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PUBLIC HEARING

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
XCEL ENERGY TRANSMISSION CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADE PROJECT
FROM EAST OF SIOUX FALLS TO MINNESOTA BORDER
DOCKET EL05-023

RECEIVED
OCT 03 2005
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Thursday, September 22, 2005
7:10 p.m.
Tailgators
1013 North Splitrock Boulevard
Brandon, South Dakota

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I N D E X O F E X H I B I T S

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	MARKED
1	Presentation	89
2	Sign-in Sheet	89

(The following proceedings were taken before
 Maxine J. Risty, RPR, a Notary Public within and for
 the State of South Dakota.)

1 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Good evening, ladies and
2 gentlemen. We'll start the meeting. I need to run
3 through some preliminary items first; however, at this
4 point, we will call the meeting officially open.

5 We will now begin the public hearing in Docket
6 EL05-023 concerning an application submitted by
7 Northern States Power Company doing business as Xcel
8 Energy for a new 345-kilovolt Split Rock-Lakefield
9 Junction transmission line and a substation upgrade
10 east of Sioux Falls.

11 I'm Gary Hanson, chairman of the South Dakota
12 Public Utilities Commission. With me here this evening
13 is Vice Chairman Bob Sahr and Commissioner Dusty
14 Johnson. The date is September 22nd, 2005, the time is
15 7 p.m. Central Daylight Time, and the place is
16 Tailgators in Brandon, South Dakota.

17 The purpose of the hearing is to hear public
18 comments regarding Xcel's application. Interested
19 persons may present their views and comments regarding
20 the application, and we want you to be encouraged to do
21 so. A copy of the application is on file with the
22 Minnehaha County Auditor. Filings in the docket
23 including the application may be accessed on the
24 commission's web site at www.puc.sd.gov under
25 Commission Actions, Commission Dockets, then scrolling

1 down to Docket EL05-023.

2 If the application is approved, Xcel will
3 construct a new 345-kilovolt transmission line from
4 Split Rock substation located near the Angus Anson
5 Generating Station east of Sioux Falls along or near
6 I-90 from Exit 402 to the Minnesota line and upgrade
7 the Split Rock substation to accommodate the new line.

8 The parties to this proceeding are currently Xcel
9 and the Commission. Each person residing in the area
10 of the project, each municipality, county and
11 governmental agency in the project area, any nonprofit
12 organization formed in whole or in part to promote the
13 conservation or natural beauty, to protect the
14 environment, the personal health or other biological
15 values, to preserve historical sites, to promote
16 consumer interests, to represent commercial and
17 industrial groups, or to promote the orderly
18 development of the project area, or any interested
19 person may be granted formal party status in this
20 proceeding by making written application to the
21 Commission on or before October 25, 2005. We have
22 application forms available here tonight if you'd like
23 to apply for a party status.

24 Karen Kramer of the Commission staff is here
25 tonight, and if you have any questions concerning

1 intervention or other questions, she's available here
2 to answer those. She's seated over here.

3 To receive a permit, Xcel must show that the
4 proposed transmission upgrade project will comply with
5 all applicable laws and rules; will not pose a threat
6 of serious injury to the environment nor to the social
7 and economic condition of inhabitants or expected
8 inhabitants in the siting area; will not substantially
9 impair the health, safety or welfare of the
10 inhabitants; and will not unduly interfere with the
11 orderly development of the region with due
12 consideration having been given to the views of
13 governing bodies of affected local units of government.
14 Based on these factors, the Commission will decide
15 whether the permit should be granted, denied or granted
16 upon such terms, conditions or modifications of the
17 construction, operation, or maintenance as the
18 Commission finds are appropriate.

19 Xcel will begin with a presentation to explain its
20 proposed project. Following that overview, we'll take
21 comments from any interested persons. And again, we
22 want to encourage you, if you would like to present any
23 information to us or you have any comment whatsoever,
24 we would like to hear from you this evening.

25 This is an official meeting of the South Dakota

1 Public Utilities Commission. If you do speak, we need
2 you to identify yourself and any organization you
3 represent for our court reporter. Please use the
4 microphone or your outdoor voice.

5 Additionally, we have sign-in sheets, and we ask
6 everyone to sign in on the sheet so we have a complete
7 record of who's attending this hearing. Thank you.

8 I see Jim Wilcox in the back.

9 Jim, would you introduce your presenters this
10 evening and whoever is to be the first presenter?

11 **MR. WILCOX:** Mr. Chairman, Pam Rasmussen
12 represents Xcel here tonight.

13 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Good evening everyone. I see
14 several familiar faces out here. I'm pleased to be
15 here tonight to talk about the project. I've got a
16 brief overview up on the screen with slides to talk
17 about the project, and as I go through, if people have
18 questions and clarifications of anything I've said,
19 please let me know.

20 We filed our application with the PUC in August.
21 And as the chair has said, we're building a 345-kV line
22 that starts at our Split Rock substation, and we'll be
23 going to our Lakefield Junction substation in
24 Minnesota. That substation actually is owned by
25 Alliant Energy. The project in South Dakota is

1 approximately 9.6 miles long, the total project is 86
2 miles, and it also includes expansion of our existing
3 Split Rock substation and the construction of a new
4 station near Worthington, Minnesota.

5 This map here shows what our proposed route is.
6 We're going to come out of the Split Rock substation
7 and we're going to head north paralleling our existing
8 345-kV line that we have that goes into the substation.
9 We'll be located on the east side of that transmission
10 line. We'll cross over I-90 and follow along the north
11 side of I-90 to the point where we meet with the
12 existing Western Area Power Administration 345-kV line
13 that heads north-south. At that point, the
14 transmission line is going to cross over onto the south
15 side of I-90 and will follow the line into Minnesota.
16 At that point, it will meet with the route that was
17 approved by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
18 earlier this year where they approved a route following
19 I-90 going over to Lakefield Junction substation.

20 As some of you are aware, this is part of a larger
21 series of projects. To give you an idea of where this
22 project fits in just with the 345 line I've been
23 talking about, this red area here is the proposal in
24 South Dakota that we're requesting the facility permit
25 for and the blue section is what has been permitted in

1 Minnesota. Up in this area right here is where we're
2 going to be building a new substation which will tie
3 into the transmission system in the area.

4 The project need covers several issues, and it's
5 primarily to support the development of wind energy in
6 southwestern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota. As
7 many of you are aware, wind energy is important in this
8 area. People are building a lot of turbines. And part
9 of our job is to make sure that our transmission system
10 can support that growth.

11 The current transmission system that we have
12 cannot support all the existing wind generation that's
13 on Buffalo Ridge right now. There's approximately over
14 500 megawatts of existing generators out there right
15 now. There's many more planned to be developed. And
16 our system right now can only handle approximately 425
17 megawatts to be transported out into the grid for
18 people to use for energy in their homes.

19 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Pam, how much existing wind
20 generation did you say?

21 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** There's over 500 megawatts. I'm
22 not sure what the exact number is. And that just hits
23 the amount that's on Buffalo Ridge right now.

24 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Thanks.

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The project will also strengthen

1 the transmission system to support wind development
2 regardless of location. We've been referring to this
3 as the southwest Minnesota wind transmission project,
4 but in actuality, it also supports wind development in
5 South Dakota, too. We've pretty much called it that
6 because the majority of the projects that we're looking
7 at are in that area, and I'll show you that on this
8 next slide.

9 And finally a side benefit of this is that because
10 it's bringing in another transmission line source into
11 our Split Rock substation, it's going to enhance the
12 reliability in the Sioux Falls area because it provides
13 another mechanism for us to bring energy into this
14 area.

15 This map right here -- and there's also handouts
16 of the same map over on the tables over there -- shows
17 all the projects that we're doing in southwest
18 Minnesota and South Dakota. The 345-kV project we're
19 talking about tonight is right here. We've got another
20 new 161-kV line that's in this area and a new 115 line
21 that's up by Brookings, South Dakota that extends over
22 into Lake Benton. And this area where I'm marking on
23 the map with the laser pretty much marks the area where
24 Buffalo Ridge is and where all the wind turbines are
25 being built. All the other lines shown on the map are

1 existing lines that we're doing upgrades to to help
2 bolster the system to support carrying the energy on
3 the grid.

4 This process of -- the project has been going on
5 for several years. A lot of our work has been focused
6 on Minnesota because we had to go through a
7 certificate-of-need process and a lengthy routing
8 process. We're to the point now where we now need to
9 work on getting our South Dakota permit prior to us
10 building the line. We've had some general routing
11 meetings early on in the process as we were working on
12 our permits in Minnesota. And then we started having
13 public meetings earlier this year to kind of propose
14 options for people to look at and see if they had
15 concerns about it, propose other options, and to kind
16 of get people's concerns out in the air for what we
17 were looking at.

18 We had an initial route that was proposed at our
19 February 24th meeting that we had. It was following
20 existing transmission lines that we had in the area and
21 some new corridor. There were several concerns raised
22 about that route that we proposed. It included
23 proximity to homes that were along the corridor. There
24 was a new cross-country section where there weren't any
25 existing transmission lines, it was hilly terrain, and

1 people were concerned about that. And other -- people
2 were commenting that they considered other corridors
3 better primarily following along I-90.

4 This map shows the original route that we
5 proposed. It came out of the Split Rock substation and
6 headed north and continued north until it met with an
7 existing 115-kV line that we had. We were going to
8 double circuit for a section until we got a new
9 right-of-way, which is this green line on the map. And
10 then we met up with another 161-kV line that Xcel
11 Energy owns and we were going to follow that corridor,
12 replace that line with a double circuit 115-161-kV line
13 and then head into Minnesota.

14 After getting input from people and going through
15 the rest of our Minnesota process, we came back in June
16 and proposed a different route that we were going to
17 file with the South Dakota PUC. We revised the route
18 based on several factors. Our final route that was
19 approved by Minnesota went along I-90, and we felt that
20 it made sense for us to continue on I-90 and into South
21 Dakota.

22 From a landowner input that we had from the
23 previous meeting, we thought that it was an option from
24 the public that we talked with that it was probably a
25 better fit overall of the land use in the area. And we

1 also had agency and municipal input. Brandon had some
2 comments on where they felt the best place the line was
3 going to be, too.

4 There were no significant or major issues raised
5 at that public meeting except that we had had some
6 discussions with the Department of Transportation who
7 initially told us that they were considering not
8 allowing us to overhang the interstate, which would --
9 and that means that -- our proposal is to place the
10 line on private property but adjacent to the DOT fence,
11 and part of the line would overhang the interstate.
12 Initial reaction was that they didn't want us to do
13 that. That they wanted us to place the poles further
14 out in the field. Our concern with that is it puts
15 poles out in the field and makes it difficult to farm
16 around the structures. If there's development, it also
17 causes some problems with orderly development. And so
18 we worked with them on talking through the issue. And
19 they have a process and we have the same process in
20 Minnesota that we're going to follow that you can apply
21 for a permit and show hardship. And what that means is
22 that if you can show that -- if you place the line away
23 from the interstate fence and it creates a burden on
24 agricultural impacts and those types of things, they
25 can allow overhang. And we're in the process of doing

1 that right now on our Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake
2 transmission line and apply for a permit from them.

3 And, Grant, have we gotten that permit? And they
4 granted us a permit in Minnesota already. And then
5 we'll be filing for the same permit for the entire
6 345-kV line with the Minnesota and South Dakota DOT.

