



*Citizens Energy Task Force ([www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us))*

*Media Contact: Jeremy Chipps, 608-317-5700  
Attorney: Paula Maccabee: 651- 646-8890*

***MEDIA ALERT:***

Nov. 3 2009 - For Immediate Release:

***BIG STONE II COAL PLANT CANCELLATION WEAKENS NEED FOR CAPX2020 HIGH VOLTAGE PROJECT  
-Citizens Energy Task Force Proposes Local Renewable Energy that is Locally Distributed-***

On November 2, 2009, the developers of Big Stone II coal-fired power plant in South Dakota officially cancelled the \$1.6 billion project. Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities involved blamed the poor economy and concerns about impending federal regulations of carbon dioxide emissions. Read the AP story [here](#).

This victory for environmental and renewable energy advocates adds to the stack of legal reasons for questioning the “need” for CapX2020 ultra-high voltage power lines (proposed by Xcel Energy and 10 other utilities, including Otter Tail Power). Citizens Energy Task Force (CETF) is currently appealing the “Certificate of Need” which was approved this summer.

CETF Attorney Paula Maccabee explains that this new development could seriously impact CapX2020: “The collapse of Big Stone II is significant for the huge CapX2020 interstate power lines that were designed to rely on coal power, even more than renewable energy, to justify and finance their projects. Big Stone II and CapX2020 were closely tied together. As the house of cards of central station coal-fired power falls, the CapX2020 power lines must also be reexamined.”

Following are key issues connecting the Big Stone II collapse & the potential impact on CapX2020:

- Big Stone II power plant has been scrapped due to the poor economy and uncertainty about the future of coal;
- Big Stone II was assumed in two out of the three scenarios predicting that the CapX2020 transmission line projects were needed;
- Big Stone II was assumed in the base model for the Southwestern Minnesota Study used by the CapX2020 utilities to justify the Brookings power line;
- The current Brookings Project includes a connection at the Hazel Creek substation that was designed specifically to connect with the Big Stone II coal plant;
- In the CapX2020 cases, the Administrative Law Judge acknowledged that it was not possible to determine what impacts changes in the Big Stone II project would have on CapX2020.

Citizen Energy Task Force advocates locally dispersed energy that can be transmitted without new ultra high voltage lines and is 9 times less costly, according to a study released Sept. 15, 2009 by the Minn. Dept. of Commerce. Read more [here](#):

**The Fate of CapX2020 – “Need” is Legally Challenged:** On October 9, 2009, CETF filed a detailed 45-page brief [[available by clicking here](#)] challenging the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission’s decision to certify the CapX2020 projects and challenged the La Crosse Project and “upsizing” the CapX2020 lines as contrary to law. “A groundswell of opposition from residents and customers in both Wisconsin and Minnesota propelled us to a formal legal appeal,” stated Paula Maccabee, “We’ve demonstrated major flaws in the methods used by the utilities to show a “need” for the project, including new evidence showing a significant drop in peak energy demand. The CapX2020 power line crossing the Mississippi River also violates laws and policies designed to protect national wildlife refuge areas.” The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission questioned CETF’s right to

have an appeal heard in the Minnesota Court of Appeals but on October 15, 2009, the Court of Appeals ordered that the case will move forward to be decided on its merits. Read the media release [here](#):

Meanwhile, the eleven utilities involved with CapX2020, including Xcel Energy, Riverland Energy, Otter Tail Power Company and Dairyland Power are currently considering power line routes which are posted on [www.capx2020.com](http://www.capx2020.com) and will be announcing preferred routes for the Minneapolis/La Crosse line in Nov./Dec. 2009. Watch for more appeal updates as they progress. Full appeal document is posted on [www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us). Additional information on renewable energy is available at [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org), [www.nawo.org](http://www.nawo.org) and [www.c-bed.org](http://www.c-bed.org)

A community educational effort has also been launched in order to inform residents of both MN and WI about the importance of an energy future that involves local, clean renewable energy. Read more at: [www.powerlinetruth.org](http://www.powerlinetruth.org)

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**Citizens Energy Task Force** – is a non-profit grassroots organization of more than 300 citizens from both Wisconsin and Minnesota—and growing fast—who support clean, renewable and sustainable energy. Concerned citizens are encouraged to become members by visiting the website. [www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us), (to view media reports about CapX go to: [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org))

**Media Contact: Jeremy Chipps**, Member, 608-317-5700

**Attorney Paula Maccabee** 651-646-8890