COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

MEMO

Date: November 2, 2020

To: Adyita Ranade, Assistant Commissioner

Through: Louise Miltich, Supervisor EERA

From: William Cole Storm, Environmental Review Manager
EERA, (651) 539-1844

Subject: **Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Decision for Plum Creek Wind Project**
PUC Docket No. IP6997/CN-18-699 and IP6997/TL-18-701

Action Required

The signature of the Assistant Commissioner is requested on the attached Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping Decision. Once signed, Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff will provide notice of the Scoping Decision to those persons on the *Project Contact List* and all affected landowners and begin preparing the EIS.

Background

Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC (Plum Creek or Applicant) filed three separate applications in support of its proposed up to 414 megawatt (MW) Plum Creek Wind Farm and a 31-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line to be located in Cottonwood, Murray, and Redwood counties (collectively, the Project):

- a certificate of need application for the wind farm and the associated 345 kV transmission line (Docket No. IP6997/CN-18-699),
- a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS) site permit application (SPA) (Docket No. IP6997/WS-18-700), and
- a high-voltage transmission line (HVTL) route permit application (RPA) for the proposed 345 kV transmission line (Docket No. IP6997/TL-18-701).

The Plum Creek Wind Project requires three approvals from the Commission —1) a certificate of need (covering both the wind farm and the transmission line), 2) a route permit for the transmission line, and 3) a site permit for the wind farm. Items 1 and 2 require the preparation of an environmental review document, respectively an Environmental Report (ER) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In its order of January 30, 2020, the Commission authorized joint proceedings and combined environmental review (ER and EIS) for these approvals. Accordingly, the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is preparing an EIS that will address the certificate of need and route permit applications.

Schedule

Please review and provide a signature by November 6, 2020. If you require any changes or have any questions, please contact staff as soon as possible. The draft EIS is scheduled to be completed by January 11, 2021.

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

In the Matter of the Application of Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC for a Certificate of Need (LWECS and HVTL) and Associated HVTL Route Permit for the Plum Creek Wind Project in Cottonwood, Murray, and Redwood Counties
PUC Docket No. IP6997, CN-18-699 and TL-18-701

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING DECISION

The above matter has come before the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (Department) for a decision on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be prepared for the Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC (Plum Creek or Applicant) Project in Cottonwood, Murray, and Redwood Counties.

Introduction and Background

The Applicant filed three separate applications in support of its proposed 414 megawatt (MW) Plum Creek Wind Farm and a 31-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line to be located in Cottonwood, Murray, and Redwood counties (collectively, the Project):

- a certificate of need application for the wind farm and the associated 345 kV transmission line (Docket No. IP6997/CN-18-699),[1]
- a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS) site permit application (SPA) (Docket No. IP6997/WS-18-700),[2] and
- a high-voltage transmission line (HVTL) route permit application (RPA) for the proposed 345 kV transmission line (Docket No. IP6997/TL-18-701).[3]

Project Description

The Project consists of two major components, a LWECS of up to 414 MW, and the 345 kV HVTL of approximately 31 miles (Figures 1 and 2).

414 MW LWECS

The Project will be located in northwestern Cottonwood, northeastern Murray, and southern Redwood counties, Minnesota. The Project will have up to 414 MW of nameplate capacity. Plum Creek continues to assess its turbine options. For the SPA Plum Creek evaluated wind turbines with rated nameplate power outputs ranging from 2.8 MW to 5.6 MW, corresponding to between 110 and 74 wind turbines at the site.[4]

---

[1] Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC, *Application for a Certificate of Need*, November 12, 2018. eDocket No. 201911-1157472-01, -02, -03, -04 [hereinafter Certificate of Need Application].

[2] Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC, *Application for a Large Wind Energy Conversion System Site Permit*. November 12, 2018. eDocket No. 201911-157475-01,-02, -03,- 04, -05, -06, -07, 08, -09, -10, 201911-157576-01, -02. [hereinafter Site Permit Application (SPA)]

[3] Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC, *Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit for a 345 kV High Voltage Transmission Line*, November 20, 2018, eDocket No. 201911-57483-01,-02, -03,- 04, -05, -06, -07, 08. [hereinafter Route Permit Application (RPA)].

[4] Site Permit Application, at Section 4.0.

