Subject: PUC docket EL26-026

November 8, 2026

To whom it may concern:

My name is Gene Pinkert. I and my brother Neil Pinkert, co-owners of Rainbow Holsteins, Inc., received the official notice letters about the PowerOn project in the mail. Xcel Energy has asked us for an easement and to survey our land with the intention of running the proposed 765-kV lines across this property. The legal description of our land that is affected by this project in Grant County, SD are as follows: 8-120N-47W, Parcel No 02.47.08.1000 GRT-8020 and Parcel No 02.47.08.2000 GRT-7990. Parcel No 02.47.08.1000 GRT-8020 is owned by Gene Pinkert and Neil Pinkert equally and is rented to our family corporation, Rainbow Holsteins, Inc. for crop production. My grandfather purchased this land around 1916 and now with my son in the farming operation, he is the fourth generation farming this land. Parcel No 02.47.08.2000 GRT-7990 is owned by Rainbow Holsteins, Inc. whose shares are owned equally by Gene Pinkert and Neil Pinkert. The Pinkert family has farmed this land for over 70 years, first as renters and eventually purchasing it from the owners. Just to be clear from the beginning of this letter, we are opposed to this project as it is proposed with a 765-kV above ground transmission line.

My home is located on 5-120N-47W. The land that our house is located on was purchased by my great grandfather in 1903 so this land has been in our family for 122 years and I am the fourth generation to be farming this farmland. My wife and I built our house in 1992 as our forever home. We are not so sure about that anymore with the proposed 765-kV line passing within ¼ mile of our house. We built our house so it would be close to the dairy which we operated at that time. The address for our personal house is 48574 149th St. Big Stone City, SD 57216. The address for the farm site and my son's house is 48575 149th St. Big Stone City, SD 57216. The house that my son lives in was built by my grandfather when he purchased the property. This house is also within ¼ mile of the proposed 765-kV transmission line. Both of our houses and most of the outbuildings on the farm as well as the grain bins on the farm have metal exteriors, with many having metal roofs as well. With these buildings being this close to the proposed project, I am worried that on humid summer days the static electricity coming off of this proposed line would energize these buildings creating a health risk to the homes as well as the outbuildings on the farm.

According to the plans we have seen, there would be a dead end structure on our land, which means there will also be at least two other structures going in two directions from the dead end structure (north and west). The dead end structure is to be placed where we have a 100 year old shelter-belt which was planted by my grandfather, and is an integral part of our land operation protecting crops from wind damage and creating a greenhouse effect in the field to the north of it. Since the dead end structure is placed there, it means that a minimum of 125 ft of those legacy trees would be destroyed as well as a minimum of 250 ft of another shelter-belt to the north of the legacy shelter-belt. This second shelter-belt is also an integral part of our operation, as it helps to control wind erosion and also helps promote the greenhouse effect with the legacy shelter belt to the south. These shelter-belts are also home to deer, turkeys and pheasants. So if they are removed or altered, the wildlife habitat will be affected also.

This proposed line also crosses Rainbow Holsteins, Inc.'s most productive farm land, with guaranteed yields of 212 bushels of corn and 57 bushels of soybeans, which economically affects Rainbow Holsteins. (These are the APH-TAYA bushel values. See attached document #1 proving these values.)

My son, Sean, and I attended the PUC meeting in Milbank. We did not speak as we didn't know what to expect. Plus, with the meeting being in the middle of harvest, we didn't have time to prepare anything in advance. By attending this meeting several questions and concerns came to mind on topics that were not discussed.

