



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Land Management

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April 13, 2016

Larry Hartman, Environmental Review Manager
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101

RE: In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation for a Route Permit for the Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project in Olmsted County
PUC Docket Number: G-011/GP-15-858

Dear Mr. Hartman,

On February 4, 2016, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) and the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) issued a Notice of Application Acceptance - Public Information and Comparative Environmental Analysis Scoping Meeting, which includes a public comment period regarding the environmental analysis of the Pipeline Routing Permit Application by Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (Applicant), for the Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project in Olmsted County. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the application regarding the proposed project and submits the following comments in response to the Notice.

Pipelines may be placed across a trunk highway (TH) pursuant to Minn. Stat. §222.37, subd. 2. The environmental document should address the permit requirements of MnDOT as well as all relevant permits or authorizations the Applicant must obtain from road authorities relating to any pipeline or associated facilities placement that cross a trunk highway. MnDOT has adopted a formal policy and procedures for accommodation of utilities, including pipelines, on the highway rights of way ("Utility Accommodation Policy"). A copy of MnDOT's policy can be found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/policy/utilitypolicy.html>. MnDOT's policy seeks to permit utilities to occupy portions of the trunk highway rights-of-way where such occupation does not put the safety of the traveling public or highway workers at risk or unduly impair the public's investment in the transportation system.

Based on the information provided in the Application, it appears that the Proposed Project Route would cross state trunk highways: US 14 and US 63. Permits the Applicant will seek from MnDOT to cross trunk highways will need to address matters such as construction methods for boring under highways, impact on other utilities, traffic control in construction areas, authorized access points for construction activities, impact on highway drainage, impact on highway vegetation, and other similar concerns. Because the proposed US 63 crossing (at 40th St SE/SW) may be within 75

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feet of a MnDOT bridge, the Applicant's Application for Utility Accommodation on Trunk Highway Right Of Way would also include a thorough review from our Bridges and Structures Office.

It should also be noted that Olmsted County has official mapping for a planned grade separated interchange west of the Proposed Project crossing of US 14 that the Applicant may want to review.

Oversize/Overweight Permits:

There may be highway-related considerations related to oversize/overweight hauling of the pipeline and equipment. Specifically, these large loads of freight are often transported along nearby interregional corridors (IRC) such as US 52 (High Priority IRC) as well as US 14 and US 63 (both Medium Priority IRCs). Because MnDOT's highway construction activities could impact the Applicant's plans to haul oversize loads to the proposed site, the Applicant will need to coordinate with MnDOT when planning such loads.

Any pipeline construction work, including delivery or storage of materials or equipment that may affect MnDOT right of way is of concern such that MnDOT should be involved in planning and coordinating such activities. Please note that if work is required within MnDOT right of way for temporary or permanent access, such work should be coordinated with MnDOT Engineering Specialist Tom Streiff, District 6A Permits/Roadway Regulations Supervisor at (507) 286-7592 or Thomas.Streiff@state.mn.us.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,



Stacy Kotch
Utility Transmission Route Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Transportation

cc: Tom Streiff – D6A Permits

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