

12-1163

Town Board of Obrien Twp RESOLUTION
REGARDING MINNESOTA POWER'S APPLICATION docket # 12-1163
INCLUDING 500 kV and 345 kV TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, The Public Utility Commission of Minnesota is considering an electric utility project that includes Phase 1: 500 kV line from the Canadian border to Minnesota's Iron Range and Phase 2: 345 kV double circuit line from the Iron Range to near Duluth, Minnesota and;

WHEREAS, the cost that ratepayers in our jurisdiction would assume for the Great Northern high-voltage transmission proposal are estimated at about \$960 million for construction and significant costs for financing; and,

WHEREAS, the proposal could promote an additional high voltage transmission project other regional transmission proposals with costs ratepayers could additionally assume; and,

WHEREAS, the high voltage transmission option includes possible route corridors that would cut across an area known for it's spectacular beauty including, farms, forests and valleys, scenic bluffs and wildlife/waterfowl habitats, water resources, cultural, economic and archeological districts; and,

WHEREAS, our responsibilities include protecting and enhancing the natural assets, including the scenic beauty which would be adversely affected by the 110 to 180 foot steel or concrete poles of the high voltage transmission option; and,

WHEREAS, studies have shown growth in the use of electricity and peak demand in Minnesota and adjacent states have been at historically low rates for the last four years and is projected to average less than 1% per year growth over the next 25 years; and,

WHEREAS, it is our belief that there are other ways of meeting any need claimed by applicants that should be considered, including conservation, demand side management, dispersed renewable generation, aggressive energy efficiency, and energy-related economic development, before high-capacity transmission is considered; and,

WHEREAS, building a transmission line would require condemnation of property for easements; and,

WHEREAS, a new transmission line could also result in increased electricity rates, loss of property value because of the view and perceived health issues, and adverse effect on the area's tourism and general economy; and,

WHEREAS, medical studies have shown a potential association between exposure to electromagnetic fields produced by large transmission lines and childhood leukemia, and neurological diseases and conditions, and a possible association exposure of farm animals and crops; and,

WHEREAS, making investments in energy efficiency and local power self sufficiency in states such as Massachusetts are proving to significantly reduce need for costly transmission and new power plant additions; and,

WHEREAS, carbon emission reduction through efficiency investment is more cost effective compared to adding remote renewable generation and transmission; and,

WHEREAS, investment in efficiency and developing local power self-sufficiencies directly lowers home, farm and business operation costs while creating local jobs and greater economic stability; and,

WHEREAS, the cost of achieving electrical system goals with above local benefits goals may be no more costly than the transmission proposals thus defining an alternative solution; and,

WHEREAS, clear, detailed information explaining the perceived needs for the high-voltage options, the low voltage options, the efficiency-only and local power options with supporting objective studies and cost benefits analysis for each have not yet been provided to potentially impacted parties during the public information meeting phase; and,



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that

1. The township of O'Brien in Beltrami County requests that every effort be made in developing or enhancing the energy system on which rural communities rely to do the following:
 - a. Maximize cost-effective conservation, efficiency, and load management;
 - b. Rely to the greatest extent possible on local renewable generation;
 - c. Support local ownership of energy generation that includes dispersed renewable energy to support the local economy including the creation of sustainable jobs;
 - d. Minimize the size, scale, voltage and environmental impacts of electric transmission.
2. The township of O'Brien in Beltrami County is without sufficient means to evaluate this proposal during the public information meetings phase.
3. The township of O'Brien in Beltrami County requests the Public Utility Commission of Minnesota to ensure that an impartial study of all solutions for this proposal becomes available for public evaluation in the Phase I contested hearing case before the independent Administrative Law Judge. One option included in the comprehensive comparison of costs and benefits should combine accelerated energy efficiency, expanded implementation of demand side management and increased dispersed generation incentives with improvements to low voltage transmission lines as needed for in-state reliability. Total funding for alternative options should match the amount Minnesota ratepayers would assume for the development of all Great Northern phases and possible, subsequent development in MN, WI and MI. The study should assess impacts on in-state job creation, regional carbon emission reduction and policies that could place limitations on distributed generation and other energy self-sufficiency goals.

The below clerk is authorized to transmit this resolution and other appropriate documents to the Minnesota Public Utility Service Commission Docket #12-1163 and to the Administrative Law Judge conducting proceedings for this transmission line proposal.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the township of O'Brien Board hereby approves the resolution ADOPTED this 21 day of October, 2013.

Adopted by Carl Nipp (chair)

Attested by Linda A Keers (clerk)

on this 21 day of October, 2013