

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**North Plains Connector LLC
North Plains Connector Transmission Project
Siting Application**

Case No. PU-26-082

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

_____, 2026

Appearances

Commissioners Randy Christmann, Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, and Jill Kringstad.

Hope L. Hogan, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, 2911 North 14th Street, Suite 303, Bismarck, North Dakota 58503, as Procedural Hearing Officer.

Zachary E. Pelham, Special Assistant Attorney General, as Counsel for the North Dakota Public Service Commission, 600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 408, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505.

Mollie M. Smith and Bridget A. Duffus, Fredrikson & Byron, P.A., 60 South Sixth Street, Suite 1500, Minneapolis, MN 55402, on behalf of the Applicant North Plains Connector LLC.

Preliminary Statement

On February 20, 2026, North Plains Connector LLC (North Plains) filed a Consolidated Application for a Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit (Consolidated Application) for a high-voltage direct current (HVDC) electric transmission line, and associated 345 kilovolt (kV) alternating current (AC) transmission lines and facilities (Project), to be located in Golden Valley, Slope, Hettinger, Grant, Morton, and Oliver Counties, North Dakota. The Project comprises the North Dakota portion of the North Plains Connector Transmission Project (North Plains Connector).

On July 24, 2026, North Plains submitted an Updated Publication Map.

On July 27, 2026, the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) issued a Notice of Technical Hearing, scheduling a technical hearing for September 1, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. Central Time at the Brynhild Haugland Room, State Capitol, Ground Floor, 600 East Boulevard Ave, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505. Also on July 27, 2026, the Commission issued a Notice of Public Hearings, scheduling two separate public hearings for September 2, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. Central Time at the Ed “Bosh” Froehlich Commission Room, Mandan City Hall, 205 2nd Avenue Northwest, Mandan, North

Dakota 58554 and September 3, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. Mountain Time at the Enchanted Castle, 607 Main Street, Regent, North Dakota 58650. The July 27, 2026 notices identified the following issues to be considered:

1. Will construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility at the proposed location produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota?
2. Is the proposed facility compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources?
3. Will construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility at the proposed location minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

On August 14, 2026, the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) filed correspondence in the docket.

On August 21, 2026, North Plains filed its proposed Hearing Exhibit List and proposed Exhibits 1 through 16: (1) Consolidated Application (slip sheet); (2) North Plains Connector Overview Map; (3) Local Zoning Approvals; (4) Route and Corridor Overview Map; (5) Water Resource Management District Correspondence (slip sheet); (6) County Weed Board Approvals; (7) Certification Relating to Order Provisions; (8) Letter of Support; (9) Updated Potential Permits and Approvals Table; (10) Programmatic Agreement; (11) SHSND Correspondence; (12) North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) Correspondence; (13) Summary of Avoidance Minimization and Mitigation Measures; (14) Brant Johnson Pre-Filed Direct Testimony; (14-A) Brant Johnson Curriculum Vitae; (15) John Kuba Pre-filed Direct Testimony; (15-A) John Kuba Curriculum Vitae; and (16) Public Hearing Presentation.

On August 31, 2026, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) filed correspondence in the docket.

On August 31, 2026, the Oceti Sakowin Power Authority filed correspondence in the docket.

On September 1, 2026, the Technical Hearing was held as scheduled except in the Commission hearing room on the 12th floor of the Capitol Building. Copies of proposed exhibits not filed on August 21, 2026 were provided at the hearing.

On September 2 and 3, 2026, the Public Hearings were held as scheduled.

On September 30, 2026, North Plains filed Late-Filed Exhibits 17 and 18, along with a status update on the federal and Montana permitting processes and an acknowledgment executed by the owners of an abandoned structure located within 500 feet of the Project Corridor.

Having allowed all interested persons an opportunity to be heard and having heard, reviewed, and considered all testimony and evidence presented, the Commission makes its:

