



April 9, 2024

— Via U.S. Mail —

**TO: PROPERTY OWNERS WHOSE PROPERTY IS WITHIN OR ALONG THE ROUTE PROPOSED IN THE MANKATO TO MISSISSIPPI RIVER 345 kV TRANSMISSION PROJECT ROUTE PERMIT APPLICATION, THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION ENERGY FACILITIES GENERAL LIST, LOCAL OFFICIALS, AND TRIBAL OFFICIALS**

**RE: NOTICE OF FILING OF ROUTE PERMIT APPLICATION WITH THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION FOR THE MANKATO TO MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRANSMISSION PROJECT**

DOCKET NO. E002/TL-23-157

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy (the Applicant) filed a Joint Certificate of Need and Route Permit Application (the Joint Application) with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (the Commission) on April 2, 2024 for the Mankato – Mississippi Transmission Project (the Project). This letter provides information on the Project and the routing process, as well as how to register your name with the Commission on the Project contact list. Adding your name to the Project contact list with the Commission will ensure that you receive future notices about the Project.

### **Project Need and Project Description**

The Project is needed to provide additional transmission capacity, improve electric reliability, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to renewable energy in the region. The Project was studied, reviewed, and approved in July 2022 by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, the regional transmission operator, as part of the Long-Range Transmission Plan Tranche 1 Portfolio.

The Project consists of new 345 kV transmission facilities from the existing Wilmarth Substation in Mankato to the Mississippi River near Kellogg, and new 161 kV transmission facilities between the existing North Rochester Substation and an existing transmission line northeast of Rochester, Minnesota. The Project is comprised of four segments Segments 1, 2 and 3 making up the 345 kV portion and Segment 4 the 161 kV portion. Segment 1 will consist of a new 345 kV transmission line between the existing Wilmarth Substation and a point near the West Faribault Substation. Segment

2 will consist of a new 345 kV transmission line between a point near the existing West Faribault Substation and the existing North Rochester Substation. Segment 3 will consist of a new 345 kV transmission line between the existing North Rochester Substation and the Mississippi River and will involve converting approximately 26 miles of existing 161/345 kV transmission line to 345/345 kV operation and installing approximately 16 miles of new 345 kV circuit on existing poles. Segment 4 will then involve relocation of a portion of the existing 161 kV transmission line that is currently on the existing 345 kV structures that will be converted to operate at 345 kV (as described above). Many portions of the proposed route are located along existing transmission line rights-of-way, minimizing the potential impact of the Project. A map showing the proposed route for the Project is attached to this notice.

The Applicant filed the Joint Application in the Project's Certificate of Need docket (Docket No. CN-22-532) and Route Permit docket (Docket No. TL-23-157). Instructions for obtaining a copy of the Joint Application are provided below.

### **Certificate of Need and Route Permit Process**

For the Project, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and, if so, where the Project should be located (Route Permit). On April 2, 2024, the Applicant filed with the Commission a Joint Certificate of Need and Route Permit Application for the Project.

Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must first certify that the Project is needed. The certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, and Minn. R. Chs. 7829 and 7849—specifically, Minn. R. 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In analyzing the Joint Application under the Certificate of Need requirements, the Commission will determine whether what the Applicant has proposed is needed and if so, the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project.

In addition to certifying the Project is needed, the Commission must also grant a Route Permit for the Project. As part of the Route Permit analysis and process, the Commission determines the final route of the transmission line based on its review of the Joint Application, feedback received from the public and other stakeholders, a report from an administrative law judge, and environmental review performed by the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA).

The routing of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including the Power Plant Siting Act, Minn. Stat. 216E and Minn. R. Ch. 7850.

