



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Phil Montgomery, Chairperson  
Eric Callisto, Commissioner

610 North Whitney Way  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
RECEIVED: 07/06/11, 11:07:26 AM

July 5, 2011

Re: Joint Application of Dairyland Power Cooperative, Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Public Power Inc., for Authority to Construct and Place in Service 345 kV Electric Transmission Lines and Electric Substation Facilities for the Applicants Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse Project, Located in Buffalo, Trempealeau, and La Crosse Counties, Wisconsin 5-CE-136

To the Person Addressed:

You have been identified as a resident or landowner whose property may be affected by a proposed electric utility transmission construction project in your area.

## Transmission Line Developers

An application has been filed with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC or Commission) by Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin, Dairyland Power Cooperative, and Wisconsin Public Power Inc. (applicants) for authority to construct and place into operation new 345 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission facilities serving the La Crosse area.

## Brief Project Description

The applicants are proposing to construct a new 345 kV transmission line from Minnesota across the Mississippi River at Alma, Wisconsin, in Buffalo County to a new substation that would be built on the west side of the village of Holmen, Wisconsin, in La Crosse County. The western terminus of the line would be an interconnection at the state boundary at the Mississippi River with a new 345 kV line currently under state review in Minnesota. The eastern terminus would be the proposed 345 kV substation, near County Trunk Highway (CTH) XX and Briggs Road southwest of Holmen. The line would be approximately 43 to 57 miles long depending on the route selected, through Buffalo, Trempealeau, and La Crosse Counties. A variety of transmission structures have been proposed to address the different landscapes and terrain that would be crossed by the new line.

The geographic area of the proposed project is shown on Attachment 1. The applicants have proposed three routes in their application. Two additional routes have been suggested by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). All of these routes will be considered by the Commission during its project review:

**Q1-Highway 35** - From Alma this route extends to the southeast mainly following an existing 161 kV transmission line (Q1) corridor and roughly paralleling State Highway (STH) 35. South of Cochrane, the existing Q1 corridor is separate from STH 35 and lies inland, crossing STH 35/54 at the county line and extending cross-country southeast across the Trempealeau River and across STH 35 again north of the village of Trempealeau. East of

the village, this route is separate from the Q1 corridor, running east across the Black River bottomlands, parallel to and about 400 feet north of STH 35. It follows the U.S. Highway (USH) 53/STH 35 corridor south to the Briggs Road area.

**Q1-Galesville** - This route extends along the same Q1 corridor from Alma to a point south of STH 35/54 and east of the Trempealeau River. At Delaney Road, the route leaves the existing Q1 transmission corridor and extends eastward along farm field lines about 5.4 miles, to a point just west of Engen Road. The route jogs north for about 0.9 mile to connect with and follow the STH 54/STH 93 corridor and USH 53 along the south side of Galesville. East of Galesville, it follows the existing 161 kV transmission line corridor running parallel to USH 53 south to connect with the new substation sites at Briggs Road.

**Arcadia** - This route passes through Alma and eastward along an existing 69 kV transmission line corridor to another 69 kV corridor northeast of Arcadia. From that point, the route mostly follows the second 69 kV corridor south, roughly east of and parallel to STH 93. The route follows Thompson Valley Road for several miles and crosses several town roads before intersecting with STH 93/STH 54 east of Centerville. From that intersection, it extends to Briggs Road along the same path as the Q1-Galesville Route.

**STH 88 Alternative** - This new route is the same as the Q1 Routes except that the northern portion along STH 35 between Alma and Waumandee Creek along STH 35 is avoided to reduce scenic impacts along the Great River Road. The applicants offer two STH 88 Route options to alleviate DOT's concerns:

1. Follow the existing 69 kV transmission line corridor east of Alma along the Arcadia route as far as STH 88. From there, follow STH 88 south across the Great River Road and the existing Q1 line to the north side of the railroad corridor paralleling Kamrowski Road. Continue following the applicants' Q1 routes eastward from there.
2. From the point where the applicants' proposed Arcadia Route meets STH 88, extend the route nearly due south across Block and Plank Roads before turning southeast and crossing STH 88 near Blankhill Road. Continue south on the east side of Waumandee Valley across Waumandee Creek, Gleiter Road, and Schoepp's Valley Road to a point on STH 88 along Waumandee Creek south of CTH O. From there, use the first STH 88 Route alternative to connect to the applicants' proposed Q1 routes near the railroad line.