A number of facilities will be constructed to support the operation of the wind turbines and facilitate the delivery of the electricity to consumers. Plum Creek is seeking approval from the Commission through the LWECS site permit for the following associated facilities: permanent meteorological towers and other data collection systems, up to two ADLS radars, an electrical collection and communications system, access roads, temporary laydown and staging areas, two collector substations and associated equipment, and an O&M facility.[5]

At the time of the filing, Plum Creek stated it had acquired 73 percent (53,223 acres of the 73,000 acres required) of the land required for successful construction and operation of the Project site.[6] Easement negotiations are ongoing. Plum Creek had anticipated commencing construction of the LWECS in the fourth quarter of 2020, with an anticipated commercial operation date (COD) in the fourth quarter of 2020.[7]

On July 7, 2020, Plum Creek, through its council, notified the EERA staff of the availability of an additional turbine model option for the proposed LWECS. The new turbine, a Siemens Gamesa SG170 6.0 MW turbine, provides greater output, corresponding to 68 turbine locations at the site.[8]

345 kV HVTL

Plum Creek proposes to construct two new collector substations (Collector Substation 1 and Collector Substation 2) within the LWECS site.[9] Plum Creek proposes to connect the LWECS to the electrical grid through approximately 31 miles of new 345 kV transmission line. The HVTL Project will begin at the new Collector Substation 2 to be constructed in Ann Township of northwestern Cottonwood County; the HVTL will then proceed generally north and east for approximately five miles to connect to the Collector Substation 1, also in Ann Township. The HVTL Project will then connect Collector Substation 1 to the proposed Switching Station, which connects the proposed transmission line to the existing Brookings to Hampton 345 kV transmission line, approximately 26 miles north of the Plum Creek site.[10]

Minnesota Rule 7850.1900, Subpart 2, Item C, requires that an applicant provide at least two proposed routes for the HVTL and identify the applicant's preferred route and reasons therefore, however, Minnesota statute 216E.03, subdivision 3 states that neither of the two proposed routes may be designated as a preferred route. Plum Creek identified two potential route segments between Collector Substation 2 and Collector Substation 1 (the Green and Yellow) and two potential routes between Collector Substation 1 and the Switching Station (the Blue and Red).[11]

Prior to submittal of the HVTL Route Permit Application, the DNR requested that the Applicant evaluate an *alternative route segment* where the proposed Red Route crosses the Cottonwood River; the DNR's alternative would lie outside the original planned route width of the Red Route. In response to the DNR's request, the Applicant widened the portion of the Red Route (to 6,250 feet) near the intersection of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5 and CSAH 4 and the Cottonwood River. Expanding the requested route width allows flexibility in crossing the Cottonwood River and its associated floodplain and wetlands along the Red Route.

[5] Site Permit Application, at Section 4.0.
[6] Ibid, at Section 7.0.
[7] Ibid, at Section 10.8
[8] Fredrikson and Byron, PA, comment letter, July 7, 2020. eDocket No. 20207-164707-03.
[9] Route Permit Application, at Appendix C, page 1 of 4.
[10] Ibid, at Section 2.1.
[11] Ibid, at Section 2.1 and Figure 2.0-1.

The DNR's request is included in staff's proposed scoping decision (Figure 3 - The *Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment*).

Plum Creek indicates that the proposed single-circuit 345 kV HVTL will require a right-of-way (easement width) of 150 feet but has stated in areas where paralleling existing road rights-of-way that poles would be placed on adjacent private property, within approximately 10 feet of the existing road right-of-way. This pole placement allows the transmission line right-of-way to share (overlap) existing road rights-of-way and will reduce the overall size of the easement required from the private landowner along roads.[12]

Plum Creek requests a 1,000-foot route width for the Green, Yellow, and Blue proposed routes. For the proposed Red route, Plum Creek is requesting a varying route width from 1,000 feet up to 6,250 feet (1.2 miles).[13]

At the time of filing, Plum Creek had secured 100 percent of the total necessary private easements on the Blue route and 70 percent of the total necessary easements on the Red route.[14] If additional property rights are required for the HVTL, Plum Creek has stated that it will seek to negotiate a voluntary easement agreement with each affected landowner. However, if Plum Creek and the landowner are unable to negotiate an easement for the right-of-way, Plum Creek has stated "Plum Creek reserves the right to evaluate whether the use of eminent domain is appropriate under Minn. Stat. Ch. 117, based on specific circumstances."[15]

Plum Creek proposes to use four types of steel monopole structures: tangent, small angle, heavy angle, and dead end. The proposed structures will range in height from approximately 110 feet to 125 feet, with spans of approximately 650 feet between structures.[16]

