

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)	DECISION AND ORDER
XCEL ENERGY FOR A FACILITIES PERMIT TO)	APPROVING STIPULATION
BUILD 9.65 MILES OF THE BUFFALO RIDGE)	AND GRANTING PERMIT TO
TO BROOKINGS COUNTY 115 KV)	CONSTRUCT
TRANSMISSION LINE, TWO 0.4 MILE)	TRANSMISSION FACILITIES
BROOKINGS COUNTY TO WHITE 345 KV)	
TRANSMISSION LINES, THE BROOKINGS)	EL05-028
COUNTY SUBSTATION AND TO ADD)	
FACILITIES TO THE WHITE SUBSTATION)	

On December 2, 2005, Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota Corporation d/b/a Xcel Energy (Xcel) filed an application for a Construction Permit to build the following facilities: (i) two new 0.4 mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines connecting the Western Area Power Administration White Substation located southeast of White, South Dakota, and a new Xcel Energy Brookings County Substation; (ii) a new 345 kV/115 kV Brookings County Substation located approximately 0.4 miles east of the White Substation; (iii) a new 9.65 mile 115 kV transmission line from the Brookings County Substation to the Minnesota/South Dakota border; and, (iv) improvements to the White Substation to accommodate the new 345 kV lines. The application comprises the western portion of the Buffalo Ridge - White transmission project which connects the White Substation to the Buffalo Ridge Substation southeast of Lake Benton, Minnesota.

On December 8, 2005, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing to interested individuals and entities. Applications for Party Status were due by January 31, 2006. On February 6, 2006, the Commission received an Application for Party Status from the Brookings County Commission (Brookings). By order dated March 16, 2006, the Commission granted party status to the Brookings County Commission. A public input hearing was held as scheduled on December 21, 2005, in White. On October 10, 2006, the Commission received amendments to the application from Xcel. On October 20, 2006, the Commission received a Stipulation entered into by Xcel, Brookings and Commission Staff. The Stipulation set forth Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Terms and Conditions. On October 23, 2006, the Commission received the Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration Finding of No Significant Impact and Floodplain Statement of Findings.

At its October 31, 2006, meeting, the Commission considered this matter. The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-41B, specifically 49-41B-1, 49-41B-2, 49-41B-2.1, 49-41B-4, 49-41B-11, 49-41B-12, 49-41B-13, 49-41B-15, 49-41B-16, 49-41B-17, 49-41B-17.1, 49-41B-21, 49-41B-22, 49-41B-25, 49-41B-26, 49-41B-33, 49-41B-38, and ARSD Chapter 20:10:22. The Commission voted to approve the Stipulation and accept the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Terms and Conditions. By approving the Stipulation, the Commission grants Xcel's application for a permit to construct transmission facilities, subject to the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Terms and Conditions listed in the Stipulation.

It is therefore

ORDERED, that the Stipulation entered into by Xcel, Brookings, and Commission Staff on October 20, 2006, shall be approved and shall be incorporated by reference into this Decision and Order the same as if it had been set forth in its entirety herein; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Xcel is granted a permit to construct the transmission facilities, subject to the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Terms and Conditions listed in the Stipulation.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 17th day of November, 2006.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.
By: <u>Melaine Kolbs</u>
Date: <u>11/21/06</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

Dustin M. Johnson
DUSTIN M. JOHNSON, Commissioner

Gary Hanson
GARY HANSON, Commissioner