

From: PUC
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 10:53 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: HP22-001

Mr. Fisk,

This is in response to your letter regarding the proposed SCS Carbon Transport LLC pipeline.

The Public Utilities Commission received a siting permit application for this pipeline project on Feb. 7, 2022, resulting in the opening of docket [HP22-001](#). This docket will receive a detailed review of the proposed project by the commission, with a final decision required by state law by Feb. 6, 2023. This began with public input meetings hosted by the commission along the pipeline's route, as required by law. These meetings began last night and continue through the week, with information on these posted in the docket.

You will be able to learn more as further project information will be requested by the commissioners and staff, filed in the online docket, and be publicly available during the months ahead. I encourage you to follow this docket as it is processed and new information is posted in the online docket. Many issues raised will be addressed by commission staff working with other state agencies and industry expert witnesses.

The commission is not involved with eminent domain or easements. Here is an excerpt from the Public Utilities Commission's [Information Guide to Siting Pipelines](#) posted online:

The PUC is not involved in the easement acquisition process that occurs between applicants and landowners. Likewise, the PUC does not have a role in the eminent domain process, which is handled in the circuit court system. Landowners with concerns about these issues should seek advice from their personal attorney.

So, while you list valid concerns, and others will hopefully read your points and keep them in mind, the commission does not have the expertise or authority to advise landowners on eminent domain or contract negotiations. Likewise, the commission is not involved in planning or routing the project, and does not have the legal authority to change or mandate a route. See [SDCL 49-41B-36](#). In past siting dockets involving other projects, routes and layouts have become more firm following the information gathered at the public input meetings.

Since easements are not within the legal authority of the commission, you are advised to seek advice from your personal attorney or one that specializes in easements. It would be misleading and irresponsible for the commission to step in and attempt to counsel individual landowners on easement details. You may also wish to communicate directly with the applicant on certain questions and suggestions.

My fellow commissioners and I cannot deny any applicant a siting permit without fully reviewing and processing the application. We are bound by law to follow the criteria on whether or not a project is eligible to receive a permit. If the commissioners were to not follow the specific criteria in state law and deny a permit without proper cause, that decision would be appealed to, and almost certainly overruled by, circuit court.

In addition to my obligation to follow the law, I am a landowner in South Dakota and I understand your concern to protect your property.

Thank you for reaching out. Your letter and my response will be posted under Comments and Responses in the docket.

Chris Nelson, Chairman
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
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