On July 7, 2020, Plum Creek, through its council, notified the EERA staff of potential alignment changes along the Blue Route's CSAH 14 segment to address concerns raised by MnDOT. Plum Creek has identified two options: (1) using the proposed horizontal configuration and shifting the alignment approximately 20 feet away from the edge of the highway right-of-way edge, and (2) using a vertical design coupled with more minor pole shifts, in the 10-feet range. Both alignment options remain in the original request route width.[17]

Plum Creek anticipates that project construction will begin in the second quarter 2021 and that the new line will be in service by the third quarter of 2022.[18]

Regulatory Process and Procedures

The Plum Creek Wind Project requires three approvals from the Commission —1) a certificate of need (covering both the wind farm and the transmission line), 2) a route permit for the transmission line, and 3) a site permit for the wind farm.

[12] Ibid, at Section 2.4.
[13] Route Permit Application, at Section 2.2.
[14] Ibid, at p.14.
[15] Applicant Notice (Minn. Stat. 216E.03, subd. 4, Minn. R. 7850.2100 and Minn. R. 7829.2500) Notice of Plum Creek Wind Farm, LLC's Filing of Certificate of Need, Site Permit and Route Permit Applications with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC Docket Nos. IP-6997/CN-18-699, WS-18-700 and TL-18-701).
[16] Route Permit Application, at Section 2.3.
[17] Fredrikson and Byron, PA, comment letter, July 7, 2020. eDocket No. 20207-164707-03.
[18] Ibid, at Section 2.6.

Items 1 and 2 require the preparation of an environmental review document, respectively an Environmental Report (ER) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The LWECS SPA, development of the Draft Site Permit, and the Public Hearing facilitates the analysis of potential impacts and informs the development of the final site permit for large wind projects.

In its order of January 30, 2020, the Commission authorized joint proceedings and combined environmental review (ER and EIS) for these approvals.[19] Accordingly, the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is preparing an EIS that will address the certificate of need and route permit applications.[20]

The first step in preparing the EIS is scoping, or focusing the EIS on those issues and alternatives that are most relevant to the proposed project.[21] Citizens, local governments, tribal governments, and agencies are asked to comment on the scope and EERA staff uses those comments to develop the scope.

For a detailed summary of the regulatory review process, see the EERA staff *Comments and Recommendations on the Application Acceptance* dated December 4, 2019.[22]

Scoping Process Summary

Commission and EERA staff held a joint public information and EIS scoping meeting on June 16, 2020. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, a remote-access meeting replaced the standard in-person meeting, as directed by the Governor's executive orders. Similar to an in-person meeting, the remote-access meeting provided interested persons the opportunity to: (1) learn about the state permitting process and the proposed project; and (2) ask questions and provide comments on potential issues and alternatives to be considered for analysis in the EIS or included as a condition in a draft LWECS site permit.

Total attendance, including staff, at this meeting was approximately 54 persons; 10 individuals took the opportunity to comment.[23] Comments were mostly from LIUNA and Local 563 and the Iron Workers 512, who commented that they supported the project for the potential jobs and other positive socioeconomic impacts that would result from this project.

One citizen shared concerns about the environmental impacts of wind turbines, specifically to the bald eagle populations in the area, and concerns about what would happen to the wind turbines after their lifecycle ends. This person was also concerned about the noise from turbines.

Another citizen was interested in decommissioning of the project and soil remediation related to salinity. This commenter also wanted more information about what compensation would be available to nonparticipating landowners.

[19] Commission Order Application Acceptance, January 30, 2020, eDocket No. 20201-159855-01.
[20] Minnesota Rule 7849.1900, subp. 2
[21] Minnesota Rule 4410.2100
[22] EERA Comments and Recommendations-Application Acceptance, December 4, 2019. eDocket No. 201912-158031—03.
[23] Oral Comments from October 25, 2018, Public Information and EIS Scoping Meeting, eDockets No. 20207-164841-01

A 20-day comment period, closing on July 7, 2020, provided the public an opportunity to submit written comments to EERA staff on potential impacts and mitigation measures for consideration in the scope of the EIS. Comments were received from eight citizens, the Applicant,[24] and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR),[25] the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)[26] and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).[27]

Citizen written comments expressed general support for the Project, as well as, concern about a variety of potential impacts associated with the Project, including impacts to public safety, noise, and compliance with the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act.

No system alternatives (LWECS/HVTL CN) or specific route alternatives (HVTL routing) were proposed for consideration in the EIS during the scoping comment period.