1) Why wasn't this line placed in Minnesota which receives most of the benefit from this line? Is it easier for a utility to get approval in South Dakota for controversial lines such as this one than in Minnesota? There are two 345-kV lines already in existence that are ¾ mile away from our homes and farm presently. One ¾ mile to the southwest that has only one side of the line in use now and one ¾ mile to the east. How many transmission lines should a person have to tolerate within one mile of their home? With the construction of this 765-kV line, that would mean there would be three lines within ¾ mile of our homes and farm. I did notice that no one from the Xcel Energy contingent ever responded back to the question asked by one of the landowners questioning whether they would want to live by one of these 765-kV lines. That was a telling moment in the Milbank PUC meeting as to the safety of these lines.

2) My concern with these three lines within ¾ of mile of our homes and farm is how much our property value will drop because of the 765-kV being placed on our property? I have heard reports of up to 20-25% devaluation because of one 765-kV transmission line. How much will our valuation drop on our property that has three lines within ¾ of a mile? As a comparison, what would the general public's response be to having to deal with this kind of devaluation on their home valuation or having to deal with the same thing on their 401k? I am sure it wouldn't be very positive. This will definitely be an economic loss for us if this project is completed as planned.

3) During the PUC meeting in Milbank, the Xcel Energy contingent said that this project would be a great benefit to the people of South Dakota and showed an illustration of the power flow during different times of the day. A resident of Milbank, Dave Copeland, asked how this project would affect his bill. Xcel Energy contingent stated that upon completion his bill would in fact go down $1.10/month. That is great and wonderful for the Ottertail Power customers in Milbank but almost all of the farmers that are being asked to grant easements for this project are Whetstone Valley Electric customers. I was able to visit with Dave Page, general manager of Whetstone Valley Electric, when exiting the meeting. I asked Dave if there would be any benefit for the patrons of Whetstone Valley Electric from this transmission line being built. Dave said there would be very little benefit, if any, since Touchstone Energy gets their power from a different electrical grid. This means that the farmers that are expected to give Xcel Energy easements for this project get no benefit from this project thus creating a negative economic situation for the landowners granting easement to this project. I find this a very important point. The real estate representative for this project, Peter Wyatt, visited with me, my wife, my son and my brother Neil on April 9, 2026 at my house about the easement. Peter's big sales pitch was how much of a benefit in electrical reliability we would receive from this project. We informed him that we get our electricity from Touchstone Energy Cooperative which is not affiliated with Xcel Energy or Ottertail Power in any way and would not receive any benefit from electrical security or cheaper electricity from this project. You would think that Xcel Energy or Ottertail Power would have educated their real estate representatives about the actual real life conditions that the

landowners they are dealing with live every day. I also remember when I went in for the initial meeting in Big Stone City, Peter introduced himself to me and was very helpful and courteous in getting maps to me. Upon realizing that these lines were crossing property that we own and farm, I asked Peter how they designed this line and determined the path of the lines? His reply was that he had no idea and he was just a real estate guy. I thought this is strange since in past dealings and meetings that I have attended about transmission lines, we always dealt with employees of Ottertail Power that could answer these questions. It would seem to me that if Xcel Energy was so confident about this project and its benefits, they would have their engineers that designed this project along in the initial visiting of the landowners to explain the project more thoroughly. It is almost as if corporate Xcel Energy has placed a shield between the landowners and Xcel Energy by placing real estate people that know nothing about the project as a go between.

