Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy®

Minnesota Regulatory Process

We're early in the process that includes evaluation of the project's need and routing by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The MPUC ultimately determines whether the project is needed and, if so, the project's final route. The MPUC will thoroughly review all project information provided by the applicants and input from stakeholders, landowners and the general public before making its decisions.

Two key approvals must be obtained from the MPUC before the project can be built:

1. A **Certificate of Need (CON)** identifies the issues the proposed project is designed to solve (the need for the project) and reviews how the project benefits the state and region. The CON Docket number is 25-121.
2. A **Route Permit (RP)** identifies where the project should be located, including an evaluation of route alternatives. The RP docket number: 26-156.

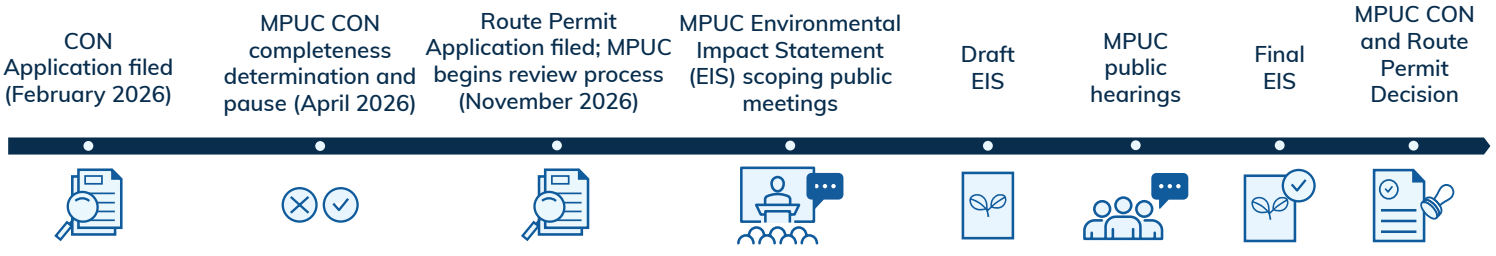
UPDATE

In November 2026, the project partners filed a Route Permit Application with the MPUC. The Certificate of Need (CON) application, which was accepted as complete in April, was paused pending the Route Permit application filing. The CON and Route Permit applications will now be considered together in a joint proceeding. Opportunities for public comment will continue throughout the regulatory review process.

Upcoming regulatory milestones

Now that the project partners have submitted both key applications, the CON and Route Permit, the MPUC will begin a joint review process to evaluate the project's need and proposed route.

The MPUC will determine the route following their review process, which includes numerous opportunities for public input and involvement. The MPUC final decision generally takes 12-18 months. We encourage you to stay involved throughout the process, so your perspective is heard.



Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.

*Opportunity to propose route alternatives.

CONTACT US GophertoBadgerLink.com Connect@GophertoBadgerLink.com 612-474-7799

Regulatory Process

1 RP Application filed with MPUC

We filed our Route Permit application in November 2026. After the permit is filed and accepted as complete by the MPUC, the regulatory review process begins.

2 Public information and scoping meetings

Once the RP Application is deemed complete, the MPUC will hold public information and scoping meetings throughout the project area to begin developing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

These meetings, along with the public comment period, allow landowners and community members to:

- ask questions of MPUC staff and the applicants
- provide input on what should be studied in the EIS
- suggest alternative routes for consideration by the MPUC
- suggest system alternatives (alternatives to the project) to be evaluated in the EIS
- address potential impacts and mitigation measures that should be studied in the EIS

The EIS evaluates potential effects on land use, including agricultural operations and residences, water resources, natural habitats and other environmental factors. Proposed system alternatives should still meet the project's purpose and need. Proposed route alternatives can include minor alignment shifts as well as longer route alternatives, but should have the same start and end points as the project. Following this process, the MPUC publishes a decision outlining the topics and route alternatives that will be included in the EIS.

3 Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will be published and made available for public review and comment.

4 MPUC public hearings

After the Draft EIS is published, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will hold public hearings throughout the project area, with a public comment period, to receive comments on the project, how potential impacts of the project could be addressed, and what conditions should be required for the project to move forward. Advance notice of these public hearings will be provided via mail and newspaper advertisements. The ALJ then prepares a report summarizing the overall record and writes a report and recommendation to the MPUC, including recommendations about what route should be selected and conditions that should be included in the RP.

5 Final EIS

The MPUC publishes the Final EIS.

6 MPUC CON and RP decison

After reviewing the CON and RP Applications, testimony, all public comments, the final EIS, and the ALJ report, the MPUC will consider the applications at a scheduled MPUC meeting to make its final CON and RP decisions. MPUC meetings and hearings are open to the public. At that time, the MPUC will decide if the project is needed and on which route, or combination of routes, to approve the transmission line and any conditions the permit should include.

A RP can only be issued after a CON is granted, and it is the approval that determines the transmission line route. Once approved, the utilities will pursue any additional required permits, such as those required by other state and federal agencies depending on the designated route.

**Wisconsin follows a separate regulatory process.*

To learn how to subscribe to the project's Certificate of Need or Route Permit docket, and to receive email notifications when information is filed in the dockets, visit: **www.mn.gov/puc/edockets/howto**

To subscribe to this docket, follow those instructions and enter Docket Number 25-121 for the Certificate of Need and 26-156 for the Route Permit.