

Office of Administrative Hearings
The Honorable Judge Beverly Jones Heydinger
600 North Robert Street
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, MN. 55164-0620

RE: CapX 2020 High Voltage Transmission Lines

Dear Judge Heydinger,

The utilities are claiming that the CapX 345 kV high voltage power lines are not intended to serve any particular power plants, so they don't have to follow Minnesota law, Minn. Stat. 216B.243, subd.3a which creates a preference for renewable energy, whether from power plants or carried by transmission lines. (The state Department of Commerce does not oppose this circumvention of key state policy.)

Unlike the southwestern Minnesota 825 MW of wind proceeding or the Big Stone II transmission proceeding, this would allow the utilities to build major new power lines without a preference for wind energy, in fact without disclosing what energy sources will even be served by the CapX power lines. This means that we not only have health risks from coal, but unknown economic and regulatory risks.

The utilities have proposed CapX 2020 power lines that extend from Fargo, North Dakota and Brookings, South Dakota across Minnesota to LaCrosse, Wisconsin. This would allow coal plants in South Dakota (600 MW proposed for Big Stone) and North Dakota (over 1255 in line in the MISO queue) to hook up their power in South or North Dakota without having to meet the requirements of Minnesota law reviewing transmission for coal.

Since the Big Stone plant is already exempted from state law restricting new coal plants that increase greenhouse gas emissions, Minn. Stat. 216H. 03, Subd. 7, if the Big Stone coal plant were to propose to hook up its power near Brookings, South Dakota, Minnesota would have no regulatory ability to oppose this coal plant. The current Minnesota Public Utilities Commission proceeding would become moot.

In addition, once the CapX 2020 power lines hook up LaCrosse, Wisconsin, electricity can be sold on the open market to Wisconsin and points east without any role at all for Minnesota law and policy to decide whether coal plants are built in North or South Dakota (prevailing winds blowing their emissions east to our cities and lake country). Neither our renewable energy standard nor our greenhouse gas initiative would be worth the paper they were written upon.

Please deny the utilities the choice of using our ratepayer money to build these power lines. Please do not approve the CapX transmission project. Tell them to design an energy system that meets the needs of the future through conservation and local, dispersed, renewable energy generation.

Sincerely,

Name

Member of Citizens Energy Task Force

Address