4) At the PUC meeting in Milbank, a question was asked by one of the farmers to the Xcel Energy people about how these 765-kV lines will affect GPS signal to our equipment. The engineer from Xcel Energy stated that standard WAAS GPS should not be affected by these lines, but RTK GPS would not work under these lines. RTK GPS is a more precise GPS that is used for seed placement. RTK GPS is the GPS that our Case 2150 planter uses. When the tractor monitor is not receiving a RTK GPS signal, the planter shuts down and does not plant. My question to Xcel Energy is this: are we supposed to buy new/different machinery so that we are able to farm the acres that your easement is supposed to occupy-22.5 acres on our farm? If so, how are we compensated for those purchases or upgrades? Or are we supposed to turn all our easement acres into grassland and get nothing from it? Either way, it affects us economically, affecting our cash flow from either having to purchase different equipment or from loss of revenue from lost crop production. Also of concern to us on the economic side is how these 765-kV lines will affect GPS systems in drones, planes and ground sprayers which are all used in our farming operation in applying herbicides, fungicides and insecticides as needed? Also concerning to us is the ground clearance of these lines with relation to any aerial applications and the safety of the aerial applicators and their equipment. Also of concern is the ground clearance in relation to the use of combines, ground sprayers, tractors and planting equipment in relation to the electrical field underneath these lines and the possible damage to sensors and other electrical systems on this equipment. In the proposed path of the lines on our property, there is a drastic change of elevation in some places that cause a concern to us with this electrical field matter. If any of this damage does occur, who is responsible for these costs? If it is us, that would be more economic hardship on our part and even if we are reimbursed by Xcel Energy for this damage, we will still have down time in our operation which will cost us economically as well.

At the PUC meeting in Milbank, Chairman Nelson mentioned that there had been a change in the route of the project a week before the meeting due to a landowner wanting to protect a shelter belt. When he mentioned that, I thought that we should contact Xcel Energy to protect our legacy shelter belt mentioned on page 1 of this document. I thought that we could propose altering the route with two 45 degree pole structures instead of the single dead end one that is placed on the end of the legacy shelter belt. After thinking about this for a day or two, we dismissed the thought of proposing this as it would mean having a line go at an angle across a field and if the RTK GPS doesn't work under the lines this would be a real mess to deal with and more extensive economic hardship.

5) Thinking of the destruction of the wind towers by Highmore, SD this summer, what is the possibility of this happening to these proposed power lines? We have experienced winds as strong or stronger as recently as twice in May 2022 and many other times in previous years. With the way the lines are held

together on the rings for spacing, is there a possibility of this spacing failing due to adverse weather conditions such as icing, wind, etc, causing them to spark or cause line failure? If this were to happen, would we be looking at the possibility of fire similar to what California has experienced when they have electrical line sparking due to wind events? If this were to happen during the fall when crops are drying down, would Xcel Energy take financial responsibility for this damage and pay for any and all damages?

6) We have been presented with an option agreement for easement from Northern States Power (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy) which we have not signed. Our legal advisor pointed out that item 5 on page 2 of the document (see attached document #2) states that the easement sketch is preliminary in nature and subject to change at the Grantees discretion during the option term or option term extension. This language, in addition to item 10 on page 4, (see attached document #2) basically states that upon signing and execution of the agreement, Northern States Power can move the line wherever they want to on our property thereby nullifying any initial said project path. Our concern is that, upon signing the contract presented to us, we are essentially stripped of our rights to have any say or input into where these lines go. Our legal advisor, who regularly deals with these types of contracts, had never seen this language in a document such as this, and also made the comment that this language was placed in the contract by Xcel Energy and it benefits their interest only, with no regard to the landowner's interests and rights.

7) Nobody has mentioned that with the size of these structures when erected, will there be flashing lights on top of each structure that we have to filter out with curtains and such at night so it doesn't affect our health and sleep patterns?

In closing, I would like to reiterate that we are opposed to these 765-kV transmission lines as they are proposed now and the path that they take across our property. What I don't understand with this whole transmission line project is why Xcel Energy and Ottertail Power wants to install these above ground transmission lines that are subject to environmental concerns and more importantly health and economic concerns to the people who are affected by these lines. Especially when there is an alternative for them to install an underground DC line that minimizes all of these concerns as well as cleans up the aesthetics of the project plus less miles of line with a direct underground line in the ROW (Right of Way) where Xcel Energy is not crossing and destroying non-renewable precious farmland. Where our house is located, we can see the Coteau Hills to the west. In the morning they used to have a hue similar to the mountains but with the construction of wind towers, they are an eyesore with white structures sticking up on the horizon during the day, and at night, a mass of red flashing lights. I hope the PUC takes this project and all the adverse concerns with this project seriously and doesn't just rubber stamp this project as they seem to have done with every project in the past. These 765-kV transmission lines are forever lines that generations in the future will have to deal with. I was visiting with another landowner that is affected by this project and I mentioned to her that with the health and economic risks that we will have to deal with upon completion that I am feeling like we should be considering moving away from our farm and homes, to which she agreed but also replied, "But why should we have to? Why should we have to give up our family history and heritage to a for-profit corporation that seems to think they have a right, possibly through the use of eminent domain, to basically seize our property for their financial gain?"

