

MEMORANDUM

To: Commissioners Fedorchak, Kalk and Christmann
FR: Jerry Lein
Da: April 24, 2015
Re: Agenda Briefing memo, Fargo Cap-X Tree Mitigation Plan, Case No. PU-07-759.

On March 23, 2015, NSP filed, for Commission approval, its tree and shrub mitigation plan for its Fargo-St. Cloud 345 kV Cap-X Transmission line. NSP reports that construction of the line is complete and its tree contractor is to begin plantings this spring.

In short summary, NSP inventoried 2,188 trees and 1,628 shrubs for removal. The shrubs were cut off at ground level with the roots still in place and covered with site topsoil such that they are expected to regenerate naturally. Therefore, replacement shrubs are not proposed in NSP's mitigation plan.

NSP's mitigation would plant at least 4,376 tree saplings in locations off the right-of-way. Landowners accepting mitigation trees were offered replacement species in-kind or of similar species. In cases where invasive Buckthorn was removed, landowners could select either American Linden or Silver Maple as the mitigation species. Landowner requests for species other than those offered were considered and approved on a case-by-case basis. All waived trees were offered and accepted as additional trees to landowners accepting mitigation.

On April 24, 2015, NSP amended its plan to remove the last paragraph in Section 5. This paragraph proposed to count regrowth of Buckthorn trees as successful tree mitigations during subsequent annual survival reporting. NSP is no longer proposing to count Buckthorn regrowth.

I recommend approval of NSP's Tree Mitigation Plan.

JRL