

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009

1:00 p.m.

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for a
345 kV Transmission Line from Brookings County,
South Dakota to Hampton, Minnesota

PUC Docket Number ET2/TL-08-1474

Best Western Marshall Inn
1500 East College Drive
Marshall, Minnesota

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COMMENTS

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1 MR. EK: So now I guess we'll open it up
2 to public comment. And I failed to mention that
3 there were green cards in the back for people who
4 wanted to speak, and in the hurry of getting this
5 all ready I didn't let people know.

6 So why don't we just go this time with a
7 show of hands, and if I could have a person come up
8 here and, please, we'll have you face the court
9 reporter, state your name, and then your comment, if
10 you could.

11 MR. DOLAN: My name is Michael Dolan and
12 I'm an affected landowner, or potentially affected.

13 The question I have is relatively simple.
14 If we go through the trouble of submitting a written
15 comment later than today, will someone in your
16 office or another office actually get back to us and
17 give us a response as to whether or not it was
18 accepted or why it was rejected or what the other
19 alternatives might be to that concern that we have?
20 In other words, will somebody actually let us know
21 that you received it and actually considered it?

22 Thank you.

23 MR. EK: Thank you. Yes, we actually
24 receive all the comments, we go through them, and in
25 a memo or in the scoping decision we would describe

1 the different alternatives and possibly what was
2 accepted, what was not accepted, why, and so on and
3 so forth.

4 MR. DOLAN: So you will respond to our
5 specific questions?

6 MR. EK: We wouldn't send you a direct
7 letter back, no.

8 MR. DOLAN: So we really don't know
9 whether it's being considered, in other words.

10 MR. EK: Well, you would see in the
11 scoping document that eventually comes out, and if
12 you're on the project contact list you would receive
13 notice and actually receive that scoping document,
14 and it would show the items that you requested. And
15 if they weren't requested, you can call and ask why.

16 MR. DOLAN: Thank you.

17 MR. EK: And then you would -- and then
18 again, I should say, in the Draft EIS, once that's
19 put out, there is that second comment period, you
20 could bring that question up again as to why this
21 wasn't addressed in the EIS and so forth.

22 MR. DOLAN: Thank you.

23 MR. EK: Anybody else? State your name.

24 MR. WAMBEKE: My name is Dan Wambeke, I
25 live over by Green Valley with my wife Joy, over

1 there, and my son Toby and my two-year-old daughter,
2 Anna.

3 I want to reiterate some of the comments
4 that were already put in about the importance of
5 keeping away from homes. For me, as a father, I
6 don't feel that I could live with putting my
7 children extremely close to one of these lines. And
8 I don't feel that anybody else should have to make
9 that decision either. And I realize that there's
10 some -- it's difficult to determine what is an
11 acceptable distance, but I know there are a handful
12 of homes along this line that are uncomfortable,
13 quote, unquote, shall we say. So that's the first
14 comment I want to make.

15 And along that line, I'm -- I do have
16 some concerns about the accuracy of some of the
17 information that's in the route application. I know
18 my own home is -- was marked incorrectly, which
19 miscategorized how close we actually were. And as I
20 looked, anyone can go out to Google Maps and to
21 Microsoft's maps site, and at least in Lyon County
22 they have a nifty feature where you can -- there's
23 aerial photography. And when I did that I
24 discovered several other homes that were
25 miscategorized.

1 So I think as we go forward in this
2 process I want to make sure that everything is
3 accurately represented so that an evaluation can be
4 made. And just for your information, I'll submit or
5 I'll e-mail you the information that I have so far.
6 I just looked at Lyon County, of the portion of the
7 line between -- or that goes from Brookings to the
8 Lyon County substation.

9 And the second comment I wanted to make,
10 I think an evaluation should be made not only on
11 proximity to homes, but the impact on trees that are
12 around homes. There are some -- or there's sort of
13 kind of a vague statement in the route application
14 right now about minimizing the number of trees in
15 the right-of-way as much as possible, but all you
16 have to do is just step outside today to know why
17 there are trees around people's homes. And there
18 are several cases where there are groves that are
19 liable to be taken down in the process. So I think
20 that would be a categorization that's missing from
21 the route -- or the current evaluation of things
22 that should be added.

23 And it seems to me I had a third thing to
24 say, but I can't remember what it was, so I'll send
25 that to you as well.