Relative to the HVTL portion of the Project, the DNR requested that the EIS describe the criteria the applicant proposes for identifying avian flight diverter locations and to recognize that the DNR's License to Cross Public Waters may require flight diverters.

The MnDOT stated that their policy[28] is to work to accommodate HVTLs within or as near as feasible to the trunk highway rights of way, while ensuring that appropriate clearance is maintained to preserve the safety of the traveling public and highway workers and the effective operation of the highway system now and in the foreseeable future.

MnDOT's reviewed of the proposed routes indicates that the Red Route would cross trunk highways (TH) 68 and US 14. Stating that both of these crossings are allowable if the Applicant adheres to the MnDOT Accommodation Policy. The Blue Route appears to have the potential to both cross and parallel TH 68 and US 14. The paralleling of TH 68, with aerial encroachment, looks to be permittable. However, as communicated to the Applicant in an email dated December 3rd, 2019, the potential aerial encroachment of US 14 may not be allowed if the placement of the line cannot meet the more restrictive Clear Zone requirements in that area. On July 7, 2020, Plum Creek, through its council, notified the EERA staff of potential changes to the alignment along US 14 to address MnDOT's concerns. Plum Creek identified two options: (1) using the proposed horizontal configuration and shifting the alignment approximately 20 feet away from the edge of the highway right-of-way edge, and (2) using a vertical design coupled with more minor pole shifts, in the 10-feet range.[29]

Additionally, MnDOT requested that the Applicant coordinate with the agency in the planning of construction work, including delivery of oversized loads that may affect MnDOT right of way.

The MPCA comments on the HVTL portion of the Project focused on potential impacts to water resources, noting the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and the State Disposal System Construction Stormwater Permit. Additionally, the MPCA requested that the EIS contain detailed information

[24] Written Public Comments on Scope of EIS, eDockets No. 20207-164766-01.
[25] Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Scoping Comments, April 8, 2020. eDockets No. 20204-161904-01.
[26] Minnesota Department of Transportation Scoping Comments, April 8, 2020. eDockets No. 20204-161915-01.
[27] Written Public Comments (MPCA 1/16/2020) on Scope of EIS, eDockets No. 20207-164766-01.
[28] Utility Accommodation on Trunk Highway Right of Way, http://www.dot.state.mn.us/policy/operations/op002.html.
[29] Fredrikson and Byron, PA, comment letter, July 7, 2020. eDocket No. 20207-164707-03.

on the total new impervious surfaces that will be created by the Project, and an estimation (acres) of permanent impacts to wetlands.

Applicant Comments

Pursuant to Minn. Rule 7850.3700, subpart 2(B), applicants have the right to review proposed alternatives. No requests for alternative routes, alternative route segments, and/or alignment modifications were received during the scoping comment period.

Commission's Consideration of Alternatives

On July 21, 2020, Department staff provided the Commission with a summary of the EIS scoping process.[30] The DNR's request concerning the crossing of Plum Creek was included in EERA's proposed scoping decision (in this case as the *Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment*).

In its Order of October 30, 2020, the Commission ordered that a route segment (Blue E) formerly rejected by the Applicant[31] be included in the scope of the EIS and held over for further analysis in the EIS.[32]

Alternatives Recommended for Inclusion in the Scope of the EIS

Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment: The Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment is approximately 2-miles in length and parallels the western side of CSAH 5 between 180th Street and CSAH 4 (Figure 3).

Blue E Alternative Route Segment: In general, much of the Blue Route is located along CSAH 10 in Redwood County. The Blue Route deviates from CSAH 10 between 160th Street and 170th Street, avoiding the Fagen Farms, LLP properties (PID 56-033-4020 and 56-034-3060) which straddle CSAH 10 (Figure 4). The Blue Route around these two parcels is approximately 1.25 miles in length.

The Blue E alternative route segment would continue north along CSAH 10, between the two Fagen Farm properties, for approximately 1,200 feet before once again being joined with the Blue Route.

Alternatives Not Recommended for Inclusion in the Scope of the EIS

No specific route (HVTL) alternatives or system alternatives (CN) were proposed for consideration in the EIS during the scoping comment period.

EERA staff is not recommending any additional alternatives routes, alternative route segments, and/or alignment modifications.

