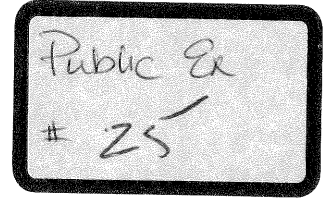


Emily Helgeson
HG59 600 E 4th St
Morris, MN 56267



Your Honor,

I would like to make some short comments on the Minnesota Department of Commerce Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Big Stone II Transmission Project.

This transmission project is part of the larger Big Stone II Generation Project and it cannot be fully assessed without considering the generation source this transmission project serves.

Minnesota wants clean energy. Building this giant polluting coal plant across the border, beyond the full regulatory authority of Minnesota and asking Minnesota rate payers to foot the bill is wrong. Built on the eastern edge of South Dakota, the prevailing winds will deliver much of Big Stone II's pollution into Minnesota. I want to say that I believe wind is a viable option and that coal will cost us dearly for many years to come.

The Draft EIS should include a full analysis of clean, renewable energy alternatives to Big Stone II such as wind and solar development, energy efficiency, and demand side conservation. Currently Minnesota gets less than 2% of its power from our vast wind source, and 75% from coal.

The Draft EIS should consider the full range of costs related to Big Stone II, especially how the rising costs of the proposed plant compares to alternatives. In addition, the likely future regulation of carbon dioxide, and the significant societal costs such as those associated with neurobehavioral disorders and asthma in Minnesota's children must be considered. Coal plants contribute significantly to such diseases.

The Draft EIS does not adequately address the Environmental Justice implications of Big Stone II and the impact on human health, particularly for women, children, and subsistence fishers- such as the disproportionate impact on Native American families that live in proximity to the plant and consume a large amount of fish. Mercury from coal plant emissions contaminate fish tissue and cause neurobehavioral disorders. Minnesota recently passed one of the strongest mercury reduction laws in the country. Transmission lines for a new dirty coal plant just over our border destroys the progress of bi-partisan leadership in setting new standards for mercury reduction in Minnesota.

And finally, as the consequences of global warming become more real, the Draft EIS should acknowledge the high level global warming pollutants Big Stone II will emit and how global warming consequences are impacting our world today.

Thank You

RESOLUTION NO. 44

Public Ex
26

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE BIG STONE II PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Big Stone II Project (BSP II) has been judged to be the most cost effective option to meet the growing electric power and energy needs of the Willmar Municipal Utilities in order to ensure rate stability and service reliability on a timely basis, and

WHEREAS, BSP II will incorporate highly efficient technology that will result in a cleaner environment, including a substantial reduction in mercury, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides emissions, and

WHEREAS, BSP II will construct new transmission facilities in the region to improve reliability and in conjunction with other transmission projects in the state will also accommodate development of 800 – 1,000 MW of additional generation beyond that needed by BSP II, including potential new renewable generation facilities, and

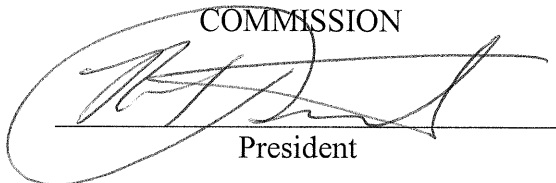
WHEREAS, the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission finds this project consistent with its environmental record of approximately 10% hydro power and the balance from the cleanest possible base load generation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the Willmar Municipal Utilities fully supports the Big Stone II Project generation and transmission facilities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Willmar Municipal Utilities urges Minnesota state legislators and all state regulators to support the BSP II project based on meeting the base load energy needs of the City and the region, the environmental considerations being shown by the project, the potential for future resource development created by the additional transmission capacity proposed by the project and the cost stability and system reliability BSP II would bring to the area.

Dated this 10th day of October 2006.

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
COMMISSION



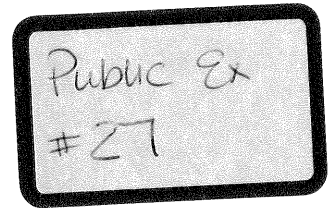
President

ATTEST:



Secretary

P 5X 26



RESOLUTION
Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota

WHEREAS, Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities have formally applied for Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the transmission facilities for which application has been submitted will transmit power from the Big Stone II power facility located in South Dakota to consumers in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the new coal-burning facilities at the Big Stone plant are likely to have the greatest impact on Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the counties through which the transmission facilities are to be built will be impacted by both the generation and transmission facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to require that utilities seeking Certificates of Transmission Facilities to develop renewable energy to mitigate, in part, the environmental impacts of a coal-burning electric generation facilities and the siting of transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, the development of community-owned wind electric generation facilities can provide the opportunity for citizens most directly impacted by these facilities to secure benefits to offset the impact of the coal-burning generation and electric transmission facilities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) formally requests the opportunity to intervene and/or present testimony In the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17037-2; MPUC Dkt No. CN-05-619) and In the Matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17038-2; MPUC Dkt No. TR-05-1275).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UMVRDC, on behalf of the citizens of Region 6W, specifically requests that conditions be established on the Certificate of Need for Transmission Facilities that not less than ⁶⁰ megawatts of wind generation facilities be developed in two or three locations in the counties impacted by the transmission facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the community wind facilities' ownership structure be established so as to maximize the opportunity for local citizens to participate in the ownership of these wind facilities.