1 So, thank you.

2 MR. EK: Thank you. Just to reiterate,
3 the locations, please put that in the comment letter
4 so we can look at that. That's something important.
5 And to get on the item of tree breaks, or whatever
6 you want to call them, there have been past permits
7 where we've -- where those are considered, past
8 projects where tree breaks are considered. So it is
9 something that's thought about during the process.
10 Even though you may not have seen it here or in the
11 application, it is an item that is thought about
12 during the environmental impact statement process.
13 Just to let you know.

14 Any other comments? Sure.

15 MR. OFTEDAHL: Perry Oftedahl from Hanley
16 Falls.

17 And one of my comments kind of echoes the
18 last one, concern about health issues. The
19 preferred route runs about a hundred feet from my
20 house, and so I'm worried about health issues, I
21 mean now and in the future. Not only for myself,
22 but for my grandkids and further on down the line,
23 being that close to my actual house. And the
24 possibilities of moving it to the other side of the
25 road so it's a little farther away, where there's

1 bare farmland, rather than preferred route closer to
2 the house.

3 And also the question of the preferred
4 route versus the alternate route, was the alternate
5 route chosen because it's -- or put second because
6 it's more costly to go that way? Was there more
7 farmhouses along that alternate route? You know,
8 what was the reasoning for the preferred route?

9 Thank you.

10 MR. EK: Thanks for your comment.

11 Any other comments? Please state your
12 name.

13 MR. GALHONES: Albert Galhones
14 (phonetic), Lincoln County, Limestone Township. My
15 concern is that if a pole -- first of all, I
16 understand that the poles are to be roughly 1,000
17 feet apart. Is that correct?

18 MR. EK: That does depend on the
19 topography, and I forget what exactly is in the
20 route permit but, yes, there are figures of 700,
21 1,000 -- to 1,000 feet.

22 MR. GALHONES: My concern is that if a
23 pole, at its proposed placement, would be in such a
24 place that it would be difficult for a farmer, say,
25 to get between the pole and another obstruction,

1 like trees or wetland, to get between there with
2 machinery, is it possible, will it be possible for
3 that farmer to mitigate the placement of that pole?
4 To, you understand what I mean, to discuss the
5 placement.

6 MR. EK: Sure, during final design.
7 That's something -- I believe something that I
8 believe Craig might be able to answer for you here.

9 MR. POORKER: Sure. Now, that's a good
10 question. That's a real detailed question. I think
11 when we eventually get a route, if we do, that's a
12 question that -- or a thing that we're going to have
13 to negotiate with each individual landowners, where
14 the poles go. And I think we're going to have to
15 work really closely with landowners and farmers on
16 those situations, because there are a lot of issues
17 that go into where we put a pole. I mean, issues
18 could be tile lines, other underground features that
19 may be there, do you want it on the fence line or
20 would you rather have it north or south, on a
21 property corner, we'll try to hit property corners
22 as much as we can as well. So those are a lot of
23 details that we'll have to work with each individual
24 landowner on, in that eventuality.

25 And also to address your question as

1 well, on how do we pick the preferred over the
2 alternate. I'm not sure, Hanley Falls, you're in
3 the portion from Lyon County to Granite Falls. I
4 can comment on that portion right there, there's a
5 115 kilovolt line that runs up there right now, and
6 it's our intent to take that line out and replace it
7 with this one here. So I'm hoping that that impact
8 is going to be minimal. But that existing 115 kV
9 line, I know, is probably pretty close to the
10 roadway, and the road authorities really like us to
11 be right on the edge of their right-of-way, just
12 outside of the road right-of-way.

13 MR. GALHONES: So farther away from the
14 road.

15 MR. POORKER: Yep. It's a township road,
16 as I recall, and their right-of-way is most likely
17 33 feet, so we'd probably be out there with our
18 centerline 35 to 38 feet or something like that.

19 MR. GALHONES: It could put it right
20 through the middle of my garage.

21 MR. POORKER: We don't want to be doing
22 that.

23 MR. GALHONES: Because if you move
24 farther away from the right-of-way, you're moving
25 closer to my house. You know, and obviously, if you

1 put it on the other side of the road, there is a
2 farm there, but I got neighbors down the road where
3 their house is on the other side of the road, and
4 the odds are you can't have poles there going back
5 and forth.

