

Xcel Energy's Bayfield Second Circuit Transmission Line Project
Public Input Update and Routing Workshop Summary

Background material pertinent to the Routing workshop

- In December of 2017, members of Bayfield Peninsula Energy Alternates, BPEA, under the leadership of Kim Bro, Washburn Town Planning Commission, developed a list of criteria for ranking and selecting transmission routes for Bayfield County – for both present and future use.
- All five townships affected by the Second Circuit Transmission Project (Towns of: Bayfield, Barksdale, Bayview, Eileen and Washburn), plus the city of Bayfield, were presented with this criteria tool. Each signed a Statement of Support accepting the routing criteria for use when considering transmission lines. Citizens will be asking the Bayfield County Supervisors at the next meeting to endorse the same transmission line criteria.
- During a question-and-answer session at the Washburn Library on January 17, 2018, with Xcel representatives, BPEA, and the public, Xcel routing personnel and engineers were present but could not answer all the public questions. The BPEA, therefore, requested a **Routing Workshop** with Xcel representative, spanning three separate meetings: part 1: the public could ask/submit questions, part 2: Xcel Energy could answer, and part 3: the utility and the public could discuss and collaborate. This set of three separate routing workshops did not occur.
- Instead, Xcel planned and conducted a **single** session Routing Workshop, adding citizens living along the new proposed transmission routes to attend. This left out many of the people from the January meeting; plus, there was no public announcement of the Routing Workshop.

Xcel Routing Workshop

- The Xcel Routing Workshop was held on April 4, 2018 from 5 to 8 P.M at the Harbor View Event Center in Washburn. According to Xcel Energy's handout, the "purpose of the workshop was for residents on any of the alternative transmission line segments to get an in-depth look at what goes into routing a new line, including data analysis, state criteria and more". Residents were asked to "weigh in on the proposed routes".
- More than 60 Bayfield County residents participated in the workshop (whether they received an invitation letter or not). Eight Xcel Energy representatives facilitated small group discussions after a brief Xcel Energy power point presentation. The entire workshop was videotaped and is available for viewing.
- The first half of the Routing Workshop Xcel covered basic information primarily for residents who recently received a letter about a **new** alternative line being proposed near their house. Many citizens raised questions about Xcel's definition of the need for the proposed new route. Numerous questions were raised by citizens about alternatives, such as solar and underwater cables. Xcel indicated that those topics were off the table regarding the afternoon's workshop. Only the routes proposed by Xcel were discussed.

- The second half of workshop was devoted to small group discussions of proposed alternative routes, with criteria to consider and compare, with very limited time. Xcel stated they would be submitting the Existing Route and one alternative route to the Public Service Commission, PSC. Most of the Groups preferred the use of the Existing Route to prevent the need for new corridors. This is consistent with the priorities called for in state regulation and the criteria approved by the townships.

Summary Conclusion

- Overwhelmingly, the first choice of routes was the existing route with consideration of small sections that could be improved with an underground line, or changing the side of a road, etc. These could be the two routes proposed to the PSC (the existing route, and the existing with variations). Groups mentioned that Big Rock Road, Friendly Valley Road, and Star Route should be taken off the list of route considerations.
- The group also highly recommended bringing the second circuit to the City of Washburn and then stopping. Redundancy to Bayfield could be achieved by updating the line from the Iron River- Cornucopia section. Xcel is planning to do this sometime in the future. This strategy would eliminate the need to construct new lines across the sensitive area of the Sioux River.
- Because Xcel proposed several new routes at the last minute, many new questions have been raised while several old ones have still not been answered by Xcel who managed this meeting and limited what could be asked and answered. More information is still needed and a further delay of decisions on approving the utilization of County lands is needed to secure this information. Xcel stated that another Open House will be scheduled by Xcel to answer non-engineer questions on these newly proposed alternative transmission lines. The BPEA will be requesting another routing workshop to answer specific questions still not answered by Xcel.
- Bayfield County citizens are highly engaged in the proposed second circuit transmission line because they do not want to see any more power lines than necessary. And they have insisted that Xcel follow the criteria approved by local governments and citizen groups.