BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION BY
WESTERN MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY AND MISSOURI RIVER ENERGY SERVICES FOR A FACILITY PERMIT FOR AN ENERGY CONVERSION FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES INCLUDING AN ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINE IN DEUEL COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF BRENT MOELLER
ON BEHALF OF WESTERN MINNESOTA MUNICIPAL POWER AGENCY
AND MISSOURI RIVER ENERGY SERVICES

August 7, 2025

I. INTRODUCTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Q. Please state your name, employer, and business address.

A. My name is Brent Moeller. I am employed by Missouri River Energy Services ("MRES"). My business address is 3724 West Avera Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57109-8920.

Q. What is your position with MRES?

A. I am the Director of Generation Resources.

Q. Briefly describe your educational and professional background.

A. I have approximately 29 years of experience in the electric utility industry, with more than 17 years of those in power generation resources. In my current role, I am responsible for directing the operation and maintenance of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency ("WMMPA") owned and operated generation resources. In addition, I oversee the planning, design, and construction of additional generation resources, which includes permitting generation facilities at the local, state and federal levels. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. I am also a previously registered professional engineer in the States of Nebraska, Oklahoma and South Dakota; my licenses have been retired. My resume is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Q. Are you familiar with the Toronto Power Plant Project ("Project")?

A. Yes, the Project includes an energy conversion facility and associated facilities being developed by WMMPA, through its agent MRES. The Project is located within Deuel County, South Dakota, approximately 2 miles north of Toronto, South Dakota. The transmission line component of the Project extends from the power plant site to the existing Astoria 345-kV substation owned by Otter Tail Power Company ("OTP Substation").

Q. What is your role with respect to the Project?

A. I am responsible for securing the required permits for the Project from local, state and federal agencies. I also oversee activities associated with design, construction, operation, and environmental and regulatory compliance for the Project.

Q. Will WMMPA and MRES ("Applicants") construct, own, operate, maintain, and manage the Project?

A. WMMPA will own and finance the construction of the Project. MRES performs all required administrative services on behalf of WMMPA under an administrative services agreement and will be responsible for the construction, operation, maintenance, and management of the Project.

Q. Please describe the Applicants' respective business operations.

A. WMMPA is a municipal corporation and political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, headquartered in Ortonville, Minnesota. WMMPA owns generation and transmission facilities, the capacity and output of which are sold to MRES.

MRES is a not-for-profit joint-action agency headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota that provides electricity and energy services to 61 member municipalities in South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota, who in turn serve approximately 174,000 customers. MRES is a transmission-owning member of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator ("MISO") and Southwest Power Pool ("SPP"). MRES is committed to enhancing the value of member utilities to their communities by supplying reliable, cost-effective, long-term energy and energy services in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner.

The Applicants have extensive track records of successfully developing generation projects in the region.

II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY

Q. What is the purpose of your Direct Testimony?

A. The purpose of my Direct Testimony is to:

- provide an overview of the Project;
- discuss the purpose of, demand for, and benefits of the Project;
- discuss the Applicants' power plant site and route selection process;
- discuss the Applicants' stakeholder engagement;
- provide information on the Project's design, construction, and operation;
- provide an overview of the Applicants' efforts to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts on the local community, environment, land use, and existing infrastructure; and
- discuss local land use approvals.

Q. What exhibits are attached to your Direct Testimony?

A. The following exhibit is attached to my Direct Testimony:

- Exhibit A: B. Moeller Resume.

Q. Please identify which sections of the Application you are sponsoring for the record.

A. I am sponsoring the following portions of the Application:

- Section 1.0: Introduction
- Section 2.0: Names of Participants and Names of Owner and Manager
- Section 3.0: Purpose of Facility
- Section 4.0: Estimated Cost of Facility
- Section 5.0: Demand for Facility
- Section 6.0: General Site Description
- Section 7.0: Alternative Sites and Siting Criteria
- Section 13.0: Land Use
- Section 16.0: Time Schedule
- Section 17.0: Community Impact (except 17.6)
- Section 18.0: Employment Estimates
- Section 19.0: Future Additions and Modifications
- Section 20.0: Nature of the Proposed Energy Conversion Facility
- Section 21.0: Transmission Facility Layout and Construction
- Section 22.0: Information Concerning Transmission Facility
- Section 24.0: Additional Information in Application
- Section 26.0: Testimony and Exhibits
- Section 27.0: Applicants' Verification
- Appendix F: Transportation Study

