

Department of Agriculture

Rural Utilities Service

Dairyland Power Cooperative: CapX 2020 Hampton-Rochester La Crosse Transmission Line Project

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USD

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Public Hearings.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to meet its responsibilities under the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) and 7 CFR 1794 related to providing financial assistance Dairyland Power Cooperative (Dairyland) for its share in the construction of proposed 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line and associated infrastructure between Hampton, Minnesota and the La Crosse area in Wisconsin (the proposed project). Dairyland is participating in the proposed project with a number of other utilities (Applicants).

The purpose of the proposed project is to: (1) improve community reliability of the transmission system in Rochester, Winona, La Crosse, and the surrounding areas, which include areas served by Dairyland; (2) improve the regional reliability of the transmission system and (3) increase generation outlet capacity.

DATE: Written comments on this Draft EIS will be accepted 45 days following the publication of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's notice of receipt of the Draft EIS in the Federal Register.

RUS will conduct five public meetings in an open-house format followed by a discussion period: January 9, 2012, Alma High School Gym, S1618 State Rd 3, Alma, Wisconsin; January 10, 2012, Wanamingo Community Center, 401 Main Street, Wanamingo, Minnesota; January 11, 2012, Cannon Falls High School Cafeteria, 820 Minnesota St. E, Cannon Falls, Minnesota; January 12, 2012, American Legion Hall, 215 3rd Street S, Plainview, Minnesota; and January 13, 2012, Centerville/Town of Trempealeau Community Center, W24854 State Road 54/93, Galesville, Wisconsin.

All meetings will be held as follows: open house from 5:00 to 6:00 PM followed by the discussion period from 6:00 to 8:00 PM local time. A contact reporter will be available.

ADDRESSES:

A copy of the Draft EIS may be viewed online at the following website: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWP-CapX2020-Hampton-Rochester-LaCrosse.html> and at the following repositories:

Alma Public Library
312 North Main Street
Alma, WI 54610
Phone: 608-685-3823.

Arcadia Public Library
406 E Main Street
Arcadia, WI 54612
Phone: 608-323-7505.