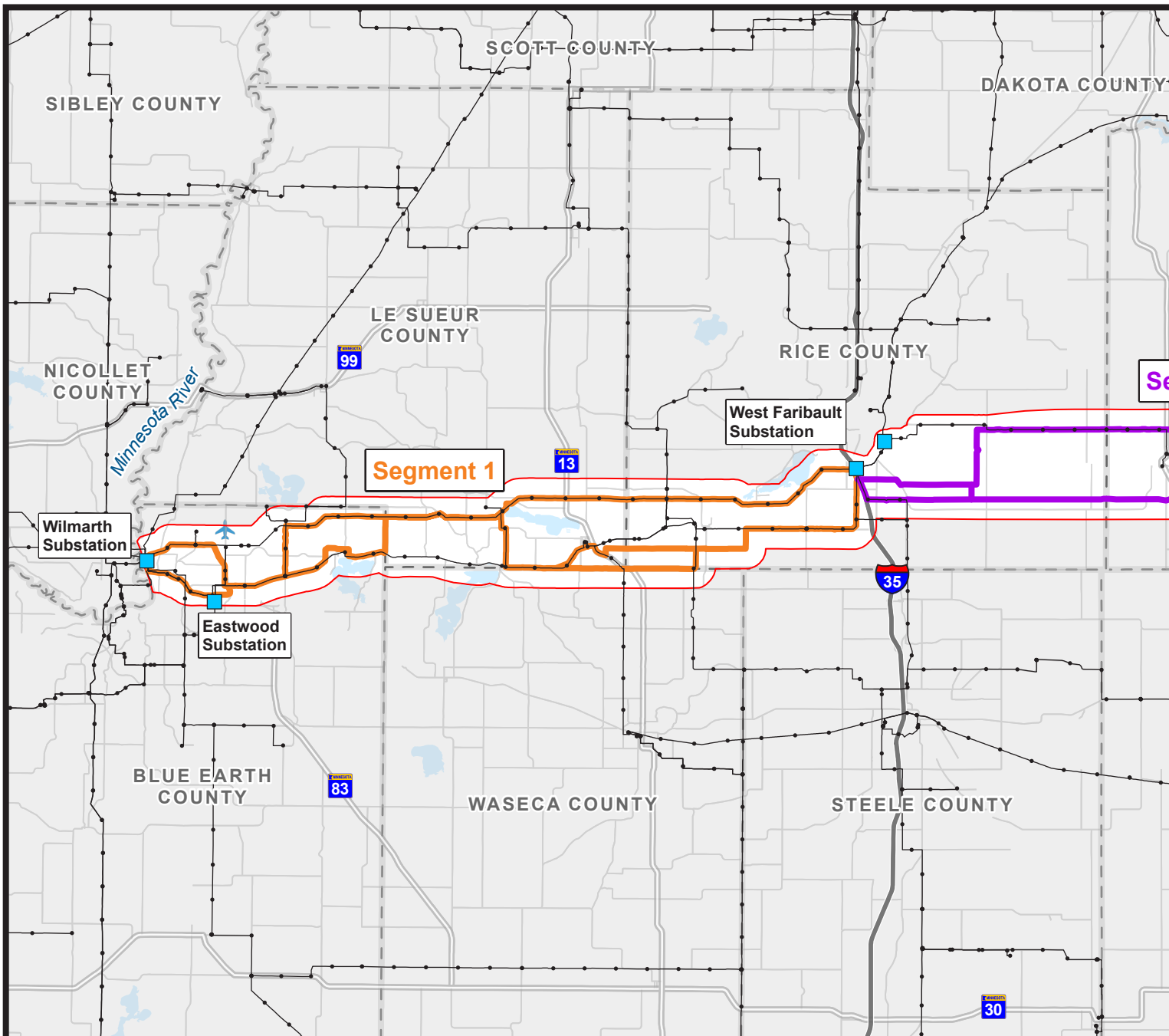
After the Commission accepts the Joint Application as complete, the Commission and EERA staff will jointly hold public information and scoping meetings to provide information and seek public comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be prepared for the Project. At the scoping meetings, and throughout a comment period after the meetings, EERA will gather information from stakeholders on potential impacts and mitigation measures that should be evaluated in the EIS, as well as any additional route segments that should be reviewed. EERA will recommend to the Commission those impacts and mitigation measures, including routes and route alternatives, that it believes should be evaluated in the EIS. EERA will issue a “Scoping Decision” that identifies the impacts and mitigation measures to be evaluated in the EIS.

