

**NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD  
ON APPLICATION COMPLETENESS**

Issued: February 11, 2026

**In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of Need for the Gopher to Badger Link 765  
kV High Voltage Transmission Line Project**

**Docket Number:** ET3, E002/CN-25-121

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) is accepting comments on the Certificate of Need Application filed by Xcel Energy and Dairyland Power Cooperative (collectively, Applicants) for the proposed Gopher to Badger Link 765 kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line project (Project).

The Gopher to Badger Link Project would involve constructing two new 765-kV high-voltage electric transmission lines across Minnesota as part of a broader proposed regional transmission network connecting Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

In Minnesota, the Gopher to Badger Link Project would include the 2 segments

1. Segment 1: A single-circuit 765 kV high voltage transmission line that would be approximately 34 miles between the existing North Rochester Substation and a point near Marion, Minnesota. This portion of the route will use lattice structures to support the transmission line. The structures will be placed 1,100 to 1,300 feet apart, will typically be 150 to 175 feet tall, and will generally require a 250-foot-wide right-of-way.
2. Segment 2: A 765 kV/161 kV double-circuit high voltage transmission line that would be approximately 105 miles from near Marion, Minnesota, to the Wisconsin border. Segment 2 also includes a new three-circuit breaker 161 kV switching station at a location to be identified in Houston County, Minnesota, as well as minor upgrades at existing 161 kV substations to support operation of the new Project facilities. This portion of the route will use lattice structures to support the transmission line and will

be placed 1,200 to 1,500 feet apart, and will typically be 150 to 199 feet tall, and will generally require a 250-foot-wide right-of-way.

**\*\*At this time, Applicants have not submitted proposed routes for the public to review and provide comments. Applicants expect to file a separate route permit application with the Commission in the fall of 2026. The Commission will review the application as a separate proceeding under Minnesota Statute 216I, and will provide opportunity for the public to comment at that time.**

The project is part of Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) Long Range Transmission Planning Tranche 2.1 projects, approved in July 2024 under the MISO Transmission Expansion Plan 2024 (MTEP24).

MISO and the Applicants have identified a need for up to 10,000 megawatts of additional electrical transmission capacity in Minnesota. As described in the Certificate of Need application and MTEP24, the project is intended to:

- Address projected electric reliability overloads and provide support for compliance with national electric reliability standards;
- Improve efficiency in meeting current and future state and regional reliability needs;
- Provide transmission capacity to serve forecasted residential, commercial, and industrial demand, supporting Minnesota's and the Midwest region's long-term growth; and
- Support the transition from fossil-fuel generation to carbon-free energy resources while maintaining system reliability.

### **Comment Period**

Initial comment period closes **February 25, 2026**, at 4:30 p.m.

Reply comment period closes **March 4, 2026**, at 4:30 p.m.

Supplemental comment period closes **March 9, 2026**, at 4:30 p.m.

Please include the docket number in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

### **Topics for Comment**

- Does the certificate of need application contain the information required under Minn. R. 7849.0220, subp. 2?
- Are there any contested issues of fact with respect to the representations made in the applications?
- Should the application be evaluated using the Commission's informal process or referred to the Court of Administrative Hearings for contested case proceedings?
- Are there any additional issues or concerns related to this matter?

### Submit Comments

**Online:** [mn.gov/puc/consumers/public-comments](https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/public-comments)

**Email:** [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)

**U.S. Mail:** Consumer Affairs Office  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission's website except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

### Additional Information

**Minnesota Statutes and Rules.** This project is being reviewed under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216B.243 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849. The statutes and rules are available for review at: [revisor.mn.gov](https://revisor.mn.gov).

**Review Process.** Information on the review processes for large energy infrastructure facilities is available on the Commission's website at: [puc.eip.mn.gov](https://puc.eip.mn.gov).

**Filing Requirements.** Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are also encouraged to use eFiling: [edockets.state.mn.us](https://edockets.state.mn.us), select *Sign In/Register* and follow the prompts.

**Full Case Record.** See all documents filed in this matter via the Commission's website at: [edockets.state.mn.us](http://edockets.state.mn.us), select *Search Documents*, enter the docket number (25-121), and select *Search*.

**Subscribe to the Docket.** To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: [edockets.state.mn.us](http://edockets.state.mn.us), select *Subscriptions*.

**Questions about these dockets or Commission process and procedure?** Contact Commission staff:

- Sam Lobby at [sam.lobby@state.mn.us](mailto:sam.lobby@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2205.
- Logan Hicks at [logan.m.hicks@state.mn.us](mailto:logan.m.hicks@state.mn.us) or 651-539-1067
- Jessica Livingston at [jessica.livingston@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.livingston@state.mn.us) or 651-539-1068

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### Overview Map