6 MR. POORKER: Sure. We like to do that
7 as little as possible, but if there is something
8 there and we need to engineer around it or build
9 around it, that's something we certainly need to
10 take into consideration, definitely. And did I
11 answer all your questions?

12 MR. GALHONES: No, I have one more.

13 MR. POORKER: Okay.

14 MR. GALHONES: First of all, on this
15 question here, if I understood you right, you said
16 that you could come in, move inland from the
17 right-of-way. Is that correct?

18 MR. POORKER: Can we move inland from
19 further -- a little bit further away from the road?

20 MR. GALHONES: Correct.

21 MR. POORKER: I think there are probably
22 situations we can do that. Again, those are
23 specifics that we'll work with with the landowners
24 while we're in the design phase.

25 MR. GALHONES: Now, for the most part,

1 you follow the road. Is that correct?

2 MR. POORKER: Yes. For the most part,
3 again, we looked at the criteria, the routing
4 criteria, and that's addressed pretty well in
5 section four, I believe, in the permit application.
6 We tried for the most part to follow roadways,
7 existing transmission lines where we can, we can do
8 that very often. We also try to follow field lines.
9 If we can't follow a roadway or perhaps a railroad,
10 and we have to go out away from a roadway, we try to
11 stick to like quarter section lines in most cases
12 where there is a field line or a field break line.

13 MR. GALHONES: You can hold it. Is there
14 any statute or statement by you people that you
15 cannot go diagonally where there's an offset, where
16 you cannot go diagonally across the field with an
17 offset?

18 MR. POORKER: Yes. I think your question
19 is are we going to go diagonally across fields in
20 some cases. And the answer to that, or his question
21 was is there a statute. It's not a statute, but I
22 think it's in the rules, they tell us as much as we
23 can to avoid that situation. And I don't think -- I
24 think there are very few cases on this whole
25 project, both on the preferred and alternate, where

1 we are going diagonally across any fields. We're
2 doing our best to stay out of farmers' fields. And
3 I don't think we have anything diagonal on this
4 project.

5 MR. GALHONES: Thank you.

6 MR. POORKER: Thank you.

7 MR. EK: Any other questions? Comments?
8 Can you state your name?

9 MR. BOERBOOM: My name is Galen Boerboom,
10 I live between Ghent and Minneota.

11 First of all, I'd like to address what
12 you had said earlier when you got up about sending
13 out the letters with your first mailing. The
14 mailings looked like junk mail, to be honest with
15 you, so I don't think a lot of people commented or
16 even looked at it. Secondly, we were advised that
17 we could have a public task force committee, there
18 was two of them, you said, that were up by the
19 New Prague area.

20 MR. EK: Correct.

21 MR. BOERBOOM: We applied, and from my
22 understanding, we were denied, or not given a chance
23 to have it. I went to a township meeting. We were
24 also told that all government agencies where the
25 line was run through was notified. The township

1 board never knew anything about it, nor the next one
2 to us didn't know anything about it. So right away
3 red flags go up, mistrust is placed, and then when
4 we're not allowed this input by the public task
5 force, there's a lot of mistrust that comes, and a
6 lot of answers -- questions that are not answered.
7 So some of this stuff you say I don't believe. And
8 I don't know how the other people feel, but I know
9 when you made the comment about the task force, I
10 seen people look at each other here and say how come
11 we weren't allowed.

12 MR. EK: Well, I don't know how to answer
13 that question, because we did send out letters to
14 all townships, all counties, all regional
15 development commissions, all large cities. And no,
16 we did not receive any --

17 MR. BOERBOOM: Oh, yes, you did. And
18 I'll tell you the guy that called you was Ross
19 Thompson from our township, and he was sent mail
20 from your office and he e-mailed it back. Any
21 comment on this, Dan?

22 MR. WAMBEKE: I had called a couple of
23 times, but I'm just a citizen.

24 MR. BOERBOOM: There's another member of
25 the township board in here, sitting right there.

1 MR. BUYSEE: I called you and e-mailed
2 you, hoping to be on a task force.

3 MR. EK: Okay. Well, we didn't receive a
4 response from --

5 MR. BOERBOOM: You did.

6 MR. BUYSEE: I talked to you
7 specifically.

8 MR. EK: And your name?

9 MR. BUYSEE: Brian Buysee.

10 MR. BOERBOOM: So, in other words, we're
11 supposed to sit in this room and believe everything
12 else that's said.

13 MR. EK: I'm sorry you feel that way,
14 sir.

15 Any other questions, comments?

16 MR. OFTEDAHL: Just a comment. I was
17 wondering on like of the size of the poles and the
18 distance between, is there a specific, you know, if
19 your building site is so long, is it possible, if it
20 does go through your place, that you'd have a pole
21 at the beginning and at the end, you don't have one
22 in the middle of your yard? I mean, is there a
23 minimum distance that the poles or towers have to be
24 set apart, and then the height of them or whatever?
25 Any specifics on that?

