

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION BY)	ORDER GRANTING PARTY
OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY ON BEHALF)	STATUS
OF SEVEN REGIONAL UTILITIES FOR A)	
PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT 5.45 MILES OF 230)	EL06-002
KV TRANSMISSION LINE, 33 MILES OF 345)	
KV TRANSMISSION LINE, THE BIG STONE)	
345 KV SUBSTATION AND MODIFICATION OF)	
THE BIG STONE 230 KV SUBSTATION)	

On January 17, 2006, Otter Tail Power Company, on behalf of seven regional utilities (Applicants) - Otter Tail Power Company, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Great River Energy, Heartland Consumers Power District, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (as represented by Missouri River Energy Services) filed an application for a permit to construct transmission lines and associated facilities in Grant and Deuel Counties in South Dakota. The applicants seek a Construction Permit designating a route and authorizing construction of three new transmission lines in South Dakota. Two lines would be constructed to 230 kV standards and would run from the Big Stone 230 kV Substation to a new Big Stone 345 kV Substation, with one 230 kV line continuing on to the Morris Substation near Morris, Minnesota, a distance of approximately 48 miles. Approximately 5.45 miles of new 230 kV line would be built in South Dakota. The third line would be constructed for future 345 kV operation but initially be operated at 230 kV and would run from the new Big Stone 345 kV Substation to the Granite Falls Substation in Granite Falls, Minnesota, a distance of approximately 90 miles, 33 miles of which are in South Dakota. In addition, modification of the existing Big Stone 230 kV Substation and existing transmission facilities and construction of a new Big Stone 345 kV Substation will also be required as part of the project.

On February 10, 2006, the Commission issued its Notice of Application; Order for and Notice of Public Input Hearing; Notice of Opportunity to Apply for Party Status in this docket. The notice provided that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the area where the facility is proposed to be sited; any non-profit organization, formed in whole or in part to promote conservation or natural beauty, to protect the environment, personal health or other biological values, to preserve historical sites, to promote consumer interests, to represent commercial and industrial groups, or to promote the orderly development of the area in which the facility is to be sited; or any interested person, may be granted party status in this proceeding by making written application to the Commission on or before March 20, 2006.

At its regularly scheduled meeting of April 11, 2006, the Commission reviewed an application for party status received from the City of Gary on March 13, 2006. The Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL 49-41B, specifically 49-41B-17, and further finds that the City of Gary's application for party status shall be granted. It is therefore

ORDERED, that the City of Gary shall, hereafter, be considered a party in this matter.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 25th day of April, 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: Alaine Koelb

Date: 4/27/06

(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

Robert K. Sahr
ROBERT K. SAHR, Chairman

Dustin M. Johnson
DUSTIN M. JOHNSON, Commissioner

Gary Hanson
GARY HANSON, Commissioner