

North Route Group, NoCapX and U-CAN Exceptions regarding Chester Line

59. The two segments of 345 kV transmission line are 81 to 89 miles in length total and would traverse parts of Dakota, Goodhue, Olmsted, and Wabasha counties. The 161 kV line is approximately 15 to 18 miles long in Goodhue and Olmsted counties; it would connect the new North Rochester substation with an existing Northern Hills substation north of Rochester. On April 29, 2011, Applicants added the 161kV North Rochester – Chester 161 kV line for consideration in the FEIS and for co-location by the Commission.⁶

80. The North Rochester Substation would have to accommodate interconnections with the 345 kV line and the 161 kV line that are part of this Project and the Chester 161 kV line.¹⁰⁷ The North Rochester Substation must also accommodate interconnections with the existing Prairie Island to Byron 345 kV transmission line.¹⁰⁸ To accommodate these interconnections, the new substation will include six 345 kV circuit breakers, a 345 kV/161 kV transformer, three 161 kV circuit breakers, a control house and associated line termination structures, switches, buswork, controls, and associated equipment.¹⁰⁹

fn 107 Ex. 2 at 32 (Hillstrom Direct); Ex. 14 (Schedule 12 to Hillstrom Direct; FEIS p. 147; Response to Applicant Comments p. O-209.

109. The Applicant initially estimated that the total cost of the project (preferred and alternate routes) would be between \$234 and \$243 million (2009 dollars). It estimated that the preferred 345 kV route in Segment 1 would be \$88 million and in Segment 3 would be \$106 million. It estimated the alternate route in Segment 1 would cost \$101 million, as would the alternate route in Segment 3. The 161 kV route in Segment 2 would cost \$16 million for the preferred route and \$17 million for the alternate route. There is no cost or cost-savings estimate provided for co-locating the Chester 161 kV line. The new North Rochester Substation is estimated to cost \$22 million, and improvements to the Northern Hills Substation would be \$2 million.¹⁶⁴