed soil by promptly planting, seeding, using erosion control blankets and turf reinforcement mats, stabilizing slopes, protecting storm drain inlets, protecting soil stockpiles, and controlling vehicle tracking. Contours shall be graded as required so that all surfaces provide for proper drainage, blend with the natural terrain, and are left in a condition that will facilitate re-vegetation and prevent erosion. All areas disturbed during construction of the Transmission Facility shall be returned to pre-construction conditions.

5.3.9 Wetlands and Water Resources

The Permittee shall develop wetland impact avoidance measures and implement them during construction of the Transmission Facility. Measures shall include spacing and placing the power poles at variable distances to span and avoid wetlands, watercourses, and floodplains. Unavoidable wetland impacts as a result of the placement of poles shall be limited to the immediate area around the poles. To minimize impacts, the Permittee shall construct in wetland areas during frozen ground conditions where practicable and according to permit requirements by the applicable permitting authority. When construction during winter is not possible, the Permittee shall use wooden or composite mats to protect wetland vegetation.

The Permittee shall contain soil excavated from the wetlands and riparian areas and not place it back into the wetland or riparian area. The Permittee shall access wetlands and riparian areas using the shortest route possible in order to minimize travel through wetland areas and prevent unnecessary impacts. The Permittee shall not place staging or stringing set up areas within or adjacent to wetlands or water resources, as practicable. The Permittee shall assemble power pole structures on upland areas before they are brought to the site for installation.

The Permittee shall restore wetland and water resource areas disturbed by construction activities to pre-construction conditions in accordance with the requirements of applicable state and federal permits or laws and landowner agreements. The Permittee shall meet the USACE, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, and local units of government wetland and water resource requirements.

5.3.10 Vegetation Management

The Permittee shall minimize the number of trees to be removed in selecting the right-of-way specifically preserving to the maximum extent practicable windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snow fences, and vegetation in areas such as trail and stream crossings where vegetative screening may minimize aesthetic impacts, to the extent that such actions do not violate sound engineering principles or system reliability criteria.

The Permittee shall remove tall growing species located within the transmission line right-of-way that endanger the safe and reliable operation of the transmission line. The Permittee shall leave undisturbed, to the extent possible, existing low growing species in the right-of-way or replant such species in the right-of-way to blend the difference between the right-of-way and adjacent areas, to the extent that the low growing vegetation that will not pose a threat to the transmission line or impede construction.

5.3.11 Application of Pesticides

The Permittee shall restrict pesticide use to those pesticides and methods of application approved by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), DNR, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Selective foliage or basal application shall be used when practicable. All pesticides shall be applied in a safe and cautious manner so as not to damage adjacent properties including crops, orchards, tree farms, apiaries, or gardens. The Permittee shall contact the landowner at least 14 days prior to pesticide application on their property. The Permittee may not apply any pesticide if the landowner requests that there be no application of pesticides within the landowner's property. The Permittee shall provide notice of pesticide application to landowners and beekeepers operating known apiaries within three miles of the pesticide application area at least 14 days prior to such application. The Permittee shall keep pesticide communication and application records and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.3.12 Invasive Species

The Permittee shall employ best management practices to avoid the potential introduction and spread of invasive species on lands disturbed by Transmission Facility construction activities.

The Permittee shall develop an Invasive Species Prevention Plan and file it with the Commission at least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting. The Permittee shall comply with the most recently filed Invasive Species Prevention Plan.

5.3.13 Noxious Weeds

The Permittee shall take all reasonable precautions against the spread of noxious weeds during all phases of construction. When utilizing seed to establish temporary and permanent vegetative cover on exposed soil the Permittee shall select site appropriate seed certified to be free of noxious weeds. To the extent possible, the Permittee shall use native seed mixes. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.3.14 Roads

The Permittee shall advise the appropriate governing bodies having jurisdiction over all state, county, city, or township roads that will be used during the construction phase of the Transmission Facility. Where practical, existing roadways shall be used for all activities associated with construction of the Transmission Facility. Oversize or overweight loads associated with the Transmission Facility shall not be hauled across public roads without required permits and approvals.

The Permittee shall construct the fewest number of site access roads required. Access roads shall not be constructed across streams and drainage ways without the required permits and approvals. Access roads shall be constructed in accordance with all necessary township, county or state road requirements and permits.

The Permittee shall promptly repair private roads or lanes damaged when moving equipment or when accessing construction workspace, unless otherwise negotiated with the affected landowner.

5.3.15 Archaeological and Historic Resources

The Permittee shall make every effort to avoid impacts to archaeological and historic resources when constructing the Transmission Facility. In the event that a resource is encountered, the Permittee shall consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Archaeologist. Where feasible, avoidance of the resource is required. Where not feasible, mitigation must include an effort to minimize Transmission Facility impacts on the resource consistent with State Historic Preservation Office and State Archaeologist requirements.

Prior to construction, the Permittee shall train workers about the need to avoid cultural properties, how to identify cultural properties, and procedures to follow if undocumented cultural properties, including gravesites, are found during construction. If human remains are encountered during construction, the Permittee shall immediately halt construction and promptly notify local law enforcement and the State Archaeologist. The Permittee shall not resume construction at such location until authorized by local law enforcement or the State Archaeologist. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.3.16 Avian Protection

The Permittee in cooperation with the DNR shall identify areas of the transmission line where bird flight diverters will be incorporated into the transmission line design to prevent large avian collisions attributed to visibility issues. Standard transmission design shall incorporate adequate spacing of conductors and grounding devices in accordance with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee standards to eliminate the risk of electrocution to raptors with larger wingspans that may simultaneously come in contact with a conductor and grounding devices. The Permittee shall submit documentation of its avian protection coordination with the plan and profile pursuant to Section 9.1.

5.3.17 Drainage Tiles

The Permittee shall avoid, promptly repair, or replace all drainage tiles broken or damaged during all phases of the Transmission Facility's life unless otherwise negotiated with the affected landowner. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.3.18 Restoration

The Permittee shall restore the right-of-way, temporary workspaces, access roads, abandoned right-of-way, and other public or private lands affected by construction of the Transmission Facility. Restoration within the right-of-way must be compatible with the safe operation, maintenance, and inspection of the transmission line. Within 60 days after completion of all restoration activities, the Permittee shall file with the Commission a Notice of Restoration Completion.

5.3.19 Cleanup

The Permittee shall remove and properly dispose of all construction waste and scrap from the right-of-way and all premises on which construction activities were conducted upon completion

of each task. The Permittee shall remove and properly dispose of all personal litter, including bottles, cans, and paper from construction activities daily.

5.3.20 Pollution and Hazardous Wastes

The Permittee shall take all appropriate precautions to protect against pollution of the environment. The Permittee shall be responsible for compliance with all laws applicable to the generation, storage, transportation, clean up and disposal of all waste generated during construction and restoration of the Transmission Facility.

5.3.21 Damages

The Permittee shall fairly restore or compensate landowners for damage to crops, fences, private roads and lanes, landscaping, drain tile, or other damages sustained during construction. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.4 Electrical Performance Standards

5.4.1 Grounding

The Permittee shall design, construct, and operate the transmission line in a manner so that the maximum induced steady-state short-circuit current shall be limited to five milliamperes root mean square (rms) alternating current between the ground and any non-stationary object within the right-of-way, including but not limited to large motor vehicles and agricultural equipment. All fixed metallic objects on or off the right-of-way, except electric fences that parallel or cross the right-of-way, shall be grounded to the extent necessary to limit the induced short-circuit current between ground and the object so as not to exceed one milliamperes rms under steady state conditions of the transmission line and to comply with the ground fault conditions specified in the National Electric Safety Code. The Permittee shall address and rectify any induced current problems that arise during transmission line operation.

5.4.2 Electric Field

The Permittee shall design, construct, and operate the transmission line in such a manner that the electric field measured one meter above ground level immediately below the transmission line shall not exceed 8.0 kV/m rms.

5.4.3 Interference with Communication Devices

If interference with radio or television, satellite, wireless internet, GPS-based agriculture navigation systems or other communication devices is caused by the presence or operation of the Transmission Facility, the Permittee shall take whatever action is necessary to restore or provide reception equivalent to reception levels in the immediate area just prior to the construction of the Transmission Facility. The Permittee shall keep records of compliance with this section and provide them upon the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

5.5 Other Requirements

5.5.1 Safety Codes and Design Requirements

The Permittee shall design the transmission line and associated facilities to meet or exceed all relevant local and state codes, the National Electric Safety Code, and North American Electric Reliability Corporation requirements. This includes standards relating to clearances to ground, clearance to crossing utilities, clearance to buildings, strength of materials, clearances over roadways, right-of-way widths, and permit requirements.

5.5.2 Other Permits and Regulations

The Permittee shall comply with all applicable state statutes and rules. The Permittee shall obtain all required permits for the Transmission Facility and comply with the conditions of those permits unless those permits conflict with or are preempted by federal or state permits and regulations.

At least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting, the Permittee shall file with the Commission an Other Permits and Regulations Submittal that contains a detailed status of all permits, authorizations, and approvals that have been applied for specific to the Transmission Facility. The Other Permits and Regulations Submittal shall also include the permitting agency name; the name of the permit, authorization, or approval being sought; contact person and contact information for the permitting agency or authority; brief description of why the permit, authorization, or approval is needed; application submittal date; and the date the permit, authorization, or approval was issued or is anticipated to be issued.

The Permittee shall demonstrate that it has obtained all necessary permits, authorizations, and approvals by filing an affidavit stating as such and an updated Other Permits and Regulations Submittal prior to commencing construction. The Permittee shall provide a copy of any such permits, authorizations, and approvals at the request of ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff.

6 SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The special conditions shall take precedence over other conditions of this permit should there be a conflict.

~~[Add Special Conditions in accordance with the record of the docket]~~

6.1 Facility Lighting

The Permittees must use shielded and downward facing lighting and LED lighting that minimizes blue hue.

6.2 Dust Control

The Permittees shall utilize non-chloride products for onsite dust control during construction.

6.3 Wildlife Friendly Erosion Control

The Permittees shall use only “bio-netting” or “natural netting” types of erosion control materials and mulch products without synthetic (plastic) fiber additives or malachite green dye.

6.4 Vegetation Management Plan

The Permittees shall develop a vegetation management plan (VMP), in coordination with the Vegetation Management Plan Working Group (VMPWG), using best management practices established by the DNR and BWSR. The Permittee shall file the VMP and documentation of the coordination efforts between the Permittee and the DNR with the Commission as part of the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of the Permit.

The VMP must address the following:

- a. the timing of vegetation removal;
- b. maintaining floodplain vegetation to the extent feasible;
- c. herbicide use;
- d. minimizing impacts to sensitive areas, including but not limited to, MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance, DNR Native Plant Communities, and state-managed lands;
- e. vegetation management within and near Wildlife Management Areas, State Trails, and State Water Trails; and
- f. timing restrictions for tree removal from April 15 – September 30 to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species.
- g. seed mixes used on state lands, areas adjacent to state lands, and sensitive habitat areas with state-listed species.

6.5 Calcareous Fens

Should any calcareous fens be identified within five miles of the Designated Route, the Permittees must work with DNR to determine if any impacts will occur during any phase of the Project. If the Project is anticipated to impact any calcareous fens, the Permittees must develop a Calcareous Fen Management Plan in coordination with the DNR, as specified in Minn. Stat. § 103G.223. Should a Calcareous Fen Management Plan be required, the approved plan must be submitted concurrently with the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of the Permit. Should a no effect determination result from DNR coordination, documentation must be submitted concurrently with the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of the Permit.

6.6 Survey of State-Listed Species

Prior to the start of construction, the Permittees shall resubmit a valid Natural Heritage Review and continue to coordinate with the DNR regarding implementation of avoidance measures for state-protected threatened and endangered species. The Permittees, in coordination with the DNR, shall design and conduct preconstruction field surveys to assess the presence of existing state-listed species within relevant areas that could be impacted by the project. Surveys must be conducted by a qualified surveyor and follow the standards as directed in the Natural Heritage Reviews associated with the project. The results of the surveys shall be filed with the Commission at least 30 days prior to the pre-construction meeting to confirm compliance with conditions in this permit.