In addition to an EIS, public hearings on the Project will be held. The public will be invited to make comments on the Project at these hearings before an administrative law judge. Anyone may speak at the public hearings, present documentary evidence, ask questions of the Applicant and EERA staff, and submit written comments. After the hearings, a period during which stakeholders can provide written comments on the Project will be provided. It is anticipated that the administrative law judge will prepare a report summarizing comments received during the above-described process. During an open meeting, the Commission will deliberate and make a final decision as to the Certificate of Need and the Route Permit for the Project, using the criteria set forth in Minn. Stat. § 216B.243 (Certificate of Need) and Minn. Stat. § 216E.04, subd. 8 and Minn. R. 7850.4100 (Route Permit) and stakeholder input received during the regulatory process to guide its decision.






Before beginning construction, the Applicant will acquire property rights for the transmission line. The 345 kV portions of the Project will require a 150 foot wide right-of-way and the 161 kV portions will require a 100 foot wide right-of-way. The Applicant typically will acquire these property rights through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel. If the Applicant and the landowner are unable to negotiate an easement for the right-of-way, the Applicant will acquire real property rights through exercise of the power of eminent domain pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 117. The process of exercising the power of eminent domain is called condemnation.

### **Project Mailing List and Contacts**






To ensure you receive written notices of the Project milestones regarding the environmental review process, public meetings, public hearings, and comment periods, please sign up for the Project mailing list. If you would like to have your name added