III. RELATIONSHIP TO PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECTS

Q. Please describe the Project.

A. The Project consists of construction and operation of an energy conversion facility to generate approximately 145 megawatts ("MW") consisting of four combustion turbine-generator sets ("genset") contained in a turbine hall building, natural gas pipeline, diesel fuel truck unloading facilities, and other facilities. In addition, the Project includes installation of an approximately 4.9-mile-long, single-circuit, 345-kV transmission line to connect with the OTP Substation.

Q. What led to the development of the Project?

A. Because the Applicants are obligated to meet the increasing needs of their members, they must plan for and acquire the necessary power supply resources that can meet these needs. According to MRES's forecast, MRES has adequate capacity over the next several years in SPP and is facing a significant deficit in capacity in MISO. MRES's most recent integrated resource plan identified that natural gas generation would be an economical option in meeting its long-term regional resource needs.

Q. What are the anticipated benefits of the Project?

A. Natural gas units will provide low-cost, dispatchable, reliable power for the Applicants' members and their electricity consumers. As the region's energy generation mix evolves and more renewable energy sources like wind and solar energy are utilized, the Project will provide the Applicants with another dispatchable generation resource with a fast power ramp-up to maintain local grid reliability when wind and solar generation is low, as well as during major weather events. The Project will be connected to the MISO energy market, reducing MRES's capacity deficit in MISO.

Q. What is the estimated total cost of the Project?

A. The estimated total capital costs for the Project is $378 million. This includes: (1) construction of the dual fuel power plant and (2) costs associated with the construction of the Project's transmission line between the power plant site and OTP Substation. Estimated costs are based on the proposed route and preliminary engineering and are subject to change based on the final Project design and marketplace escalation before contracts are executed.

Q. What is the anticipated schedule for construction and operation of the Project?

A. Construction of the Project is anticipated to start in Q4 2027 and be completed in Q4 2029. Commissioning (i.e. testing) of the Project is anticipated to occur in Q3 and Q4 2029. Following the completion of commissioning, the commercial operation date of the Project is anticipated to occur in Q4 2029. Multiple variables, such as land acquisition, obtaining the necessary federal, state and local approvals, material lead times, contractor availability, weather conditions, and the MISO interconnection process could cause this schedule to change.

Q. Why are the Applicants filing the Application for the Project now when Project construction is not anticipated to begin until Q4 2027?

A. The Commission has one year to act on the Application. Additionally, the approved Application may identify additional requirements that could require additional time to incorporate into the design of the Project. Construction is contingent on acquisition of all required permits.

IV. LAND RIGHTS

Q. What is the current status of right-of-way acquisition for the Project?

A. The Applicants first contacted landowners beginning in June 2024 to discuss obtaining voluntary easements for the proposed route of the transmission line. Coordination with

landowners was reinitiated in June 2025 to discuss an option agreement for easements. Three landowners have signed option agreements for easements. The Applicants will coordinate with landowners throughout Project development, construction, and operation.

V. OVERVIEW OF POWER PLANT SITE AND ROUTE SELECTION

Q. Please provide an overview of the power plant site and route selection process for the Project.

A. The Applicants evaluated general locations in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Iowa for the power plant site; however, the proposed power plant site is preferred when considering the following criteria: 1) the power plant site is crossed diagonally by a major natural gas pipeline, allowing it to tie into the gas pipeline with a minimal length connection; 2) the power plant site is located in relatively close proximity (approximately 3 miles northwest) of the existing OTP Substation, which will serve as the interconnection point into the MISO energy market; 3) the OTP Substation was reviewed and evaluated to be a more desirable substation that potentially would result in less transmission network upgrades; 4) the power plant site is located on a paved road to aid in winter transport of fuel oil if the need arises; 5) the power plant site is located near a fuel oil terminal in Watertown, South Dakota; and 6) the power plant site avoids and minimizes impacts on environmental resources (e.g., USFWS easements, WPAs, and undisturbed lands). In addition, the Applicants were able to secure a land purchase option at the power plant site location.