6.7 Prevailing Wage

The Permittees, its contractors, and subcontractors shall (1) pay no less than the prevailing wage rate as defined in Minn. Stat. § 177.42; and (2) shall be subject to the requirements and enforcement provisions under Minn. Stat. §§ 177.27, 177.30, 177.32, 177.41 to 177.435, and 177.45. The Permittee shall keep records of contractor and subcontractor pay and provide them at the request of Commission staff.

6.8 Labor Statistic Reporting

The Permittees shall file quarterly Labor Statistic Reports with the Commission within 45 days of the end of the quarter regarding construction workers that participated in the construction of the Project. The Labor Statistic Reports shall:

- A. detail the Permittee's efforts and the site contractor's efforts to hire Minnesota workers; and
- B. provide an account of:

- 1) the gross number of hours worked by or full-time equivalent workers who are Minnesota residents, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 290.01, subd. 7;
- 2) the gross number of hours worked by or full-time equivalent workers who are residents of other states, but maintain a permanent residence within 150 miles of the Project; and
- 3) the total gross hours worked or total full-time equivalent workers.

The Permittees shall work with its contractor to determine the suitable reporting metric. The report may not include personally identifiable data.

6.9 Archeological and Historic Resources

As part of the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of this permit, the Permittees shall demonstrate that they have coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office, the Office of the State Archaeologist, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, as applicable, regarding potential impacts to archaeological and historic resources.

6.10 Rare Natural Communities

The Permittee shall file with the Commission as part of the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of this permit, documentation of coordination with the DNR to identify those areas of the Designated Route that contain rare natural communities as determined by the DNR.

6.11 Blasting Plan

If bedrock blasting is required during any phase of project construction, the Permittees shall file with the Commission as part of the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of this permit the bedrock blasting plan developed in coordination with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives or the local authority that enforces explosive rules, whichever is applicable. The Permittees shall coordinate the blasting plan with the DNR. The blasting plan, developed in coordination with the DNR, shall address commitments to best management practices to mitigate, minimize, or avoid potential impacts to rare natural communities.

6.12 Shallow Groundwater Locations

The Permittee shall file with the Commission concurrently with the part of the plan and profile required in Section 9.2 of this permit separate foundation drawings that depict locations where shallow depths to groundwater are identified within the Designated Route during geotechnical

design of the project as well as appropriate mitigation measures that will be employed in shallow groundwater areas.

6.13 Grounding of Structures and Operation of Equipment

Within 30 days of issuance of this route permit, the Permittees shall provide all affected landowners with educational materials on appropriate grounding of structures and operation of equipment near the Project. The Permittees shall file with the Commission an affidavit of distribution demonstrating compliance within 30 days of issuance of this route permit.

7 DELAY IN CONSTRUCTION

If the Permittee has not commenced construction or improvement of the route within four years after the date of issuance of this route permit the Permittee shall file a Failure to Construct Report and the Commission shall consider suspension of this route permit in accordance with Minn. R. 7850.4700.

8 COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

At least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting, the Permittee shall file with the Commission the complaint procedures that will be used to receive and respond to complaints. The complaint procedures shall be in accordance with the requirements of Minn. R. 7829.1500 or Minn. R. 7829.1700, and as set forth in the complaint procedures attached to this route permit.

Upon request, the Permittee shall assist ~~Department of Commerce staff or~~ Commission staff with the disposition of unresolved or longstanding complaints. This assistance shall include, but is not limited to, the submittal of complaint correspondence and complaint resolution efforts.

9 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Failure to timely and properly make compliance filings required by this route permit is a failure to comply with the conditions of this route permit. Compliance filings must be electronically filed with the Commission.

9.1 Pre-Construction Meeting

Prior to the start of construction, the Permittee shall participate in a pre-construction meeting with ~~Department of Commerce and~~ Commission staff to review pre-construction filing

requirements, scheduling, and to coordinate monitoring of construction and site restoration activities. Within 14 days following the pre-construction meeting, the Permittee shall file with the Commission a summary of the topics reviewed and discussed and a list of attendees. The Permittee shall indicate in the filing the anticipated construction start date.

9.2 Plan and Profile

At least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting, the Permittee shall file with the Commission, ~~and provide the Department of Commerce,~~ and the counties where the Transmission Facility, or portion of the Transmission Facility, will be constructed with a plan and profile of the right-of-way and the specifications and drawings for right-of-way preparation, construction, structure specifications and locations, cleanup, and restoration for the Transmission Facility. The documentation shall include maps depicting the plan and profile including the right-of-way, alignment, and structures in relation to the route and alignment approved per this route permit.

The Permittee may not commence construction until the earlier of (i) 30 days after the pre-construction meeting or (ii) or until the Commission staff has notified the Permittee in writing that it has completed its review of the documents and determined that the planned construction is consistent with this route permit.

If the Commission notifies the Permittee in writing within 30 days after the pre-construction meeting that it has completed its review of the documents and planned construction, and finds that the planned construction is not consistent with this route permit, the Permittee may submit additional and/or revised documentation and may not commence construction until the Commission has notified the Permittee in writing that it has determined that the planned construction is consistent with this route permit.

If the Permittee intends to make any significant changes in its plan and profile or the specifications and drawings after submission to the Commission, the Permittee shall notify the Commission, ~~the Department of Commerce,~~ and county staff at least five days before implementing the changes. No changes shall be made that would be in violation of any of the terms of this route permit.

9.3 Status Reports

The Permittee shall file with the Commission monthly Construction Status Reports beginning with the pre-construction meeting and until completion of restoration. Construction Status Reports shall describe construction activities and progress, activities undertaken in compliance with this route permit, and shall include text and photographs.

If the Permittee does not commence construction of the Transmission Facility within six months of this route permit issuance, the Permittee shall file with the Commission Pre-Construction Status Reports on the anticipated timing of construction every six months beginning with the issuance of this route permit until the pre-construction meeting.

9.4 In-Service Date

At least three days before the Transmission Facility is to be placed into service, the Permittee shall notify the Commission of the date on which the Transmission Facility will be placed into service and the date on which construction was completed.

9.5 As-Builts

Within 90 days after completion of construction, the Permittee shall submit to the Commission copies of all final as-built plans and specifications developed during the Transmission Facility construction.

9.6 GPS Data

Within 90 days after completion of construction, the Permittee shall submit to the Commission, in the format requested by the Commission, geo-spatial information (*e.g.*, ArcGIS compatible map files, GPS coordinates, associated database of characteristics) for all structures associated with the Transmission Facility and each substation connected.

9.7 Right of Entry

The Permittee shall allow Commission designated representatives to perform the following, upon reasonable notice, upon presentation of credentials and at all times in compliance with the Permittee's site safety standards:

- (a) To enter upon the facilities easement of the property for the purpose of obtaining information, examining records, and conducting surveys or investigations.
- (b) To bring such equipment upon the facilities easement of the property as is necessary to conduct such surveys and investigations.
- (c) To sample and monitor upon the facilities easement of the property.
To examine and copy any documents pertaining to compliance with the conditions of this route permit.

10 ROUTE PERMIT AMENDMENT

This route permit may be amended at any time by the Commission. Any person may request an amendment of the conditions of this route permit by submitting a request to the Commission in writing describing the amendment sought and the reasons for the amendment. The Commission will mail notice of receipt of the request to the Permittee. The Commission may amend the conditions after affording the Permittee and interested persons such process as is required under Minn. R. 7850.4900.

11 TRANSFER OF ROUTE PERMIT

The Permittee may request at any time that the Commission transfer this route permit to another person or entity (transferee). In its request, the Permittee must provide the Commission with:

- (a) the name and description of the transferee;
- (b) the reasons for the transfer;
- (c) a description of the facilities affected; and
- (d) the proposed effective date of the transfer.

The transferee must provide the Commission with a certification that it has read, understands and is able to comply with the plans and procedures filed for the Transmission Facility and all conditions of this route permit. The Commission may authorize transfer of the route permit after affording the Permittee, the transferee, and interested persons such process as is required under Minn. R. 7850.5000.

12 REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF ROUTE PERMIT

The Commission may initiate action to revoke or suspend this route permit at any time. The Commission shall act in accordance with the requirements of Minn. R. 7850.5100, to revoke or suspend this route permit.

Appendix D

Information Request Responses from Applicants

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA
Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce
Analyst: Jenna Ness
Date Received: May 15, 2025
Date Due: June 2, 2025
Date of Response: June 2, 2025
Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

I noticed in your application that Figure 7-2 is named, “Calculated Magnetic Field(mG) for Proposed 345 Kilovolt **Single Circuit Transmission Line** on Double Circuit Capable Structures.” Can you please verify whether these calculations are based on one transmission line or two? Since a route permit granted for this project would eventually include two transmission lines on the same structure, I would like the calculations to match that if they’re different.

Attachments: 0

Response:

Figure 7-1 and Table 7.2-14 include the Electric Field calculations for a single circuit 345 kV line on double circuit capable structures. An equivalent table and figure of the Electric Field calculations for a double circuit 345 kV transmission line is as follows for the anticipated steady state and maximum operating voltages:

Electric Field Calculations Summary at one meter above ground – Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line

Calculated Electric Field Magnitudes - Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line														
Maximum Values	Distance to Application Alignment (Feet)													
Within ROW	Edge of ROW	-300	-200	-100	-75	-50	-25	0	25	50	75	100	200	300
Steady State at 100% of nominal voltage (kV/m)														
4.15	0.36	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.36	1.70	3.63	3.42	3.73	1.66	0.36	0.19	0.11	0.06
Maximum at 110% of nominal voltage (kV/m)														
4.57	0.40	0.05	0.09	0.07	0.40	1.87	4.00	3.77	4.10	1.84	0.40	0.21	0.12	0.06

Calculated Electric Field (kV/m) at one meter above ground - Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line

