

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

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

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.

The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-41B and ARSD Chapter 20:10:22.

Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15 and 49-41B-16, the Commission will hold a public hearing on Applicants' application on Thursday, March 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. CST at the Revillo City Auditorium - Basement, Revillo, South Dakota. The purpose of the hearing will be to hear public comment regarding Applicants' application. At the public input hearing, Applicants will present a brief description of the project, following which interested persons may appear and present their views, comments and questions regarding the application. A copy of the application is on file with the Grant County and Deuel County Auditors pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15(5) and the Commission's office in Pierre and the application and all other documents in the case may be accessed on the Commission's web site at www.puc.sd.gov under "Commission Actions," "Commission Dockets," "2006 Electric Dockets," "EL06-002."

Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, the parties to this proceeding are currently Applicants and the Commission. Further, 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. Applications for party status will be available at the public input hearing. Applications for party status must be received by the Commission on or before March 20, 2006.

Following the public input hearing, the Commission may schedule one or more subsequent formal evidentiary hearings conforming to SDCL Chapter 1-26 to consider any issues raised by any

intervening party, Commission Staff or the Commission itself. At such formal hearing, all parties will have the opportunity to appear, present evidence and cross-examine the other parties' witnesses and exercise all other rights afforded by SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-1 and 49-41B and ARSD 20:10:01 and 20:10:22. Absent a contested issue, the Commission will schedule the matter for decision at a regular or special meeting of the Commission.

For approval, Applicants must show that the proposed transmission line project will comply with all applicable laws and rules, will not pose a threat of serious injury to the environment nor to the social and economic condition of inhabitants or expected inhabitants in the siting area, will not substantially impair the health, safety or welfare of the inhabitants, and will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration having been given to the views of governing bodies of affected local units of government. Based upon these factors, the Commission will decide whether the permit should be granted, denied or granted upon such terms, conditions or modifications of the construction, operation or maintenance as the Commission finds appropriate.

It is therefore

ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a public input hearing on Thursday, March 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. CST, at the Reville City Auditorium - Basement, Reville, South Dakota; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, applications for party status must be filed on or before March 20, 2006; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17.1, a party who wishes to receive personal service of all material filed in this matter shall make a specific request to the Commission for personal service, which may be included in the application for party status. Absent such a specific request, the County Auditors for Grant County and Deuel County are designated by law as the agent for service of process upon all parties to this proceeding residing in Grant County and Deuel County.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, this hearing is being held in a physically accessible location. Please contact the Public Utilities Commission at 1-800-332-1782 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing if you have special needs so arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 10th day of February, 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><i>Helaine Koelbo</i></u>
Date:	<u>2/10/06</u>
(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