7 A little more specifics on the project at our
8 Split Rock substation. We're adding about one acre to
9 the substation. It's on property that is owned by Xcel
10 Energy. We own the majority of the land in that area,
11 which is right near our Angus Anson plant. There's
12 going to be no changes in the current noise levels from
13 that facility because there's not going to be any major
14 equipment additions.

15 And that means that we'll have no transformers or
16 major noise sources that are going to be added, which
17 are something that would have an impact on noise in the
18 area. We did go out and measure the current noise
19 levels, and we also did some noise modeling which
20 showed that the substation doesn't impact noise at the
21 nearest residence to the substation, which is about
22 3,000 feet away. So we were concerned that the size of
23 the substation would have impacts, and the measurements
24 in how the substation's going to be built show that it
25 shouldn't have any impact on increasing the noise in

1 the residences nearby.

2 The transmission line has several factors to it.
3 The right-of-way will be 80 feet for those areas that
4 follow along I-90. For any sections where we go
5 cross-country, it will be 150 feet of right-of-away.
6 That will only apply in areas like where we head down
7 into our Split Rock substation, which is Xcel Energy
8 property, so it's kind of a moot point. But there are
9 some sections in Minnesota where we will be going
10 cross-country. And the only 80 feet of right-of-way --
11 because as I said earlier, we're overhanging the
12 interstate and that allows us to reduce the amount of
13 land we need for the transmission line.

14 The structures are going to be steel davit arm
15 structures, and there's a picture here that shows what
16 they look like. They're going to be about 120 to 150
17 feet tall and have an 800 to 900-foot span. They're
18 going to be similar to the structures that are along
19 I-90 right now except for the fact as you can tell from
20 the picture they're going to be a single-circuit
21 structure rather than a double-circuit structure that's
22 there now.

23 This drawing on the next page shows what it's
24 going to look like with the overhang easement. The
25 road is to the left of the drawing on the screen, and

1 then the right-of-way of the road that we'll be
2 following, and then we're going to be five to ten feet
3 adjacent to the DOT fence. What that means is,
4 basically we're going to be as close as we can to the
5 fence, but the foundations of the structures are large;
6 so it's not like it's going to be right near the fence,
7 and there's not going to be anything on private
8 property. There's probably going to be foundations
9 about eight feet in diameter on average. And then it
10 shows that, plus the 75-foot additional width from the
11 center of the line over to the edge of the
12 right-of-way, add it up and it's about an 80-foot
13 easement. If there's circumstances where we need a
14 little bit more, it may be a little wider than 80 feet,
15 but for the majority of the project, it's going to be
16 80 feet.

17 We have several project approvals that we need for
18 the project. The one that we're here for tonight is a
19 facilities permit from the South Dakota PUC. We
20 already received our Minnesota Environmental Quality
21 Route Permit. As we talk through this project in the
22 future, though, I would point out that the Minnesota
23 Public Utilities Commission now has jurisdiction over
24 routing so we may be referring to them in future
25 meetings or discussions on the project, so I want to

1 clarify that tonight.

2 Other permits will be needed. We'll need permits
3 from Minnehaha County and the City of Brandon building
4 permits; again, the DOT overhang permit; permits for
5 highway crossings to make sure our clearances are
6 adequate; and stormwater construction permits because
7 the work at the Split Rock substation is an acre and
8 we're required to get a stormwater construction permit
9 for that.

10 The schedule up above on the screen shows that we
11 had the project approved by the Minnesota Environmental
12 Quality Board in June. We hope to get PUC approval in
13 early 2006. And construction for the project will
14 start in 2006, but we're going to start on the eastern
15 edge of the project. As you know, we've got the permit
16 in Minnesota. We're starting some of the design, and
17 we'll be starting right-of-way contacts. This section
18 will probably see construction in 2007. And the
19 project is expected at this time to be complete in
20 August of 2007. It may extend further than that, but
21 the goal in 2007 is to have the system that's built at
22 that time capable of providing 825 megawatts of outlet
23 capacity. That may not mean the entire project's
24 built, but we may have enough in place that it could
25 support the system; and we're working on those issues

1 right now.

2 As we've been working on this project in South
3 Dakota, we wanted to highlight a couple things that we
4 feel are some of the primary siting construction issues
5 that were raised by the public. We want to place the
6 line adjacent to the I-90 fence to minimize the impacts
7 and are going to work with the DOT on that issue.
8 We're going to try to plan our construction work to
9 avoid impacts so that -- there's a bald eagle nest
10 that's near our Split Rock substation. That will
11 coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and
12 the GFP, the local -- we call it the DNR where I'm
13 from; so it's a local natural resources group. We had
14 to deal with that issue when we did some recent work at
15 the Angus Anson plant. And we have a plan in place to
16 work on minimizing impacts if the birds are nesting
17 there, and that will basically revolve around -- if the
18 birds are nesting during certain times of the year,
19 we'll adjust our construction schedule to make sure
20 that the work we do doesn't deter the birds from
21 nesting in that area. The birds have been nesting in
22 that area every other year is about what we've seen, so
23 it's going to depend probably on the year we're there,
24 whether they're there or not. But we'll also have some
25 flexibility on the construction schedule to maybe not

1 have to work during that nesting period.

2 We're also going to use what we call best
3 management practices during construction, and that's
4 implementing erosion control measures where needed to
5 reduce the amount of erosion during construction and
6 using winter construction in areas, such as if we're
7 going across a wetland, to go across that during frozen
8 ground conditions. Those types of things.

9 Finally, we compensate landowners for easements
10 when our line goes across their property, but we also
11 compensate for damage caused by construction. So if
12 there's crop damage, those types of things, we'll work
13 with the landowners and compensate for those issues, as
14 well as repairing any damage on the people's property.

15 And that ends my presentation on the specifics of
16 the project.

17 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Do any of the commissioners have
18 questions?

19 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Mr. Chairman, I do have a
20 couple if I may. One of the questions I had is, you
21 talk about supporting wind in South Dakota and
22 obviously the region in general, and we have heard
23 about how the proposed power lines coming in near
24 White, South Dakota would support wind development
25 actually in the state of South Dakota. Are the plans

1 with this improvement, as part of the overall package
2 between South Dakota and Minnesota, is this geared more
3 towards -- this particular line -- towards Minnesota
4 wind and then more reliability on this side of the
5 border, or are there actual opportunities out there for
6 South Dakota wind with this particular line?

7 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** This particular line, because it's
8 a 345-kV line, is going to support the high voltage
9 grid to get the power transported throughout the
10 region. So indirectly it's kind of like an interstate
11 system where the 345 is going to get the major traffic
12 going through the major energy. And it ties into all
13 the lower voltage systems. So all the 115-kV lines
14 where we have our wind generators tie into that grid.

15 So for example, up in Brookings in the areas where
16 we see some potential for wind development, there's a
17 345-kV line up there at the Brookings substation. That
18 345-kV line is the same one that crosses the interstate
19 here and ties into the Sioux Falls substation. So us
20 building this line will help the power that comes into
21 Brookings onto that line, into the grid, kind of going
22 into the other areas as needed. So indirectly it does
23 support wind.

24 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** But as far as you know right
25 now within Xcel's foreseeable plans, you're not talking

1 about any sort of wind farms right here in the Brandon
2 area?

3 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No.

4 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And then you had mentioned
5 towards the end -- and I may have just missed part of
6 it -- did you say that you thought the total project
7 would support 825 megawatts of output capacity or -- I
8 was kind of listening as you were talking about
9 construction schedule. Could you repeat that or
10 elaborate on it?

11 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yeah. The map earlier on in the
12 presentation that showed all the different transmission
13 projects that we're doing including that one, once
14 those are all built and in service, they'll support 825
15 megawatts of outlet capacity for wind.

16 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And then you mentioned that
17 during the process, you received comments from -- I
18 believe you might have said the City of Brandon or some
19 type of local government entities. Could you talk just
20 briefly about what sort of comments you received? Was
21 it more in terms of questions or did they have
22 suggestions on routing or what came up?

23 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** On the specifics on that, I can't
24 remember exactly what they said, but it was more
25 related to our initial proposed route and how that was

1 going to impact development north of I-90 versus
2 proposing it along I-90. They felt it was a better
3 blend for what they wanted to do rather than following
4 along the other corridor we had.

5 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Okay. So when you say
6 impact, you meant they were concerned about an adverse
7 impact with the original routing?

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

9 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And then, you know, as you
10 know, out here with the existing line, the tall line
11 that you see right along the interstate here, on the
12 south side, then putting in an existing line -- or new
13 line on the north side, how many miles of interstate
14 are we looking at being doubled up so to speak?
15 Because ultimately you do cross and then go on on one
16 line; is that correct? And then you -- well, then you
17 go with one line going into Minnesota.

18 **MS. STEINHAUER:** This is Suzanne Steinhauer. I'm
19 with HDR Engineering that helped prepare the
20 application. Coming from Minnesota to the large 345-kV
21 line is about four-and-a-half miles. So that will --
22 at that point, there will just be a new line on the
23 south side of the interstate. From the intersection
24 with the 345 with the large line going west into Split
25 Rock is also about four-and-a-half miles. And then

1 when it crosses back over the interstate is about a
2 half a mile.

3 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** So it's about four-and-a-half
4 miles.

5 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And obviously -- I mean
6 tonight's the public's opportunity to comment. Have
7 you heard people express any concerns about the
8 proposed route, any comments on -- from landowners or
9 governmental entities or anyone out there about where
10 you're looking at setting it now?

11 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think there's been some comments
12 about the fact that there will be two lines on both
13 sides of I-90, and that's been one of our struggles
14 with determining where to put the lines. You have the
15 Split Rock substation right next to I-90, the other
16 line there, and you need to bring it in. And, really,
17 the most reasonable corridor is to bring it along I-90
18 and try to weigh that with the possible visual impacts
19 for travelers along I-90 versus putting it out in other
20 areas and weighing those impacts of going with the 161
21 and other lines we have north of there.

22 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And with that doubling up so
23 to speak, are there any concerns other than just the
24 visual concern to it? I mean is it -- or does it
25 really not matter from an engineering standpoint and

1 all that? It's pretty much the same as putting it
2 elsewhere; is that -- I mean other than the problems
3 associated with putting it elsewhere. What I'm saying
4 is, other than the visual problems with the two lines
5 being on either side of the interstate, there's no
6 technical issues with that, are there?

7 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No. Generally our planners would
8 deter us from putting that line on the same structure
9 as another 345-kV line, but because they're not on the
10 same pole and they're separated, the concerns about
11 reliability aren't there. There are certain standards
12 that the North American Liability Council has, and this
13 complies with that type of thing that they're separate
14 circuits.

15 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** So you feel that there's not
16 really the ability to put them on the same line so to
17 speak, or that would not be something you would do
18 under those standards?

19 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** That would be supported by our
20 planning criteria to put them all on the same line.

21 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Okay. And I think I know the
22 answer to this question, but it might be of interest.
23 I mean I assume there's some problems with actually
24 putting lines underground as well?

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yeah. The big issue with that of

1 course is cost, trying to put the line underground.
2 From a liability perspective, you don't have the storm
3 problems where out here of course -- with the wind and
4 the ice and the galloping problems, you don't have
5 that. But on the other hand, if you do have an outage,
6 it's a longer term outage because you've got to find it
7 because it's underground. There's also just the
8 environmental impact of putting it underground. We
9 have to dig a huge trench. We have to put concrete
10 conduits in to put the cable in. And you don't just
11 put cable in for one 345-kV line. You have to double
12 up to make sure that if the cable fails, that you've
13 got a backup cable already in place so you can still
14 utilize the line if you have a cable failure. And that
15 all adds up to be a significant cost estimate.