**Ettick Alternative** - This alternative, like the Arcadia Route, avoids impacts on the Van Loon State Wildlife Area along the Black River. It utilizes the Arcadia Route from Alma to Fox Coulee Lane, where it follows an existing 69 kV transmission corridor for about three miles up Fox Coulee and Hovel Lane. West of the ridge crossing, it passes a number of town roads and angles northeast along the north side of Beaver Creek to intersect with an existing 161 kV transmission corridor at West Road southwest of Ettick. Between this point and the new substation site at Briggs Road, it mainly shares the 161 kV corridor.

These are relatively brief route descriptions. Route location details can be found in the applicants' CapX2020 project application, which can be viewed on the PSC website at <http://psc.wi.gov/> as discussed below. The two new routes suggested by DOT and DNR are shown in Supplemental Appendix D (ERF REF #147504).

### **State Agencies' Jurisdiction**

The proposed project requires a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the PSC before construction can begin. At the PSC, the Commissioners will decide whether to approve, modify, or deny the applicants' proposal. DNR will be considering the applicants' application for wetland and waterway permits under Wis. Stat. ch. 30 and other laws. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection will be preparing an Agricultural Impact Statement under Wis. Stat. § 32.035 to aid farmers in easement negotiations if a route is approved across their lands. DOT will be considering permits to build in or cross state and federal highway rights-of-way and will be examining impacts to scenic easements associated with the Great River Road. The Wisconsin Historical Society will request adjustments in routes or structure placements to avoid or reduce any potential adverse impacts to listed historic properties under Wis. Stat. § 44.40.

### **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

This project is a Type I project under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(1). It requires an EIS to be prepared as specified under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act, Wis. Stat. § 1.11. A draft EIS will be jointly prepared by the PSC and DNR and will likely be issued in the autumn of 2011. There will be a 45-day period for the public and others to comment on the draft EIS after it is issued. The comments will be used to prepare a final EIS, which is anticipated to be issued in late 2011.

The PSC and DNR are now identifying issues and conducting analyses for the draft EIS. The agencies encourage persons with local information or environmental concerns to: (1) contact the EIS coordinator listed near the end of this letter; (2) submit a comment through the PSC internet site at <http://psc.wi.gov/apps/dockets/comment.aspx> under PSC docket 5-CE-136; or (3) come to one of the two public scoping meeting sessions described below.

When completed, the draft EIS can be viewed on the PSC's website at <http://psc.wi.gov>. You can request a free copy of the draft EIS by mail at the address at the top of this letter or by contacting the docket coordinator William Fannucchi by telephone at (608) 267-3594 or by e-mail at [william.fannucchi@wisconsin.gov](mailto:william.fannucchi@wisconsin.gov).

### **Public Scoping Meetings**

The PSC and DNR will host two public "scoping" meetings to share information about the state's application review processes and to encourage persons to identify local concerns and issues. Staff will use the information from the meetings to help establish the scope of the EIS. The dates and locations of the meetings are:

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<b>When:</b>	July 14, 2011 – 1:30-4:00 p.m. and 6:30-9:00 p.m.	July 20, 2011 – 1:30-4:00 p.m. and 6:30-9:00 p.m.
<b>Where:</b>	Buffalo City Hall 245 East 10 <sup>th</sup> Street Cochrane, WI 54622	Centerville Community Center W24854 State Road 54/93 Centerville WI 54630

### **Public Hearings and Commission Decision**

The PSC will hold technical and public hearings on the project approximately 30 days after the release of the final EIS. At least 30 days before the hearings, the PSC will mail a Notice of Hearing to everyone on the project mailing list and notify the local news media. The Notice will include the time, date, and location of the hearings, and also how to make a comment for the hearing record. If you have any concerns about the project, you should participate in the hearing process to make the Commission aware of your concerns. The Commission must base its decisions about the project on the record of the hearing. At this time, the hearing is anticipated to be held in early 2012.

### **For More Information**

You may view the applicants' application materials, as well as all other documents filed in this docket, through the PSC's Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) system at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. The docket number 5-CE-136 is required to access the documents. The Commission's website also includes descriptive summaries of the regulatory process for proposed construction cases like this one. As required by Wis. Stat. § 194.491(3)(a)1, copies of the complete application are also available for review at local libraries and municipal clerks' offices in the project area.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to the PSC review and approval process, you may contact me by telephone at (608) 267-3594 or by e-mail at [william.fannucchi@wi.gov](mailto:william.fannucchi@wi.gov). For environmental issues, contact the EIS coordinator Ken Rineer by telephone at (608) 267-1201 or by e-mail at [kenneth.rineer@wi.gov](mailto:kenneth.rineer@wi.gov). For issues regarding the DNR permits, contact Cheryl Laatsch by telephone at (608) 264-8943 or by e-mail at [cheryl.laatsch@wi.gov](mailto:cheryl.laatsch@wi.gov).