Findings of Fact

1. North Plains is a Delaware limited liability company authorized to do business in the State of North Dakota, as evidenced by the Certificate of Good Standing issued by the North Dakota Secretary of State on January 22, 2026.
2. North Plains is a joint venture between North Plains Connector Holdings LLC, a subsidiary of Grid United LLC (Grid United), and Pattern NPC Transmission LLC (Pattern). ALLETE, Inc. (ALLETE) is anticipated to be the Project operator.
3. The Project is currently owned and being developed by North Plains. Avista Corporation, BHE U.S. Transmission, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Montana-Dakota Utilities Company, Great River Energy, NorthWestern Energy, Portland General Electric, Puget Sound Energy, and Otter Tail Power have each signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding with North Plains to acquire either an ownership interest or transmission capacity. ALLETE also signed definitive agreements for the ability to acquire ownership and capacity in the North Plains Connector.
4. North Plains utilized a stakeholder-first approach in developing and selecting the Project Corridor and Route. North Plains engaged with federal, state, and local agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders early in route development. Throughout development, North Plains made route adjustments based on feedback from agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders. North Plains has acquired approximately 99 percent of the private land rights agreements required for the Project.
5. North Plains obtained conditional use or special use permits from all counties crossed by the Project Route, as well as Havelock Township, which is the only township with zoning authority.

Size, Type, and Preferred Location of Facility

6. The North Plains Connector is a bidirectional HVDC electrical transmission line system and associated facilities that will extend approximately 422 miles from near Colstrip, Montana to two separate end points in North Dakota—one near the town of Center in Oliver County and the other near St. Anthony in Morton County.

7. The North Plains Connector crosses federal lands and has been conditionally awarded a federal grant. The respective federal agency actions require the North Plains Connector to undergo National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. The Montana portion of the North Plains Connector requires a Certificate of Compliance from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality pursuant to the Montana Major Facility Siting Act.

8. The Project consists of the following:

- HVDC Transmission Line – An approximately 168-mile-long, +/-525-kV HVDC transmission line segment extending from the Montana-North Dakota state line through Golden Valley, Slope, Hettinger, Grant, and Morton counties and terminating at the Morton County Converter Station.
- Oliver Transmission Line – An approximately 52-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line located in Oliver and Morton counties, North Dakota. The line will extend east and north from the Morton County Converter Station in Morton County to the East Oliver Substation (to be constructed and owned by Minnesota Power) in Oliver County, North Dakota.
- Morton Transmission Line – An approximately 22-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line located in Morton County, North Dakota. The line will extend east and southeast from the Morton County Converter Station to the Morton County Switchyard (to be constructed and owned by Basin Electric Power Cooperative).
- Morton County Converter Station – The AC/DC converter station and switchyard will be located in Morton County, North Dakota and serve as the connection point between the HVDC Transmission Line, Oliver Transmission Line, and Morton Transmission Line.
- Fiber Repeater Stations – At least one fiber repeater station along and connected to the HVDC Transmission Line to mitigate signal loss in the optical power ground wire (OPGW).
- Appurtenances and equipment, including OPGW and grounding components and access roads.
- Temporary workspaces during the construction phase to access the construction site, access structure locations, stage equipment and materials, splice wires and conductor lines, and install the various Project components.

9. Three main structure types are proposed for use on the transmission lines: tangent structures, angle structures, and dead-end structures. Most of the Project will use a tubular steel design. However, North Plains may use steel lattice or two-pole designs in particular situations, such as locations requiring longer spans, where the alignment changes direction by a substantial degree, or locations with difficult access for construction. Structure height will vary depending on the Project segment and structure type as well as site-specific conditions. Structure characteristics, including height ranges, spans, and minimum ground clearance, are provided in Table 4.1.1-1 of the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1).

10. The Project Corridor includes the Project Route, right-of-way, and full construction easements for the Morton County Converter Station and fiber repeater station(s), along with areas surveyed for cultural and natural resources. The Project Corridor is typically 300-feet wide, except for the following: (1) adjacent to public roads, the corridor is up to 350-feet wide to extend to the road centerline; (2) across the two parcels where easement option negotiations are on-going, the Project Corridor is up to 682-feet wide; and (3) near the Morton County Converter Station site and the Morton County Switchyard, the Corridor is up to 2,078-feet wide. All permanent infrastructure will be located within the Project Corridor, depicted in Appendix A to Exhibit 1, Exhibit 4, and Late-Filed Exhibit 17.

11. The right-of-way width for the HVDC Transmission Line is typically approximately 200 feet, with the fiber repeater station(s) located within the right-of-way. The Oliver and Morton Transmission Line rights-of-way are typically approximately 200 feet wide, except where co-located for about 3.4 miles in Morton County. Where the Oliver and Morton Transmission Line segments are co-located, the right-of-way is 150 to 250 feet wide for each segment, for a total width of 300 to 500 feet.