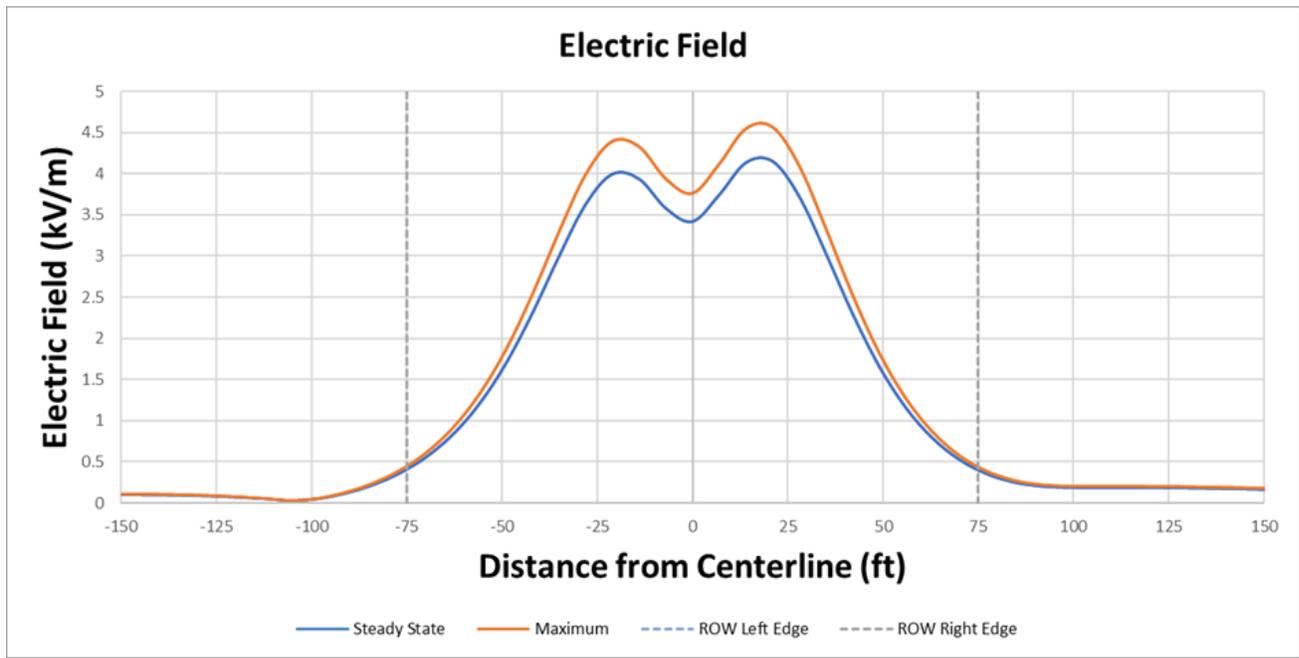
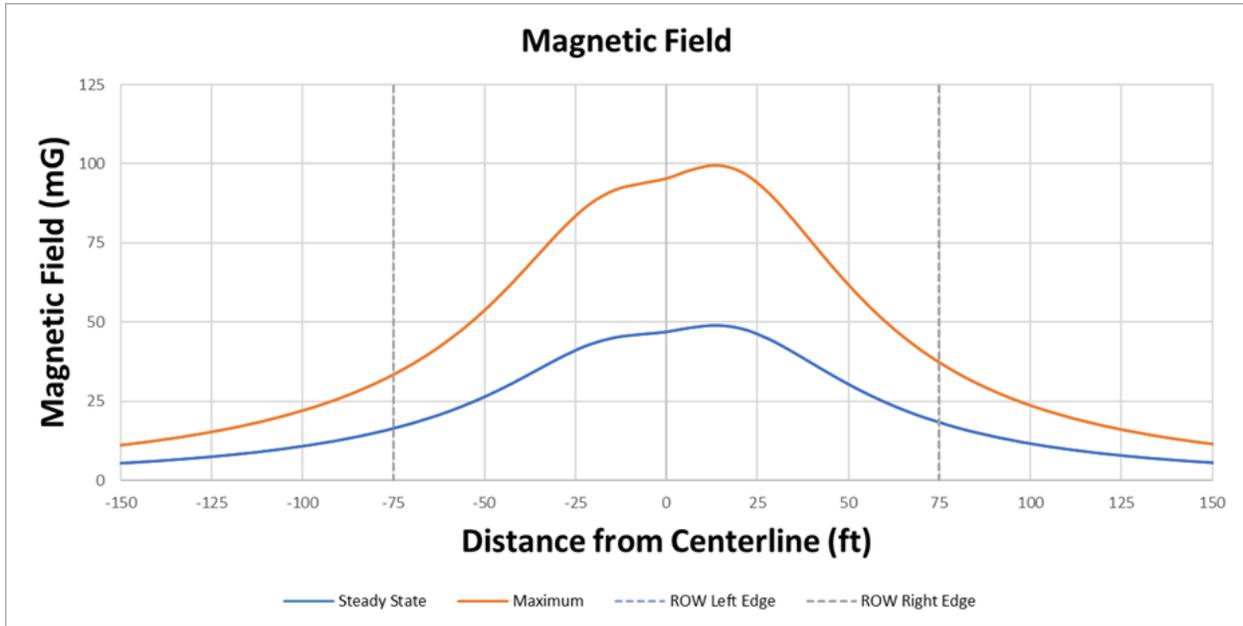


Figure 7-2 and Table 7.2-15 include the Magnetic Field calculations for a single circuit 345 kV line on double circuit capable structures. An equivalent table and figure of the Magnetic Field calculations for a double circuit 345 kV transmission line is as follows for the anticipated steady state and maximum flows:

Magnetic Field Calculations Summary at one meter above ground – Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line

Calculated Magnetic Field Magnitudes - Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line														
Maximum Values		Distance to Application Alignment (Feet)												
Within ROW	Edge of ROW	-300	-200	-100	-75	-50	-25	0	25	50	75	100	200	300
Double Circuit with steady state current of 476 A per line (mG)														
49	18	1	3	11	16	27	39	47	45	31	18	12	3	2
Double Circuit with maximum current of 968 A per line (mG)														
100	36	2	6	23	32	55	80	95	91	63	36	25	7	3

Calculated Magnetic Field (mG) at one meter above ground - Double Circuit 345 kV Transmission Line



OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: May 15, 2025

Date Due: May 23, 2025

Date of Response: May 20, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

For the Regeneration Station, the application says that backup power could be batteries or propane. How much energy would these provide in a situation where backup is required? The batteries or a propane tank would supply the generator that's needed, correct?

Attachments: 0

Response:

The back-up power source of either batteries or a propane-fired generator would be sized to only supply the energy needs of the regeneration station. The back-up power source would operate intermittently to keep the regeneration station in-service if the electrical service is interrupted due to a power outage.

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: May 15, 2025

Date Due: May 23, 2025

Date of Response: May 20, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

Now that we're past scoping, is there a chance that BSSA can narrow in on a subregion for the Regeneration Station? Understood it is still based on the final route and project design, but now we have delineated subregions in shapefiles attached to this email that we'll be using for EIS analysis. We created subregions based on common start and end points so routing decisions can be made by the PUC in each subregion independent of routing decisions made in other subregions.

Attachments: 0

Response:

No, it is still too early to identify a potential location for a regeneration station. A study will be performed with the exact route and line length following a decision from the Commission to determine if a regeneration station is needed, and if so, where to build it. To the extent that a regeneration station is needed, the Applicants anticipate it would be located within the Central Segment.

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: May 15, 2025

Date Due: May 23, 2025

Date of Response: May 20, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

Any high voltage circuit breakers at the Regeneration Station?

Attachments:

Response:

No, there will not be any high voltage circuit breakers at the regeneration station.

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: May 15, 2025

Date Due: June 18, 2025

Date of Response: June 18, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

Are there any changes from scoping to project costs? I checked Appendix C of your RPA which outlines the estimated segment cost at the end of the table. We plan to discuss Costs that are Dependent on Design and Route for relative merits among the routing options within each subregion, and the PUC may ask for breakdowns at the route permit decision. Can you provide us estimated cost for each routing alternative that was introduced during scoping, or perhaps a rough estimate per mile? If there's a way you think would make this easier to address, let me know how you'd like to handle presenting cost among routing alts in the EIS. We could also break down cost for all of the applicants' routes based on subregion for comparison. My goal is to make this discussion and comparison as easy as possible at the route permit decision.

Attachments: 0

Response:

The Applicants have updated the estimated costs for each of the route segments included within the scope of the EIS in the table below. As part of its analysis, the Applicants identified updates to the cost estimates provided in Appendix C of the Route Permit Application filed with the Commission in October 2024. The updated estimates reflect the same set of assumptions for each larger route segment alternative by subregion and each of the individual route segments. These updates are intended to ensure consistency when comparing the various route segment alternatives under consideration in the EIS.

Similar to the approach used to estimate the costs presented in Appendix C of the Route Permit Application, the estimated cost for each route segment includes transmission line material costs, land cost, engineering cost and construction cost but do not include other costs common among all segments such as but not limited to construction management, contractor mobilizations, environmental inspections, storage yards, environmental surveys, land agent costs and owners' internal costs. Accordingly, the Applicants would like to emphasize that the estimated cost per route segment are only to be considered for comparison purposes between route segments in each

comparison group and that the summation of individual route segments will not equal the total project cost.

Route Segment Estimates

Comparison Group	Unique Route ID	Length (mi)	Estimated Cost
32	32-R-North 1 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	18.13	\$95,246,500
32	32-R-North 2 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	25.26	\$127,668,000
31	31-R-Central 1 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	34.43	\$165,629,500
31	31-R-Central 2 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	38.52	\$193,163,000
30	30-R-South 1 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	41.94	\$203,544,500
30	30-R-South 2 (Appendix C of Route Permit)	38.82	\$192,279,000
29	29-ASR-RSA-N11	2.07	\$11,569,000
29	29-ASR-RSA-N11_North2_Eq	2.13	\$12,026,500
28	28-ASR-RSA-N207	1.84	\$11,011,000
28	28-ASR-RSA-N207_North2_Eq	2.27	\$10,990,500
27	27-ASR-RSA-N206	2.09	\$11,178,500
27	27-ASR-RSA-N206_North2_Eq	2.46	\$12,731,500
26	26-ASR-RSA-N10	2.06	\$12,678,500
26	26-ASR-RSA-N10_North1_Eq	1.53	\$10,427,500
25	25-ASR-RSA-N205	1.30	\$6,742,000
25	25-ASR-RSA-N205_North1_Eq	1.33	\$8,595,500
24	24-ASR-RSA-N9	3.04	\$17,115,500
24	24-ASR-RSA-N9_North1_Eq	3.03	\$14,894,500
23	23-ASR-S-North 1	18.13	\$95,246,500
23	23-ASR-S-North 2	25.26	\$127,668,000
22	22-WBLSR-RSA-C202	2.00	\$10,414,500
22	22-WBLSR-RSA-C202_Central1_2_Eq	2.01	\$10,870,500
21	21-WBLSR-S-Central 1	12.04	\$58,455,500
21	21-WBLSR-S-Central 2	12.07	\$62,087,000
21	21-WBLSR-S-Central 3_C11	12.05	\$62,059,000
21	21-WBLSR-S-Central 4_C101	12.06	\$58,905,000
20	20-CSR-AA-CAA01	0.49	\$3,269,500
20	20-CSR-AA-CAA01_Central2_Eq	0.47	\$4,105,500
19	19-CSR-S-Central 1	8.98	\$44,288,000
19	19-CSR-S-Central 2	8.93	\$43,794,500
18	18-HSR-RSA-C203	3.00	\$15,133,000
18	18-HSR-RSA-C203_Central2_Eq	2.99	\$15,119,500
17	17-HSR-RSA-C208	4.58	\$26,622,500
17	17-HSR-RSA-C208_Central2_Eq	4.76	\$23,257,000
16	16-HSR-S-Central 1	13.41	\$64,144,000
16	16-HSR-S-Central 2	17.55	\$86,758,000
16	16-HSR-S-Central 3_C102	17.50	\$88,328,000

15	15-SSR-AA-SAA01	2.03	\$10,897,000
15	15-SSR-AA-SAA01_South1_Eq	2.03	\$9,981,500
14	14-SSR-AA-SAA02	2.22	\$12,233,500
14	14-SSR-AA-SAA02_South2_Eq	2.19	\$9,418,000
13	13-SSR-AA-SAA03	0.51	\$4,193,000
13	13-SSR-AA-SAA03_South1_Eq	0.53	\$3,350,500
12	12-SSR-RSA-S203	1.78	\$13,343,000
12	12-SSR-RSA-S203_South2_Eq	1.98	\$11,281,500
11	11-SSR-RSA-S201	2.61	\$17,807,500
11	11-SSR-RSA-S201_South2_Eq	1.64	\$10,358,000
10	10-SSR-RSA-S202	8.10	\$40,535,500
10	10-SSR-RSA-S202_South2_Eq	3.32	\$20,789,000
09	09-SSR-RSA-S18	2.39	\$14,604,000
09	09-SSR-RSA-S18_South2_Eq	1.46	\$7,506,500
08	08-SSR-RSA-S204	3.00	\$15,133,500
08	08-SSR-RSA-S204_South1_Eq	3.00	\$14,212,000
07	07-SSR-RSA-S205	7.52	\$36,069,500
07	07-SSR-RSA-S205_South1_Eq	8.50	\$43,418,000
06	06-SSR-S-South 1	26.02	\$124,861,500
06	06-SSR-S-South 2	25.16	\$121,842,000
06	06-SSR-S-South 3_S211	25.50	\$117,994,000
06	06-SSR-S-South 4_S211	25.52	\$121,500,000
05	05-BSSR-AA-SAA04	0.65	\$4,967,500
05	05-BSSR-AA-SAA04_South2_Eq	0.68	\$4,127,000
04	04-BSSR-RSA-S208	3.65	\$27,334,000
04	04-BSSR-RSA-S208_South1_Eq	2.55	\$13,327,000
03	03-BSSR-RSA-S210	4.66	\$23,736,500
03	03-BSSR-RSA-S210_South1_Eq	3.74	\$17,511,500
02	02-BSSR-RSA-S207	1.99	\$12,405,500
02	02-BSSR-RSA-S207_South2_Eq	1.52	\$13,657,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 1	15.93	\$78,683,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 10_S16_S17	15.62	\$80,303,500
01	01-BSSR-S-South 1_South 2	14.90	\$76,388,500
01	01-BSSR-S-South 2	13.66	\$71,358,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 2_South 1	14.67	\$75,664,859
01	01-BSSR-S-South 3_S16	15.59	\$77,468,097
01	01-BSSR-S-South 4_S16	14.97	\$80,270,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 5_S17	14.67	\$75,178,729
01	01-BSSR-S-South 6_S17	15.95	\$81,605,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 7_S104	14.10	\$67,878,500
01	01-BSSR-S-South 8_S104_S17	14.13	\$67,934,000
01	01-BSSR-S-South 9_S16_S17	15.98	\$84,575,500

Notes:

1) The estimated cost per segment are only to be considered for comparison purposes between segments in each comparison group. The estimates include transmission line material costs, land cost, engineering costs and construction costs but do not include other project costs common among all segments including but not limited to construction management, contractor mobilizations, environmental inspections, storage yards, environmental surveys, land agent costs and owners' internal costs.