Members of the media are urged to contact Matt Pagel, PSC Public Affairs, by telephone at (608) 266-9600 or by e-mail at [matt.pagel@wi.gov](mailto:matt.pagel@wi.gov).

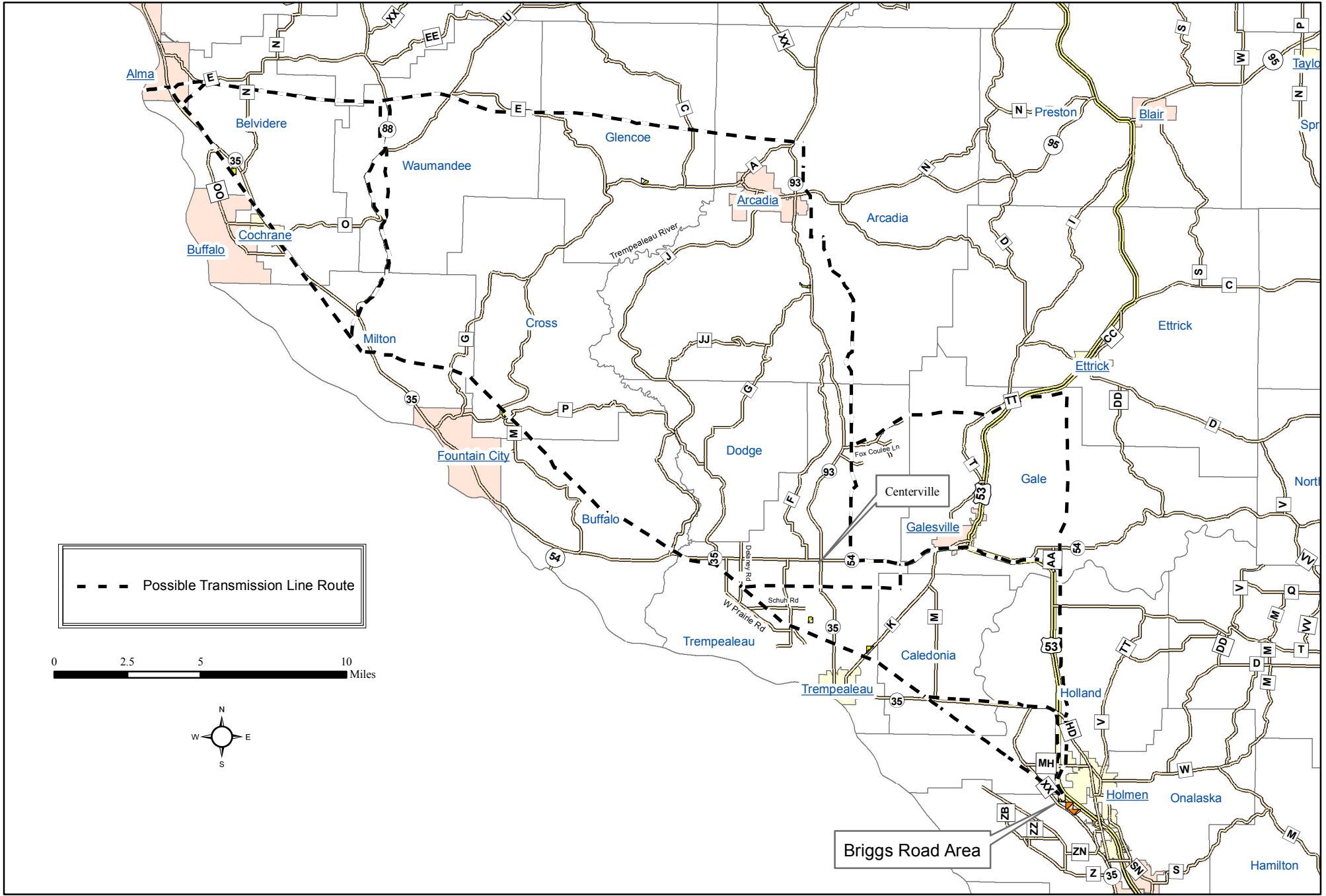
Sincerely,

*/s/ William Fannucchi*

William Fannucchi  
Docket Coordinator  
Gas and Energy Division

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Enclosure



**CapX2020 Possible Transmission Line Routes**