12. North Plains anticipates starting construction in 2027 and completing construction by the end of 2031. Commercial operation is projected to commence in the Fourth Quarter of 2032.

13. The total cost of the Project is estimated to be \$3.2 billion. The total cost of the North Plains Connector is approximately \$6 billion.

Study of Preferred Location

14. North Plains initiated correspondence seeking comments from the following federal, state, and local agencies/entities regarding the Project:

- Federal: (1) Natural Resources Conservation Service; (2) United States Department of Defense; (3) United States Fish and Wildlife Service; (4) United States Army Corps of Engineers; (5) Federal Aviation Administration; (6) Bureau of Land Management; (7) Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse; (8) 91st Missile Maintenance Squadron; (9) Minot Air Force Base; (10) Grand Forks Air Force Base;

United States Forest Service; (11) United States Department of Energy, and (12) National Park Service.

- State: (1) Energy Infrastructure and Impact Office; (2) North Dakota Aeronautics Commission; (3) North Dakota Attorney General; (4) North Dakota Department of Agriculture; (5) North Dakota Department of Health; (6) North Dakota Department of Human Services; (7) North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights; (8) North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education; (9) North Dakota Department of Commerce; (10) NDGFD; (11) North Dakota Industrial Commission; (12) North Dakota Office of the Governor; (13) North Dakota Department of Transportation; (14) SHSND/North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (ND SHPO); (15) North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission; (16) Job Service North Dakota; (17) North Dakota Department of Trust Lands (NDDTL); (18) North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department; (19) North Dakota Department of Water Resources; (20) North Dakota Transmission Authority; (21) North Dakota Pipeline Authority; (22) NDDEQ; (23) North Dakota Geological Survey; (24) North Dakota Forest Service; (25) Little Missouri Scenic River Commission; and (26) Old Red Old Ten Scenic Byway Committee.
- Local: (1) Oliver County; (2) Morton County; (3) Grant County; (4) Hettinger County; (5) Slope County; (6) Golden Valley County; (7) Havelock Township, Hettinger County; (8) Oliver County Water Resource District; and (9) Morton County Water Management District.

15. North Plains also performed early outreach and coordination with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers from 21 Tribal Nations.

16. North Plains conducted desktop and field studies to assess wildlife, habitat, cultural, and ecological conditions for the Project Corridor and Route and provided the following documentation in support of its Consolidated Application:

- a. *Cultural Resource Surveys.* North Plains coordinated with ND SHPO and other required agencies as part of the NEPA and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) process, leading to development of a Programmatic Agreement, which outlines the process for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, including defining the agreed-upon process for identifying, evaluating, and resolving potential impacts on historic and Tribal cultural resources. North Plains conducted a Class I Literature Review and performed Class III cultural resource surveys to identify cultural resources that may be affected by the Project. Eighteen Tribal Nations elected to participate directly in Tribal cultural resource surveys conducted along the Project Route. A summary of the Class I and Class III Cultural Resources Inventory was included in Appendix I-1 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1).

- b. *Wetlands and Water Resources Surveys.* North Plains completed desktop and field surveys for surface waters, including wetlands, within the Project Corridor and additional workspaces. Transmission structures and other temporary Project workspaces have been sited to minimize impacts to wetlands where avoidance is not possible. Across the Project workspace, North Plains anticipates approximately 0.1 acre of permanent wetland impacts and 9.1 acres of temporary wetland impacts. Transmission line structures and related workspaces have been sited to span and avoid waterbodies; however, construction equipment will need to cross waterbodies. North Plains anticipates approximately 0.1 acre of permanent waterbody impacts and 0.2 acres of temporary waterbody impacts from Project access roads. The Project Route crosses two state navigable waters, the Heart and Cannonball Rivers, and one state scenic river, the Little Missouri River. The Project has been designed to span all three rivers and transmission structures have been sited to avoid placement within the rivers. No travel through the rivers (except on existing roads) will occur during construction or operation of the Project. A summary of the wetland and water resource surveys was included in Appendix I-2 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1).
- c. *Wildlife and Habitat Surveys.* Field surveys and desktop studies were conducted to assess wildlife and habitat resources within the Project Corridor, Project workspace, and/or species-specific survey area. A full list of surveys can be found in Consolidated Application Table 6.11.1-1 (Exhibit 1).
- i. As part of the NEPA process, North Plains conducted a review of potential impacts to sensitive species, including any state-listed species and federal-listed species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Surveys conducted include bat surveys (see Appendix I-3 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1)), Dakota skipper habitat assessment survey (see Appendix I-4 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1)), and Dakota skipper occupancy surveys (see Appendix I-5 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1)). North Plains also engaged in consultation under Section 7 of the ESA, which provides a more focused review on direct and indirect effects to species federally listed as endangered, threatened, or candidates for protection under the ESA. Based on the field surveys completed, along with implementation of proposed voluntary conservation measures, the Project is anticipated to have minimal potential adverse effects on ESA-listed species and species proposed for listing.
- ii. North Plains conducted aerial raptor and eagle nest surveys in 2022 and 2023 within a one-mile buffer of the Project route at the time of survey, which was expanded to two miles in areas with higher predicted golden eagle nesting potential (see Appendix I-7 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1)). Based on surveys and the implementation of avian conservation commitments referenced in the draft Construction, Mitigation, and Reclamation Plan (CMRP), which include preparation of an Eagle Management Plan, Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) Compliance Plan, and Avian Protection Plan, the Project is anticipated to have minimal adverse effects on raptors and eagles.