16 I haven't done -- I don't think we have any
17 specific information that we could give you a number
18 tonight, but if that's something that the Commission
19 wanted, we could provide that.

20 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Mr. Chairman, I have no
21 further questions at this time.

22 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Mr. Johnson?

23 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** I have a few questions.
24 Regarding the underground cable, would there be
25 physical problems involving thermal -- are there

1 thermal issues for putting cable underground for long
2 distances, those high voltage cables?

3 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think it depends on how it's
4 designed. They design it to try to avoid those types
5 of issues. And the type of cable that you use, it's
6 usually more of an oil -- there's a cooling system base
7 using oil, and so you have certain stations based along
8 the line that have oil included into the ducts to keep
9 them cool. When you bring lines that close together,
10 that is one concern.

11 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** When people talk about a
12 tunnelling effect of having lines on both sides of the
13 interstate, is that just an aesthetic tunnelling
14 effect, or is there another component that I'm not
15 aware of?

16 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** That's the only component that
17 Xcel is aware of.

18 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Would there be reasons that
19 the second set of high voltage lines couldn't also go
20 south of the interstate with a newly secured
21 right-of-away?

22 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** We looked at that as an option,
23 but our concern with that one is, well, you don't have
24 the tunnelling effect. You do place the poles out in
25 the farmer's fields. You have an additional burden on

1 them, and you have the lines -- and that was probably
2 our primary concern is that we would put them out and
3 have them in the same corridor out in the field. We
4 felt putting them adjacent on the north side would
5 reduce the overall impact of farming operations.

6 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Were there other primary
7 alternatives other than your initial option and then
8 sort of the I-90 north option? Were there other
9 alternatives you considered or rejected?

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No. Those were the main ones we
11 looked at.

12 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** What is the closest that
13 the 345 kV -- the new kV line will come by homes?
14 What's the closest it would be?

15 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** A little over 300 feet.

16 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** Robert Johnson from Corson --

17 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Just a minute, please, sir.

18 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** Oh, I'm sorry.

19 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We're on questions from the
20 Commission. Then after they've completed their
21 presentation, then we'll go on with --

22 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** You bet.

23 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you.

24 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** At the substation, Split
25 Rock substation, you talked about 3,000 feet from the

1 nearest existing home. How far away from the nearest
2 existing private property? And what I'm getting at is,
3 could we have a new home constructed closer than 3,000
4 feet from the existing substation?

5 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I'm not aware of the exact
6 dimensions of our property, but I think it's probably
7 still pretty close to 3,000 feet. We own a large
8 amount of property in that area, and again, that's
9 something we could go back and find out for you. But
10 I'm sure it's a considerable distance because that's
11 all land we own.

12 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Are there reasons we
13 haven't talked about tonight why your current proposal,
14 what I'll call the I-90 north proposal, was not your
15 initial proposal?

16 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** When we came to the first meeting
17 and proposed that option, we were really trying to --
18 we struggled with the two options because the initial
19 option we proposed provides what we call corridor
20 sharing with existing transmission facilities, which is
21 something we get a lot of directives to do. And that
22 would provide a lot of corridor sharing with existing
23 transmission lines. However, it did impact more homes,
24 it had some corridor cross-country with it versus going
25 along I-90 where there were concerns about the

1 tunnelling effect and having stuff close together. So
2 we kind of tried to weigh them back and forth and said,
3 well, the initial look at -- let's do what we do
4 standard on a lot of our projects and look at corridor
5 sharing with our lines; take that out to the public,
6 see what kind of reaction we get and comments people
7 have; factor that in and go from there.

8 And at the time, we also didn't know where
9 Minnesota was going to route us either, so we didn't
10 really know whether they'd have us double circuit in
11 Minnesota on our existing 161 line or if they were
12 going to approve us on I-90.

13 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** In the application,
14 cultural resources are mentioned just very briefly. At
15 this point, do you have any reason to believe that
16 there would be sensitive cultural resources that would
17 cause a problem with the project?

18 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No, not at this time.

19 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Mr. Chairman, I believe
20 that's all I have.

21 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you. Pamela Jo, has there
22 been an analysis of the potential for future growth in
23 this region recognizing that the region is experiencing
24 phenomenal growth and where a future line might be
25 placed?

1 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** A future line in addition to this
2 line?

3 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Yes.

4 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No.

5 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** How long do you anticipate that
6 the 345 would provide for this region?

7 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know the answer to that
8 question. I'd have to get back to you on that one.

9 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** The Commission is very
10 interested in wind development in the area. Perhaps
11 you're aware of that because --

12 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes, I am.

13 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** -- your very first slide
14 presented a great deal of information on wind energy.
15 The second bullet point states that the transmission
16 system cannot support existing wind generation tying
17 into the system. And I understand from your answer to
18 Commissioner Sahr's question that this is an integrated
19 system that's going to help facilitate transmission
20 from Buffalo Ridge to the Minnesota area. Will it
21 facilitate -- and I recognize from your last bullet
22 point as well that it will enhance transmission in the
23 whole area, but will it enhance the ability to build
24 wind turbines in South Dakota?

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** On the slide I showed with all the

1 projects that are under construction, there was a
2 115-kV line that goes from the Brookings County
3 substation into a new substation that -- I'm sorry,
4 into the -- yeah, the Brookings substation, which is
5 going to be a new 345-kV to 115-kV substation right
6 next to the Western Area Power Administration's White
7 substation. That substation is going to be designed to
8 eventually be able to accommodate wind tying into that
9 substation. And that line goes over to Lake Benton to
10 our Buffalo Ridge substation. In the middle there's a
11 substation called Yankee, and that's going to
12 accommodate wind developers who want to tie into our
13 system and can accommodate whether it's built around
14 that area right where the substation is or just across
15 the border, which is about a mile or two away. And
16 there's projects that are in the MISO queue that
17 eventually may be the ones that are tied into there, so
18 that could accommodate it.

19 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you. Just a curiosity,
20 how strong are these poles? Hurricanes, truck
21 collisions, things of that nature. Just a curiosity.

22 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know about hurricanes.

23 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** I'm sorry. I meant tornadoes.
24 I meant tornadoes. We won't worry about hurricanes.

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know the specifics of what

1 kind of wind forces and that that they're designed for,
2 but I know that in this area, our engineering and our
3 design is a higher standard than we may have in some
4 other areas to address ice issues, wind issues and that
5 type of thing. I know the line that's going along I-90
6 right now was designed to ensure that -- you know, it
7 would have to be one heck of a storm to take that thing
8 down. Plus they're steel, they're on concrete
9 foundations that are 20 to 30, 40 feet deep, so they're
10 very strong. But a specific listing of the criteria
11 they're designed for is something that we could get to
12 you if you wanted it.

13 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Please do. I believe it was
14 Sioux Valley Electric that lost several of the very
15 large wooden poles along Marion Road about a year or
16 two ago when a high wind came through there, so I'm
17 curious what the strengths of these are.

18 I am particularly interested, too, in what the
19 future holds for the development of transmission lines
20 in this area, recognizing that this becomes more and
21 more a tunnel, driving down the interstate having huge
22 lines on each side; and that if in fact the
23 transmission system presently cannot support wind
24 development and we will see additional generation in
25 this area, if in fact we're going to see even more

1 lines going down each side of the interstate system.
2 So I'm curious at what point do we increase megawatts
3 or whatever that we would expect to see some additional
4 lines being built.

5 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** At this point, we're under
6 additional planning studies to look at providing
7 additional megawatt outlet capacity on the grid, and
8 they are looking at additional high voltage
9 transmission lines and additional 115-kV lines to get
10 us up to more outlet capability. The lines that
11 they're focusing on aren't in this area. They're
12 looking at a 345-kV line near the Brookings County area
13 as a possibility to tie into the grid and tie us into
14 the metro area. I'm not aware of any other planning
15 studies at this time that get us into any more details
16 of coming into this area.

17 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you, Pamela Jo. Do you
18 have anyone else that's going to be making a
19 presentation this evening?

20 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No. But if there's specific
21 questions, then our project manager may talk.

22 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Then we will turn to questions
23 from the audience. I believe Mr. Robert Johnson is on
24 the queue first.

25 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** The original line that you're

1 going to run, I believe they call it the Alliant line,
2 the one coming at a diagonal down?

3 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yeah. That line is owned by us in
4 South Dakota and just into Minnesota. And then right
5 by Luverne, then Alliant Energy owns that one. But we
6 refer to as the Alliant route is how we described it in
7 our application to Minnesota.

8 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** Now it is possible that if
9 that line would have been built, that would have taken
10 out -- taken two lines out instead of one if a tornado
11 came through and took that line out.

12 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes. That's one of the risks that
13 our planners get concerned about when we put lines on
14 the same structure.

15 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** And how many yards of cement
16 does each pole require?

17 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know.

18 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Mr. Johnson did an excellent job
19 with speaking up and waiting, allowing her to answer
20 the question and not speaking at the same time. So if
21 you can use his example when you ask your question,
22 make sure that Pamela Jo has had an opportunity to
23 answer, and that you're not speaking at the very same
24 time. Sometimes we run into that situation. So thank
25 you for setting the pace for us. Yes, sir.

1 **MR. HANSEN:** Cory Hanson, landowner along the
2 line. I kind of find it curious -- and your quote was,
3 it's going to take one heck of a storm to knock the
4 line down, when your original line was going to be
5 basically in a lot of our backyards. And one of the
6 reasons that you wanted to put it in our backyard was
7 because you said in your papers that you were worried
8 about two lines getting taken out if there was a storm.
9 Now you're telling us that it's going to take one heck
10 of a storm to take these lines out. My question is, as
11 landowners, why do we care how much it costs you to
12 bury these lines? Because our values goes down on our
13 properties. As Commissioner Hanson has said, there's a
14 lot of future home growth in that area where our land
15 value is going to go down. Why should we care as
16 landowners how much it's going to cost you to bury the
17 lines?

18 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Because the main issue that
19 happens, when we pay a lot to build our lines, it all
20 goes into rate base, and it comes back to the rate
21 payers paying for what we build. The rates include a
22 variety of different costs the utilities have, and the
23 cost for us to build transmission lines is one of them.
24 So that's one of the factors we try to balance out is
25 building lines that are strong enough to withstand

1 storms but not spending a lot of money that gets
2 people's rates up to a high level.

3 **MR. HANSEN:** How do you -- in your original
4 proposal, the other argument was for the tunnelling,
5 and now you're being asked if there's a possibility of
6 burying the lines; but the reason you wanted it to be
7 in our backyards was because of the wind and the
8 tunnelling effect. And now that supposedly you're
9 going to run it closer to the interstate, that doesn't
10 seem to be as big of an issue as it was when you were
11 asking us if there's any argument to have it running
12 through our backyard.

13 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think the issue I raised was one
14 of the concerns we had. And as I mentioned earlier,
15 routing this line and where to put it was a difficult
16 choice to make and was trying to balance all of those
17 issues that you raised. And it's true that if both
18 lines are along I-90, we've got a tunnelling effect,
19 and if a storm comes through that is strong enough to
20 take all the lines out, they're closer together, there
21 is a higher risk that they'll both go at the same time;
22 whereas if you put them in a half-mile north, maybe
23 that wouldn't happen. Or it could happen. It's all
24 kind of speculation what we think the risk is. But we
25 try to balance that along with input we got from people

1 at the public meeting and try to weigh the pros and
2 cons. What we heard from the people and what we
3 thought would be the best option was going along I-90.
4 It doesn't mean those issues go away. It's just us
5 trying to balance them and what we think is the best
6 route, factoring in all the issues that the Commission
7 wants us to look at when we propose a route to them.

