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,

As a resident of Minnesota, an electric ratepayer and a member of the Citizens Energy Task Force, I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the CapX 2020 High-Voltage Transmission Line Project and respectfully request that you deny the Certificate of Need for the proposed CapX 2020 project.

I have numerous concerns about the CapX proposal but the most pressing concern is that these lines are based on an old and outdated energy prototype. It is very important that any transmission infrastructure built in Minnesota be designed to be a cost effective distribution system for a new energy paradigm based on conservation and dispersed, renewable energy transmission.

Smart transmission development involves the strategic enhancement of substations and lower-voltage power lines first, thereby significantly increasing the ability of the system to efficiently collect energy from distributed and dispersed electrical generation facilities, and then using the knowledge gained by those strategic enhancements to inform decisions about higher voltage development.

Compared to building high-voltage power lines prior to analyzing lower voltage opportunities, developing smart transmission first is cheaper and quicker to build, enables more local economic development and provides for more rapid deployment of community-based renewable electrical generation technologies.

It is time for a major shift in electric utility management, away from remote central station – mostly coal and nuclear power plants – and huge power lines and toward more dispersed renewable energy and a more efficient use of power lines. As presently planned these CapX lines send us backward not forward in our goals for a new energy paradigm.

Presently community owned energy developments (CBED) and smaller distributed renewable generation (DRG) projects face high costs connecting up to transmission lines. It is crucial that any new transmission lines permitted in Minnesota be designed to support and encourage CBED development. It makes no sense for us as ratepayers to spend over a billion dollars to connect large corporate wind farms and coal plants in the Dakotas, while small renewable energy projects that would help the rural economy can't afford to interconnect to these great big power lines.

Minnesota has laws setting standards for energy efficiency, preferring renewable energy

and setting renewable energy standards. Yet, the CapX utilities and the state Department of Commerce are insisting that there be no conditions placed on the CapX power lines to make it more likely that they will carry wind energy rather than dirty coal. If indeed these lines are intended to carry wind, the utilities must agree to conditions on the permit guaranteeing that a majority if not *all* of the energy the lines would carry will be wind.

Our state legislators passed the Renewable Energy Standard for two primary reasons, to address global climate change, AND to provide opportunity for economic development for MN through participation in this rapidly growing industry.

If permitted, CapX 2020 transmission lines will define the energy future for Minnesota and the upper Midwest, and at this great tipping point in our energy policies I hope that you will hold our public utilities accountable to Minnesota laws requiring conservation, increased efficiency, and incorporation of renewable energy.

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 in specific communities, 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 does not mean starving. It's not having less comfort or fun. It's a creative approach to energy systems and the 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.

Conservation, energy efficiency, smart grids. 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-power lines if we maximize conservation and support the development of dispersed, renewable energy projects. Please deny the utilities the choice of using our ratepayer money to build these power lines.

Please recommend against permitting the CapX certificate of need. It does not move Minnesota forward to a more sustainable energy system.

Name

Member of Citizens Energy Task Force

Address