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Department of Commerce

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: June 23, 2025

Date Due: July 2, 2025

Date of Response: July 2, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

Barr created the table below based on the RPA, Appendix E, which only includes a single row with the typical tangent structure. Barr expanded the table to include the 4 structure types in Appendix E. Can you confirm this information is accurate for the project and also provide the span lengths?

Below the table, we also have pictures we'd like to use in the draft EIS. Please confirm if you're okay with using those or if you want to provide us with something else to use.

Line Type	Structure Type	Structure Material	Structure Height (feet)	Foundation Diameter (feet)	Typical Span Between Structures (feet)
345 kV Double-circuit Tangent, Small and Medium Angles	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	120 to 180	7 to 14	400 to 1,400
345 kV Double-circuit Tangent, Crossing Span	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	120 to 160	8 to 10	
345 kV Double-circuit Large Angle and Dead-end, Standard	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 to 130	10 to 12	
345 kV Double-circuit Large Angle and Dead-end, 2-Pole	Two poles with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 to 130	8 to 10 each pole	

Attachments: 1

Attachmen1 1 to DR MN-DOC-2.00.pdf

Response:

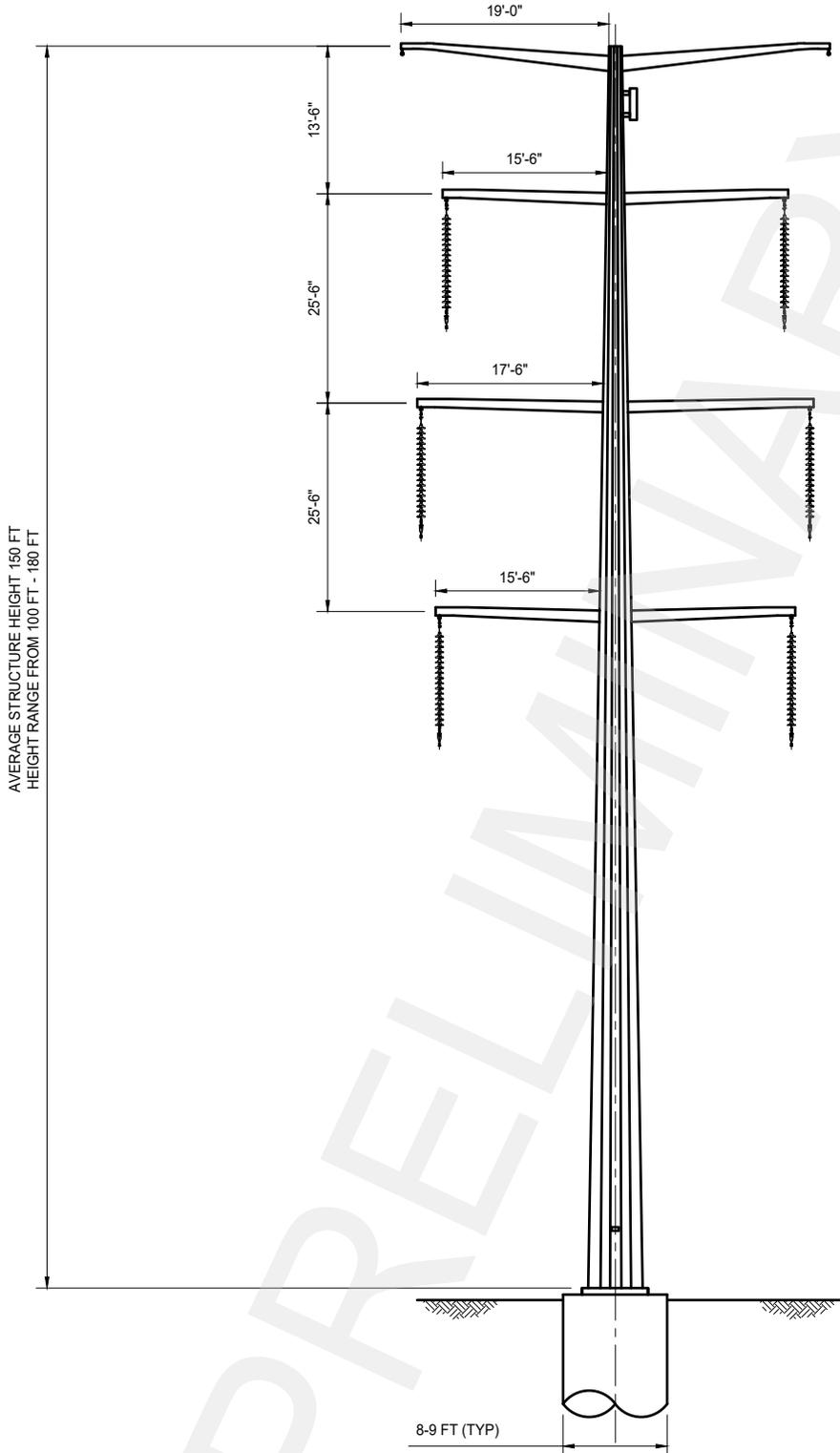
The following table includes the estimated parameters for the typical structure types that are expected for the Project. The attached file includes six drawings and six photos that illustrate the typical structure types for each line item below.

Drawing #	Line Type	Structure Type	Structure Material	Structure Height (feet)	Foundation Diameter (feet)	Typical Span Between Structures (feet)
01	345 kV Double-Circuit Tangent, Standard	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	100 - 180	8 - 9	400 - 1,400
02	345 kV Double-Circuit Running Angle	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	120 - 170	9 - 11	400 - 1,200
03	345 kV Double-Circuit Deadend, Standard	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 - 140	12 - 14	200 - 1,200
04	345 kV Double-Circuit Crossing Tangent	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 - 160	9 - 10	400 - 1,200
05	345 kV Double-Circuit Crossing Deadend	Monopole with Davit Arms	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 - 160	12 - 14	400 - 1,200
06	345 kV Double-Circuit Two-Pole Deadend	Two-Pole	Corten (weathered) Steel	90 - 130	8 - 10 (each pole)	200 - 1,200

THIS DRAWING WAS PREPARED BY POWER ENGINEERS, INC. FOR A SPECIFIC PROJECT. TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SPECIFIC AND UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECT. REUSE OF THIS DRAWING OR ANY INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DRAWING FOR ANY PURPOSE IS PROHIBITED UNLESS WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM BOTH POWER AND POWERS CLIENT IS GRANTED.

BSSA Big Stone South to Alexandria

A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB	
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD	



LOOKING AHEAD
TANGENT STRUCTURE
STANDARD SPAN

NOTES
1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BSSA STRUCTURES.dwg

	DSGN	ML	1/10/25
	DRN	EC	1/10/25
	CKD	JB	1/10/25
	SCALE:		N.T.S.
*	*		
REFERENCE DRAWINGS			
FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY			



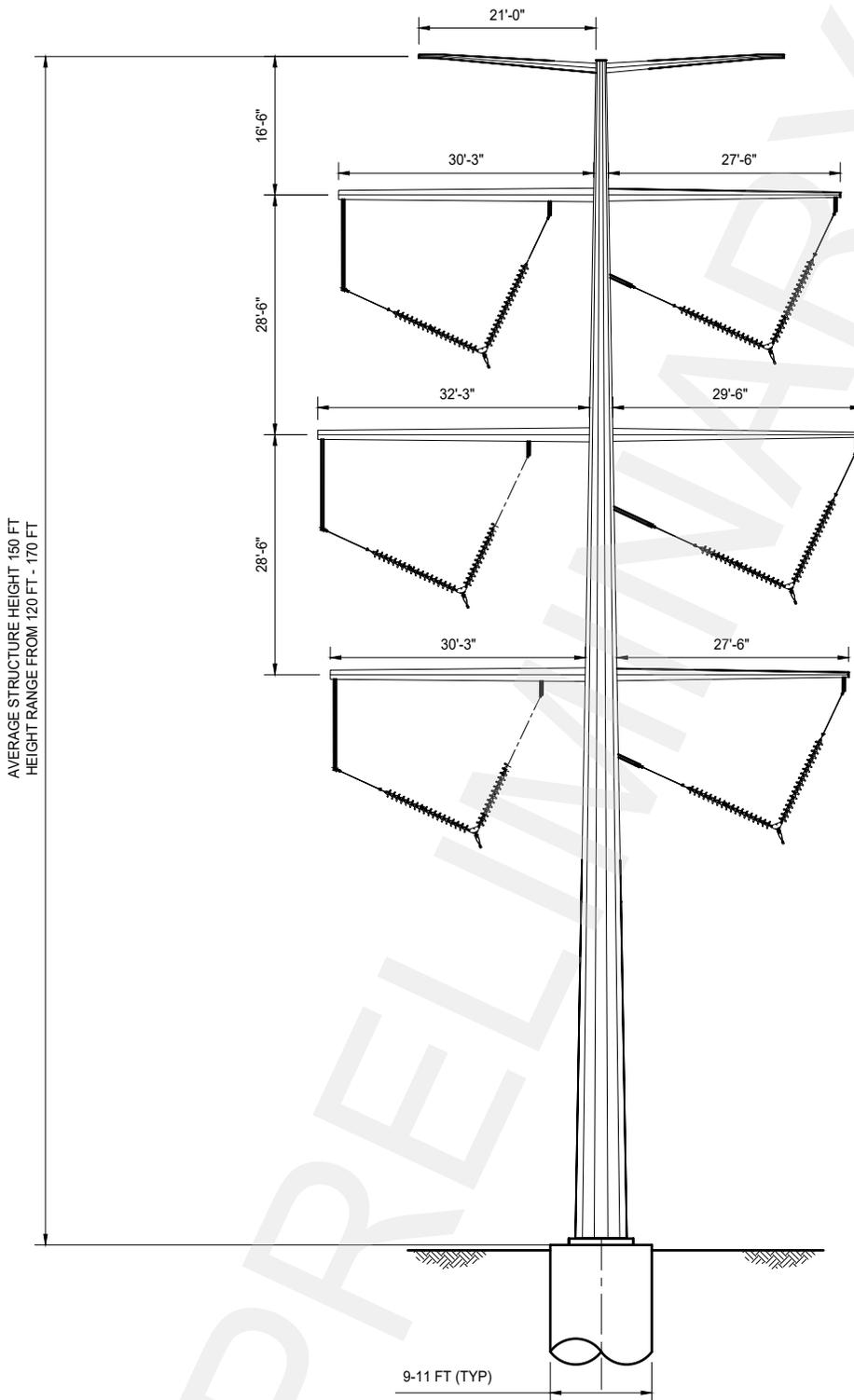
BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA
345kV
TRANSMISSION LINE
345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL
MONO-POLE TANGENT STRUCTURE
TYPE TTT66NUPT