8 **MR. HANSEN:** And my last question may be an easy
9 one, but is there any way to make the line on the south
10 side of the interstate bigger? The current line you
11 have now that's on the south side of the interstate,
12 why can't that line -- I don't know, but why can't that
13 line be made bigger to accept the power that you're
14 going to bring in from Minnesota? Do you have a 650
15 line instead of a 345 line?

16 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The next voltage would be a 500-kV
17 line. That line on the south side of the interstate
18 goes to where the Western Area Power Administration
19 line crosses. And it ties into that, and it stops at
20 that point. And what we looked at and our planners
21 looked at was bringing a 345-kV line past that point
22 all the way over to the Lakefield Junction. So they're
23 really two separate lines. And so making that a bigger
24 line wouldn't have addressed the issue that we needed
25 to build a line from Sioux Falls over into Lakefield to

1 tie into the system. We have 345-kV lines over there,
2 and it's going to tie into that.

3 **MR. HANSEN:** But that would eliminate the problem
4 from Brandon to the substation by just making that part
5 of the line bigger.

6 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Well, no. It would have still
7 tied us into -- what that line does is it ties us into
8 the Western Area Power Administration line. Basically
9 it comes from the north; heads down; when it gets to
10 I-90, it follows into Sioux Falls; and then it comes
11 back out and it basically is on the same structure
12 coming out and going back south again. And the line we
13 needed needed to come out of Sioux Falls and head to
14 Minnesota.

15 Jim, do you want to help out?

16 **MR WILCOX:** I think I can interpret the question,
17 Pam, in a language he might understand better. I think
18 maybe you're suggesting -- my name is Jim Wilcox.

19 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Can you come up to the front,
20 please?

21 **MR WILCOX:** In listening to the question, I just
22 was interpreting in my mind that -- this is how I
23 understood the question. That we're going to end up
24 with three power lines essentially on two sides of the
25 interstate, and you're wondering why couldn't we just

1 have three power lines all on the same set of towers on
2 the south side.

3 **MR. HANSEN:** Right.

4 **MR WILCOX:** That was what I understood. I might
5 need to defer to the engineer, Grant here, but I think
6 it's technically unfeasible, really, to have three
7 345-kV power lines on the same structures.

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I can answer that one.

9 **MR WILCOX:** All right. Thank you.

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Our planning criteria and what
11 would be approved from our reliability group that we're
12 a part of for the United States wouldn't allow us to
13 put all three structures on one -- all three lines on
14 one structure. That wouldn't solve the problem in
15 their minds because you basically have all three lines
16 on one structure and all at risk for an outage. In
17 that case, one of the biggest concerns they would have
18 would be lightning strikes on the line. Plus, if we
19 put them all on one structure, I would assume the line
20 would be a lot taller and a lot bigger. I don't know
21 exactly what it would look like, but that would have to
22 be a factor to take into account, too. And it wasn't
23 really an easy question.

24 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Were you done, Mr. Hansen?

25 **MR. HANSEN:** Yes.

1 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Commissioner Johnson?

2 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** What's the basis for
3 landowner compensation?

4 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** We have handouts that talk about
5 our right-of-way process. We bring them to every
6 meeting to kind of walk people through what the process
7 is and that type of thing.

8 What we'll do for each landowner is determine the
9 area that the line impacts, and that's based on the
10 width of the right-of-way and the length of the
11 corridor that the line follows. And then we'll do an
12 analysis of what the land value is for that parcel that
13 we're on, what the market value is, and then we'll base
14 a payment. It's usually between 50 to 70 percent of
15 the market value of the land is what we pay landowners.
16 And each case is different. The type of land it is is
17 factored in, and of course whether it's farmland or
18 whether it's industrial land, those types of things.
19 So that also factors into it.

20 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Fifty to 70 percent of the
21 value of the land. But what's your parcel of the land?
22 Just the shadow of the transmission line?

23 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** For any parcel that's along I-90,
24 it would be the 80-foot easement width and then
25 whatever the length of the line is.

1 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Thanks.

2 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions? This
3 gentleman.

4 **MR. ALJETS:** I don't have a question. I have a
5 statement to make.

6 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Please state your name.

7 **MR. ALJETS:** My name is Raymond Aljets, and I have
8 land directly across from the Xcel Energy in Section
9 30. I talked to my granddaughter that has worked for
10 the PUC in Texas, and I called her purposely to find
11 out maybe if there was a secret word that you needed to
12 send to the Commission that might further my idea here.
13 But she assured me that there wasn't any in Texas and
14 she knew nothing about South Dakota. But anyway, my
15 idea is that when you put them poles on a person's
16 land -- and I have five, three-set poles. You know
17 what I'm talking about?

18 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** You're --

19 **MR. ALJETS:** There's three poles in a set.
20 There's five of those on my land. And then there's
21 also a two-pole set, and I have four of those on my
22 land. And now you've surely devalued my land to a
23 great degree. I know that when they were put in -- I
24 didn't own the land when they put it, and I know I
25 bought it knowing the poles were there. But

1 nevertheless, this is the 21st century, and what they
2 gave you then is nothing now. In my opinion, you could
3 save yourself a lot of trouble if you would give a
4 yearly fee to offset the fact that you devalued their
5 land to pay for the taxes. Now when I bought mine, my
6 neighbor's taxes and mine were the same. I checked
7 with them today and they're about the same. So my land
8 is not as valuable as his because he doesn't have any
9 poles on his, but I have poles on mine. I don't know
10 how you would figure that out, but that's surely --
11 there should be a yearly compensation to take care of
12 that. Does anybody disagree with that?

13 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We're not going to take a vote
14 here.

15 **MR. ALJETS:** No, I understand that. But I mean if
16 there's a negative side of this or something I don't
17 see, I would like to know about it.

18 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We'll allow Xcel to comment on
19 that if you would like.

20 **MR. ALJETS:** Okay. Thank you.

21 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you, Raymond.

22 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Do you own all the property south
23 of our Split Rock substation, is that where you're
24 located?

25 **MR. ALJETS:** I live north.

1 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** North. Okay.

2 **MR. ALJETS:** Right across the road. I live right
3 on Interstate 90. As a matter of fact as you look on
4 the map here, County Road 121, the campground there,
5 that's on my land.

6 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Okay.

7 **MR. ALJETS:** I live along County Road 121.

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The easement compensation issue is
9 one that we get a lot of questions about on how to do
10 it and what's the best way to do it. The process that
11 we do and has been set up and in place for a long time
12 and, based on a lot of issues, try to factor in what's
13 a fair way to compensate people who have lines on their
14 property basically for the greater good and, you know,
15 to provide power to everybody who uses it. I'm not
16 going to get into a lot of the pros and cons, but one
17 of the issues that would be a concern for us to do the
18 yearly payment is how do you figure it out, how do you
19 figure what should the yearly payment be, what is it
20 based on. Administratively, we have tens of thousands
21 of easements and to keep track of everybody you pay is
22 difficult, and it's something that has to be factored
23 into the decision. But our easement process and how we
24 compensate is based on a lot of past history and how
25 we've handled it.

1 Now there's some information in the handout that
2 kind of addresses this issue, but from our perspective,
3 the way we do it now we think is a fair process.

4 **MR. ALJETS:** In this day and age, in the computer
5 age, I'm sure you could figure out some formula that
6 would take care of that; that it wouldn't be as hard to
7 figure out. You base it on inflation rates? I don't
8 buy that, that it would be hard to figure out.

9 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you for your testimony.
10 Yes, ma'am.

11 **MS. JOHNSON:** My name is Sandy Johnson. How do
12 they figure how much money you pay to the people that
13 have the windmill on their land? Who figures that?
14 The guys that build the towers or build the windmills?

15 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The people who build the wind
16 turbines are people who don't have condemnation
17 authority. Our public utilities basically have -- pay
18 what the landowners think is a reasonable price for
19 what they want to have the turbines on their property.
20 We don't have any of those types of agreements that we
21 have wind turbines and that type of thing.

22 **MS. JOHNSON:** But Xcel buys the energy from those
23 wind turbines, right?

24 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes, we buy the -- we're the ones
25 that buy the majority of it.

1 **MS. JOHNSON:** Okay. When you buy the majority of
2 that energy, your money is going to the company that
3 put those wind turbines up, so you've got to know --
4 you have to pay so much, too. The company that owns
5 the turbine is paying those people, but you pay that
6 company so much money. How do you figure that factor
7 on how much you pay for that?

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know what all goes into
9 the factor on what we pay our wind developers. I'm not
10 part of that side of the business so I'm not sure what
11 all factors into that.

12 **MS. JOHNSON:** Is there any way you can get us
13 information on that?

14 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Jim, do you know if there's a way
15 to kind of get that? I think it's a contract between
16 us and the developers, and I'm not sure how available
17 that type of information is.

18 **MR WILCOX:** I don't know if I have any more to
19 say. I know we negotiate a contract with the wind
20 developers for the purchase power, cost of the wind
21 power, and it's a price per kilowatt hour and it's set
22 into a contract. So there's -- it's a negotiated
23 price. I guess there's no more details for us to know
24 and negotiate a price.

25 **MS. JOHNSON:** Is it the same every year? Do you

1 have like a 20-year contract with those people?

2 **MR. WILCOX:** You know, I have to say I'm not
3 privileged to have seen the contracts. What I know is
4 that each contract's a little bit different. Some run
5 for, you know, 20 years, maybe some run for 30 years.
6 Some -- each of them have a different price, too, I
7 think, but I personally have not seen any of the
8 contracts.

9 **MS. JOHNSON:** Okay. I have another question.
10 When you put up these three-arm poles like you
11 described on the thing, will you ever come back and put
12 six arms on those poles like you have along the side of
13 the interstate now? Because you said you would put up
14 those three-arm ones. Would you ever come on the north
15 side and put up the six-arms ones to run more energy
16 through there?

17 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** We wouldn't do that on the
18 existing structures.

19 **MS. JOHNSON:** Not on the existing structures?

20 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No. They're only going to be
21 designed for a single-circuit line.

22 **MS. JOHNSON:** So this is a 345 with a three arm,
23 and it's a 345 with a six arm, correct?

24 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The six-arm one is two 345-kV
25 lines on the same structure.

1 **MS. JOHNSON:** Okay. Thank you.

2 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Please be careful not to speak
3 at the same time. It's difficult to type. Further
4 questions? Yes, sir. Blue shirt.

5 **MR. JARRED JOHNSON:** My name is Jarred Johnson.
6 And one thing I'd like to say right now is that I think
7 that this is a partnership. It's a partnership between
8 us -- the landowners -- and consumers of electricity
9 and you folks who provide us electricity as our
10 electrical providers. One thing that we've noticed is
11 that in the last decade, maybe two decades, is that our
12 potential of electricity has changed, okay? I think
13 that we need to update how our compensation has changed
14 as well with this new potential that comes. Without
15 our land to put those lines on, it would be very
16 difficult to get that extra electricity to where it's
17 needed: To us as residents of Minnehaha County in
18 South Dakota. I think there should be something done
19 to look at the ability to either share revenue or have
20 a yearly easement or a yearly compensation of those
21 transmission lines. It's difficult to have one without
22 the other.