For the transmission line route, the Applicants identified initial alignments for the route within a Transmission Line Study Area using data collected and the following routing criteria: 1) minimize the proximity to existing residences and structures; 2) avoidance and minimization of impacts on environmental resources (e.g., waterbodies, wetlands, WPAs, USFWS easements, potentially undisturbed grasslands, public lands); 3) minimize the impact upon croplands; and 4) minimize the route length. These alignments typically follow public roadways and section or quarter section field lines to minimize impacts on existing land uses and to allow for easier construction and long-term maintenance access.

Further analysis along these initial alignments included conducting field surveys, including wetland and waterbody field delineations and mapping, where landowner permission was granted or from the roadway ROW. A records search was conducted for cultural resources, and previous recorded surveys and site locations were noted. Additional information was collected by conducting a public open house meeting and gathering landowner, stakeholder and agency feedback.

Route selection required the Applicants to balance various factors, such as: (1) avoiding engineering constraints (i.e., infrastructure in and around the OTP Substation); (2) utilizing engineering opportunities (e.g., road ROW); (3) avoiding or minimizing impacts on environmental resources (e.g., waterbodies/wetlands, cultural resources, potentially undisturbed grassland, public lands); and (4) minimizing impacts on landowners and existing land use in order to maximize the potential to secure voluntary easements.

Applying the routing criteria to three route alternatives, the Applicants selected the proposed route, which is approximately 4.9 miles ("Route"), depicted on Figures 4 and 5 of the Application.

Q. Please discuss further how Applicants utilized existing linear features when selecting the proposed Route.

A. Approximately 2.1 miles of the proposed Route follows existing roadways. The proposed Route begins at the power plant site and extends east for 1.0 mile (0.25-mile north of 192nd Street). The Route then turns north for 0.15 mile along 480th Avenue before turning at a northeast angle for 0.14 mile. The Route extends for approximately 0.91 mile east to 481st Avenue. It then turns south along 481st Avenue for 2.0 miles before turning southeast across a row crop farm field to the OTP Substation.

Q. Does the proposed Project minimize potential impacts?

A. Yes. As discussed throughout the Application and in the Direct Testimony of Ms. Baker, the proposed Project is compatible with the existing land uses, which are primarily agricultural (crop production, with some pasture and hay production). The proposed Route also follows existing linear corridors, which minimizes potential impacts to existing land uses. Additionally, the proposed Route minimizes impacts on homes and structures, while avoiding and/or minimizing potential impacts to existing infrastructure and environmental resources.

Q. Did the Applicants consider other routes as they developed the proposed Route? If so, please discuss the alternative routes considered.

A. While analyzing potential routes for the Project, the Applicants considered but rejected two separate routes that begin at the power plant site and follow 479th Avenue south to 192nd Street, then proceed east along 192nd Street. These routes were rejected to avoid residences within 500 feet of the transmission line centerline. One route would have paralleled an existing 115 kV transmission line along 193rd Street.

Q. Please discuss the Applicants' coordination with agencies, landowners, and other local stakeholders when developing the proposed Project.

A. The Applicants have coordinated with various stakeholders during the development of the proposed Project, including landowners, local community members, local officials, Tribes, and federal, state, and local agencies. The Applicants reached out to various federal, state, and local agencies as well as stakeholders to provide a summary of the Project and request information relevant to each agency/stakeholder to inform the siting and routing analysis. For example, the Applicants presented information regarding the Project to the Deuel County Board of Adjustment, Deuel County Board of Commissioners, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Applicants also hosted a public open house in the area to provide information and answer questions regarding the Project and to solicit landowner and local stakeholder input. The Applicants' outreach efforts are described further in Section 8.1.1 of the Application with agency correspondence included in Appendix A of the Application.

Q. Were the criteria set forth in SDCL § 49-41B-22, Applicant's Burden of Proof, considered by the Applicants when siting the Project?

A. Yes.

VI. PROJECT DESIGN AND SITING REQUEST

Q. What upgrades will be made to the existing OTP Substation?

A. The Project will include an expansion of the existing OTP Substation and modifications to the substation to accommodate a new breaker position (within Otter Tail-owned property). OTP will modify the substation according to their standard practices and in accordance with the MISO-sponsored generation interconnection agreement. The current fenced area of the OTP Substation will be expanded to the south on Otter Tail-owned property to accommodate the new substation equipment.