- iii. North Plains conducted aerial lek surveys for sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage-grouse in North Dakota in 2022 (see Appendix I-8 to the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1)). No active greater sage-grouse leks were observed in North Dakota during surveys. The closest active greater sage-grouse lek is approximately 3.2 miles south of the Study Area in Slope County. North Plains sited the Project workspace and right-of-way to avoid all 18 active sharp-tailed grouse leks identified within one mile of Project structures. Additionally, for five of these leks, Project structures within one mile are sited in cropland or already fragmented and isolated grasslands, and are co-located with existing roads. For the remaining 13 leks where Project structures are sited within one mile and within potential sharp-tailed grouse nesting habitat, North Plains has developed proposed conservation measures in coordination with NDGFD to minimize potential impacts, focusing on construction time-of-year restrictions that minimize disturbance activities during the lekking and nesting seasons.
- iv. North Plains coordinated with NDGFD to identify unbroken grassland within the Project Corridor and sited the Project to avoid large tracts of unbroken grassland where possible. North Plains has coordinated with NDGFD regarding mitigation measures for impacts to unbroken grasslands, including reclamation and offsets for permanent infrastructure impacts.

Siting Criteria

17. The Commission has developed criteria pursuant to North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) section 49-22-05.1 to guide the site, corridor, and route suitability evaluation and designation process. The criteria, as set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) section 69-06-08-02, are classified as Exclusion Areas, Avoidance Areas, Selection Criteria, and Policy Criteria.

18. North Plains evaluated the Project with respect to the Commission's Exclusion Area, Avoidance Area, Selection Criteria, and Policy Criteria.

19. An Exclusion Area is a geographic area that must be excluded in the consideration of a route for a transmission facility. An Exclusion Area may be located within a corridor, but at no given point may such an area or areas encompass more than fifty percent of the corridor width unless there is no reasonable alternative.

20. No Exclusion Areas are located within the proposed Corridor or Route.

21. An Avoidance Area is a geographical area that may not be considered in the routing of a transmission facility unless the applicant shows that, under the circumstances, there is no reasonable alternative. In determining whether an Avoidance Area should be designated for a transmission facility, the Commission may consider, among other things, the proposed management of adverse impacts, the orderly siting of

facilities, system reliability and integrity, the efficient use of resources, and alternative routes.

22. The Little Missouri National Grassland (LMNG), a designated national grassland, is crossed by the Project Route and is located within more than 50 percent of the Project Corridor in some locations. Given the Project's interconnection points and that the LMNG stretches approximately 109 miles perpendicular to the Project Route in the western part of North Dakota, there is no reasonable alternative but to cross the national grassland. North Plains has minimized potential impacts to the LMNG by establishing a buffer zone to avoid existing resources within or near the LMNG, such as: Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Inventoried Roadless Areas, Rough Rider State Park, Burning Coal Vein Park campground, and notable cultural sites like the Battle of the Badlands.

23. The Little Missouri River, a state scenic river, is crossed by the Project Route and is within the Project Corridor. Due to the Project's endpoints and that the Little Missouri River extends from the southwest corner of North Dakota flowing north, there is no reasonable alternative but to cross the river. The Project will span the Little Missouri River, no structures will be placed in the river, and no travel across the river (except via existing roads) will be allowed during construction or operations. Accordingly, no impacts to the Little Missouri River are anticipated from the Project.