23 The other thing I'd like to mention is that as far
24 as the structure of those lines go and the durability
25 of them, I believe that those lines were put in back in

1 the '80s I think, the existing ones now on the south
2 side of the interstate. Those lines have stood up to
3 tremendous winds. They've stood up to a lot of ice
4 storms and things like that. And I think that's very
5 fair: I think they're well engineered. And I don't
6 foresee a problem in my opinion with them.

7 The other thing that I would also ask as well, if
8 we are to put up this map -- it is the wind
9 transmission infrastructure improvement status of
10 7-11-05 back up on the overhead there. My question is
11 this. Pam, how much existing potential does Buffalo
12 Ridge have right now for extra development of wind
13 energy?

14 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't do wind development, and
15 so I have no idea what is available. I know that
16 people talk about 10,000 megawatts. I've heard that
17 number. What's realistic and what could actually be
18 built? I don't know what that answer is.

19 **MR. JARRED JOHNSON:** And -- okay. I understand,
20 but as we've seen the technology increase quite a bit
21 with the way the wind turbines were even a decade ago
22 as to what they are now, there's been quite an increase
23 of power production with modern technology. I would
24 think it'd be safe to assume that someday we're going
25 to need even more transmission into the area I guess.

1 What my point is is that this problem of these
2 transmission lines being in our backyard as we are the
3 ones that also are in partnership with you providing
4 electricity and us as users of it, that, you know, we
5 need to, as our taxes go up -- because our property has
6 devalued -- because of the development potential, the
7 agricultural use. In one of our fields, we have a hard
8 time putting a center pivot in this field for I guess
9 exploitation of that resource. I guess I'd like to see
10 some type of yearly easement that would be similar to
11 what the wind energy is. I think that's fair. I think
12 that would be easy enough to rectify.

13 And I also think, you know -- I do want to
14 reiterate. I'm glad to see transmission lines coming
15 into South Dakota. We truly need that. We need secure
16 and safe power. But I also think we need to really
17 work hard towards the compensation end.

18 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions? Further
19 questions? Cory?

20 **MR. HANSEN:** Well, I appreciate this -- Cory
21 Hansen again. I appreciate where the Commission was
22 going as far as the question is being led that this
23 isn't revenue that's coming from the state of South
24 Dakota. I mean I was born in this state and live in
25 this state and I'm going to die in this state. And

1 these lines are coming from a different state. And all
2 of the moneys -- the majority of the moneys that you're
3 paying for these lines is going to the citizens and
4 residents of the state of Minnesota, and the
5 possibility of these lines getting tied in with the
6 residents in South Dakota is pretty minimal from what I
7 understand. The cost for you guys to pay the producers
8 of this energy is primarily going into the state of
9 Minnesota with little compensation -- like Mr. Johnson
10 said, that the lines -- you have to have these lines go
11 through our place. And I guess I'm just making a
12 statement that I hope the Commission understands that
13 this isn't revenue that is getting put into our state.
14 I don't know if -- it seems like that's where, you
15 know, you folks up there were kind of leading into.
16 It's nothing that -- I mean it would be different --
17 Bob Johnson's east of me and he's the one with the wind
18 turbines and he's trying to get lines across my place
19 versus somebody that I don't know and quite honestly
20 don't care about in the state of Minnesota. We're just
21 asking for fair compensation. You've got to make it a
22 little bit equal because our land is going to go down
23 in value whether or not your studies that you do show
24 it doesn't. It's going to. Mr. Aljets knows that.

25 **MR. ALJETS:** Absolutely.

1 **MR. HANSEN:** He's paying the same taxes as the
2 neighbor without lines, and so will I. And I don't
3 think a ten-year easement is really going to take care
4 of that need.

5 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Well, I think on the one issue
6 that you raised about wind development and it all being
7 in Minnesota is that at this point right now, there's
8 a lot of wind development in Minnesota. As I mentioned
9 earlier, it's in this area. But a lot of our
10 interconnect requests and stuff we're seeing is
11 development extending along the ridge further into
12 South Dakota.

13 Minnesota has had a program over the years for
14 incentives for developers and that type of thing, which
15 is factored into why you see a lot of development
16 there. But I think as we move forward with wind
17 development and promote what we're seeing right now,
18 people are looking at building turbines in South
19 Dakota, building large wind projects in South Dakota,
20 too. Now that doesn't get into the issue where you're
21 talking about compensation. I think that's one
22 where -- we've heard before and we're going to have to
23 continue working with people on talking through it and
24 trying to -- we understand where people are coming from
25 and what some of their concerns are, but again, we have

1 to try to balance what's best and fair in the long run
2 to treat everybody equally. And whether it's a wind
3 developer who pays people to have a turbine on their
4 property or whether it's any other type of generation
5 facility, they all use the transmission line, and we
6 pay costs to all of them. So factoring it and basing
7 it just on wind energy and what people get paid and how
8 that business works really doesn't factor into all the
9 other issues and all the other people that use our
10 facilities, too.

11 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Obviously this is your
12 opportunity to be testifying, asking questions, having
13 some give-and-take. And there's quite a bit of
14 interest in wind development here. Any one of the
15 three of us could go through this and explain it, and I
16 was debating whether we should because of the
17 repetitive questions we have pertaining to wind
18 development. I think it's important for you to
19 understand some challenges that Xcel Energy is faced
20 with. This is not necessarily to support their
21 position. It's simply so that you have some background
22 information.

23 Xcel Energy has three nuclear power plants in
24 Minnesota. They do not have the ability to place their
25 spent nuclear fuels in Yucca Mountain because the

1 federal government has not acted -- Department of
2 Energy has not acted to provide a facility for them.
3 As a result of that, they have to place their spent
4 nuclear fuels on-site. In order to do that, we had to
5 get permission from the state of Minnesota. Minnesota
6 legislature requires them to pay originally a certain
7 amount of money. It's \$500,000 per cask per year to
8 have it sited. They recently reached an agreement
9 about two years ago in which they are now paying -- I
10 believe it's \$16 million a year in order to store those
11 spent nuclear fuels on-site. That fund -- those moneys
12 go into a fund, and that fund is used for renewable
13 energy sources in Minnesota. The legislature also
14 passed a requirement that Xcel Energy is required to
15 build a certain amount of wind energy in Minnesota.
16 And that is why there is so much wind energy that has
17 been developed in Minnesota and magically stops at the
18 South Dakota line. That is something that has
19 certainly bothered members of this Commission. We're
20 quite interested in seeing development in South Dakota
21 as well.

22 Having that background information and explaining
23 that to you is not necessarily to say that this is why
24 we should proceed with this, and that is not your
25 problem that -- of what Minnesota legislature has done.

1 It's just a fact so that you will understand why
2 they're going through this particular process, because
3 they have had to build all that development. Now
4 they're trying to get that energy out to another
5 source. We have to balance that and try and figure out
6 how South Dakotans can also participate in this.

7 I assume you weren't able to answer that question.

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** No.

9 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Chairman, I have a question
10 for Pam. Currently Xcel doesn't have any base load
11 generation to serve its South Dakota service territory.
12 As the load grows in South Dakota, are these
13 transmission upgrades needed to move more energy from
14 the base load generation plants in Minnesota into South
15 Dakota? Or maybe my assumption's not correct. I
16 assume Xcel's territory is that its load is growing in
17 South Dakota.

18 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes, Xcel Energy's load is growing
19 in South Dakota. And one of the side benefits I said
20 this line would do is provide another source into Sioux
21 Falls to support growth in this area because, as you're
22 aware, it is rapidly growing. So while it's to support
23 wind energy getting on the grid, it also -- because
24 it's a high voltage line into the area, it also
25 provides another way for you to get energy in, whether

1 it's our base load plants or other facilities that tie
2 into the grid.

3 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions?

4 **MR. ELOFSON:** Yes. Dave Elofson, property owner.
5 We already have two of the 345 double-circuit kV lines
6 plus two of the WAPA towers. My question: Your 115 at
7 Brookings -- which that also ties into the WAPA line?

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

9 **MR. ELOFSON:** Okay. And that's where the growth
10 of wind energy is right now?

11 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** That's in the area where Buffalo
12 Ridge --

13 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct.

14 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** That land is located.

15 **MR. ELOFSON:** Okay. With this tie-in that you're
16 looking to do right here, how many wind generators will
17 that support? There must be some figures out there
18 someplace.

19 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know numbers of wind
20 generators that everything we're doing is supporting.
21 The numbers that we've been using to kind of describe
22 what this will support in wind development is allow us
23 to have up to 825 megawatts tie into our system on a
24 firm basis at all times, regardless of where
25 specifically they're located, as long as they tie into

1 our system. I don't know how many total turbines that
2 would equate to because they're all kind of different
3 megawatt levels and kilowatt levels.

4 **MR. ELOFSON:** Somebody must have some statistics
5 of how many it will support, though, because right now
6 basically you're tying into the WAPA line, which gives
7 you access to Minnesota, correct? This tie-in here
8 which you do not have now will give you access to the
9 WAPA line, correct?

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Well, we have access to the WAPA
11 line right now. I think the structures -- I mean we
12 tie into it right now. It's a double-circuit line that
13 goes into Sioux Falls.

14 **MR. ELOFSON:** You do?

15 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

16 **MR. ELOFSON:** Where is that at?

17 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** It's right on I-90. Where the
18 WAPA line crosses Interstate 90 on the south side,
19 there's a steel lattice structure there.

20 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct.

21 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** And that structure is owned by us,
22 and that's where the lines -- as you know, they go west
23 into Sioux Falls. And so that's our tie-in to Western
24 right now.

25 Grant, you want to show a route map up there,

1 please?

2 This is the Western Area Power Administration
3 line -- or WAPA as we call them. And this red line
4 right here is our existing double-circuit 345-kV line,
5 and that ties into the Western line right there.

6 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct. I have that on my
7 property.

8 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Okay.

9 **MR. ELOFSON:** So you -- you're tied into the WAPA
10 line. Which line -- you don't --

11 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** And that's the same line that goes
12 up to White or Brookings County.

13 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct. How will you adjoin from
14 the north side to the south side at that point?

15 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I'm sorry, I'm not quite sure what
16 your question is.

17 **MR. ELOFSON:** The existing WAPA line and two of
18 your poles are on our property right now.

19 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

20 **MR. ELOFSON:** Your proposal is to go from the
21 north side of I-90 and cross onto the south side of
22 I-90 at that point. How is the connection made there?

23 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** That gets into a little more
24 complex question. I think -- Mr. Stevenson, would you
25 try to answer that for us? I'll get an aerial map up

1 there.

2 **MR. STEVENSON:** Grant Stevenson. I'm project
3 manager with Xcel Energy. While Pam's getting a map,
4 that location is where your properties are located?

5 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct.

6 **MR. STEVENSON:** I'll wait for Pam to pull up a
7 map.

8 This is the line that comes -- this is the Western
9 Area Power line that comes from Brookings County and
10 the south comes from Sioux City. And this spot is on
11 the south side of the freeway where that
12 lattice-tower-erector-set-looking structure is. And
13 that you said is on your property?

14 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct.

15 **MR. STEVENSON:** What our proposal is is that the
16 line from Minnesota comes in on the south side, single
17 circuit, to that point. We will reconfigure so that
18 the line that comes from Brookings will connect at this
19 point to a new pole and be on the north side of the
20 freeway and then cross into -- head west and then cross
21 over and go into the Split Rock substation.

