



Administration

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May 15, 2026

Scott Ek
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St Paul, MN 55101
scott.ek@state.mn.us

**Re: PowerOn Midwest Certificate of Need Application and EA Scoping
PUC Docket Number: ET6675/CN-25-117**

Dear Mr. Ek,

Mower County appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the above-referenced project, prior to consideration of a Route Permit by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). The following comments are offered to ensure that all relevant local land use, infrastructure, and environmental factors receive adequate consideration during the EA process.

1. Agricultural Impacts

Mower County is predominantly agricultural and is home to nearly 600 feedlots. Both cultivated crop production and animal agriculture may be adversely affected by the proposed transmission line, and impacts to each must be thoroughly evaluated. With respect to Chapter 8 of the application (Farming and Buildings Near Transmission Lines), Mower County expects that the applicants—not the landowners—will bear full responsibility for identifying and mitigating any negative side effects, including electromagnetic induction, associated with any proposed route.

2. Archaeological and Historical Resources

Chapter 10.7 of the application addresses archaeological and historical resources. Mower County wishes to bring to the applicants' attention the presence of a Hutterite Community located in the vicinity of the Pleasant Valley Substation. This community and any associated cultural resources must be appropriately considered during the EA.

3. Local Zoning and Land Use Permitting

Mower County has adopted a Zoning Ordinance that may affect project setbacks and could require additional permitting from local government authorities for accessory uses, including construction laydown yards. Parties with questions regarding land use permitting should contact:

Angela Lipelt, Environmental Services Director
angiel@co.mower.mn.us | 507-437-7718

4. Surface Waters and Bridge/Culvert Crossings

Mower County contains a significant number of surface waters and shoreland overlay zones, resulting in a high number of bridge and culvert crossings. All such features must be evaluated for potential project impacts and must be fully accounted for prior to finalizing any route selection.

5. Oversize and Overweight Load Coordination

Any overweight or oversize loads associated with the project—particularly heavy equipment and components related to substation upgrades—must be coordinated in advance with local road authorities. Mower County requests that the EA give adequate consideration to the logistical challenges of transporting large components into a rural area, and that the execution of a Road Use Agreement with PowerOn Midwest be made a condition of any permit issued.

6. Right-of-Way and Access Permitting

Mower County has adopted a Right-of-Way Ordinance and requires access permits for any new point of ingress or egress onto County roads. Parties with questions regarding right-of-way or access permitting should contact:

Mitch Wenum, County Engineer
mitchw@co.mower.mn.us | 507-437-7718

Mower County thanks the applicants for the opportunity to submit these scoping comments and looks forward to continued collaboration with PowerOn Midwest in support of a successful and responsible project.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Sheedy

Valerie Sheedy, P.G.

Deputy County Administrator

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Cc: Matt Verdick, County Administrator; Mitch Wenum, County Engineer; Angie Lipelt, Environmental Services Supervisor; Dan Sparks, Chair, Mower County Board of Commissioners