

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Katie J. Sieben
Hwikwon Ham
Audrey C. Partridge
Joseph K. Sullivan
John A. Tuma

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of the Application for a Route
Permit for the Big Stone South to Alexandria
345-kV Transmission Project in West-Central
Minnesota

SERVICE DATE: June 25, 2026

DOCKET NO. E-017,ET-10/TL-23-160

The above-entitled matter was considered by the Commission on April 30, 2026, the date on which the record closed under Minn. Stat. § 14.61, subd. 2, and the following disposition made:

1. Adopted the Administrative Law Judge's (ALJ) Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation to the extent they are consistent with the Commission's decision.

2. Modified Finding 218 of the ALJ Report as follows:

Of the Routing Alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion (South Region), BSSR014–~~(included in the Applicants' Preferred Route)~~, BSSR06, and BSSR11 have the least amount of residences within 75 to 250 feet of the alignment (34, 0, and 1, respectively). The Applicants' Preferred Route in this subregion, BSSR04, includes four residences within 75 to 250 feet of the alignment and only six residences within the Route Width

3. Found that the Environmental Impact Statement is adequate under Minn. R. 7850.2500, subp. 10.

4. Issued a Route Permit to Otter Tail Power and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project with the conditions recommended in the ALJ Report along the route recommended by the ALJ, with the following modifications:

a. South Subregion, East Segment. Authorized expansion of the route width for the applicants' preferred route (BSSR04) in the segment by 1500 feet to the north starting at a point 1500 feet west of County Road 23 going east until the route turns north.

- b. Swift Subregion. SSR01 with S205 (FEIS maps G-9 through G-12). Authorized the applicants' preferred route (SSR01 with S205, FEIS maps G-9 through G-12) and shifted the alignment to the north side of US Highway 12 both to the east and west of the driveway of Daniel Wiese 1500 feet on both sides. (FEIS map G-10).**
- c. Cyrus Subregion. The ALJ and applicant preferred (CSR02) along with route alternative CAAO1 (FEIS map G-45). Authorized the expanded route width in the area near Solvie Slough as shown on page 14 of the Direct Testimony of Jason Weiers filed on August 15, 2025, to allow flexibility to minimize impacts to the environment, landowners, and existing land uses.**
- d. White Bear Lake Subregion. WBLSR04 Authorized applicant preferred with alignment shift West. WBLSR04 with alignment alternative.**
- e. Alexandria Subregion. (ASR01) On the south end of the Alexandria subsection near the town of Lowry in the area lying north of Pope Co Road 28 and south of Pope Co Road 76. (FIES maps G-52 and G-53)**

Approved State Hwy 114 alternative ASR01 with Route Segment N9, along with N205, and expanded Route Segment N9 between ASR01 and north of the N9 route width where it deviates from the Applicants' Preferred Route north to the Little Chippewa river.

- f. Alexandria Subregion. Mud Lake to Alexandria Substation route width expansions from the applicants preferred route ASR01 (FEIS maps G-56 and G-57), as follows:**
 - i. Expanded the route width 500 feet to the west on parcel 30-0340-000 Douglas County in Lake Mary Twp.**
 - ii. Expanded the route width 1000 feet to the east between parcel 30-0340-000 and Woodsman Ln SW.**
 - iii. Expanded the route width 1000 feet to both north and south of Woodsman Ln SW and Cross Country Ln SW.**
 - iv. Expanded the route with 3000 feet to the west of Waterfowl Drive SW between Cross Country Ln SW and the existing transmission corridor to potentially identify an alternative route into the substation behind and west of the residence on Waterfowl Drive.**

5. Included the following conditions in the route permit:

- a. The conditions recommended by the ALJ.**
- b. Tree Replacement Plan condition.**

The Commission adopts the attached staff recommendations as modified above.¹ This Order shall become effective immediately.



BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sasha Bergman".

Sasha Bergman
Executive Secretary

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email consumer.puc@state.mn.us for assistance.

¹ The Commission modifies the ALJ's report as set forth in ordering paragraph 4 above to provide the Applicant with the flexibility to minimize potential impacts to the environment and landowners, consistent with Minn. Stat. 216I.03, subd. 1, and 216I.05. No party opposed these modifications.

RE: PUC EIP Staff Exceptions to ALJ Report

Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project

PUC Docket No. E-017, ET-10/TL-23-160

CAH Docket No. 22-2500-40506

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Energy Infrastructure Permitting (EIP) staff has reviewed the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendations (ALJ report) issued by Administrative Law Judge Christa L. Moseng on February 18, 2026, for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345 kV Transmission Line Project (project).¹

EIP staff appreciates the comprehensive analysis of the record and submits the following exception to the ALJ report to ensure the accuracy of the record.

1. **Finding 218** of the ALJ report states:

Of the Routing Alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion (South Region), BSSR04 (included in the Applicants' Preferred Route), BSSR06, and BSSR11 have the least amount of residences within 75 to 250 feet of the alignment (4, 0, and 1, respectively). The Applicants' Preferred Route in this subregion, BSSR04, includes only six residences within the Route Width.²⁹¹

Finding 218 inaccurately states those routes with the fewest residences within 75-250 feet of the alignment. Footnote 291 of the ALJ report cites the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) main text at page 205. The FEIS demonstrates on page 205 that BSSR01, BSSR06, and BSSR11 have the fewest residences within 75-250 feet of the alignment. To accurately reflect the record while maintaining reference to the Applicants' Preferred Route, EIP staff recommends that the finding be amended to read:

Of the Routing Alternatives in the Big Stone Subregion (South Region), BSSR014 (~~included in the Applicants' Preferred Route~~), BSSR06, and BSSR11 have the least amount of residences within 75 to 250 feet of the alignment (34, 0, and 1, respectively). The Applicants' Preferred Route in this subregion, BSSR04, includes four residences within 75 to 250 feet of the alignment and only six residences within the Route Width.²⁹¹

¹ On July 1, 2025, Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (DOC EERA) unit staff moved to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Energy Infrastructure Permitting (PUC EIP) unit as directed by state law (Laws of Minn. 2024, ch.126, art. 7). While DOC EERA staff initiated environmental review of this proposal prior to July 1, 2025, the environmental review is now being completed by PUC EIP staff. For accuracy related to procedural history, references to previous filings by EERA will be identified as such, and "EIP" will be referenced throughout the remainder of this document.

EIP staff appreciates the opportunity to provide these exceptions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenna Ness', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jenna Ness
Public Utilities Commission, Energy Infrastructure Permitting
Environmental Review Project Manager