22 This double-circuit line, the red and black dashed
23 line, now brings both circuits of the WAPA line. The
24 circuit that is occupied -- using the wires on the
25 north side of that existing circuit will end up

1 electrically connected to the new poles on the north
2 side. The crossing of the interstate will stay at
3 Western's request, but it will be de-energized between
4 the existing structure and the new structure.

5 **MR. ELOFSON:** Okay.

6 **MR. STEVENSON:** And the reason they require that
7 for our interconnect with them is if there was some
8 catastrophic failure that would take both circuits
9 out -- that could happen on the transmission line or it
10 could happen back at the substation -- they'll be able
11 to temporarily configure and jump around on those poles
12 and they'll still have a connection from Brookings down
13 to Sioux City to meet their needs is the reason.

14 **MR. ELOFSON:** Okay.

15 **MR. STEVENSON:** Is there another question related
16 to that?

17 **MR. ELOFSON:** No. But I have another question
18 about compensation. I dealt with this original circuit
19 approximately 30 years ago when my father owned the
20 property, and I believe we were compensated less than
21 \$2,000 for the two poles; for structures that do last
22 an eternity. And the other part is, over the long run,
23 the compensation is very, very minimal for actually
24 devaluing the property. If the poles have already
25 been -- the existing ones I have now have been there

1 for 25 years and my parents were paid \$2,000 total,
2 that's only a hundred dollars a year. Pretty small
3 pittance for some structures like this that last
4 forever. That's all I've -- every one is bringing up
5 the idea of compensation. We know you'll get your
6 right-of-way because it's eminent domain. You can
7 seize our property if you'd like to. I would just
8 agree with everyone else that we should be compensated
9 fairly.

10 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Did you have --

11 **MS. ELOFSON:** I have a comment. Sandy Elofson,
12 Dave's wife. And this is basically on aesthetics. We
13 expect and, you know, want to have continuous power, so
14 we support that. I think aesthetically what bothers me
15 is having it be so close to our home. Aesthetically
16 they're not good-looking. And I don't know when your
17 survey was done for the noise. I don't think it was
18 done in the wintertime. Do you know when your survey
19 was done?

20 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** The noise that I mentioned was
21 done specifically for the substation. It wasn't done
22 for the line.

23 **MS. ELOFSON:** Okay. Irregardless, what time of
24 the year was that done, do you know?

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** It was done in July.

1 **MS. ELOFSON:** Okay. Minimal noise problems at
2 that time, if you were to go back and have your noise
3 level done in January in South Dakota, that line
4 buzzes. You know, when we're in our bedroom, I open
5 the patio door, and it's buzzing. And that's not just
6 in January, it's pretty much all winter long.

7 The interstate traffic is another problem. This
8 land was homesteaded. The other section you see on
9 Section C there was also part of the Elofson land. It
10 was homesteaded. Also, the interstate went through and
11 cut that apart. Very little compensation at that time
12 for a division that caused them to sell that property
13 and no longer have it in the family, which is
14 homesteaded land to this day.

15 So while the family was here before the energy or
16 the energy companies or the need for all of Minnesota's
17 energy, compensation is a big factor in this because it
18 doesn't go away. It's an emotional issue for the
19 landowners having the WAPA line, the interstate, the
20 transmission lines. Like Dave said, we know that it
21 will be done.

22 We supported I guess the initial proposal that
23 went up and back by the gravel pit, understanding
24 Brandon didn't want to do that because they wanted to
25 have that land for future development -- the tunnel

1 effect -- so that would have delayed that.

2 And we understood from going to the February
3 meeting and hearing from the proposal that was sent out
4 is that that was going to be the suggested path, and
5 that was our last understanding until this summer. We
6 evidently missed communication that, oh, no, now we're
7 not going with that proposal farther north. We're back
8 to the southern route. So I guess, you know, that's
9 our fault for not staying actively involved and being
10 in constant communication with the Commission or with
11 Xcel. But I don't know that our voice would be heard
12 very well anyway, but I guess we better make it known
13 now.

14 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think one of the things I wanted
15 to highlight about what Grant talked about with that
16 area there and kind of the way we want to configure the
17 line where we cross Western and why we kind of -- you
18 know, basically the new line is the corridor we said,
19 but technically, you know, the new line will be on the
20 existing structures once it meets there. And one of
21 the reasons why we wanted to do that -- because if we
22 had to cross over the Western line and build new
23 structures, that was going to be additional poles, big
24 poles; and trying to cross over major power lines was
25 something we were concerned about and would have had

1 more structures most likely on your land to the south.
2 So one of the reasons why we proposed this layout was
3 try to at least reduce the number of structures in that
4 area.

5 **MS. ELOFSON:** And while we appreciate that, I
6 don't know that we would have had enough easement from
7 our property and our home. That's the little green
8 area there of houses. The WAPA line you see is the
9 red. If you go down to the mile line --

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Here.

11 **MS. ELOFSON:** -- that right there is where our
12 home sets. You can see the proximity, which was there
13 way before the interstate or the WAPA lines. But you
14 know, we were a victim of circumstances. Energy is
15 needed, and in the best interest of all, it's good. It
16 just seems to have been, you know, cross-sectioned
17 quite a number of times. Outside of somebody buying
18 this land for development or buying it and knowing
19 whatever existed was there already, that's not a
20 factor. But thank you.

21 **MR. ALJETS:** Yeah. Like I said -- my name's Ray
22 Aljets, and I've got them lines running across my
23 property, and now you're going to run this on the north
24 side of the interstate. Is there any chance of getting
25 rid of some of the poles that are there already and

1 putting it onto these poles that you're going to put
2 up? I've got five three-pole sets in Segment B there,
3 A and B.

4 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Looking at the map and what your
5 question is, it would be rerouting an existing
6 transmission line that we have, and that's not
7 something that we looked at proposing with this.

8 **MR. ALJETS:** You couldn't take those off of there
9 and put them on the new line that you're proposing?

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Well, it wasn't something that we
11 considered. And I guess at this time just from hearing
12 it from you right now, I don't know if that's something
13 that -- I don't know what our position would be on
14 supporting something like that at this point.

15 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** I think what she's saying is
16 she's not a policymaker.

17 **MR. ALJETS:** Well, what I'm saying, I've got nine
18 poles on there now, and I'm probably going to have two
19 or three more; so nine, ten, eleven. I was thinking
20 maybe they could take them down, so have three poles
21 instead of eleven.

22 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Pam, just for our benefit --
23 you were kind of pointing at the map, sir. Could we
24 pull out this picture so I can see and understand a
25 little bit of where your -- which line you're talking

1 about? Are you talking about the red existing line on
2 the map, is that the one you're asking about, if they
3 could use that?

4 **MR. ALJETS:** Can you go back a little further to
5 where you can get off -- I'm talking about County Road
6 121, 478th Avenue.

7 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Could you give Ray the laser
8 pointer?

9 **MR. ALJETS:** Okay. This is where the campground
10 is right here. The lines that I have running across my
11 property are right here. And I was thinking maybe that
12 these here two lines could come down and go on the ones
13 that they're going to put up now.

14 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** And for the record, we're
15 talking about the purple lines on this, on this map,
16 right?

17 **MR. ALJETS:** Purple lines?

18 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Yeah, right there.

19 **MR. ALJETS:** This is what I'm talking about. This
20 is the line that goes through my property. Now what I
21 would like to see is if those lines could come down and
22 hook onto these here and take these out.

23 **MR. STEVENSON:** And can you show me the boundary
24 of your property?

25 **MR. ALJETS:** Well, I have -- it's a mile long.

1 It's half a mile wide and a mile long.

2 **MR. STEVENSON:** Grant Stevenson, the project
3 manager. First of all, you mentioned two- and
4 five-pole sets. I just want to make sure you
5 understand this new line will be all single pole, so
6 you don't have to worry about multiple poles.

7 **MR. ALJETS:** Right, I understand that. But can
8 those come down off from there and be hooked onto that
9 one --

10 **MR. STEVENSON:** I understand the issue.
11 Technically, it's possible. The transmission system
12 has not been studied to have that combination of wires
13 together, and it does add cost. So Xcel's position is
14 the proposal as shown here, at least as it is today.

15 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Your concern will be noted by
16 the Commission.

17 **MR. ALJETS:** Thank you.

18 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you. Further questions?

19 **MR. ELOFSON:** In their proposal, they must have
20 some idea of what they're going to average for
21 compensation per pole across Minnesota. Are those
22 figures available to us so we have an idea what the
23 average is that they're willing to pay out?

24 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We'll be off the record for a
25 moment.

1 (Discussion off the record.)

2 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We're back on the record. We do
3 not have those available at the present time; however,
4 we will request that of Xcel and make it available to
5 anyone who contacts us and specifically requests them.

6 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Just for clarification, are you
7 asking for wind easement payments or transmission line
8 easement payments or -- I'm not sure.

9 **MR. SMITH:** Per pole --

10 **MR. ELOFSON:** On the 345 that you're going --

11 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Wait. You may finish now.

12 **MR. SMITH:** I think what you're getting at is, is
13 there an amount that we could say was the normal rate
14 paid per pole for these particular poles?

15 **MR. ELOFSON:** Correct.

16 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I don't know about past data that
17 we have that would be recent enough on a 345-kV line
18 but for our 161-kV line, the brand-new one that we're
19 building between the Lakefield Junction substation and
20 the substation over by Fox Lake, we're compensating
21 landowners approximately 85 percent of the value of the
22 land of the strip we're going on. It's not a per pole
23 payment. It's for the strip of land that we take.

24 **MR. ELOFSON:** Is there a dollar amount?

25 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** It's 85 percent of that particular

1 strip. It varies with each landowner so...

2 **MR. STEVENSON:** We can provide anything the
3 Commission asks us for and we'll gladly do so, but to
4 give you an idea tonight -- what's the value of land?
5 You know, if it's \$3,000 an acre, we calculate -- and
6 for a given landowner, there's an 80-foot wide strip a
7 half mile long. Convert that to acres, how many ever
8 acres that is, times the value of the land if you can
9 sell it, times typically 50 to 85 percent. But we've
10 been paying on the high end in recent projects at 85
11 percent. Does that help?

12 **MR. ELOFSON:** 85 percent of current land value?

13 **MR. STEVENSON:** Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

14 **MS. ELOFSON:** 80-foot section.

15 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Jarred?

16 **MR. JARRED JOHNSON:** Jarred Johnson again. Is
17 that bare land cost, or is that the cost of land with
18 power lines on it?

19 **MR. STEVENSON:** It's the cost of the land as
20 appraised. So if it's commercial property, it has a
21 different value than agricultural land, than
22 residential land, than any other kind of land.

23 **MR. JARRED JOHNSON:** Appraised.

24 **MR. STEVENSON:** Prior to the power line being
25 built, we have it appraised, yes.

1 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions?

2 **MR. ALJETS:** If the land goes up -- and Donald
3 Trump said the other day that the land prices are still
4 going to keep on a goin' up. But ten years from now,
5 that appraisal that you put on that land is going to
6 look pretty bad.

7 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** This is off the record. Why
8 don't you just rent?

9 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Everything's on the record
10 unless the chairman says it's off. I believe
11 Commissioner Sahr has a question.

12 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** Pam, you've somewhat teed up
13 the issue as one of exportation of Minnesota wind, and
14 I don't know if you meant to do that or not. But
15 that's -- a lot of the first few bullet points and
16 comments were talking about exportation of wind energy
17 from Minnesota. Now does that have -- I'll ask you a
18 couple questions.