JOB NUMBER	REV
0253345	A
DRAWING NUMBER	
01	



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A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD



AVERAGE STRUCTURE HEIGHT 150 FT
HEIGHT RANGE FROM 120 FT - 170 FT

LOOKING AHEAD
MONO-POLE
ANGLE STRUCTURE

NOTES

1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

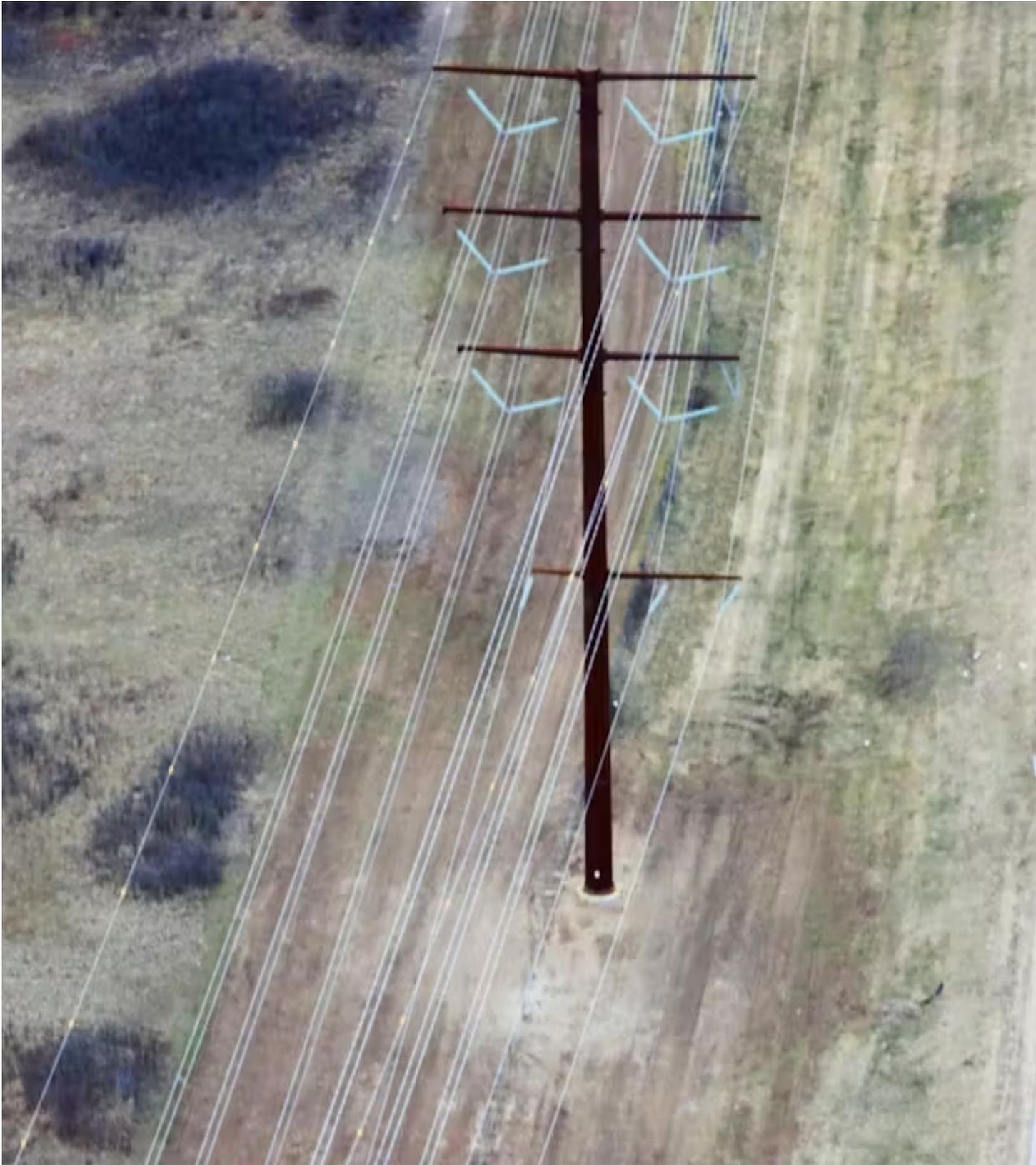
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		DSGN	ML	1/10/25
		DRN	EC	1/10/25
		CKD	JB	1/10/25
		SCALE:	N.T.S.	
*	*	REFERENCE DRAWINGS		
FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY				



BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA
345kV
TRANSMISSION LINE
345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL
MONO-POLE RUNNING ANGLE STRUCTURE
TYPE TA266NUPT

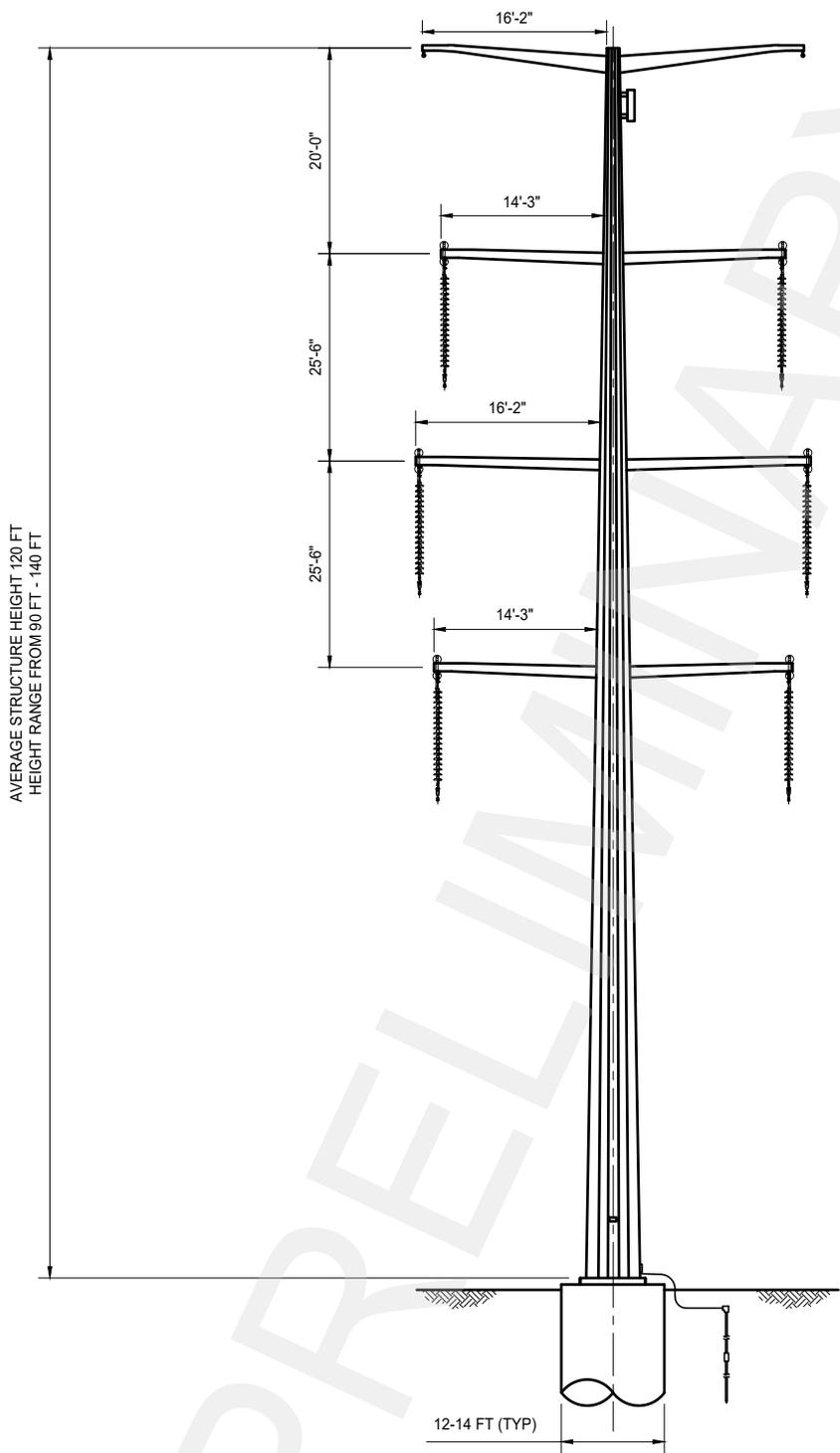
JOB NUMBER	REV
0253345	A
DRAWING NUMBER	
02	



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BSSA Big Stone South to Alexandria

A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB	
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD	



AVERAGE STRUCTURE HEIGHT 120 FT
HEIGHT RANGE FROM 90 FT - 140 FT

LOOKING AHEAD
DEADEND STRUCTURE
STANDARD

NOTES

1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BSSA STRUCTURES.dwg

	DSGN	ML	1/10/25
	DRN	EC	1/10/25
	CKD	JB	1/10/25
	SCALE:	N.T.S.	
*	*		
REFERENCE DRAWINGS			
FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY			



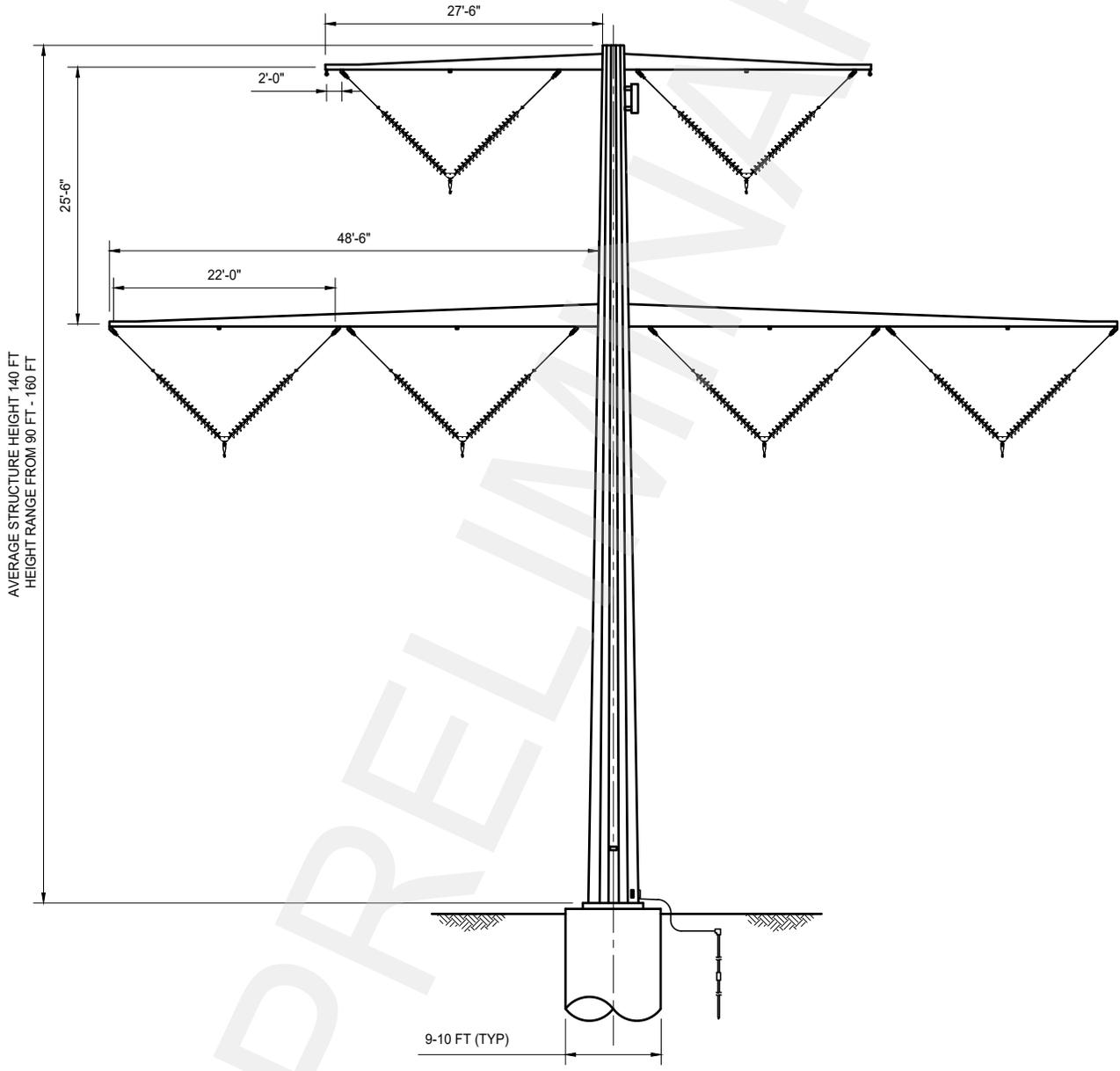
BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA
345kV
TRANSMISSION LINE
345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL
MONO-POLE DEADEND STRUCTURE
TYPE TD166NUPT