My Grandfather and Father taught me to cherish the land and be a good steward of the land and it will reward you with a bountiful harvest and give you an opportunity to make a living. I had hoped to pass

this on to my son, but I don't think this project that Xcel Energy is proposing will enhance any stewardship towards the land that we farm, which is sad as Xcel Energy touts that they are so environmentally conscious as a company. Unfortunately I don't see that they are being environmentally conscious because with the way this project is proposed, it will cause the destruction of non-renewable farmland for the monetary gain that benefits corporate Xcel Energy and it's stockholders. There is an immense profit potential for Xcel Energy and its stockholders through this project, yet in the process, they are taking advantage of the landowners by causing economic hardship and health concerns to the landowners as well as destruction of the landowners non-renewable farmland. We feel like we are backed into a corner, stuck between a contract giving Xcel Energy free reign, and the very real possibility of instead losing our land through eminent domain, which Xcel seems more than willing to impose as their lawyer indicated in response to a question about eminent domain at the PUC meeting in Milbank. So we appeal to the PUC, please do not approve this project. Xcel Energy's only interest is improving their bottom line, not the safety or well being of those affected by this project.

Sincerely,

Gene Pinkert
[redacted]
Big Stone City, SD 57216
Rainbow Holsteins, Inc.-President

Cell: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Rainbow Holsteins, Inc

Grant

Place	Legal	Wheat 2026 APH	Wheat 2026 APH-TA	Wheat Acres	Wheat APH Bushels	Wheat APH-TA Bushels	Corn 2026 APH	Corn 2026 APH-TAYA	Corn Acres	Corn APH Bushels	Corn APH-TAYA Bushels	Soybeans 2026 APH	Soybeans 2026 APH-TAYA	Soybeans Acres	Soybeans APH Bushels	Soybeans APH-TAYA Bushels
Grant																
	5-120-47	54	54				160	184	56.0	8960	10304	47	52			
Quarry / Home	8-120-47	50	50				200	212	149.8	29960	31758	54	57	167.8	9061	9565
	9 & 10-120-47	49	50				197	209	94.1	18538	19667	50	53	84.1	4205	4457
	15-120-47	48	48				195	209	32.6	6357	6813	50	53	21.6	1080	1145
Gaylon's	16-120-47	47	47				183	195	30.0	5490	5850	48	51	100.3	4814	5115
Pomeroy's	17-120-47	44	45				170	183	53.9	9163	9864	45	48	60.7	2732	2914
	APH Average	49	49				184	199	416.4	78468	84256	49	52	434.5	21892	23196
		Wtd avg Rate	Wtd avg APH	Wtd avg APH-TA	Total Acres	APH-TA Bu. Guar	Wtd avg Rate	Wtd avg APH	Wtd avg APH-TAYA	Total Acres	APH-TAYA Bu. Guar	Wtd avg Rate	Wtd avg APH	Wtd avg APH-TAYA	Total Acres	APH-TAYA Bu. Guar
		70% RP - YAYC - EU					80% RP - TAYAYC - EU					80% RP - TAYAYC - EU				
	Grant						188	188	202	416.4	67404	50	50	53	434.5	18556

* acres rotated from 2025

* Also has Forage Seeding - 50% MP-OU and Oats - 65% YP -OU

Attachment #1

Attachment #1