HAVING REVIEWED THE MATTER, consulted with Department EERA staff, and in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7850.2500, I hereby make the following Scoping Decision:

[30] Department EERA Comments and Recommendations EIS Scoping Summary, July 21, 202018, eDocket No.20207-165144-01.
[31] RPA, at pp. 13-19, Appendix F.
[32] Commission, Order Identifying Route Alternatives and Issuing a Draft Site Permit, October 30, 2021, eDocket ID: 202010-167812-01.

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The issues outlined below will be identified and described in the EIS for the proposed Plum Creek Wind Farm Project. The EIS will describe the Project and the human and environmental resources at the facility location. The EIS will also provide information on the potential impacts of the proposed project as they relate to the topics outlined in this scoping decision, including possible mitigation for identified impacts, identification of irretrievable commitment of resources, and permits from other government entities that may be required for construction of the project.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- Project Purpose
- General Project Description and Location
- Project Costs
- Project Schedule

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Certificate of Need
- Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) Site Permit
- High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) Route Permit
- Environmental Review Process
- Other Permits and Approvals

PROPOSED LWECS PROJECT AND SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES

The EIS, in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7849.1500, will describe and analyze the availability and feasibility of the following project alternatives, and the human and environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures associated with each:

- Proposed LWECS Project
  - Project Description {turbines, collector system, project substation, roads, operations and maintenance facility, transmission intertie)
  - Wind Easement Acquisition
  - Construction
  - Restoration
  - Operation and Maintenance
  - Decommissioning
  - Required Permits
- LWECS Project Alternatives
  - No-Build Alternative

- Generic 414 MW LWECS (sited elsewhere)
- Generic 414 MW Solar Farm
- Alternatives not Evaluated (fossil-fuel plants, non-renewable)

- Potential Impacts of Proposed LWECS and System Alternatives
  - Environmental Setting
  - Human Settlements
    - Demographics
    - Noise
    - Aesthetics {lighting, visibility impairment, appearance of project components)
    - Shadow Flicker
    - Property Values
    - Local Economies
    - Public Services {roads, utilities, emergency services)
    - Electronic Interference {radio, television, cellular service, internet service)
    - Public Health and Safety {Construction Safety, Stray Voltage, Aviation Hazards, Ice Throw)
  - Solid and Hazardous Waste
  - Air Quality {criteria pollutants, hazardous air pollutants and volatile organic compounds, ozone)
  - Agriculture {cropland, livestock, compaction, tile systems, aerial spraying, GPS)
  - Natural Environment
    - Water Resources {water appropriations, surface water, groundwater, wetlands)
    - Geology and Soils
    - Vegetation
    - Wildlife
    - Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- Fuel Availability
- Availability and Feasibility of Alternatives

PROPOSED 345 kV HVTL PROJECT AND SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES

The EIS, in accordance with Minnesota Rule 7849.1500, will describe and analyze the availability and feasibility of the following system alternatives, and the human and environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures associated with each:

- Proposed 345 kV HVTL Transmission Line
  - Engineering and design (structures, conductors, Byron interconnect)

- Route width, Right-of-Way, Anticipated Alignment
- Right-of-way Acquisition
- Construction
- Restoration
- Operation and Maintenance
- Decommissioning

- . HVTL Project Alternatives
  - No-Build Alternative
  - Transmission Alternative of a Different Size
  - Alternative Endpoints
  - Alternatives not Evaluated (Demand-Side Management, Purchased Power, Upgrading Existing Facilities)

PROPOSED HVTL AND ROUTE ALTERNATIVES -AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, POTENTIAL IMPACTS, AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES

The EIS will include a discussion of the human and environmental resources potentially impacted by the proposed project and the route alternatives described herein. Potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the project and each route alternative will be described. Based on the impacts identified, the EIS will describe mitigation measures that could reasonably be implemented to reduce or eliminate the identified impacts. The EIS will describe any unavoidable impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

- Human Settlement
  - Noise
  - Aesthetics (lighting, appearance of project components)
  - Displacement
  - Property Values
  - Local Economies (local revenues, taxes, employment)
  - Zoning and Land Use Compatibility
  - Electronic Interference
  - Cultural Values
- Transportation and Public Services
  - Roadways and Railways
  - Public Utilities
  - Emergency Services
  - Airports
- Public Health and Safety
  - Construction Safety