JOB NUMBER	REV
0253345	A
DRAWING NUMBER	
03	



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A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB	
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD	



AVERAGE STRUCTURE HEIGHT 140 FT
HEIGHT RANGE FROM 90 FT - 160 FT

LOOKING AHEAD
TANGENT STRUCTURE
CROSSING SPAN

NOTES
1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BSSA STRUCTURES.dwg

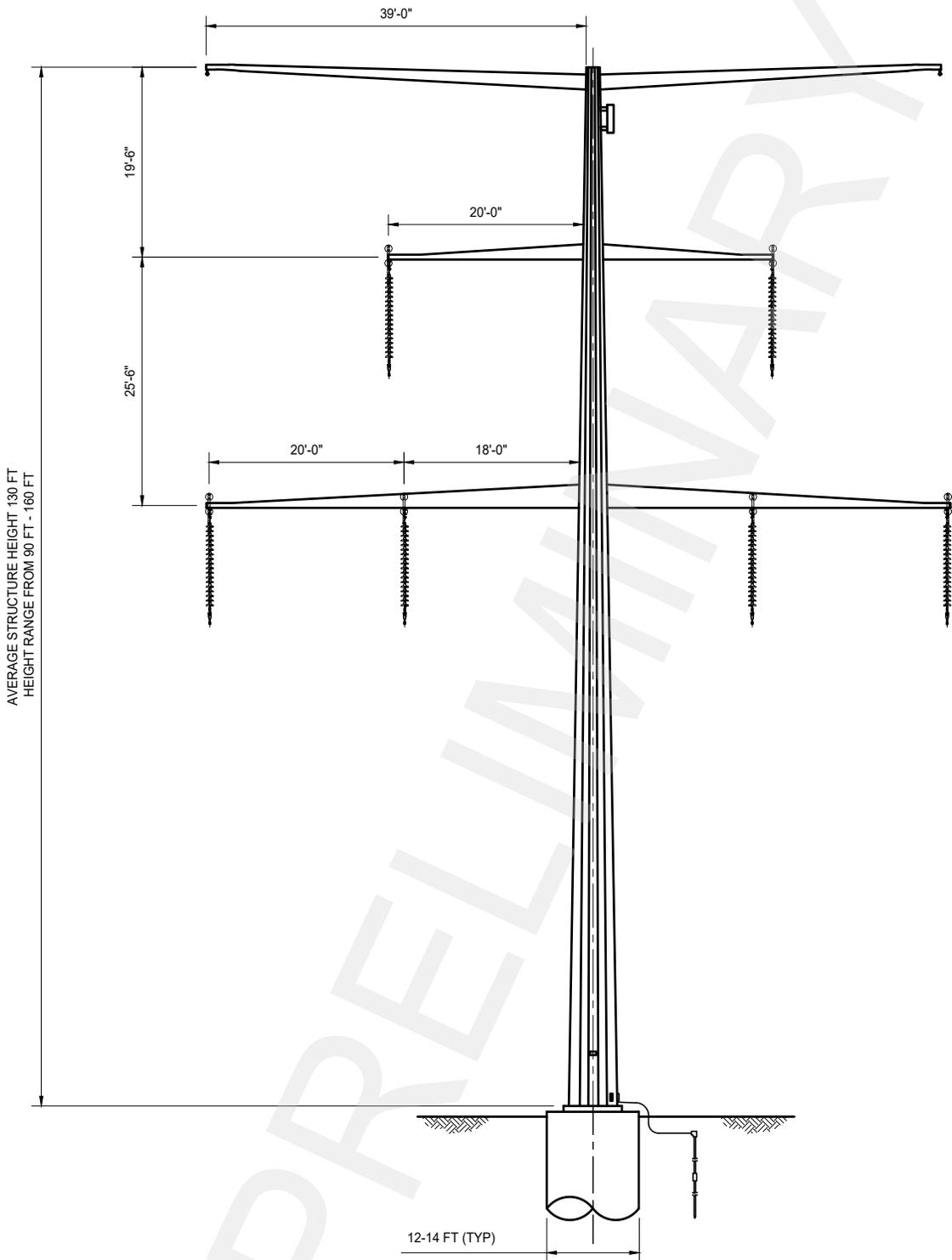
		DSGN	ML	1/10/25		BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA	JOB NUMBER	REV
		DRN	EC	1/10/25		345kV TRANSMISSION LINE	0253345	△
		CKD	JB	1/10/25		345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL MONO-POLE CROSSING TANGENT STRUCTURE TYPE TCT66NUPT	DRAWING NUMBER	
*	*	SCALE:		N.T.S.				04
REFERENCE DRAWINGS		FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY						



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BSSA Big Stone South to Alexandria

A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB	
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD	



AVERAGE STRUCTURE HEIGHT 130 FT
HEIGHT RANGE FROM 90 FT - 160 FT

LOOKING AHEAD
DEADEND STRUCTURE
CROSSING SPAN

NOTES

1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BSSA STRUCTURES.dwg

		DSGN	ML	1/10/25
		DRN	EC	1/10/25
		CKD	JB	1/10/25
		SCALE:	N.T.S.	
*	*	REFERENCE DRAWINGS		
FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY				



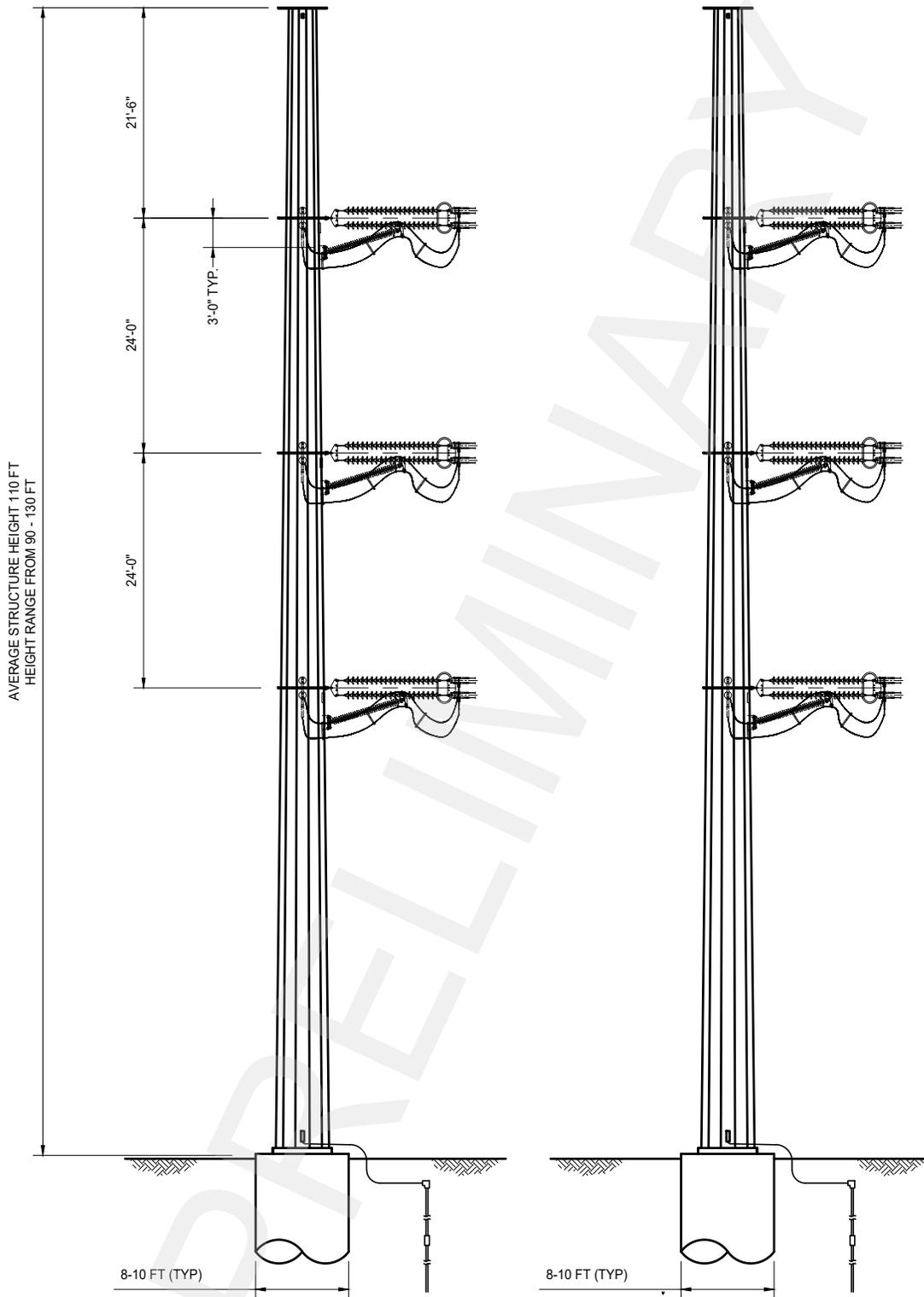
BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA
345kV
TRANSMISSION LINE
345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL
MONO-POLE CROSSING DEADEND
STRUCTURE TYPE TCD466NUPT

JOB NUMBER	REV
0253345	A
DRAWING NUMBER	
05	



THIS DRAWING WAS PREPARED BY POWER ENGINEERS, INC. FOR A SPECIFIC PROJECT, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SPECIFIC AND UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECT. REUSE OF THIS DRAWING OR ANY INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DRAWING FOR ANY PURPOSE IS PROHIBITED UNLESS WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM BOTH POWER AND POWERS CLIENT IS GRANTED.

A	PRELIMINARY FOR PERMITTING	1/10/25	EC	ML	JB	JB
REV	REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	DSGN	CKD	APPD



LOOKING AHEAD
TWO-POLE
DEADEND STRUCTURE

NOTES

1. DIMENSIONS AND CONFIGURATIONS PROVIDED ARE PRELIMINARY AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BSSA STRUCTURES.dwg

	DSGN	ML	1/10/25
	DRN	EC	1/10/25
	CKD	JB	1/10/25
	SCALE:	N.T.S.	
*	*		
REFERENCE DRAWINGS			
FOR 8.5x11 DWG ONLY			



BIG STONE SOUTH TO ALEXANDRIA		JOB NUMBER	REV
345kV TRANSMISSION LINE		0253345	A
345 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT STEEL TWO-POLE DEADEND STRUCTURE TYPE TVD06SUPT		DRAWING NUMBER	
		06	



OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MINNESOTA

Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Public Utility Commission

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: October 22, 2025

Date Due: October 30, 2025

Date of Response: October 30, 2025

Responding Witness: Jason Weiers, Mgr, Transmission Project Development - (218) 739-8311

Data Request:

For the Final EIS, we'd like clarification on construction practices for areas with low bedrock. We will be checking our data again to focus on these areas that have bedrock near surface or within 10 feet. I was not able to find the specifics we're looking for in the application. Please let us know how structures would be constructed in these areas when spanning is not possible, including heavy equipment travel, potential for blasting with near-surface bedrock, and construction mitigation strategies related to potential geological or hydrological impacts. Provide rationale if the response/mitigation is complete avoidance of these areas.

