**EXHIBIT A**

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

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| **IN THE MATTER OF THE REQUEST BY OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY AND NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY DBA XCEL ENERGY FOR APPROVAL OF MODIFICATIONS TO A 345 KV TRANSMISSION FACILITY IN GRANT COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA** | * * * * * * * * | **EL26-___** |

**AFFIDAVIT OF JASON WEIERS**

STATE OF MINNESOTA )
) ss.
COUNTY OF OTTER TAIL )

Jason Weiers, being first duly sworn upon oath, states and alleges as follows:

1. I am the Senior Manager of Transmission Strategy for Otter Tail Power Company ("Otter Tail"), and I have authority to provide this Affidavit on behalf of Otter Tail.

2. Otter Tail and Northern States Power Company dba Xcel Energy ("Xcel Energy") are co-owners of the existing 345-kilovolt ("kV") Big Stone South to Brookings Transmission Line ("BSSB Transmission Line") that interconnects to the Big Stone South Substation ("BSS Substation") in Grant County, South Dakota.

3. The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") issued a Facility Permit for the BSSB Transmission Line on January 16, 2007 in Docket No. EL06-002, the line was constructed between 2015 and 2017, and it became operational in September 2017.[1]

[1] A Facility Permit was issued for the southern portion of the BSSB Transmission Line by Order, dated February 20, 2014, in Docket No. EL13-020. However, the southern portion of the BSSB Transmission Line is not affected by this request and, therefore, is not discussed further.

4. In Docket No. EL24-015, Otter Tail and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency ("WMMPA") submitted a joint application for a Facility Permit for the portion of the Big Stone South to Alexandria Transmission Line ("BSSA Transmission Line") extending from the BSS Substation to the South Dakota/Minnesota border in Grant County, South Dakota.

5. In order to facilitate interconnection of the BSSA Transmission Line at the BSS Substation, the location of the BSSB Transmission Line interconnection at the BSS Substation must be moved and certain modifications to the BSS Substation must be constructed. Expansion of, and upgrades to, the BSS Substation needed to accommodate the BSSA Transmission Line interconnection and the modification of the BSSB Transmission Line interconnection were discussed and authorized in Docket No. EL24-015.

6. In discussions with Otter Tail and WMMPA in Docket No. EL24-015, Commission Staff indicated a preference to address the BSSB Transmission Line modifications separately from the BSSA Transmission Line Facility Permit application. In accordance with Commission Staff's preference, Otter Tail is submitting with this Affidavit a Motion to Approve Modifications to the Big Stone South to Brookings 345 kV Transmission Line ("Motion") seeking approval of the proposed BSSB Transmission Line modifications.

7. The modifications consist of moving the BSSB Transmission Line south to terminate into a new location within the BSS Substation. To accomplish this, the following construction activities are expected to occur, as shown numerically in Attachment A hereto (matching the numerical order below):

1. Expanding the BSS Substation fence to the south on Otter Tail-owned property to accommodate additional 345 kV breakers and associated 345 kV reactive equipment.

2. Removing the 345 kV transmission line conductor from the existing dead-end structure within the BSS Substation to the first structure outside of the BSS Substation.
3. Moving the existing first structure outside of the existing BSS Substation south to a new location that aligns with the row of new 345 kV breakers within the BSS Substation.
4. Installing a new dead-end structure in the expanded area of the BSS Substation in line with the row of new 345 kV breakers.
5. Installing new 345 kV transmission line conductor from the relocated first structure outside of the BSS Substation to the new dead-end structure within the BSS Substation and extending this new transmission line conductor from the dead-end structure into the new 345 kV buswork between two 345 kV breakers within the expanded area of the BSS Substation.
6. Reterminating the existing BSSB Transmission Line coming from the second structure outside of the BSS Substation onto the relocated first structure outside of the BSS Substation.
7. Protective relaying adjustments in the control house with associated testing and commissioning to ensure proper settings and coordination before placing the BSSB Transmission Line back in service.

8. The expansion, modifications and all associated construction activities will be on the existing BSS Substation parcel, owned by Otter Tail, and the modifications will be constructed concurrently with the BSSA Transmission Line construction.

9. As part of the environmental analysis conducted for the BSSA Transmission Line in Docket No. EL24-015, Otter Tail confirmed that the construction activities associated with the BSSB Transmission Line modifications will not result in any cultural or environmental concerns:

1. Wetlands: Per the Aquatic Resources Delineation Report provided as Appendix D to the Facility Permit Application, no wetlands are present within the expanded area of the BSS Substation (see pages 9 and 36, with figures showing no wetlands present).

2. Threatened and Endangered Species: Section 14.2.2.2 of the Facility Permit Application notes that, based on coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, no impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated in the expanded area of the BSS Substation (see pages 50 and 51).

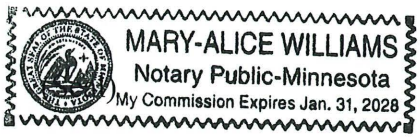
3. Cultural Resources: Per the Level III Cultural Resource Survey provided as Appendix E to the Facility Permit Application, a previously recorded cultural site (two segments of an abandoned railroad bed) in the expanded area of the BSS Substation have been destroyed (see pages 42 and 43). The South Dakota State Historical Society agreed in its concurrence letter dated April 2, 2024 (see pages 105 and 106 of Appendix C to the Facility Permit Application).

10. Xcel Energy and Otter Tail, as joint owners of the BSSB Transmission Line, have discussed the proposed modifications to the BSSB Transmission Line and Xcel Energy does not object to the proposal. The Affidavit of Roger Hargreaves, Project Director of Transmission Engineering and Asset Management for Xcel Energy, previously submitted in Docket No. EL24-015, is provided as Attachment B.

Dated this 9th day of November, 2026.

Jason J Weiers
Jason Weiers

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 9 day of November, 2026.




Mary-Alice Williams
NOTARY PUBLIC
Notary Print Name: Mary-Alice Williams
My commission expires: Jan 31, 2028