Dated this 5th day of October, 2006.



Chairman, UMVRDC

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities have formally applied for Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the transmission facilities for which application has been submitted will transmit power from the Big Stone II power facility located in South Dakota to consumers in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the new coal-burning facilities at the Big Stone plant are likely to have the greatest impact on Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the counties through which the transmission facilities are to be built will be impacted by both the generation and transmission00 facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to require that utilities seeking Certificates of Transmission Facilities to develop renewable energy to mitigate, in part, the environmental impacts of a coal- burning electric generation facilities and the siting of transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, the development of community-owned wind electric generation facilities can provide the opportunity for citizens most directly impacted by these facilities to secure benefits to offset the impact of the coal-burning generation and electric transmission facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED, that the Lac Qui Paré County Board of Commissioners formally requests the opportunity to intervene and/or present testimony In the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17037-2; MPUC Dkt No. CN-05-619) and In the Matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities

Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17038-2; MPUC Dkt No. TR-05-1275).

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board, on behalf of the citizens of the County, specifically requests that conditions be established on the Certificate of Need for Transmission Facilities that not less than ~~60~~¹⁵⁰ megawatts of wind generation facilities be developed in two or three locations in the Counties impacted by the transmission facilities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the community wind facilities' ownership structure be established so as to maximize the opportunity for local citizens to participate in the ownership of these wind facilities.

Dated this 19 day of September, 2006.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. H.", is written over a horizontal line.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities have formally applied for Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the transmission facilities for which application has been submitted will transmit power from the Big Stone II power facility located in South Dakota to consumers in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the new coal-burning facilities at the Big Stone plant are likely to have the greatest impact on Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the counties through which the transmission facilities are to be built will be impacted by both the generation and transmission facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to require that utilities seeking Certificates of Transmission Facilities to develop renewable energy to mitigate, in part, the environmental impacts of a coal-burning electric generation facilities and the siting of transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, the development of community-owned wind electric generation facilities can provide the opportunity for citizens most directly impacted by these facilities to secure benefits to offset the impact of the coal-burning generation and electric transmission facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Yellow Medicine County Board of Commissioners formally requests the opportunity to intervene and/or present testimony In the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17037-2; MPUC Dkt No. CN-05-619) and In the Matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17038-2; MPUC Dkt No. TR-05-1275); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board, on behalf of the citizens of the County, specifically requests that conditions be established on the Certificate of Need for Transmission Facilities that not less than ~~60~~⁶⁰⁻¹²⁰ megawatts of wind generation facilities be developed in two or three locations in the Counties impacted by the transmission facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the community wind facilities' ownership structure be established so as to maximize the opportunity for local citizens to participate in the ownership of these wind facilities.

Adopted by Yellow Medicine County this 12th day of September 2006.

County Board of Commissioners


Lynn Anderson, Chairman

I, John Chattin, Administrator in and for the County of Yellow Medicine, Minnesota, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on the 12th day of September 2006.


John Chattin, Administrator

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities have formally applied for Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the transmission facilities for which application has been submitted will transmit power from the Big Stone II power facility located in South Dakota to consumers in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the new coal-burning facilities at the Big Stone plant are likely to have the greatest impact on Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the counties through which the transmission facilities are to be built will be impacted by both the generation and transmission facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to require that utilities seeking Certificates of Transmission Facilities to develop renewable energy to mitigate, in part, the environmental impacts of a coal-burning electric generation facilities and the siting of transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, the development of community-owned wind electric generation facilities can provide the opportunity for citizens most directly impacted by these facilities to secure benefits to offset the impact of the coal-burning generation and electric transmission facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED, that the Big Stone County Board of Commissioners formally requests the opportunity to intervene and/or present testimony In the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17037-2; MPUC Dkt No. CN-05-619) and In the Matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities

Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17038-2; MPUC Dkt No. TR-05-1275).

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board, on behalf of the citizens of the County, specifically requests that conditions be established on the Certificate of Need for Transmission Facilities that not less than ~~60~~^{65.138} megawatts of wind generation facilities be developed in two or three locations in the Counties impacted by the transmission facilities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the community wind facilities' ownership structure be established so as to maximize the opportunity for local citizens to participate in the ownership of these wind facilities.