  - Electric and Magnetic Fields
  - Implantable Medical Devices
  - Stray Voltage
  - Induced Voltage
  - Aviation Hazards
  - Air Quality
- Land Based Economies
  - Agriculture (cropland, livestock, compaction, tile systems, aerial spraying, GPS}
  - Forestry
  - Mining
  - Recreation and Tourism
- Archaeological and Historic Resources
- Natural Environment
  - Water Resources (water appropriations, surface water, groundwater, wetlands)
  - Geology and Soils
  - Flora
  - Fauna
  - Threatened/ Endangered/ Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- Electric System Reliability
- Use or Paralleling of Existing Rights-of-Way
- Costs that are Dependent on Design and Route
- Adverse Impacts that Cannot be Avoided
- Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources
- Cumulative Potential Effects
- Relative Merits of Route Alternatives

ROUTE ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The EIS will evaluate the routes and alternative route segments proposed in the applicant's route permit application - these are referred to in the application as the Blue and Red Routes, and the Yellow and Green Routes, and are shown on the attached maps.

The *Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment*, which is an approximately 2-mile long deviation from the Red Route's alignment along the western side of CSAH 5 between 180th Street and CSAH 4.

The *Blue E Alternative Route Segment*, which is an approximately 1,200 feet long segment

that continues north along CSAH 10, between the two Fagen Farm properties, before once again being joined with the Blue Route.

IDENTIFICATION OF PERMITS

The EIS will include a list and description of permits from other government entities that may be required for the proposed project.

ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The EIS will not consider the following:

- Any route alternative not specifically identified for study in this scoping decision.
- Any system alternative (an alternative to the proposed LWECS or transmission line) not specifically identified for study in this scoping decision.
- Impacts or mitigative measures associated with specific LWECS tower or road locations for the proposed project and alternatives.
- The manner in which landowners are paid for LWECS easements or transmission line right-of- way easements.

SCHEDULE

The draft EIS is anticipated to be completed and available on January 11, 2021. Public meetings and a comment period on the draft EIS will follow. Timely and substantive comments on the draft EIS will be responded to in a final EIS. Public hearings will be held in the project area after issuance of the draft EIS and are anticipated to occur in January 2021.

Signed this 3rd day of November, 2020

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Aditya Ranade, Deputy Commissioner