1 MR. POORKER: That's a good question and
2 that gets back to what we were talking about. We
3 work really hard with the landowners when we're
4 designing so we don't end up with a pole in your
5 yard. If we need to span through, that's certainly
6 something we can do. Minimum, we try not to put
7 them too close together because they're a few
8 thousand dollars a pole, but we can certainly space
9 them out, you know, before and after, to lengthen
10 those out a little bit.

11 MR. OFTEDAHL: So it's possible.

12 MR. POORKER: Oh, yeah, it's definitely
13 possible. And we try to work hard to not put them
14 in people's yards and span through that.

15 MR. OFTEDAHL: And how much sag is there?
16 I know there's quite a bit of sag, especially in the
17 summertime on the existing lines. So what's the
18 height of them and the sag in them?

19 MR. POORKER: All right. The question is
20 how much sag is there. Of course, these
21 transmission lines are going to sag the most when
22 it's really, really hot and when it's under full
23 load, which is going to be when it's hot, of course,
24 we're all running our air conditioners at that time.
25 We do have to design this so that those wires are a

1 minimum distance above the ground, and I believe
2 it's 35 to 40 feet. So we have to design for that
3 maximum sag. So it's going to be in those hottest
4 conditions. So we do have to design it for that to
5 make sure that we are above the ground that certain
6 distance.

7 MR. EK: Thank you.

8 MR. GALHONES: I have another comment I'd
9 like to make.

10 MR. EK: All right.

11 MR. GALHONES: There's some
12 misinformation going on around here, I've been
13 hearing it from other people. Some fellows say that
14 you're going to put the poles or the support
15 structures on the edge of the right-of-way. Some
16 others have said that you may put the poles anywhere
17 within the 150 feet of right-of-way. Now, which
18 would be correct?

19 MR. POORKER: Okay. For the most part
20 we're going to try to stay right along the road
21 right-of-way as much as we can, if we're going along
22 the road right-of-way. Are we going to go out
23 further than that? In most cases, no, unless
24 there's something right there we need to be aware
25 of. But our right-of-way is 150 feet wide, 75 feet

1 each side of the transmission line centerline. And
2 so we're going to stick right to the middle of that
3 right-of-way. And for the most part, we're going to
4 be just like maybe 5 feet outside of a road
5 right-of-way, whether it's a 33 foot or four rod
6 road, we'll be just to the outside of that. If it's
7 a 50-foot right-of-way on a county road, in some
8 cases our centerline will be at 55 feet from the
9 center of the road. But for the most part, we're
10 going to try to parallel those as best we can.

11 MR. EK: Thank you.

12 Any other comments, questions? Please
13 state and spell your name, sir.

14 MR. DIEKEN: My name is Harold Dieken,
15 D-I-E-K-E-N. I have a couple of comments here.

16 Number one, on your flow chart there, of
17 the different procedures and process you go through,
18 I'd like to know if, one, if the certificate of need
19 is denied, if the routing process stops at that
20 point?

21 And number two, in regard to trees and
22 lines of this stature, which are single pole, this
23 must not be the first time you've done this, so I'd
24 like to know the exact technique you do for dealing
25 with groves, as to the width of the trees or

1 whatever. Here's the thing. I've got a mile and a
2 half of this highlighted, so I'm getting a pretty
3 good dose of this. And during the early '70s I
4 planted numerous wind breaks along this path, and
5 I'm hard-pressed to have a high line come through
6 and bulldozers take out my trees. So there must be
7 a standard or a procedure or whatever so you can
8 tell us what to expect, that it ain't the
9 last-minute decision that we're hearing about.