24. Historic resources are present within the Project Route and Project Corridor, and in some instances historic resources make up more than 50 percent of the Project Corridor. However, there is no reasonable alternative since shifting the Project Corridor will result in 1) encountering additional historic resource sites, 2) shifting onto an adjacent biological resource, 3) shifting into an area with topographical or engineering constraints, 4) shifting onto an adjacent parcel where North Plains does not have an option agreement, and/or 5) causing an increased impact to landowners or farming activities. North Plains has sited the Project to avoid impacts to cultural resource features. Additionally, North Plains will comply with the Programmatic Agreement established in coordination with multiple stakeholders, including the ND SHPO, to ensure protection of NRHP eligible, potentially eligible, or unevaluated cultural resources.

25. Landslide deposits, which are geologically unstable areas, are crossed by the Project Route and encompass more than 50 percent of the Project Corridor in some locations. These types of geologically unstable areas are common in southwest North Dakota; therefore, there is no reasonable alternative but to cross the landslide deposits. North Plains will minimize potential risks in these areas by spanning unstable areas to avoid direct impacts and conducting geotechnical investigations to inform design.

26. North Plains identified one potential occupied residence located within 500 feet of the Project right-of-way, which is currently being used as a seasonal hunting cabin. The owner of this residence requested the placement of the Route and has executed a setback waiver, which was provided in Appendix F of the Consolidated Application (Exhibit 1).

27. No other Avoidance Areas were identified within the Project Corridor. No other Avoidance Areas will be crossed by the Project Route.

28. In accordance with the Commission's Selection Criteria set forth in NDAC section 69-06-08-02(3), a transmission facility corridor or route shall be approved only if it is demonstrated that any significant adverse effects that will result from the location, construction, and maintenance of the transmission facility will be at an acceptable minimum, or that those effects will be managed and maintained at an acceptable minimum.

29. North Plains has analyzed the impacts of the Project in relation to all relevant Selection Criteria. No significant adverse impact will result from the location, construction, and operation of the Project.

30. The Commission's Policy Criteria are set forth in NDAC section 69-06-08-02(4). The Commission may give preference to an applicant that will maximize benefits that result from the adoption of various policies and practices. North Plains has maximized the benefits set forth in the Commission's Policy Criteria to the extent possible.

Additional Measures to Minimize Impacts

31. North Plains has agreed to a number of steps to mitigate the impact of the Project as indicated by the Certification Relating to Order Provisions — Transmission Facility Siting with accompanying Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications filed in this proceeding as Exhibit 7, which is incorporated by reference and attached to this Order.

32. The Project has been designed and will be constructed according to the National Electric Safety Code (NESC).

33. The Project Route crosses Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year floodplains at 15 locations along the Project Corridor. The Project has been designed to avoid placement of permanent facilities within the 100-year floodplain by spanning the designated floodplain area, with the exception of one location in Morton County. The extent of the 100-year floodplain adjacent to the Heart River in Morton County exceeds the typical 1,200-foot span distance between structures and, as a result, will require three structures within the floodplain. North Plains has coordinated with Morton County regarding the planned structure placement and will obtain a floodplain permit from Morton County prior to construction.

34. North Plains has developed a draft CMRP which outlines measures and includes plans that will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to resources during Project construction, reclamation, and operations. Plans included or referenced in the draft CMRP include: Migratory Bird Treaty Act Compliance Plan, Avian Protection Plan, North Dakota Noxious Weed Management Plan, Traffic and Transportation Management Plan, Spill Prevention and Response Plan, and Agricultural Impact Mitigation Plan.

35. North Plains will obtain coverage under the North Dakota General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity, which requires preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for the Project.

36. North Plains has committed to have environmental inspectors to conduct on-site Project compliance monitoring.

37. North Plains has prepared a Noxious Weed Management Plan, which was submitted to and approved by all of the North Dakota counties crossed by the Project (Exhibit 6).

38. The Project will participate in the North Dakota One-Call program.

39. North Plains has requested authorization from the Commission to clear trees and shrubs up to 250 feet in width within the Project workspace to accommodate construction, access, and structure placement; and up to 250 feet in width along the right-of-way to accommodate Project operation. Prior to any tree and shrub removal, a tree and shrub inventory will be completed. Trees and shrubs will be replaced in accordance with the Commission's Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications.

