

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 decision on whether or not the CapX 2020 power lines will be built is a critical decision with a huge impact on Minnesota's energy future.

As a resident of Minnesota, an electric ratepayer and a member of the Citizens Energy Task Force, I am writing because I am concerned about the long-term consequences of permitting the CapX 2020 High-Voltage Transmission Line Projects. I respectfully ask that you deny the Certificate of Need for the proposed CapX 2020 projects.

It is time that our energy needs are met through a combination of conservation, increased efficiency, and increased generation of local, renewable energy that is clean, forward-thinking, and will keep dollars in our community. Unfortunately, conservation receives three brief paragraphs of attention in the CapX Environmental Report (p. 90), most of which are devoted to a discussion of Minnesota statutes. There is no evidence in the record that the contribution conservation might make to limit load growth or bolstering local reliability of supply has been duly appraised.

Lowering the amount of electricity needed is an essential part of determining how much electricity must be supplied to communities. This means not only that the CapX 2020 utilities must meet Minnesota law's 1.5% energy savings goal. The utilities must also prove that energy management techniques specifically planned to reduce the highest demand times in the summer and the winter would cost more than the huge CapX projects. I don't believe they could prove this.

The utilities are claiming that two of the three CapX power lines are needed based on the highest energy use in the winter and the summer, what they have called the summer and winter peak. But they haven't suggested in any of their application materials how they could use targeted energy management tools to reduce the need for the new power lines by focusing on these high demand times.

Interestingly, peak energy use periods are the easiest period to supply with solar energy. I have found no evidence in the record that solar generation has even been considered as an alternative to reduce the growth in peak energy demand.

This is the direction we should be going in – conservation and renewable energy - providing consumers choices and incentives to cut energy use– rather than

building huge power line systems to meet “community” needs.

The potential savings through energy conservation should be analyzed and compared to costs of additional generation and transmission. Specific strategies to maximize cost-effective conservation, such as a certificate program, should be compared to the full costs of the CapX 2020 system before billions of dollars are invested in new generation and a bulk power transmission system to meet projected demand.

Conservation doesn't mean sitting in the dark shivering. It's not having less fun. It's a creative approach to energy systems that gives consumers more control of their energy future. It's putting smart elements together in a smart way.

In Switzerland, for instance, the average person uses five-thousand-watts annually. Most other Western European countries have six-thousand-watt averages. The United States and Canada average twelve thousand watts per person. This isn't a higher quality of life; it is a lower quality of efficiency.

It is time to be forward thinking and create the type of energy system and it's related environmental effects we want to pass on to our grandchildren. We do not need all three CapX power lines if we maximize conservation. Please deny the utilities the ability to use our ratepayer money to build the CapX power lines.

Name

Member of Citizens Energy Task Force

Address