Q. Other than the existing access into the OTP Substation, will permanent access roads outside of the permanent ROW be required for the Project?

A. No.

Q. What is the width of the proposed permanent right-of-way ("ROW") along the Project Route?

A. The proposed permanent ROW is an approximately 150-foot-wide area centered on the Project Route.

Q. What type of structures are proposed for the Project?

A. The Project is anticipated to be constructed on steel-monopole structures and is expected to require up to 30 transmission structures with spans ranging from 400 to 1,500 feet, but this may vary depending on geological, environmental, or engineering constraints identified during micro-siting. Configuration details are provided in Table 16 of the Application, and a proposed design is shown in Diagram 1 of the Application. The structures will be bolted to concrete, drilled pier foundations embedded in the ground. Foundation sizes vary generally from 8 to 15 feet in diameter and from 20 to 40 feet in depth depending upon soil conditions.

Specialty structures may be used if unique features are encountered along the route. The Applicants will know whether specialty structures must be installed after all required federal, state and local permits are obtained, land rights are secured, and final engineering is complete. In the rare event that specialty structures are required, the Applicants expect that they would be comprised of either two pole H-frame structures or 3-pole monopole structures. These types of specialty structures would require a larger footprint than the proposed monopole structures. Specialty structures may involve pole spacing that utilizes up to a total of 25 – 30 feet of land as opposed to the anticipated steel monopole foundation design of 8 – 15 feet. The need for specialty structures would be communicated with landowners as soon as the Applicants become aware of the need for such a structure. Through the course of landowner discussions, the Applicants will work with the affected landowner to incorporate landowner preferences into the design or location of the structure to the extent possible.

Q. Please describe the conductors and associated communication lines proposed for the Project.

A. The Project will include the installation of a single-circuit, 345-kV transmission line and associated communication lines. The circuit of the line will consist of three-phase conductors hung vertically from insulators attached to davit arms or post insulators on each side of the monopole structure. Each phase will be one conductor and is expected to be 2x 636-26/7 ACSR Grosbeak/VR2 cable. The VR2 conductor consists of two 636-26/7 conductors twisted together by the manufacturer to make one conductor. This type of conductor provides motion resistance to wind-induced events on transmission lines (e.g., conductor galloping or vibration).

The associated communication lines proposed for the Project with the installation of the single circuit are expected to be optical ground wire ("OPGW"). OPGW is a fiber optic cable with a designated set of fibers surrounded by steel wires that serve a dual purpose at the top of each structure: (1) to protect the phases from lightning strikes; and (2) to exchange information (i.e., communicate) between the endpoint substations and other locations on the transmission system.

Q. In the Application, the Applicants propose a condition regarding adjustments to the Project ROW and structure locations. What is that proposed condition?

A. The Applicants propose the following conditions:

> *Applicants may adjust the structure locations within the 150-foot-wide ROW (as depicted in Figure 5 of the Application) so long as:*
>
> - *Impacts to cultural resources are avoided or mitigated in consultation with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SDSHPO);*
> - *Wetland impacts are avoided or are in compliance with applicable USACE and SDDANR regulations;*
> - *Impacts on potentially undisturbed grasslands will be avoided to the extent possible; and*
> - *All other applicable regulations and requirements are met.*
>
> *Any adjustment that falls outside of the 150-foot-wide ROW or that does not meet the above stated limitations is considered a "material change." If a "material change" is proposed, Applicants must file a request for approval of the "material change" prior to making the adjustment pursuant to the following approval process:*
>
> - *Applicants must file with the Commission and serve on the official Service List a request for approval of a material change that includes:*
> - *An affidavit describing the proposed adjustment(s), the reason for the adjustment(s), the reason the adjustment(s) do(es) not comply with one or more flexibility limitations set forth above, and information regarding compliance with all other applicable requirements;*
> - *Documentation showing the impacted landowner was informed of the material change and indication whether landowner approves of the material change or contests the material change; and*
> - *A map showing the approved location of the 150-foot-wide ROW and structure locations and the proposed adjusted locations (in different colors).*
> - *Once received, Commission Staff and the Commission shall have 10 business days to request further Commission review.*