FIGURES

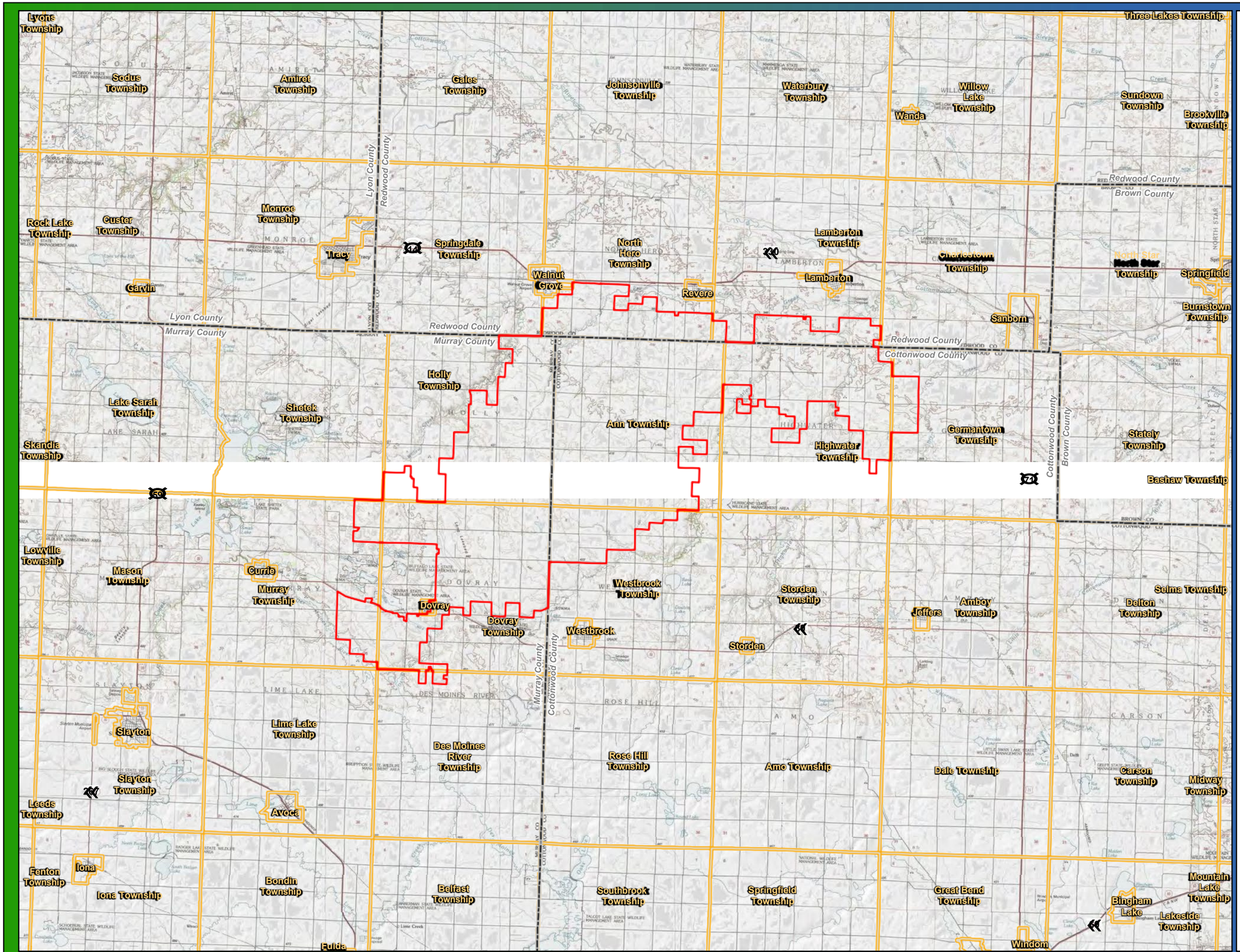


Figure 1
Project Location

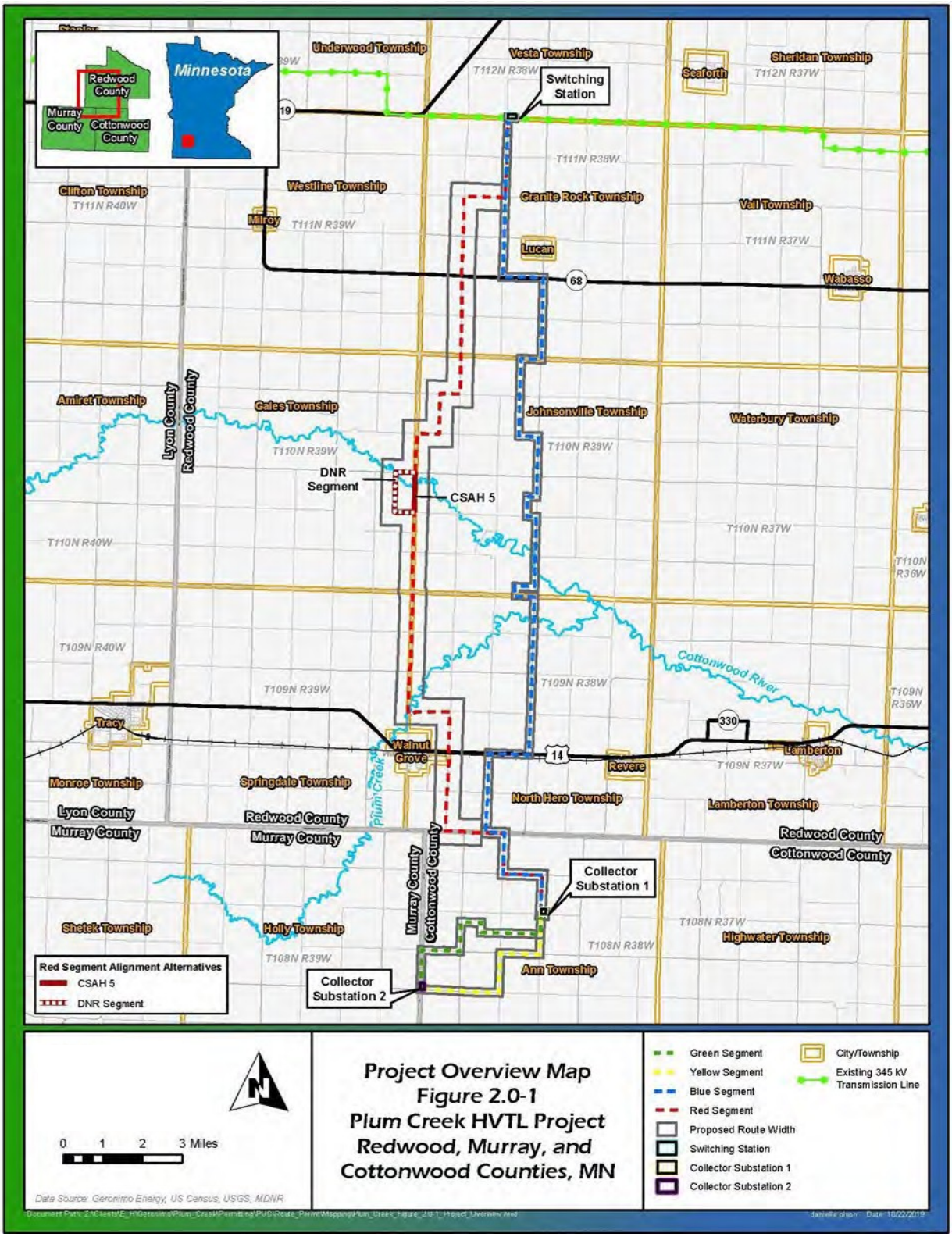
Plum Creek Wind Project

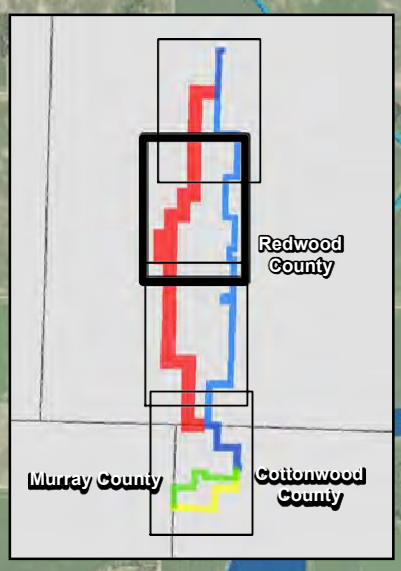
Redwood, Murray, and Cottonwood Counties, MN

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

Document Path: Z:\Clients\E_H\Geronimo\Plum_Creek\Permitting\PUC\Site_Permit\Mapping\Fig01_Project_Location.mxd

FIGURE 2 HVTL PROJECT LOCATION





T111N, R38W, Sec. 30
T111N, R38W, Sec. 29
T111N, R38W, Sec. 28
T111N, R38W, Sec. 27
T111N, R38W, Sec. 31
T111N, R38W, Sec. 32
T111N, R38W, Sec. 33
T111N, R38W, Sec. 34
T110N, R39W, Sec. 2
T110N, R39W, Sec. 1
T110N, R38W, Sec. 6
T110N, R38W, Sec. 5
T110N, R38W, Sec. 4
T110N, R38W, Sec. 3
T110N, R39W, Sec. 11
T110N, R39W, Sec. 12
T110N, R38W, Sec. 7
T110N, R38W, Sec. 8
T110N, R38W, Sec. 9
T110N, R38W, Sec. 10
T110N, R39W, Sec. 14
T110N, R39W, Sec. 13
T110N, R38W, Sec. 18
T110N, R38W, Sec. 17
T110N, R38W, Sec. 16
T110N, R38W, Sec. 15
T110N, R39W, Sec. 23