Dated this 5th day of September, 2006.

Wade Olney

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Otter Tail Power Company and other utilities have formally applied for Certificate of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the transmission facilities for which application has been submitted will transmit power from the Big Stone II power facility located in South Dakota to consumers in the State of Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of the new coal-burning facilities at the Big Stone plant are likely to have the greatest impact on Minnesotans; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the counties through which the transmission facilities are to be built will be impacted by both the generation and transmission facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to require that utilities seeking Certificates of Transmission Facilities to develop renewable energy to mitigate, in part, the environmental impacts of a coal-burning electric generation facilities and the siting of transmission lines; and

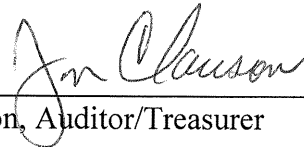
WHEREAS, the development of community-owned wind electric generation facilities can provide the opportunity for citizens most directly impacted by these facilities to secure benefits to offset the impact of the coal-burning generation and electric transmission facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners formally requests that in the Matter of the Application of Otter Tail Power Company and Others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17037-2; MPUC Dkt No. CN-05-619) and In the Matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota (OAH Docket No. 12-2500-17038-2; MPUC Dkt No. TR-05-1275), on behalf of the citizens of Chippewa County, that conditions be established on the Certificate of Need for Transmission Facilities that not less than ~~60~~¹³⁰ megawatts of wind generation facilities be developed in two or three locations in the Counties impacted by the transmission facilities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the community wind facilities' ownership structure be established so as to maximize the opportunity for local citizens to participate in the ownership of these wind facilities.

* * * * * **CERTIFICATION** * * * * *

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly passed and adopted by the Board of Commissioners, Chippewa County, Minnesota at their meeting held on September 5, 2006.



Jon Clauson, Auditor/Treasurer

(Auditor's Seal)

Public Ex
28

Testimony of Brent Olson
68704 County Highway 8
Ortonville MN 56278

In the matter of the Application of Ottertail Power Company and others for Certification of Transmission Facilities in Western Minnesota

OHA 12-2500-17037-2
MPUC Docket No. CN-05-619 and

In the matter of the Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Western Minnesota

OHA 12-2500-17038-2
MPUC Docket No. TR-05-1275

Your Honor,

My name is Brent Olson. I am a County Commissioner from Big Stone County and I am also on the board of Governors of Big Stone Wind. I am here today to testify on behalf of my board and my constituents who will be impacted by the development of new Big Stone Transmission facilities.

Your Honor, the Minnesota Rules [Minnesota Rules Part 7849.0120, subpart c (2)] require that the socio-economic consequences of large scale energy projects be taken into account and they also call for a balancing of the benefits and burdens of these projects.

As public plans currently stand, my part of the state, west-central Minnesota, will bear all of the burdens and enjoy none of the benefits of this project. Most of the permanent jobs and all of the tax base will be located in South Dakota. Most of the electricity will be sent elsewhere. We will be left with the power lines and the pollution, a cluttering of our landscape and a danger to our citizens. It is simply not fair, not reasonable, not *rational*, that our already economically depressed area of the state should be asked to pay all of the cost and reap none of the rewards.

I am not here as an advocate for or against these power lines or the proposed plant. There is a great deal of scientific testimony already entered into the record and I am not technically competent to comment on it. I am competent to comment on the needs of our area, and the fairness of our citizens being given some form of compensation for the inconvenience and risks of a major power line project.

I would urge the Minnesota PUC to follow the already established precedent, and direct the utilities involved in this project to sign power purchase agreements at a reasonable, mutually, profitable rate with *community based* wind farms located in various sections of

our area. I would further suggest a minimum of 120 megawatts, with 40 megawatts to be developed in the Big Stone/Lac Qui Parle area, 40 for the Stevens/Swift county area and another 40 for the Chippewa/Yellow Medicine area.

I cannot stress strongly enough how important that this be *community based* wind energy. A wind farm owned by large out of state corporations, or even foreign owned companies, does very little to help our local citizens. Certainly the farmers who lease portions of their land for towers profit, but the enormous bulk of the profits go out of our area and out of our state. I cannot understand the logic of losing that revenue from our state when it makes no difference to the wind who owns the turbines it spins and when the economics of a project do not depend on where the ownership resides.

We have done a great deal of research on this model for economic development. We know it's worked in other places and the Minnesota Department of Commerce has shown there is an economically viable wind source here.

Simple fairness and logic dictates that if this project goes forward, West Central Minnesota should derive some benefit commensurate with the burden that it will bear. Requiring the utilities to work with community based wind groups is reasonable, it is good for the state taxpayers, it is good for the environment and, in reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, it is profoundly patriotic.

Thank you.
Brent Olson
320-273-2297
bcolson@fedteldirect.net