- *If no further review is requested, Applicants may proceed with the adjustment.*
- *If further review is requested, the Commission will issue a decision regarding Applicants' request at its next available regularly scheduled Commission meeting, subject to notice requirements, after the request for further review is made.*

Q. Why are the Applicants proposing this condition?

A. The Applicants are continuing to work with landowners regarding structure locations and Project design. Additionally, the Project is in the process of completing additional survey and geotechnical work. To try to accommodate landowner requests, and to avoid and/or minimize potential environmental impacts, shifts in the ROW and/or structure locations may be needed. For this reason, the Applicants request that the permit allow adjustments to the Project ROW and structure locations be made in accordance with the conditions specified above.

Q. Please describe the temporary workspace that will be required for the Project during construction.

A. The transmission line construction process will include the following temporary use areas that will be restored following construction, unless the landowner requests for them to remain after construction is complete:

- Pulling/tensioning sites will be required to facilitate conductor installation. These sites require a flattened area approximately 75-feet by 300-feet. It is expected there will be up to eight of these locations required for the Project.

- Temporary access to the structure sites will be required to enable foundation installation, structure assembly and erection, conductor and OPGW or OHGW installation. This access will consist of temporary roads extending from existing roads to the structure sites within the proposed utility easement area. Temporary access roads may be bladed, if needed, to provide a level area. To prevent rutting, and as otherwise determined necessary by the contractor, temporary mats will be installed to facilitate equipment travel to the structure sites.

- Each structure site will require approximately 150-foot by 150-foot temporary workspace to facilitate foundation construction, structure assembly, and erection.

Q. Have the locations of these temporary use areas been finalized?

A. No. The final locations of these temporary use areas are dependent upon the Project's final design and micrositing of structure locations.

Q. In the Application, the Applicants make a commitment regarding the location of temporary use areas. What is that commitment?

A. Applicants commit to the following with respect to the temporary use areas: (a) all necessary land rights will be secured; (b) cultural resource field surveys and wetland delineations will be conducted, if not in an area previously surveyed; (c) cultural resource impacts will be avoided or mitigated in consultation with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office ("SDSHPO"); (d) wetland impacts will be avoided or will be in compliance with applicable USACE and state regulations; and (e) potentially undisturbed grasslands (as depicted in Figure 16 of the Application) will be avoided to the extent possible.

Q. Are any future modifications or expansions of the Project currently planned?

A. The Applicants have laid out the power plant site to allow room to mirror the building containing the four turbine-generator sets to be located on the other side of the office facilities for future development. This would effectively double the generation capability of the Project. Additional permitting would be required if future generation equipment were to be added.

VII. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Q. Discuss the personnel that will be involved in the construction of the Project.

A. Employment estimates show that construction of the Project is expected to peak at approximately 200 construction workers. Most positions needed during construction of the Project will be contracted and are expected to include, but are not limited to: project management, project management support, safety, structure framing and setting, linemen, civil foundation installation, quality assurance/quality control, inspections, design, concrete truck drivers, and environmental specialist. Additional positions expected to be involved in the construction related to the Power Plant are anticipated to be more of a balanced blend of Applicants' employees and contracted positions that include but are not limited to project management, electrical technicians, inspections, construction, design, construction management, and safety.

Q. Please provide an overview of the transmission line construction process.

A. Construction can begin once all necessary regulatory permits, authorizations, and clearances are obtained. The general steps in the construction process are:

- Construction survey and staking;
- ROW clearing;

- Mobilization and preparation of staging / laydown yards;
- Grading (as needed), excavation, and foundation installation;
- Structure setting;
- Wire stringing and clipping once there are enough structures set consecutively in a row to support a wire pull; and
- Cleanup of the construction areas.

Following the cleanup procedure, restoration and reseeding will begin (outside of areas that were previously cultivated). The Applicants will repair and restore areas temporarily disturbed by construction or maintenance of the Project. Except as otherwise agreed to by the landowner, restoration will include replacement of original pre-construction topsoil or equivalent quality topsoil to its original elevation, contour, and compaction and re-establishment of original vegetation as close thereto as reasonably practicable.

Q. Will the Project be constructed to maintain the minimum conductor to ground clearance required by the National Electrical Safety Code ("NESC")?