19 First is, are most of the energy and electricity
20 flows from this expected to come into South Dakota?
21 And if so, are we looking at bringing in these lines to
22 serve the Sioux Falls market in growth and those type
23 of issues? Because I mean that would be another issue
24 that maybe you'd want to emphasize here if that's the
25 case as opposed to -- I'm looking at your bullet points

1 and they're mostly talking about wind and it looks to
2 me like it's mostly in Minnesota. And I'd like you
3 to -- if there are benefits such as Sioux Falls is
4 growing and they need more electricity and it's got to
5 come from somewhere and the power lines have to go
6 somewhere from wherever the generation is into South
7 Dakota, if that's one of the reasons, it would be
8 helpful for me to understand that. But I am a little
9 concerned that maybe the folks here tonight have heard
10 a lot about Minnesota wind, and I think they need a
11 little more explanation on what's happening of benefit
12 to South Dakota because I'm afraid they're going to
13 walk away tonight and think these lines are coming in
14 simply to support Minnesota wind. I mean if there's a
15 benefit also of supporting growth in South Dakota or
16 maybe there's more reliability than just a bullet point
17 you kind of hit, maybe you can flush that out. But I
18 think looking around the audience right now it's
19 sounding a lot like this is about Minnesota wind power.

20 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think one of my bullet points
21 said that it's going to support wind development
22 regardless of where it's at, whether it's in Minnesota
23 or South Dakota. And some of the projects that we're
24 talking about that are in the queue and being talked
25 about are wind development projects up in Brookings

1 County in South Dakota. So it's not just about
2 supporting wind in Minnesota, it's supporting any wind
3 development along the ridge as it goes. And I think if
4 you look at the drawings of Buffalo Ridge, it shows
5 extending into South Dakota, North Dakota. And this
6 line will develop support of that. The 825 megawatts
7 is on the grid, exactly where that is. And the other
8 --

9 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** That's it. Go ahead.

10 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** And the other thing. The last
11 bullet point is that one of the benefits of building
12 this 345-kV line is that it is bringing in another
13 source into South Dakota. It's not a specific need
14 right now saying we need the line into Sioux Falls, but
15 it is a benefit that it will support strengthening the
16 system and providing another tie into this region to
17 serve the customers here.

18 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** And again, I -- we may not
19 just be connecting on the question and answer here
20 because I think I've asked it a couple times and
21 Commissioner Hanson asked it as well. And where I get
22 confused is, when I look at the proposal for the
23 improvement into the White substation up near
24 Brookings, South Dakota or what may be a new
25 substation, in my mind -- and maybe I'm oversimplifying

1 it -- I see direct support because that could
2 potentially support a Brookings County, South Dakota
3 wind farm tapping right into that new line, that new
4 substation and into that new line and off we go. And I
5 see the benefit there for the South Dakota landowner.
6 And I don't know, but I doubt, a lot of electricity
7 flow is coming the other way, but maybe I'm wrong in
8 that.

9 Where I'm getting a little bit confused here is
10 you're talking about the overall benefit. This
11 particular route, is that tied to -- and again, I don't
12 profess to have any -- you're the experts on how the
13 system works and how it works as an integrated unit.
14 Are there benefits to this line coming into South
15 Dakota in terms of supporting the wind farm development
16 in Brookings County? And if so, maybe you can explain
17 that a little bit. Or if you can't tonight, just say
18 you can't and supply some information after the fact to
19 the Commission and we can get that to the landowners.
20 But I'm getting a little confused about how this -- the
21 whole thing is working together.

22 **MR. STEVENSON:** I'm Grant Stevenson. It helps in
23 my mind to think of this 345 power line exactly like
24 the interstate highway system. You have I-29 going
25 north and south, and WAPA has their 345 line going

1 north and south. You have I-90 going east and west,
2 and right now there's not a power line going east and
3 west. But over in Lakefield there is one that goes up
4 north towards the Twin Cities. This 345 line closes
5 the gap there. And while it was justified based on a
6 plan that showed 825 megawatts of wind installed
7 predominantly in Minnesota, it will have benefits for
8 future wind generation. Because just as when the
9 interstate highway system was built, it has excess
10 capacity most of the time. The two lanes traveling
11 each direction seldom carries as many cars as it
12 possibly could. The same is true with this power line.
13 And it will not be fully utilized on day one.

14 And to get to another question you had: Does it
15 provide benefits to Sioux Falls? The power -- the
16 amount of wind generation in southwest Minnesota right
17 now exceeds what the locals in southwest Minnesota can
18 use. So by building the lines that we show on there,
19 and particularly the 345 line, it allows the power to
20 flow to the two biggest population bases in this
21 area -- Sioux Falls and the Twin Cities.

22 On most days, the power splits roughly in
23 proportion to that population split. So a lot of it
24 does go to the Twin Cities because there's a lot more
25 electric users there, but it also flows to Sioux Falls.

1 The power flows both ways on the line. Did I help
2 answer your question?

3 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** The Sioux Falls market, does
4 it need this new line for the reasonably foreseeable
5 future, or is this just -- I mean how far out is the
6 benefit? And I realize it can split, but I mean is
7 it -- splitting in terms of population, I'm seeing
8 more, certainly immediate, Minnesota benefit than on
9 our side.

10 **MR. STEVENSON:** I don't know the exact answer to
11 load-serving benefits. It's certainly something that
12 we could have one of our planners address. Pam and I
13 have been focused specifically on this project. So the
14 direct answer to your question I don't have with me
15 tonight.

16 **MR. HANSEN:** Cory Hansen. The economic benefit to
17 this is primarily to the state of Minnesota. The
18 Brookings that you keep talking about, I don't know,
19 but is there an existing line coming down that -- I
20 believe it goes through this gentleman's property.
21 WAPA. Does that come down from the Brookings area
22 where these wind generators are?

23 **MR. STEVENSON:** Yes. Suzanne, could you run the
24 wind map, the wind project map?

25 **MR. HANSEN:** My question is then for the

1 Commission and for the citizens of the state. Why
2 don't we develop our own power for our own state and
3 run a 345 line from the Brookings area so we can
4 develop more of those wind generators in the state of
5 South Dakota for the landowners up there, that we can
6 have the economic benefit in this state versus giving
7 that to Minnesota? Why don't we run that line straight
8 down, or why don't you run that line straight down?

9 **MR. STEVENSON:** There already is a 345 line from
10 Brookings down to Sioux Falls, and that's the line that
11 runs right here behind us. That line's already there.

12 **MR. HANSEN:** Why not develop another one so that
13 people up north or on this Buffalo Ridge can develop
14 more of this energy?

15 **MR. STEVENSON:** I understand the concern. Our
16 company purchases the power, and we build the wires to
17 deliver the power, but we don't site the power. The
18 chair gave a good explanation, and I think his
19 knowledge goes beyond mine about how wind came to be
20 where it is. This project was justified by 825
21 megawatts predominantly in southwest Minnesota, but
22 that doesn't mean it doesn't have other benefits. It
23 will set the stage for development in South Dakota.
24 Regardless of what fuel powers your power plant that
25 someone builds, whether it's a couple landowners

1 putting a couple turbines on or something much bigger,
2 the majority of the electric users in the upper
3 five-state area are in the Twin Cities, and this is a
4 345 connection to that market. This is like building
5 an extra road to haul grain to market. That's really
6 what it is. It will set the stage to allow development
7 to come to South Dakota. I can't tell you why the
8 turbines haven't been sited here to date. I don't have
9 that knowledge.

10 **MR. HANSEN:** It just seems like this extra road
11 that you're talking about developing is routed through
12 the state of Minnesota and they're charging to use the
13 road and they're getting all the benefits from it. My
14 question is, in the state of Minnesota, how many wind
15 turbines -- if that's what you call them now -- are
16 there as opposed to in the Brookings area? Is there
17 any way that the Commission can say, you know what,
18 50 percent of this power that we're purchasing and
19 using in this state needs to be produced in this state.

20 **MR. STEVENSON:** I'll defer to the Commission on
21 whether they can say that, but you have to remember
22 where the power comes from today. It comes from
23 Minnesota.

24 **MR. HANSEN:** But it can come from South Dakota.

25 **MR. STEVENSON:** It could come from South Dakota.

1 **MR. HANSEN:** What I'm saying is if all of a sudden
2 that's limited and you're capped out and you're
3 producing all the power you can in the state of
4 Minnesota, then you're going to say to the state of
5 South Dakota, you can't produce any more wind turbines
6 to generate any more power, we're maxed out in
7 Minnesota.

8 **MR. STEVENSON:** No, it doesn't work that way. Are
9 you thinking the system will be plugged and there won't
10 be anymore?

11 **MR. HANSEN:** Yeah, it will be full. You won't
12 need to produce any more power.

13 **MR. STEVENSON:** We're obligated to connect power
14 plants regardless of fuel type and regardless of where
15 they're located. So again, I can't tell you why the
16 turbines happened to be located in Minnesota versus
17 South Dakota right now. But if someone comes forth
18 with a bunch of turbines and wants to sell the power to
19 Xcel Energy, then that would be the justification for
20 whatever the next stage of development is. Am I
21 getting to your question?

22 **MR. HANSEN:** I think in a roundabout way.

23 **MR. STEVENSON:** I'm not trying to be obtuse.

24 **MR. HANSEN:** I know you're not trying to be.

25 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** It's a good exchange. We'll

1 have John Smith who's an attorney with the Commission
2 answer the question.

3 **MR. SMITH:** Well, I just want to point out to you
4 that we do have right now pending in Brookings County a
5 150-megawatt plus wind farm development that's in the
6 works right now, and if we granted a permit, it will
7 come on-line within the next year. So it isn't like
8 there isn't anything happening in South Dakota. My
9 understanding of -- and I'm not an electrical
10 engineer -- but that this line probably is needed to
11 enable any significant wind development to happen in
12 the area, whether it be in Buffalo Ridge or a little
13 farther north or wherever.

14 And I think the point he's making is one that
15 people forget about in the electricity world sometimes,
16 and that is, if you just put electricity on the system,
17 you've got to have a pipe big enough to carry the
18 water. And the electricity goes absolutely anywhere it
19 wants to. The electricity you put on that system in
20 Watertown or Brookings, it goes absolutely anywhere it
21 wants to based on gradients, pressure gradients in the
22 system. So I think that, you know, one of the reasons
23 for this I think is, you know, if you look at it from a
24 positive perspective is, it's just an overall
25 investment in the system; that they have to take power

1 from anybody. They have to transmit it under the Open
2 Access Transmission Rules. So if they build this thing
3 and people want to develop it, they have to.

4 One other observation I have to make, too -- and
5 there's been a lot of conversation about Minnesota,
6 South Dakota and all that -- just to let you know from
7 a legal standpoint, the Commission here is bound by the
8 Federal Commerce Clause. And when it gets right down
9 to it, we can't discriminate in our decision-making on
10 any decision based upon the fact that a particular
11 facility may or may not -- may benefit Minnesota more
12 than South Dakota. We can't do that. We have to base
13 it on the factors that are in the law. But we
14 explicitly cannot discriminate on the basis of state
15 residency when we make a decision.

16 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Yes, sir.

17 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** Yes. Here's just a comment
18 from Robert Johnson just so if we don't know here.
19 When railroads come through your property and
20 interstates come through your property, most of the
21 time it will bring the value of your property up, of
22 course; and if the electrical lines come through, it
23 degrades it even though they're needed. It does bring
24 the property down. Much difference.

25 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Mr. Johnson?