10 And number three, on this citizen task
11 force, I too filled out an application, I too sent
12 it e-mail and, yes, you did reply to me. I have got
13 your e-mail reply in my computer at this moment. So
14 don't tell us that you didn't receive any replies
15 with the citizen task force information and that we
16 filled out and returned to you. That is not true.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. EK: All right. On the task forces,
19 I guess I should clarify that. We need more than --
20 a task force is made up of a regional development
21 commission, a county, a township within the county.
22 If we don't receive enough requests from those
23 entities, we statutorily cannot set up a task force.
24 And therefore we did not receive the required local
25 government entities to set up the task forces along

1 the western portion of this route. So, yes,
2 certainly I may have received yours, I may have
3 received another gentleman's, but in order to set up
4 a task force we are required to have certain local
5 government representatives included to set up that
6 task force.

7 Let's see. Your other question was tree
8 breaks. What I would suggest is you submit a
9 comment, where you live, the tree breaks you have,
10 the concerns you have with those tree breaks, so we
11 can identify those in our environmental impact
12 statement and know where they are, where you're
13 located, and address that issue.

14 And I forget your third issue.

15 MR. DIEKEN: The certificate of need.

16 MR. EK: Oh, the certificate of need.
17 Yes, you're correct. I'm not an expert on that,
18 that's a separate docket from this. This is
19 routing, there's certificate of need. I believe in
20 the next few weeks the Public Utilities Commission
21 will be deliberating or making a decision on the
22 need of the project. I believe you are correct, if
23 they decide it's not needed, well, then, I believe
24 this does go away, the routing. The project does
25 need to be needed, so that will determine what goes

1 forward from here.

2 MR. DIEKEN: I'd like to address one more
3 thing. Getting back to your citizens advisory task
4 force, I didn't see anywhere's in that application
5 where it said we had to have a minimum number of
6 applicants not to be represented out here. I feel
7 as though that the people out here have got just as
8 much right to be represented on a citizens task
9 force as those people up at New Prague or Prior
10 Lake. Probably even more so. We're in agricultural
11 land out here and our land is adversely affected
12 with this.

13 MR. EK: Thanks for your comment. We'll
14 take that under consideration.

15 Any other comments, please?

16 MR. DEBBAUT: Yes. I have to identify
17 myself, Delmer Debbaut. And I'm concerned about, my
18 daughter-in-law has a day care center. It's kind of
19 a unique situation because it's out in the country,
20 the house sits right up next to the right-of-way.
21 Even if you put the poles on the other side of the
22 road it's still only 30 or 40 feet from the house.
23 Now, is there a safety hazard of magnetic fields?
24 Is the state going to come along and say, hey, you
25 can't have a day care center underneath these power

1 lines? It might shut her out of business. That is
2 a legal business, she's licensed by the state. If
3 the state don't say anything, maybe the mothers who
4 bring in their children there will say, oh, I don't
5 want my child underneath that wire, it's giving off
6 all kinds of radiation and what have you.

7 I'm very concerned about the placement of
8 this power line. I would be happy if you went a
9 half a mile and went through the field, I would say
10 nothing about that, or I don't see why you can't go
11 a mile north and reconstruct that power line that
12 goes to that substation.

13 MR. EK: Could you tell me where you're
14 located?

15 MR. DEBBAUT: Section 27, Underwood
16 Township, in Redwood County.

17 I'm very concerned about this 'cause that
18 is a legal business. You're taking away her
19 livelihood.

20 MR. EK: Well, I can't comment on what --
21 I believe it's the Department of Public and Human
22 Health that oversees day cares, I'm not sure, so I
23 can't comment on what their rules are. But I can
24 tell you that's an item, health and safety,
25 electromagnetic fields, that's an item that we

1 automatically analyze in the environmental impact
2 statement on any impacts that it might have.

3 I also suggest -- you mentioned some
4 alternatives, I suggest you put into a comment those
5 alternatives of moving that line north through your
6 property, or the other one, south, I believe you
7 said. I suggest that you put that in a comment so
8 we know, otherwise we will not know. However, we
9 will have it transcribed here, so that will be
10 helpful. But a comment would also be helpful. And
11 just to let you know, we do study that in great
12 detail, electric and magnetic fields.

13 MR. DEBBAUT: Who do I send a comment to?

14 MR. EK: There should be a comment form
15 in the back. Why don't I just go ahead -- yep,
16 that's it. And all the information is on there, you
17 can either just send this in, the address is on the
18 back, there's also e-mail right here, and then
19 online.

