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Update: Spill response and mitigation work at Boswell Energy Center

Minnesota Power continues to work closely with state and federal agencies and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to evaluate and mitigate the ash wastewater spill the company discovered July 16 at its Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset.

Preliminary monitoring and sampling results indicate increased levels of sulfate and boron in the immediate area where the wastewater entered Blackwater Creek. Sulfate levels are below the federal drinking water standard, but above Minnesota's wild rice-based standard. Initial sampling results from the most impacted area of Blackwater Creek did not detect mercury, arsenic, or selenium. No immediate impacts to fish or aquatic plants have been observed to date. Monitoring and sampling will continue in this area and throughout the waterbodies adjacent to the spill.

The area currently identified as having higher sulfate concentrations has been contained and is being closely monitored and sampled to assess the extent of contamination. Areas adjacent to the most impacted area show significantly lower levels of contaminants.

Mitigation activities also will continue over the weekend. In coordination with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Leech Lake Band, and the Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Power plans to excavate affected upland soils near the spill location to remove contaminants. The area was assessed for cultural and tribal resources prior to excavation.

The spill, which originated from a pipeline carrying wastewater from an onsite storage pond to the facility, first entered upland soils with a portion subsequently flowing overland to Blackwater Creek. Minnesota Power reported the spill within 15 minutes of discovery on July 16, which included an initial estimate of the spill volume of 1 million gallons. As part of the ongoing evaluation and analysis, the company now estimates that up to 5.5 million gallons were released, with an unknown but potentially significant portion of that amount entrained within the upland soils. The updated spill volume does not change the spill mitigation and response activities underway at the site and has been reported to regulators.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 150,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

ALLETE, Inc. is an energy company headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota. In addition to its electric utilities, Minnesota Power and Superior Water, Light and Power of Wisconsin, ALLETE owns ALLETE Clean Energy, based in Duluth; BNI Energy in Bismarck, N.D.; and New Energy Equity, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland; and has an 8% equity interest in the American Transmission Co. More information about ALLETE is available at www.allete.com.

Minnesota Power calculates and reports carbon emissions based on the GHG Protocol. Details in ALLETE's [Corporate Sustainability Report](#).

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