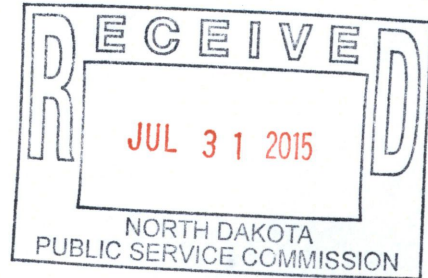




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July 31, 2015

North Dakota Public Service Commission
Public Utilities Division
600 E Boulevard Ave, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480



Subject: DC Transmission Line Reroute Project
Case No. PU-13-103
Final Construction Inspection

Attn: Mr. Jerry Lein
North Dakota Public Service Commission

Mr. Lein,

This letter is written in response to the North Dakota Public Service Commission's (PSC) Minnesota Power 250 kV DC Transmission Line Reroute Post-Construction Inspection Report PU-13-103 (report) filed on July 23, 2015. The report was prepared by Wenck Associates, Inc. 301 1st Street NE, Suite 202, Mandan, ND 58554 in July 2015.

The following are excerpts from page 4-1 of the report filed on July 23, 2015 that list each specification requiring elaboration and Minnesota Power's response:

4.1 PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS NEEDING WRITTEN VERIFICATION

Necessary Items

- *As-built design specifications and associated GIS files*

Potential Items

- *Pre- and post-construction avian monitoring studies suggested by North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department*
- *Stutsman County building permits for all new, removed, or relocated transmission line structures*
- *United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permit for work in USFWS wetland easement*
- *Permits for transportation of large equipment during construction*

Minnesota Powers response to each project specification is as follows:

Specification:

- *As-Built Design Specifications and GIS Files*

MP Response:

- ✓ Minnesota Power has included the As-Built design locations and GIS Files with the enclosed CD that can be filed to the permit docket.

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Letter regarding July 23, 2015 construction inspection report

Allete, Inc.

Daniel McCourtney, Minnesota Power

Specification:

- *Pre-and post-construction avian monitoring studies suggested by North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department*

MP Response:

- ✓ These were survey suggestions provided by the ND Parks and Rec Department and not project requirements. Minnesota Power consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well and determined that pre- and post-construction avian monitoring studies were not necessary for a project of this size and scope.

Specification:

- *Stutsman County building permits for all new, removed, or relocated transmission line structures*

MP Response:

- ✓ Minnesota Power has supplied the Stutsman County Building Permit for the project in the Supplemental Application provided to the PSC in September 4, 2013.

Specification:

- *United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permit for work in USFWS wetland easement*

MP Response:

- ✓ The Project does not fill, dredge, or impact any FWS easement wetland and therefore, a USFWS permit was not required.

Specification:

- *Permits for transportation of large equipment during construction*

MP Response:

- ✓ The transportation permits associated with the project were the responsibility of Minnesota Power's contractor and are outside the scope of the PSC Order that requires Minnesota Power to file those permits.

4.2 WASTE

At the time of the site inspection, several small chunks of concrete waste were observed around the new transmission line structures. Wenck recommends that the PSC request documentation from Minnesota Power when this waste has been removed.

MP Response:

Minnesota Power removed all concrete waste off of the site after construction. The small amount of concrete waste found at the site was not generated by Minnesota Power.

4.3 ABANDONED/REMOVED STRUCTURES

Wenck observed one location where an old structure along the original alignment was abandoned or removed. Due to limited access around the wetland area, it was unclear if this structure was fully removed, or if it was just cut off and abandoned with the foundation remaining. Wenck recommends that the PSC request documentation from Minnesota Power showing that this and any other old structure along the original alignment was fully removed.

MP Response:

After discussing with the Army Corps of Engineers and following landowner preference, it was determined that removing the base of structure # 686 would have caused more damage to the non-jurisdictional wetland than leaving it in. As a result, Minnesota Power left a portion of the structure in place and refurbished it as a wildlife nesting platform.

If any additional information is required by the PSC please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel McCourtney
Minnesota Power
Siting and Permitting

DM:sr

Enc.

Cc. David Moeller
Bryan Maslowski
Craig Kvale