20 MR. DEBBAUT: I can't e-mail, I'm not
21 smart enough to have a computer.

22 MR. EK: But there you go, there's the
23 address, then, and just send it on in.

24 Any other comments, questions?

25 MR. WAMBEKE: I don't have any more

1 comments, but I do have a couple of questions for,
2 hopefully, Craig, you can answer.

3 The first question, and this might be an
4 engineering thing so if you don't know, that's okay.
5 One of the peculiarities that I noticed in the route
6 application, there's a table in there that says what
7 the magnetic field is at various distances from the
8 route centerline. And now the route as it is
9 proposed right now is a single circuit, but it's an
10 upsized single circuit so at some point in the
11 future a double circuit could be put on it. The
12 peculiarity I noticed is that the magnetic field is
13 greater on a single circuit line than it is on a
14 double circuit line. So I was wondering if you
15 could address that.

16 And then my second question is in regard
17 to the actual -- you know, all the maps have the
18 1,000 foot wide, but within that there's a proposed
19 centerline. Could you just explain the process that
20 went in to determining where that proposed
21 centerline went? You know, why was it shifted in
22 some cases and in other cases not. And in
23 particular, I realize you want the flexibility to
24 work with landowners and all that, but how
25 reasonably certain can we feel that that's where

1 it's going to go?

2 I'll tell you, I'm sitting in a situation
3 right now where if the route would flip to the other
4 side of the road from where it is, as far as I'm
5 concerned it's an eviction notice. So if you could
6 address that, that would be great.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. POORKER: Dan, what was your first
9 question?

10 MR. WAMBEKE: It was why the magnetic
11 field is greater for a single circuit than it would
12 be for a double circuit.

13 MR. POORKER: First off, you're right,
14 I'm not an engineer, I never wanted to aspire to
15 something like that. But your question, I've been
16 told that, yes, for a double circuit line there is
17 less magnetic field at the right-of-way than there
18 is for a single circuit. Why that is, I don't know.
19 It's something about cancelling each other out, and
20 I'm sure there's some good engineering speak for
21 that. But that is what I've been told. And the
22 portion that is double-circuited, initially, when we
23 filed for this project with the certificate of need,
24 it was proposed to be double circuit from Lyon
25 County to Helena, that portion was always going to

1 be double circuit. But we heard things in the
2 certificate of need proceedings that suggested we
3 need to upsize this a little bit and plan for some
4 of the future renewable energy that could be coming
5 online. And there's a lot of that in this area. So
6 it is being proposed to be upsized from there. And
7 that single -- or that second circuit will be coming
8 on at a later date. That will have to be determined
9 depending how much wind energy comes online and
10 things like that.

11 Your second question, Dan?

12 MR. WAMBEKE: The process that went into
13 figuring out where that line goes and how -- I mean,
14 were engineers consulted in the process at all, or
15 is that just a best guess right now?

16 MR. POORKER: You hit it on the head. We
17 did come up with a proposed centerline, but that's
18 all it is. It's more a reference centerline than
19 anything else. And you'll see that it does jump the
20 road now and then and we are on one side of the road
21 as opposed to the other. And the reason for that is
22 exactly right, if there's a home that's really close
23 to the road we'd probably jump the road to avoid
24 that and then stay on the other side of the road for
25 as long as we could. But there's going to be some

1 more detailed work again, it's not cast in stone.
2 And the PUC may very well tell us you will be on
3 this side of the road from here to here. In other
4 cases they might leave that up to us and surveying
5 and engineering work. But that's exactly why we
6 moved around. If we were on one side of the road,
7 it was to avoid some of those homes.

8 MR. EK: Thanks, Craig.

9 Any other comments, questions?

10 MR. OFTEDAHL: If you will jump the road
11 to avoid homes, then why are some homes still -- the
12 line is still on that side of the road?

13 MR. EK: Actually, what could happen is
14 it could jump the road several times. You jump the
15 road in one place, run along, jump the road in
16 another place.

17 MR. OFTEDAHL: I don't want it by my
18 neighbor's house either.

19 MR. EK: Right. There is that
20 possibility where it could jump the road more than
21 one time. And there's feasibility issues and
22 engineering issues with that. But, yes, that's
23 something that has been done in the past.

24 MR. OFTEDAHL: My concern is the health
25 thing with stray voltage, whatever you want to call

1 it. I'd rather have it move farther away, but then
2 my neighbors want it as far as they can from them
3 too.

4 MR. EK: Right, because it would be
5 running along their side of the road then. Yes,
6 there is that possibility of having it jump back
7 then to the other side. Yes.