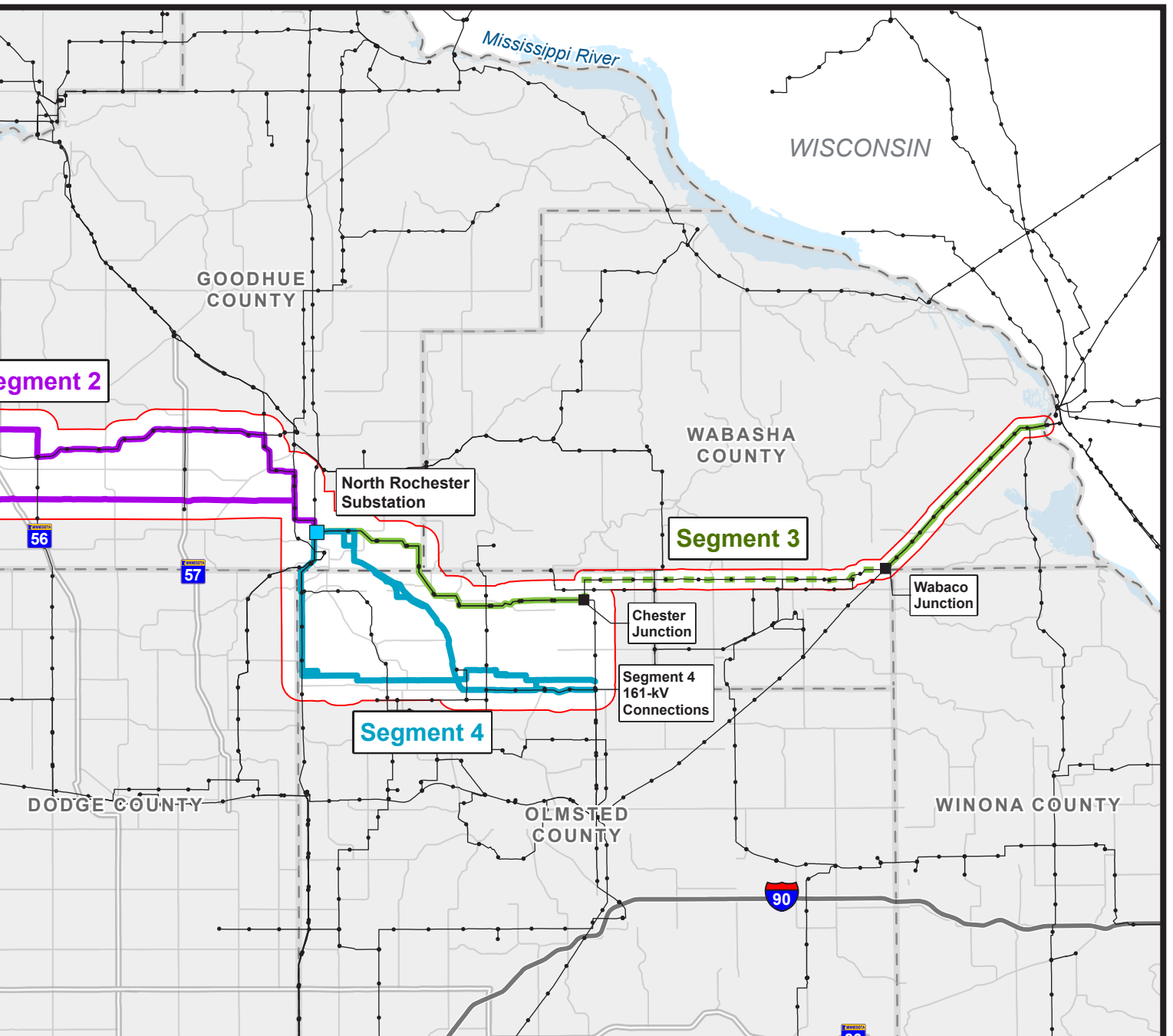


**LEGEND**

-  Mankato Regional Airport
-  Junction
-  Existing Substation
-  Project Study Area
-  Existing Transmission Lines

**Proposed Route Options**

-  Segment 1 - Wilmarth to West Faribault (345 kV)
-  Segment 2 - West Faribault to North Rochester (345 kV)
-  Segment 3 - Convert 161 kV to 345 kV (existing 345/345 kV installed)
-  Segment 3 - North Rochester to Mississippi (345 kV)
-  Segment 4 - North Rochester to Chester (161 kV)



MINNESOTA COUNTIES: GOODHUE, WABASHA, BLUE EARTH, WINONA, DODGE, OLMSTED, LE SUEUR, RICE, AND WASECA

# FIGURE 1

## NOTICE AREA

MANKATO-MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
TRANSMISSION PROJECT



to the Project mailing list, send an email to [eservice.admin@state.mn.us](mailto:eservice.admin@state.mn.us) or call (651) 201-2246. If you send an email or leave a phone message, please include: (1) how you would like to receive mail (regular mail or email); and, (2) the docket number(s) (CN-22-532 (Certificate of Need) or TL-23-157 (Route Permit)), your name, and your complete mailing address or email address. If you have questions about the state regulatory process, you may contact the Minnesota state regulatory staff listed below:

**Minnesota Public Utilities  
Commission**

*Cezar Panait and Trevor Culbertson*

121 7th Place East, Suite 350

St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

651.296.0406

800.657.3782

Email: [cezar.panait@state.mn.us](mailto:cezar.panait@state.mn.us) or

[trevor.culbertson@state.mn.us](mailto:trevor.culbertson@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.mn.gov/puc/](http://www.mn.gov/puc/)

**Minnesota Department of  
Commerce EERA**

*Rich Davis*

85 7th Place East, Suite 280

St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

651.296.1500

800.657.3602

Email: [Richard.davis@state.mn.us](mailto:Richard.davis@state.mn.us)

Website: [www.mn.gov/commerce](http://www.mn.gov/commerce)

Please visit the Project website at <https://mmrtproject.com/> for more information about the Project. If you have additional questions about the Project, you may contact the Applicant at:

Email: [contact@mmrtproject.com](mailto:contact@mmrtproject.com)

Phone: 1-800-853-3365

**Copies of the Application**

The Joint Application can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at <https://mn.gov/puc/>. On the Commission's website, click on the eDockets link in the menu at the top of the page, click on "Go to eDockets," and then enter the docket number 23-157 (23 stands for the year 2023, when the docket was created). A copy of the Joint Application is also available electronically at <https://mmrtproject.com/> and at the following public locations:

Blue Earth County Library

100 E. Main Street

Mankato, MN 56001

Rochester Public Library

101 2nd St. S.E.

Rochester, MN 55904

Buckham Memorial

Library

11 Division Street E.

Faribault, MN 55021

Plainview Public Library  
345 1st Avenue N.W.  
Plainview, MN 55964

Zumbrota Public Library  
100 West Avenue  
Zumbrota, MN 55992

Sincerely,

*/s/ Ellen Heine*

ELLEN HEINE  
PRINCIPAL SITING AND PERMITTING AGENT  
NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY



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Minneapolis, MN 55401

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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# Transmission Line Information