40. North Plains anticipates conducting winter construction. To ensure compliance with the Commission's topsoil segregation requirement during winter construction, North Plains would require the construction contractor to use measures to prevent the soil from freezing at the planned foundation locations, avoid soil disturbing activities, or obtain Commission approval prior to conducting soil disturbing activities. North Plains committed to filing a Winter Construction Plan prior to beginning construction, and to updating the plan, as needed, during construction.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission makes the following conclusions of law:

Conclusions of Law

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over North Plains and the subject matter of the Consolidated Application under NDCC chapter 49-22.

2. North Plains is a utility as defined in NDCC section 49-22-03(16).

3. The Project proposed by North Plains is an electric transmission facility as defined in NDCC section 49-22-03(7).

4. The Project satisfies the siting criteria pursuant to NDCC section 49-22-05.1 and NDAC section 69-06-08-02.

5. The location, construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project will produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota.
6. The Project is compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources.
7. The Project will minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission makes the following order:

Order

The Commission orders:

1. North Plains' Consolidated Application for a Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit is granted.
2. Certificate of Corridor Compatibility No. ____ is issued to North Plains Connector LLC designating a corridor for the construction, operation, and maintenance of an approximately 168-mile-long, +/-525-kV HVDC transmission line extending from the Montana-North Dakota border through Golden Valley, Slope, Hettinger, Grant, and Morton counties, terminating at a proposed AC/DC converter station and switchyard site in Morton County; an approximately 52-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line extending from the converter station/switchyard site in Morton County to a substation in Oliver County being separately constructed by Minnesota Power; an approximately 22-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line extending from the converter station/switchyard site in Morton County to a switchyard being constructed by Basin Electric Power Cooperative; and associated facilities, including the AC/DC converter station/switchyard in Morton County, up to two fiber repeater stations, optical power ground wire and grounding components, and any other associated facilities identified in the Consolidated Application, at the hearings and in any supplemental filings. For purposes of the Certificate, the designated corridor ranges from 300 to 682 feet in width along the Project Route; however, at the Morton County Converter Station and Morton County Switchyard, the Corridor is wider with a maximum width of 2,078 feet. For purposes of the Certificate, the designated Corridor is as depicted in Appendix A to Exhibit 1 with the modifications depicted in Exhibit 4 and Late-Filed Exhibit 17.
3. Route Permit No. ____ is issued to North Plains Connector LLC for the construction, operation, and maintenance of an approximately 168-mile-long, +/-525-kV HVDC transmission line extending from the Montana-North Dakota border through Golden Valley, Slope, Hettinger, Grant, and Morton counties, terminating at a proposed AC/DC

converter station and switchyard site in Morton County; an approximately 52-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line extending from the converter station/switchyard site in Morton County to a substation in Oliver County being separately constructed by Minnesota Power; an approximately 22-mile-long, double-circuit 345-kV AC transmission line extending from the converter station/switchyard site in Morton County to a switchyard being constructed by Basin Electric Power Cooperative; and associated facilities, including the AC/DC converter station/switchyard in Morton County, up to two fiber repeater stations, optical power ground wire and grounding components, and any other associated facilities identified in the Consolidated Application, at the hearings and in any supplemental filings. For purposes of the Route Permit, the designated route is as depicted in Appendix A to Exhibit 1 with the modifications depicted in Exhibit 4 and Late-Filed Exhibit 17.

4. The August 20, 2026 Certification Relating to Order Provisions – Transmission Facility Siting, with accompanying Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications (Exhibit 7), is incorporated by reference and attached to this Order.

5. North Plains is authorized to clear trees up to 250 feet in width to accommodate Project construction activities, and up to 250 feet in width along the right-of-way to accommodate Project operation.

6. North Plains will file a Winter Construction Plan prior to beginning construction, and update the plan, as needed, during construction.

7. To the extent that there are any conflicts or inconsistencies between North Plains' Consolidated Application in this proceeding and the Certification, the Certification provisions control.

8. North Plains shall obtain all other necessary licenses and permits prior to commencing construction on such portion of the Project for which the license or permit is required, and shall provide copies to the Commission.

9. North Plains is required to comply with all applicable laws, rules, and/or regulations in the event they desire to construct another or different transmission facility than was specified in the Consolidated Application within the corridor granted in this proceeding.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Sheri Haugen-Hoffart
Commissioner

Randy Christmann
Chair

Jill Kringstad
Commissioner