8 Any other comments or questions?

9 MR. WAMBEKE, SR.: I'm Dan Wambeke,
10 Senior, W-A-M-B-E-K-E. I guess my concern is with
11 these magnetic fields, what impact do they have on
12 livestock and wildlife? I know I've seen articles
13 on it where it shows that they become disoriented
14 and they kind of lose their sense of direction.

15 MR. EK: I can't answer your question
16 here today. I can tell you that is a subject that
17 we do study in the environmental impact statement,
18 and that includes the electric and magnetic fields
19 as well as stray voltage issues. And that the stray
20 voltage kind of deals with the livestock issues and
21 so forth, where the electric and magnetic fields are
22 more of a human health type safety risk. And both
23 of those are automatically analyzed in the
24 environmental impact statement. I can't give you
25 answers here today, of course, because we have to

1 get to that environmental impact statement. But I
2 can tell you that it will be analyzed.

3 MR. WAMBEKE, SR.: Okay.

4 MR. EK: Any other questions, comments?
5 State your name and spell it, please.

6 MR. LIBAT: John Libat, J-O-H-N,
7 L-I-B-A-T. I was just wondering if anyone could
8 tell us the approximate cost per lineal foot, per
9 lineal mile, of this line that's proposed?

10 MR. EK: Sure. I think I should know
11 that, it's in the application. Maybe Craig can give
12 you a figure.

13 MR. POORKER: I don't remember what the
14 cost is per mile, but I think the total cost for the
15 preferred route is, I believe, \$700 million, so a
16 couple million dollars per mile.

17 MR. LIBAT: Thank you.

18 MR. EK: Another question?

19 MR. DIEKEN: Harold Dieken. I'd like to
20 know, on your environmental impact study, what
21 weight do farm windbreaks carry? Very important,
22 not too important, don't count at all? And another
23 thing, if a farm windbreak is involved, and this is
24 a question for the power line man there, what do
25 they actually do with the trees? Do we go over them

1 or are they bulldozed out, or how wide a strip are
2 we talking, and the general guidelines that you use?

3 MR. EK: Well, first, to answer your
4 question about the environmental impact statement
5 and tree breaks. That subject holds just as much
6 weight as any other subject in the environmental
7 impact statement. Nothing is graded, everything is
8 just important as the next. And we look at that
9 through the route. There may be certain areas where
10 there are more tree breaks and so we'll have to
11 focus on those areas. However, no, we don't
12 discount a tree break that may be in an area where
13 there are none others. So, no, it all holds the
14 same weight, each subject.

15 As for routing around them or what final
16 design may be, maybe Craig can answer that. But
17 there is -- that possibility again comes up of
18 jumping across sides of roads to avoid those, and
19 back and forth I know is one option. Craig may know
20 others.

21 MR. POORKER: I'm not sure of other
22 options, but I certainly understand. We've done
23 other projects before, usually smaller projects, and
24 I really understand the importance of windbreaks.
25 That's something that our local governments and the

1 state's been telling us to do for a long time, to
2 build those windbreaks to protect your fields,
3 protect your homes, so they're are very, very
4 important, I really understand that.

5 And also, if we have to take them down,
6 your other question was what do we have to clear, I
7 think. And that's typically 75 feet, they're pretty
8 much the whole right-of-way. However, some lower
9 growing trees are certainly okay, if they're 15 to
10 20 feet tall they can be replanted. Just so we can
11 have access to the line, so we can drive down the
12 road or down the centerline or something like that
13 so we can inspect the poles.

14 So other plantings, if we have to, it's
15 certainly allowed -- it's probably best to talk with
16 any utility company before you do that just to make
17 sure that that's okay and the species is correct.

18 And what do we do with the wood? That's
19 usually up to the landowner. We certainly have to
20 pay significantly for windbreaks, they are not cheap
21 when we have to acquire those. But what do we do
22 with the wood? Usually we ask the landowner what
23 they want us to do with the wood. So if it's yours,
24 a lot of times we negotiate with the landowner to
25 cut it up into eight-foot lengths, sometimes four

1 feet, stack it, take away the brush or chip the
2 brush or whatever you want to do. That's something
3 that is certainly negotiable.

