Administrative Law Judge Beverly Heydinger
Office of Administrative Hearings
Suite 1700, 100 Washington Square
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Testimony at CapX 2020 Public Hearing, June 26, 2008

RE: CapX 2020 High Voltage Transmission Lines

The decision on whether or not the CapX 2020 power lines will be built is a critical decision with long term impacts on Minnesota's energy future. I am testifying to voice my concerns regarding the CapX 2020 High-Voltage Transmission Line Project and respectfully ask that you deny the Certificate of Need for the proposed CapX 2020 project.

The CapX 2020 power lines are too big, too many and are not designed to support rural communities in building energy generation near to where it will be used. The environmental effects of the power line are another issue since the proposed Cap X lines rely heavily on energy from coal power plants. Emissions from coal-fired power plants contribute to climate change and pollute our air, lakes and rivers. It is irresponsible and unhealthy to rely on coal-generated energy when there are sustainable, clean, and renewable energy alternatives available. 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.

The utility companies have failed to demonstrate that they have fully explored the possibility of obtaining power from distributed renewable energy sources, rather than the substantially nonrenewable energy sources assumed. They have not shown that it wouldn't be cheaper to make better use of conservation and renewable energy closer to home. Considering that this is such a large project with a total price tag of 1.7 billion dollars, it is only fair to know whether or not we truly need these lines.

Any transmission that is built in Minnesota should be designed to:

1. optimize the lowest voltage development potential first; and
2. be designed to support distributed, community based energy; and
3. carry large amounts of renewable energy generation; and
4. fully offset the construction-phase and operation-phase greenhouse gas emissions to mitigateclimate change impact; and
5. be designed in light of the Precautionary Principles.

While the need for all of the lines remains unproven and highly questionable, in particular the Twin Cities-La Crosse line should not be approved.

The Twin Cities to LaCrosse line would provide a super highway for electricity from the Dakotas in the west, where coal fields are located, to electric markets such as Milwaukee, Chicago and cities further east. If this power line were built, our Minnesota communities would shoulder the burden of having the power lines yet have no say about the type of energy on the

system. The proposed Twin Cities to La Crosse power line would cause Minnesota ratepayers to pay for power lines that primarily serve energy consumers in Wisconsin and places further east. It should not be approved.

The demand for energy during the summer peak in the Rochester area can be met with a combination of conservation, management of energy demand and smaller power lines that support wind in southeast Minnesota. The reality of supplying the Rochester area with C-beds is clearly demonstrated in the new Minnesota Department of Commerce study release on June 16, 2008. The study's conclusions affirm those of a previous utility study that found that significant amounts of dispersed, community based wind energy can be injected into the existing transmission system at costs far lower than building new transmission lines to more distant wind farms.

This study points the way toward a major shift in electric utility management, away from remote central station — mostly coal and nuclear power plants — and huge long distance power lines and toward more dispersed renewable energy and a more efficient use of power lines.

If the Brookings line is permitted but not the Twin Cities-LaCrosse line, a detailed and accurate analysis must be made to determine what need is necessary beyond the Lake Marion substation. I have been told by CapX representatives that 50-70% of the Brookings load will be dropped at the Lake Marion substation for south metro needs with the majority of the remaining continuing on to hook up at Hampton and continue on to Rochester and La Crosse. Without the Twin Cities-La Crosse line it is likely that a 345 kV high voltage line continued on to Hampton Corners would not be necessary, reducing unnecessary costs and diminishing EMF impact in Dakota Counties' urban edge communities.

Moving electricity long distances is inefficient and expensive. Line losses can be as high as 15-20% of the energy wasted. Large amounts of electricity are lost and the impact on citizens through EMF exposure and loss of land rights is greater. The electric utility industry is the largest source of pollution in our country. Electric utilities generate 66% of the sulfur oxide pollutants. It is far smarter, environmentally safer and more economically viable to meet electrical energy needs with conservation and dispersed renewable energy.

The only way to change this business as usual is to 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.

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