BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Docket EL26-028, Otter Tail Power Company, Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line

Revised written questions following the public input meeting, Rosholt, October 22, 2026

I am a resident of Easter Township, Roberts County, in Sections the Applicant lists at Table 9-1 (Application, printed page 27). These follow my comments at the Milbank public input meeting on October 21. I respectfully ask that the Applicant answer them in writing in this docket. These revised questions replace my written questions submitted at the Rosholt meeting on October 22, 2026. The only change is in Question 5.

1. The 500-foot distance. At the Milbank meeting, Applicant's counsel stated that the Applicant chose 500 feet from a residence because the evidence supports it as a safe distance. Please identify where in the Application or the record that distance and that evidence appear, and state whether the distance is drawn from North Dakota law, N.D.C.C. 49-22-05.1(3).
2. The closest residence. The Application states the closest residence is approximately 302 feet from the right-of-way (printed pages 66 and 69). How many residences are within 500 feet of the proposed centerline, and will the Applicant adjust the route to keep at least 500 feet from each?
3. Preemption. At Milbank, Applicant's counsel stated the Applicant cannot agree not to seek preemption of a future setback. Does the statement at printed page 75 remain the Applicant's position, and if not, please state the current position.
4. Trust allotments. The Application (printed pages 4 to 7) lists meetings with Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate representatives on November 18, 2025, February 11, 2026 and March 24, 2026. Please identify the Tribal officials and offices present at each, state whether the Chairman attended any of them, state whether the Applicant has consulted the Tribal Realty office or the Bureau of Indian Affairs about trust allotments along the Route, and explain how the Applicant determined that "There are no Tribal lands located within the Facility" (printed page 68).
5. GPS, RTK and drone operations. At Milbank, a landowner with an RTK tower about 100 feet from the line asked whether it will be disrupted, and Chairman Nelson observed that testing may be needed before springtime. Applicant's engineer said he could not say unequivocally it will not be a problem and committed to research. Separately, our drone applicator, Thad Grimsrud, who flies XAG P100 Pro and P150 spray drones, has had a drone lose power and fall while operating above a power line, and has had a drone lose communication with its remote near a high-voltage line. He keeps his distance from such lines and must relocate his equipment to complete fields near them. Section 16.5 of the Application addresses signal frequency only and does not mention aerial application or drones. The XAG P100 Pro Pilot's Operating Handbook (AU V1.0, filed in FAA docket FAA-2023-2489) states: "It is of paramount importance to ensure the absence of electromagnetic interference sources, including but not limited to high-voltage power lines, communication base stations, and transmission towers." The DJI AGRAS T50/T25 flight manual (v1.0, printed pages 39 and 91) gives similar warnings. Will the Applicant file a GPS, RTK, aerial application and drone interference analysis in the docket?
6. Federal review. At Milbank, Mr. Olson stated that a federal grant will cover about 20 percent of the costs. Table 26-1 (printed page 109) lists a U.S. Department of Energy NEPA review, "Required for federal grant funding," with status "Will proceed after Facility permit is issued," and a Section 106 review in connection with the USDOE grant. Has the Department of Energy begun Section 106 consultation with the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, and will the Applicant file the NEPA and Section 106 documents in this docket as they are issued?

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Nigg Date: Oct 28th, 2026

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