Attachments: 0

Response:

It is anticipated that bedrock will be encountered near the surface in areas of the route by the Minnesota / South Dakota border; however the depth and strength of the rock is unknown until a geotechnical exploratory program can be conducted. If more fractured and softer rock that is conducive for drilling is encountered near the surface, a typical drilled pier foundation embedded in the rock may be used. Although this installation method may include specialized tools and techniques, the drilled pier foundation would be constructed with the methods and construction equipment included in Section 6.2 of the Application and Section 3.4 of the DEIS.

Alternative foundation types would be investigated if the density of the rock does not allow for a large diameter drilled pier foundation. The alternative foundation would likely be a micropile and cap design. A micropile is a small-diameter, drilled and grouted foundation that is reinforced with steel and used to transfer structural loads to deeper, stable soil or rock layers. This type of foundation would require an array of multiple independent micropiles that would be drilled into the rock with a rotary rock drill with a diameter of less than 12 inches. These micropiles would then be connected via a large steel reinforced concrete pile cap. If the bedrock is not a flat working surface at the location of the pile cap, minor blasting may be required to create a flat surface. If blasting is required, a blasting plan would be created and shared with the applicable agencies that would outline BMPs for construction to minimize potential geological and/or

hydrological impacts. BMPs may include, but may not be limited to, conducting pre- and post-blast surveys of the bedrock and nearby springs with a monitoring plan to determine whether the blasting caused any damage to surface or subsurface bedrock or springs. Further, the finished surface grade will be restored to existing elevations to the extent practicable. Examples of finished installations of micropile and cap foundations are shown in the photos below.

The installation of a micropile and cap foundation is expected to require the same type of large equipment needed for a drilled pier foundation, such as an excavator, drilling rig, dozer, loader, concrete trucks and dump trucks. Heavy equipment travel to each structure site will be planned along a temporary access path that minimizes potential impacts. To the extent that sensitive species are present along the route, they will be marked with flagging or temporary fences with adequate buffers to avoid heavy equipment from impacting these sensitive species. Mitigation measures employed in areas with sensitive species will be developed in coordination with the applicable agencies.

Examples of Finished Installations of a Micropile and Cap Foundations





OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MN MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY
Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Public Utilities Commission

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: October 30, 2025

Date Due: November 12, 2025

Date of Response: November 12, 2025

Responding Witness: Joshua Humberg, Sr Prjt Mgr, Project Management (218)739-8832

Data Request:

Could you clarify what impacts pre-blast surveys of bedrock and nearby springs could help mitigate, minimize, or avoid, and steps that would be taken to achieve that? For example, is your discussion at the end about adequate buffers around sensitive species developed in coordination with applicable agencies related to that? Just looking for more specifics on the pre-blast surveys and blasting plan so we can better discuss that in the Final EIS. I'm unaware which agency would be applicable for monitoring the blasting plan. If you could provide the potential agencies, it will allow us to better discuss enforcing mechanisms for any potential blasting.

The blasting surveys and plans also seem integral to the assessment of potential hydrological impacts from blasting. If I'm off base there, please provide further explanation for mitigating, minimizing, or avoiding hydrological impacts in areas of low/fractured/soft bedrock. Did you intend for the micropile foundation to be part of hydrological mitigation?

Attachments: 1

Attachment 1 to IR MN-PUC-03.01.pdf

Response:

To the extent that blasting is required for micropile foundation installation, the Applicants would coordinate with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Any blasting would be conducted in compliance with ATF requirements. In addition, Minnesota Statute § 299F.19 states that the local authority (e.g., fire chief) shall enforce explosive rules. The Applicants would also coordinate the blasting plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to the extent that blasting occurs near sensitive resources. An example of a blasting plan that has been developed for an on-going transmission project in Minnesota has been provided as Attachment #1 to this response.

If blasting is required, the Applicants are committed to employing best management practices to mitigate, minimize or avoid potential impacts to bedrock and nearby springs. As one form of mitigation, the Applicants will coordinate with the applicable agencies (e.g. MDNR, USFWS) to establish buffers around sensitive resources. The areas identified as containing sensitive habitats

or species, as directed by the appropriate agencies, will be staked and flagged to ensure construction activities avoid these areas. Another best management practice employed by the Applicants will be conducting pre-blast surveys. Pre-blast surveys of bedrock and nearby springs can provide valuable information about the characteristics of these existing resources. This information can be used to design the technical details of each blast to mitigate, minimize or avoid potential impacts to existing resources. For example, blasts can be designed to limit the amount of explosives for each blast to minimize ground vibrations that could cause slope instability or impacts to nearby springs and wells.

In the event of encountering soft bedrock at a structure location, the Applicants expect that specialized drilling equipment would be able to penetrate through the soft bedrock to allow for the installation of a typical drilled pier foundation with the methods and construction equipment included in Section 6.2 of the Application and Section 3.4 of the DEIS. Geotechnical evaluations would occur prior to foundation installation to understand the hydrological conditions present at each structure location so that proper mitigation measures can be employed during installation. These mitigation measures may include but are not limited to utilizing permanent steel casing during foundation installation to maintain the foundation walls, a tremie pipe to pour concrete from the bottom of the hole while pumping ground water off the top of the hole, and using a drilling slurry that limits groundwater from entering the foundation during installation.

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND WESTERN MN MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY
Docket No. E017, ET10/TL-23-160

Response to: MN Public Utilities Commission

Analyst: Jenna Ness

Date Received: October 27, 2025

Date Due: November 14, 2025

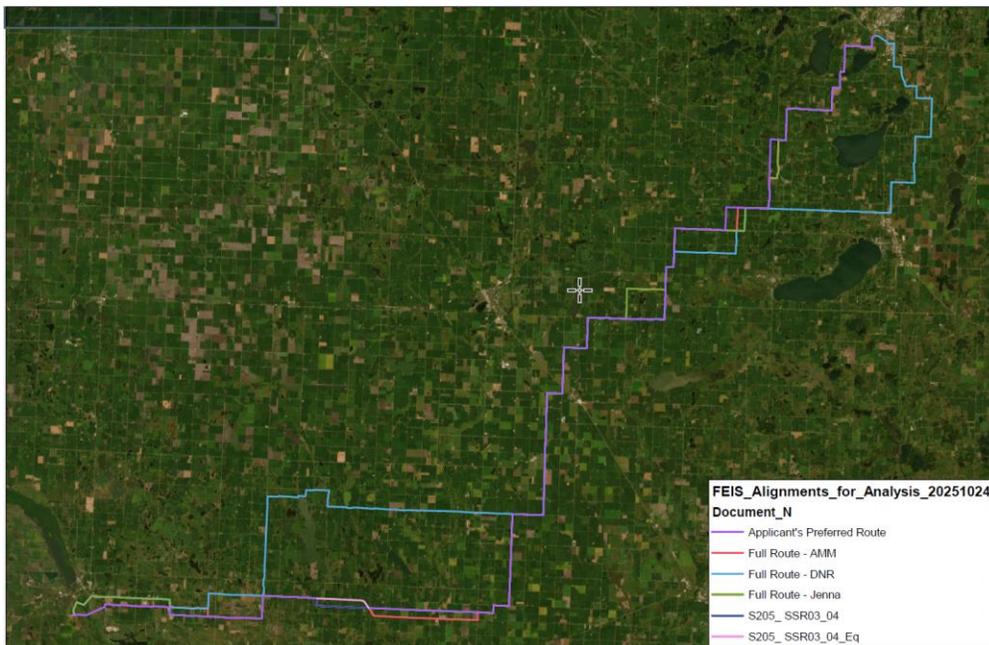
Date of Response: November 14, 2025

Responding Witness: Joshua Humberg, Sr Prjt Mgr, Project Management (218)739-8832

Data Request:

Information Request No. MN-PUC-02.01

1. Request for cost estimates for the following six routes:
 - a. 4 full end to end routes
 - i.Example A (Applicants'):
 - ii.Example B:
 - iii.Example C:
 - iv.Example D (DNR) :
 - b. 1 modified S205 that can be used with SSR03 and SSR04 (as indicated in applicants' comments for FEIS updates) :
 - c. equivalent for the modified S205 which follows SSR03 and SSR04 (as indicated in applicants' comments for FEIS updates).

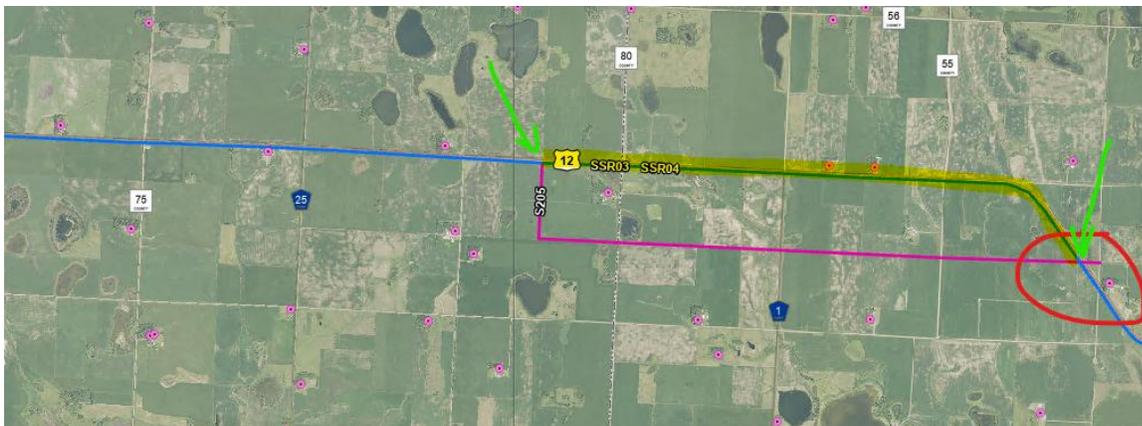


Clarification

Route Segment S205 as described in the DEIS and shown below can be used to modify SSR01. The Applicants have already provided cost for these two options so that we could compare the S205 Route Segment to the S205 equivalent (SSR01). Common start/end points at the green arrows. The equivalent is the yellow highlighted portion of SSR01.



In the DEIS we did not provide an equivalent or associated cost if S205 was used to modify SSR03 or SSR04. To do this we created a modified version (attached) of S205 with the small tail snipped off (green arrow on east end) and cut it at the western (green arrow). The equivalent to S205 would be the yellow highlighted portion of SSR03 and 04. These are the two lines we are asking for cost estimates for so that we can compare them in the FEIS.



Attachments: 0

Response:

A summary of the cost estimates requested has been provided in the table below.

Unique Route ID	Length (mi)	Estimated Cost
Full Route – AMM	93.0	\$460,045,500
Full Route – DNR	100.7	\$505,244,000
Full Route – Jenna	93.5	\$463,125,000
Applicant’s Preferred Route	92.2	\$455,045,500
S205_SSR03_04	3.9	\$20,076,500
S205_SSR03_04_Eq	3.6	\$16,591,500

Note - The estimates include transmission line material costs, land cost, engineering costs, and construction costs, but do not include other project costs common among all segments including but not limited to construction management, contractor mobilizations, environmental inspections, storage yards, environmental surveys, land agent costs, and owners' internal costs.