1 **MR. JARRED JOHNSON:** I'll be brief. One thing I
2 guess I would like to, you know, bring up to everyone,
3 especially the PUC Commission, is the fact that us
4 folks here have had a lot of experience with these
5 lines. At one time, I was out at the Grand Coulee Dam
6 with a bull customer looking at his cow herd, and it
7 was a foggy day. And we got out and we got shocked
8 when we touched the thing, you know. What my point is
9 is that scene didn't look a lot different than what it
10 is with Mr. Aljets, who is my landlord whose land that
11 we run cattle on, are quite familiar with the lines
12 going through.

13 My point is that as we move into this new world of
14 wind power in South Dakota, I would encourage the state
15 of South Dakota to look at updating the way that
16 landowners are compensated for those transmission
17 lines. One can't happen without the other. I think
18 we're at a crossroads. I think it's something that you
19 can see people competing against one another on most of
20 the -- have those lines go through. I think we
21 wouldn't be having these arguments here today if
22 everyone felt that that compensation was reasonable;
23 not high, not lowball, but reasonable.

24 **MR. STEVENSON:** That was Jarred Johnson, and I'm
25 going to have to say to refrain from saying

1 Mr. Johnson. Are there further comments? Yes, sir.

2 **MR. MEYER:** My name is Mark Meyer. And I just
3 wanted to make a comment on the reliability issues.
4 Just looking at those maps, it isn't too hard to
5 envision that a tornado could very likely take out that
6 Anson generating plant and that 345 sub and perhaps
7 some of the WAPA there. And I guess after the last
8 couple weeks, we know bad things happen. And I would
9 just like to make a comment that perhaps in some future
10 planning you might want to consider some other major
11 connections for the Sioux Falls area and maybe
12 something on the south side of town rather than every
13 single facility within about a half mile there because
14 bad things do happen.

15 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Meyer. And would
16 someone from Xcel please explain the easement process
17 when it's being contested and take us through that?
18 I'm intimately familiar with it having been a local
19 official at one point, but is there anyone who can
20 explain?

21 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I'm not familiar with the
22 condemnation process and how it applies in South
23 Dakota, and I'm also not familiar with the specific
24 details on how to work a condemnation process in
25 Minnesota and Wisconsin. I know the right-of-way

1 process when we work with landowners. We come to them
2 with a value that we think is fair, they come back and
3 counter, and we talk about it. And there's appraisals
4 that are done and that type of thing. And when you
5 reach an impasse, I know it goes to condemnation.

6 Now if there's specifics on the South Dakota
7 process that you'd like to highlight for the group
8 tonight, I think that would probably be better than me
9 trying to stumble through and giving you the answer.

10 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** I'm familiar with it on a local
11 basis why a city has to condemn a property, and I don't
12 know if there's any nuances, differences, when a
13 utility goes through that process. Has anyone
14 experienced that process recently that they would share
15 with the rest of the folks? If not, I would -- from
16 the standpoint when a city goes through a condemnation,
17 when a road has to be placed through a property or some
18 other type of utility, whether it's an easement for a
19 water line or something of that nature, then there's a
20 proposal much like what has gone on here today at
21 public hearings. And with the landowner, it is shown
22 where the easement is needed and an offer is made to
23 purchase the property. The landowner of course has an
24 option at that point to disagree with the price and
25 negotiations take place. The city generally then

1 obtains two appraisals and uses those in depending what
2 they believe the value to be. If it goes to court --
3 and the citizen does have the right to go through the
4 circuit court process, and they also have the right to
5 have a jury as opposed to just a judge. And during
6 that process, the court determines what the value is.

7 Yes, Cory.

8 **MR. HANSEN:** I have a question on that line. You
9 guys have seen this as the Commission, and you've
10 obviously seen this because this is what you do. But,
11 say, our compensation is \$10,000. And obviously you're
12 going to try to pay as little as you can. That's your
13 job. That's what you're going to try to do. Are we
14 supposed to individually hire an attorney at that point
15 to go fight for this \$10,000 that's going to cost us
16 more for the attorney or -- I mean you've got your
17 attorneys that are going to fight, the Commission
18 probably has to stay neutral. Are we supposed to come
19 collectively as a group after this meeting and sit
20 together and say, all right, we're going to hire one
21 attorney for all property owners along this whole line?
22 Because who's fighting for us? If we fight it
23 individually -- because I know the price you're going
24 to try to give us is going to be ridiculously low
25 because right now most of all that land is agricultural

1 land or whatever. It's not developmental land, but
2 it's going to be in ten years, it's going to be in 20
3 years. Who's fighting for us?

4 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Well, I'll have to take exception
5 that we'll pay ridiculously low or we'll go as low as
6 we possibly can. What we'll pay is a fair compensation
7 based on what the appraised value of the land is, going
8 through appraisal processes, having it, you know,
9 appraised by people that that's their job to determine
10 the value of the land. And as I noted earlier, our
11 practice has been to compensate about 85 percent of
12 that value because we're taking basically the right to
13 put the line there. But all the other rights --
14 farming underneath the line, that kind of thing --
15 still occurs. And we work to try to be fair to
16 everybody. And an example of that would be if we went
17 along a corridor and we compensated people a certain
18 amount and got to the point where, say, we started at
19 65 percent of the value of land and we started paying
20 75 percent, we would go back to the people that we
21 compensated earlier and pay them that additional money.
22 Because after reviewing it and going through it, we
23 determined that, no, that's a fair compensation.

24 **MR. HANSEN:** But you're basing that on today's
25 value, not the future value, which obviously we don't

1 know. I understand that. But giving us the right to
2 still farm and still rent it, are you still allowing us
3 the right to pay the taxes on it?

4 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** I think it's my understanding that
5 in South Dakota, yeah, you'd still pay the taxes on it.

6 **MR. HANSEN:** All right.

7 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions? Raymond?

8 **MR. ALJETS:** I only had one dealing with Xcel for
9 ruining a crop or something, and they were very, very
10 fair. I have no qualms about that, that you will be
11 fair.

12 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions or statements?

14 **MR. ELOFSON:** Yes. Dave Elofson. Does somebody
15 have a calculator? Why don't we put a number on all
16 these poles? Because they're talking about land value.
17 Land around here is averaging somewhere between 1,500
18 and \$4,000 an acre. Could someone calculate it out
19 because everybody's talking about compensation?

20 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We're not going to be able to
21 fix compensation at this meeting. From the standpoint
22 of using the figures that have been used here --
23 50 percent to 85 percent, 1,500, 4,000 -- there's a
24 huge variance in the price. If you look at 50 percent
25 of 1,500, you're talking about \$750; if you're talking

1 about 85 percent of \$4,000, you're talking about
2 \$3,400. So there's a significant change.

3 **MR. ELOFSON:** But that's a good enough starting
4 point. You've hit on the idea of a high and a low what
5 you're talking per acre, and their right-of-way does
6 not even consume an acre.

7 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Okay. Yes, Sandy.

8 **MS. JOHNSON:** So until we get the okay from the
9 DOT, we won't even know where these poles are going to
10 go. Are they going to go right along the interstate?

11 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

12 **MS. JOHNSON:** They are. Okay. So you will be
13 talking an 80-foot easement --

14 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes.

15 **MS. JOHNSON:** Okay. That's what I heard.

16 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Adjacent to the interstate fence.

17 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** As close as the poles on the
18 south side of the interstate are, they'll be as
19 close --

20 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yeah.

21 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** -- on the north side?

22 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Yes, that's the same concept.

23 **MR. ROBERT JOHNSON:** Okay. Thank you.

24 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions or comments?

25 **VICE CHAIRMAN SAHR:** I have a request for Xcel.

1 On page 13 of the Facilities Permit Application, 5.0,
2 Purpose of the Transmission Facility.

3 "The facility establishes a third 345-kV line into
4 the Sioux Falls area; the resulting configuration will
5 address present load-serving concerns associated with
6 failure of the existing double-circuit 345-kV line.
7 The facility also helps provide for future Sioux Falls
8 area bulk supply needs."

9 Next paragraph: "The facility will help to
10 establish some additional transmission outlets for
11 future generation additions in eastern South Dakota.
12 Although further transmission additions will be
13 required to achieve large increments of outlet capacity
14 from South Dakota, those future improvements'
15 effectiveness will be greatly enhanced by the capacity
16 of the Split Rock-Lakefield Junction line."

17 And then it gets into the wind power thing, and I
18 think you spent a lot of time talking about the wind
19 power. In particular, though, that first paragraph --
20 and it doesn't need to be tonight because I think I've
21 asked it three or four times, and I don't really feel
22 like I've gotten the answer that I'm looking for -- can
23 you explain the present, the near future, long-term
24 needs? And I'm interested to see -- you know, it's in
25 the application saying that it's going to address these

1 types of things -- you've talked about reliability --
2 but personally I would like something a little more
3 tangible. And maybe it's somewhere else in this
4 application. Maybe you can point me that way with your
5 response. But I'd like to know with the current and
6 future growth of this particular market that's
7 referenced here, you know, what are we looking at? Why
8 is this line necessary? And you can pick the years.
9 But you know, let's look out now, let's look five
10 years, let's look out ten years, 15. You know, tell us
11 why this is necessary. Because it's in the
12 application. Certainly -- although it's not
13 particularly explained here, but certainly put forth as
14 a reason to and a purpose for this line.

15 And again, I just kind of go away from the meeting
16 tonight thinking we've heard teeny-weeny bit about
17 reliability, a lot about Minnesota wind, and it would
18 help me understand what you have stated in the
19 application better. If you can file some type of
20 supplement explaining that as well. And although I
21 think there was an explanation of it, maybe a little
22 bit more about how it would be incorporated with some
23 of the improvements that you're looking at into
24 Brookings County and, you know, perhaps even what's the
25 effect on Brookings County if you don't make this

1 particular improvement and maybe a little bit more
2 information kind of on the overall systems in this part
3 of South Dakota area and into Minnesota. Thank you.

4 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further comments or questions?

5 **MR. HANSEN:** I liked what he's saying. Why do we
6 need this now? If we don't need it, why don't we wait?
7 If we're not going to use it, why do we need it through
8 our land now? Why can't we paid ten years, 15 years?

9 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Further questions?

10 They've indicated they are not able to answer that
11 question at this time. As Commissioner Sahr said,
12 they'll get that information to us.

13 Further questions or comments? Well, we
14 appreciate -- does that conclude your presentation?

15 **MS. RASMUSSEN:** Uh-huh.

16 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** We very much appreciate your
17 participation and attendance here this evening. The
18 information that the Commission has is not
19 automatically sent out to persons. As I said at the
20 beginning of the meeting, if you wish to receive
21 information, not only do you need to sign the sign-up
22 sheet but you need to inform us of that.

23 Yes, Commissioner Johnson?

24 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** I would also note that all
25 the nonconfidential information received by the

1 Commission on this docket number is placed on our web
2 site. If you have web access, that will allow you
3 access to everything we've got. And if you don't,
4 again, the Commission will be happy to send it out
5 based on requests from you.

6 **CHAIRMAN HANSON:** Thank you very much for pointing
7 that out, and that concludes the hearing.

8 (Exhibit Nos. 1 and 2 marked for identification.)

9 (Hearing concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)
 : SS
COUNTY OF MINNEHAHA)

I, MAXINE J. RISTY, Court Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify the foregoing pages 1-89, inclusive, are a true and correct transcript of my stenotype notes.

In testimony whereof, I have hereto set my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 2005.

MAXINE J. RISTY, RPR
Court Reporter and Notary Public
My Commission Expires: October 14, 2005

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