4 MR. EK: Any other questions, comments?

5 MR. GALHONES: Albert Galhones again.
6 When a landowner signs an easement -- it's probably
7 a legal question, maybe you can't answer it -- but
8 when a landowner signs an easement, can another
9 entity ride, so to speak, ride on the back of that
10 easement to put in, say, a gas line, a line of some
11 other kind, underground or above ground?

12 MR. EK: You're correct, I can't answer
13 that question.

14 MR. POORKER: That's a really good
15 question. If you didn't hear it, when we acquire an
16 easement, what can anybody else do on it. And the
17 answer is nothing, without getting your permission.
18 Because when we acquire an easement for a
19 transmission line, that's all we get. That's all
20 the document says, is that we can have it there for
21 that transmission line. Sometimes we write in
22 information about maybe a local co-op can bury a
23 line in there. And that's about it. It's still
24 your private property, you still do with it what
25 you're doing now. If you're farming it, there's no

1 reason you can't do that then. And if somebody else
2 comes along that wants to use it, whether it's a
3 bike trail or put another buried telephone cable or
4 anything like that, it's your private property, they
5 still need to get permission and an easement from
6 you to do that.

7 MR. GALHONES: Thank you.

8 MR. EK: Any other questions or comments?
9 All right.

10 MR. OFTEDAHL: Perry Oftedahl. Probably
11 not one that you want to answer right now, but when
12 you come along and you want to get the landowners to
13 sign the easements, if a landowner refuses to sign
14 an easement, does it really matter, and it's still
15 going to go through?

16 MR. EK: That's a question I can't answer
17 either. Craig can answer that question.

18 MR. POORKER: And that is a question I
19 hate answering, 'cause I think you know what the
20 answer probably is and it's a word I hate saying,
21 but it's eminent domain. And usually, at least the
22 company I work for and the people I've worked with
23 acquiring easements were pretty good at getting an
24 easement and making it satisfactory somehow.
25 Whether we need to mitigate something with you as a

1 landowner or we need to pay for some damages or
2 whatever, we're usually pretty good at that. And
3 the utilities, the electric utilities that work in
4 this state are usually pretty good, all of us, at
5 getting a satisfactory easement. Sometimes we
6 can't, but that's what the system is there for.
7 Sometimes people think that our offer is way off.
8 Usually we can negotiate that pretty well. Or there
9 might be other reasons for eminent domain, too,
10 there might be title problems or we can't find
11 somebody to get an easement from them, or there are
12 situations like that where we have to go through the
13 eminent domain process.

14 MR. EK: Again, any other questions,
15 comments? With that, I encourage -- certainly. If
16 you could please spell your name.

17 MR. COUDRON: Okay. Mike Coudron,
18 C-O-U-D-R-O-N. In regards to your last comment
19 there, if you could clarify for me, your offer for
20 the easement, would that be per parcel of land,
21 would that be a base for each one and then you
22 negotiate from there, or where will that start and
23 how will that be involved?

24 MR. POORKER: All right. That was a good
25 question, too. How do we pay for easements, right?

1 We buy it by the acre. I know some of you that have
2 had transmission lines go across your property back
3 in the '40s or '50s or something like that, we used
4 to pay per pole. But we base it now, we look at how
5 many acres that you have, how many acres we're
6 encumbering with the easement, and we pay you based
7 on what land values are right now. Hopefully it's
8 back up there the way it was a year ago when corn
9 prices were up there about eight bucks a bushel and
10 land prices were right up there with it. But we do
11 pay for easement value, your land value, per acre
12 basis, and there are a lot of other things that we
13 need to pay for, too. Crop loss, if we damage your
14 crop we need to pay you for that. We need to pay
15 you for soil compaction, tree damage, and things
16 like that. Anything that impacts your property or
17 impacts the easement that we're getting from you, we
18 need to compensate for all those things. I answered
19 your question? Anything else? I think that's a
20 question that comes up frequently, so thanks.

21 MR. EK: Any additional questions,
22 comments?

23 All right. Well, what we'll have is an
24 open house after this, I believe the meeting here
25 ends at 4:00, I believe. And I encourage you to go

1 grab a comment sheet in the back, go to the back and
2 find a map sheet, maybe fill out that for an
3 alternative. Identify your concerns so we can have
4 them when we put them into the scope, when we write
5 the environmental impact statement. Very important.

6 So thank you for coming, thank you for
7 your questions, comments, and we'll all be around
8 here to answer any questions you might have.

9 (Public comments concluded.)
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