Appendix E

Spatial Data

Spatial Data Sources

Alexandria. Zoning data. Received Data 05/13/2025.

Barr Engineering Company. Alignment Alternatives. Digitized based on scoping comments. Received 12/30/2024.

Barr Engineering Company. Commerical & Non-Residential Structures. Digitized Data. Compiled 5/13/2025.

BWSR. RIM Conservation Easements <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-bwsr-rim-cons-easements>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Calcareous Fens. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-nhis-calcareous-fens>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Campsites. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/struc-parks-and-trails-campsites>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Consolidated Conservation & School Trust Lands. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. County Lands. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/plan-stateland-dnrcounty>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. DNR Forest Stand. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-dnr-forest-stand-inventory>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. DNR Native Prairies. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-dnr-native-prairies>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. DNR State Park Trails. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-state-park-trails-roads>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. DNR State Trails. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-state-trails-minnesota>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Hunter Walking Trails. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-hunter-walking-trails>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Lakes of Biological Significance. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-lakes-of-biological-signific>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MBS Native Plant Communities by Type. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-dnr-native-plant-comm>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MBS Railroad Right-of-Way Prairies. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-mcbs-railroad-prairies>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-mcbs-sites-of-biodiversity>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MDNR Old growth stands. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/biota-dnr-forest-inv-old-growth>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Mineral Leases (Active vs. Ever Offered). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/plan-state-minleases>. Received 4/4/2025.

Spatial Data Sources

DNR. MN DNR Migratory Fowl Feeding and Resting Areas. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-migratory-waterfowl-areas>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR Scientific and Natural Areas. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-scientific-and-nat-areas>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR Shallow Lakes. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-shallow-lakes-id-by-wldlif>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR State Aquatic Management Areas. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/plan-mndnr-fisheries-acquisition>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR State Game Refuges. Not Applicable. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR State Water Trails. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-water-trails-minnesota>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR State Wildlife Management Areas. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-dnr-wildlife-mgmt-areas-pub>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR Wildlife Action Network. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-mnwap-wildlife-action-netwrk>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. MN DNR Wildlife Lakes. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-designated-wildlife-lakes>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. NHIS Rare Species. Confidential. Received 9/25/2023

DNR. NWI (MN Update). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-nat-wetlands-inv-2009-2014>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Outstanding Resource Value Waters. Outstanding Resource Value Waters - Resources - Minnesota Geospatial Commons (mn.gov). Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Public Water Inventory Basins. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-mn-public-waters>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Public Water Inventory Streams. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-mn-public-waters>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Public Water Inventory Wetlands. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-mn-public-waters>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Snowmobile Trails. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-snowmobile-trails-mn>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. State Admin Lands. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-dnr-managed-areas>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. State Fee Lands. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/plan-stateland-dnrcounty>. Received 4/4/2025.

Spatial Data Sources

DNR. State Forest Camp Grounds. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/struc-state-forest-campgrounds>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. State Parks. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-dnr-lrs-prk>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Trout Lakes. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-trout-lake-designation>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Trout Streams. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-trout-stream-designations>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Walk In Access Points. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-dnr-walk-in-access-sites>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Water Access Points. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/loc-water-access-sites>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Wetland Banking Easement. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-wetland-banking-easements>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Wild Rice Lakes Identified by DNR Wildlife. [Wild Rice Lakes Identified by DNR Wildlife - Resources - Minnesota Geospatial Commons](#). Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Wild Rice – MN DNR Modeled. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-orv-waters>. Received 4/4/2025.

DNR. Wild and Scenic River District. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/bdry-wild-and-scenic-river-admin>. Received 4/4/2025.

Douglas County. Zoning data. Received Data 05/14/2025

FEMA. FEMA Floodplain / Flood Hazard Areas. https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/floodplain/flood-map-updates-timeline.pdf. Received 4/4/2025.

Fieldcheck by FieldWatch. Minnesota Crop Site Registry. [DriftWatch MN - Map](#). Received 4/4/2025

MDH. Hospitals. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/health-facility-hospitals>. Received 4/4/2025.

MDH. MDH County Well Index. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-well-information-non-pws>. Received 4/4/2025.

MDH. MDH Emergency Response area. Received 4/4/2025.

MDH. MDH Wellhead protection area. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/water-wellhead-protection-areas>. Received 4/4/2025.

MDH. Nursing Homes. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/health-facility-nursing-boarding>. Received 4/4/2025.

MDHS. Daycares/Child-care centers/Pre-schools. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/econ-child-care>. Received 4/4/2025.

MDoE. Schools (Public & Private, > Kindergarten). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/struc-school-buildings>. Received 4/4/2025.

Spatial Data Sources

MNDOT. Aggregate Sources. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/geos-aggregate-mapping>. Received 4/4/2025.

MNDOT. Military Reservation Lands. <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=6b911a60a5a4465a85fd5c42668bf907>. Received 4/4/2025.

MNDOT. Native American Reservation Lands. <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=8fded139728f48b3b374a5dbf41dd4ec>. Received 4/4/2025.

MNDOT. Scenic Byways. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/trans-routes-tour>. Received 4/4/2025.

MPCA. Environmental Justice Census Data. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-ej-mPCA-census>. Received 4/4/2025.

MPCA. MPCA Impaired Lakes (2024 Proposed). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-impaired-water-2024-draft>. Received 4/4/2025.

MPCA. MPCA Impaired Streams (2024 Proposed). <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-impaired-water-2024-draft>. Received 4/4/2025.

MPCA. MPCA What's in My Neighborhood Sites. <https://gisdata.mn.gov/dataset/env-my-neighborhood>. Received 4/4/2025.

Pope County. Zoning data. Received Data 04/01/2025.

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Appendix F

Landowner Rights Factsheet

Understanding your rights: Transmission lines and your land

This information is a general guide and not legal advice. If a utility company wants to build a high-voltage transmission line on or near your property, it's important to understand your rights. You should always talk to your own legal and real estate advisors for help with your specific situation.

How transmission line routes are chosen

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) decides where high-voltage transmission lines (HVTL) can be built. They try to find routes that cause the least harm to people and the environment while making sure our energy system is reliable.

When the Commission approves a route, it sets a general area (the "route") and a specific strip of land within that area (the "right-of-way") where the transmission line will be located. The route is usually wider than the right-of-way, giving the utility some flexibility in where they place the line. Before building, the utility will file detailed plans showing the exact location of the right-of-way.

Rights-of-Way and easements

A right-of-way is the legal permission for a utility to use someone else's land for a specific purpose, like building and maintaining a transmission line.

An easement is a written agreement that gives the utility this right. It's like a contract between you and the utility that says they can use a specific part of your land. This agreement is recorded in official land records and stays in place even if you sell your property.

The easement document will clearly state where the transmission line will go and what the utility can and cannot do on your land. It will also outline what you, as the landowner, can and cannot do on that part of your land in the future.

Sometimes, instead of an easement, the utility might want to buy your land outright (this is called buying the fee title).

Because an easement or buying fee title are legal agreements that affect your land for the long term, it's crucial to get advice from legal and real estate professionals before signing anything.

Eminent domain: When the utility can take your land

Minnesota law allows a utility with the Commission's permission to use eminent domain (also called condemnation) to acquire property rights if they can't reach an agreement with the landowner. This means the utility can legally take the necessary land (either an easement or full ownership) even if you don't want to sell or agree to an easement.

The U.S. and Minnesota Constitutions say that if your land is taken through eminent domain, you are entitled to just compensation for its value. If a utility uses eminent domain, they must:

- First try to negotiate with you in good faith to settle on the amount of compensation you will receive.
- Provide you with a professional appraisal (estimate of value) of the property interest they want to take.

You have the right to get your own appraisal, and the utility must pay for it (within certain limits). Any appraisal should consider not just the value of similar easements or properties, but also any income you might lose because of the transmission line and any decrease in the value of the rest of your property.

The Eminent domain process and timeline



The legal process of eminent domain starts when the utility files a petition in the district court of the county where your land is located. This petition will describe the land they want and name all the owners.

At least 20 days before filing the petition, the utility must send you a *Notice of the Objects of the Petition*. This notice will tell you when and where a court hearing will take place.

At the hearing, you can object to the utility using eminent domain. However, if the court decides the transmission line serves a public purpose, is necessary, and has been properly authorized, it will likely allow the taking to proceed.

The issue of compensation will be decided separately. The court will appoint a panel of experts to determine how much you should be paid. There will be another hearing for this. You can appeal the decision (called the award) to the district court.

Possession of the property

If you don't appeal the compensation award, the utility can take ownership and possession of the property or easement once they pay you the awarded amount. If you do appeal, they can usually take possession after depositing three-fourths of the award with the court.

If the utility needs to start construction quickly, they can use a "quick take" process. In this case, they must give you 90 days' written notice by certified mail and pay you (or deposit with the court) the value of the property as they appraised it. The court can then give the utility ownership and possession after the 90-day notice period.

It's very important to consult with a legal advisor as soon as you know the utility might use eminent domain.

Relocation and Buy-the-Farm rights

The Commission tries to avoid building transmission lines in ways that would force people to move their homes or businesses. However, sometimes this can't be avoided. If the right-of-way goes directly through your residence or business, you may be entitled to relocation benefits, including:

- **Minimum compensation:** At least enough money to buy a comparable property in your community. This might be more than the "just compensation" mentioned earlier.
- **Advisory services:** Help from the utility to find suitable replacement property. This includes interviews to understand your needs, information about available properties, and help with the process.
- **Moving costs and other expenses:** Reimbursement for certain costs related to moving.

Buy the Farm

Minnesota law, often referred to as the "Buy the Farm" provision, offers significant protections to residential landowners and farmers facing the impact of large transmission lines. Recognizing that these projects can significantly affect property value and quality of life, the legislature created this option to empower landowners and mitigate the negative impacts of large transmission lines. This option only applies if the utility is using eminent domain. If you reach a voluntary agreement for an easement, you generally cannot use the Buy the Farm option later.

Specifically, for HVTL's of 200 kilovolts or larger, Minnesota law grants certain landowners the right to compel the utility company to purchase more than just the land directly needed for the transmission line if the utility is using eminent domain.

This Buy the Farm option applies to the following types of properties:

- **Homestead property:** This includes both agricultural and non-agricultural land that serves as the owner's primary residence.
- **Non-homestead agricultural land:** This covers farmland that is not the owner's primary residence but is actively used for agricultural purposes.
- **Rental residential property:** This includes properties that are leased to tenants for residential use.
- **Seasonal residential recreational property:** This encompasses properties used for recreational purposes on a seasonal basis, such as cabins or lake homes.

If the utility buys your entire property under Buy the Farm, and this includes your home or business, you are also entitled to the relocation benefits mentioned above.

When to decide on Buy the Farm

When the utility starts the eminent domain process, they will send you a *Notice of the Objects of the Petition*. You have 60 days from the date you receive this notice to inform the utility in writing if you want them to buy your entire property under the Buy the Farm law. However, if you know that you want to use Buy the Farm from the start of negotiations with the utility before they use eminent domain, your agreement with the utility might include them buying your property.

It's crucial to consult with a legal advisor if you are considering the Buy the Farm option to make sure you send the proper notices within the deadline.

The Public Utilities Commission's role in eminent domain

It's important to understand that the Public Utilities Commission does not have the authority to decide issues related to the utility's use of eminent domain, including how much you are compensated, Buy the Farm requests, or relocation benefits.

The Commission's job is to decide on the best routes for transmission lines to minimize harm to people and the environment.

Protecting your rights

The impact of transmission lines on your land can be significant. You are encouraged to:

- Participate in the Commission's proceedings that lead to the routing decisions.
- Consult with real estate and legal professionals to understand how the project might affect your land.
- Ensure that any taking of your property is fairly compensated according to the law.

For more information

For detailed information on eminent domain and Buy the Farm, visit the Minnesota Revisors website at www.revisor.mn.gov and see Minnesota Statutes Chapters 117 and 216I.21.