A. Yes.

Q. How will the Applicants minimize impacts during construction?

A. The Applicants have conducted extensive work to-date to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential environmental impacts, and will continue those efforts during construction. As described in the Application, the Applicants will employ best management practices ("BMPs") to minimize and mitigate impacts, particularly to wetlands, waterbodies, and agricultural areas. This includes development and implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan ("SWPPP") and compliance with applicable stormwater, wetland/waterbody, and floodplain permitting requirements. Mitigation measures for agricultural areas include weed management during construction, and re-establishing drainage patterns and contours after construction to the extent possible and in accordance with applicable permits and landowner agreements.

Q. With respect to the use of existing local roads during construction, will the Applicants coordinate with local road authorities regarding the use and restoration of those roads?

A, Yes. The Applicants will meet with Deuel County and townships to discuss road use and will continue that coordination during construction. In accordance with SDCL § 49-41B-38, the Applicants will provide a road bond to the Commission in favor of the applicable road authorities.

B. The Applicants propose the road bond for the Project be set at $450,000. This is based on reviewing road bond amounts for prior energy conversion facility and transmission line dockets and comparing the length of the lines to the Project, including EL24-015 ($400,000 for ~3.5 miles), EL24-023 ($1,000,000 for ~6 miles), EL19-005 ($250,000 for ~0.7 miles), EL19-012 ($500,000 for ~7 miles), EL18-019 ($500,000 for 5 miles), EL18-046 ($1,000,000 for ~8 miles), and EL17-042 ($250,000 for the Astoria Station Power Plant). Based on this information, at ~4.9 miles for the transmission line route, a bond for the Project between $250,000 and $500,000 seems appropriate, and the length of the Route indicates an amount on the higher end of the range, resulting in the proposed $450,000 bond.

Q. What steps will the Project take to prepare for a potential emergency situation at the Project site during construction and when the Project is operational?

A. The Applicants will develop a workplan and an emergency response plan and support workforce and community safety during Project construction. The Applicants will also contact local fire departments prior to the start of construction to provide early education and response training and to determine the capacities of each department to respond to a fire call at the Project site. The Applicants propose to provide annual response training to mitigate potential impacts on fire protection. The Project's general contractor will identify and secure all active construction areas to prevent public access to potentially hazardous areas and will require workers to follow safety standards. In the event an incident does occur, the Project's emergency response plan will be implemented, and area local emergency services will be contacted, as needed.

VIII. PROJECT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Q. Discuss the personnel that will be involved in the operation of the Project.

A. Operational staff are anticipated to include four to six full-time employees to operate the Toronto Power Plant and potentially serve as a regional hub to support other assets of the Applicants in the region. The Applicants anticipate they will retain and oversee contractors for operation and maintenance of the 345 kV transmission line portion of the Project.

Q. Please describe the procedures that will be employed for inspections and maintenance of the Project.

A. Once the Project is operational, regular maintenance and inspections will be performed to ensure the Project continues to operate safely, efficiently, and reliably. The Applicants will perform maintenance of the Project in compliance with the equipment manufacturer's

recommended practices and applicable reliability standards established by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation ("NERC"). Generally, the Applicants will inspect the transmission line at least once per year. Inspections of the transmission line are typically limited to the immediate Project ROW and pre-determined access points. If any damage or concerns are identified during inspections, repairs will be performed and the landowners and appropriate agencies will be notified, as needed.

IX. LAND USE AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Q. Is the Project compatible with the existing land uses in the vicinity?

A. Construction of the Project will result in the permanent conversion of approximately 20 acres of land from existing farmland use into use for the proposed power plant site. The remainder of the site (51 acres) may be temporarily affected during construction.

Following construction, areas subject to temporary disturbance will be revegetated or returned to agricultural use. Agricultural impacts are discussed in Section 17.3 of the Application.

The proposed transmission line is compatible with the existing land, which is primarily agricultural. Minimal existing agricultural land would be taken out of production by the proposed Project, primarily the area for the proposed power plant site and around transmission structures. Once construction is completed, agricultural activities may resume within the proposed ROW between structures. Landowners will be compensated for any crop damage that occurs during construction and will be compensated for granting an easement for the Project.

Additionally, the Project is consistent with the existing built landscape in the area, which includes existing linear infrastructure (e.g., SD Highway 15, SD Highway 28, and several local roads), existing transmission corridors (i.e., a 115-kV line and 345-kV line owned by Otter Tail), the Astoria Station Power Plant (a natural gas-fired electric generation facility), and Toronto, South Dakota (which consists of more densely developed residential, commercial, and industrial land use). The minor expansion of the OTP Substation, which will take place within the footprint of the substation's existing designated area, is not expected to create additional impacts in the vicinity of the Project since the substation is part of the existing environment.

Q. Does the Project avoid impacts to public lands?

A. Yes. As discussed in the Application, the Applicants selected the proposed Power Plant Site and Route in part because it avoids public lands and conservation easements. The Route runs adjacent to one USFWS wetland easement; however, no structures would be located within the easement.

Q. Will the Project have a significant impact on noise levels?

A. No. Construction noise will be temporary. Construction activities will mostly occur during daytime hours. Additionally, construction noise levels will be minimized by ensuring that construction equipment is equipped with mufflers that are in good working order. As discussed in Section 13.3 of the Application, the Applicants completed pre- construction sound studies to quantify existing ambient sound levels for the Project. The study will be used to aid the Applicants in implementing noise mitigation measures during detail design to ensure the Project complies with the Deuel County noise ordinance at the nearest residences.

Q. Will the Project have an impact on existing communications systems?

A. No. The Project is not anticipated to cause interference with existing satellite, cellular, radio, TV, and GPS systems in the vicinity of the Project. In the unlikely event television or radio interference is caused by or from the operation of the Project in those areas where good reception was available prior to construction of the Project, the Applicants will evaluate the circumstances contributing to these impacts and determine the necessary actions to restore reception to pre-existing levels.

Q. Will the Project have an impact on community facilities and services?

A. No. The existing emergency services are expected to be sufficient to support construction personnel during the construction phase. No significant increase in the permanent population of local communities would be expected from construction and operation of the Project, and the construction workforce is not anticipated to create any measurable impact to the local government, utilities, or community services or facilities.

Q. Is the Project compatible with existing land uses and future development along and around the Project?

A. Yes. The power plant site and Route were selected to avoid existing population centers and other developed areas, and are located primarily on agricultural lands. Construction of the transmission line will result in the conversion of a very small amount of land (0.06 acre) from existing agricultural land use to use for transmission line structures. As mentioned previously, the Applicants will continue to coordinate with landowners on final structure placement and design.

Q. Will the Applicants participate in the South Dakota One-Call program?

A. Yes.

X. LOCAL LAND USE REGULATIONS

Q. Does the Project require any local land use approvals?

A. Yes. The Project is located primarily in agricultural districts within Deuel County and, more specifically, within the Scandinavia Township. The Applicants are in the process of coordinating with Deuel County regarding the process to change the zoning classification of the power plant site from Agricultural to Commercial/Industrial. The Applicants plan to apply for a change in zoning classification to accommodate the proposed power plant site in Fall/Winter 2025 or Spring 2026. Following a change in zoning classification, the Applicants will apply for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Public and Private Utilities. Additionally, for the Project's electrical transmission components located within properties that are zoned as agricultural, the Applicants will separately apply for a CUP for Essential Services. Applicants will also secure a building permit from Deuel County for the Project prior to commencing construction.

XI. OTHER PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Q. In addition to an Energy Facility Permit from the Commission, what other permits or approvals are required for the Project?

A. Various federal, state, and local approvals may be required for the Project. Table 17 in the Application identifies potential permits or approvals required for the construction and operation of the Project, and also identifies the status of each permit/approval.

Q. Will the Applicants obtain all local, state, and federal permits and approvals required for the Project?

A. Yes.

Q. Will the Project be designed, constructed, and operated in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations?

A. Yes.

XII. CONCLUSION

Q. Based on the analysis the Applicants have conducted, has the Project been sited to minimize potential impacts?

A. Yes. As detailed in the Application, my Direct Testimony and Ms. Baker's Direct Testimony, the Project components have been thoughtfully sited, routed and designed to avoid or minimize potential impacts to inhabitants, resources, and land use in and along the Route.

Q. Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?

A. Yes.

Dated this 7th day of August, 2025.

Brent A Moeller

_____

Brent A. Moeller