T110N, R39W, Sec. 24
T110N, R38W, Sec. 19
T110N, R38W, Sec. 20
T110N, R38W, Sec. 21
T110N, R38W, Sec. 22
T110N, R39W, Sec. 26
T110N, R39W, Sec. 25
T110N, R38W, Sec. 30
T110N, R38W, Sec. 28
T110N, R38W, Sec. 27
T110N, R39W, Sec. 36
T110N, R38W, Sec. 29

Sleepy Eye Creek
Sleepy Eye Creek
Crown Ave
220th St
230th St
210th St
Duncan Ave
200th St
Eagle Ave
190th St
Cottonwood River
Lone Tree Creek
175th St
175th St
66
55
Cottonwood River Alignment
CSAH 5

Red Segment Alignment Alternatives
- CSAH 5
- Cottonwood Alternative

Figure 3

0 0.25 0.5
Miles

Imagery: MNGeo 2017 Color FSA
Sources: Geronimo Energy, MN Geospatial Commons, MDNR, MNDOT, USFWS

Cottonwood River Alternative Alignment

- Residence within 500ft of Segments
- Transmission Structure
- Green Segment
- Yellow Segment
- Red Segment
- Blue Segment
- Existing 345 kV Transmission Line
- Switching Station
- Collector Substation 1
- Collector Substation 2
- Proposed Route Width
- National Wildlife Refuge
- Native Plant Community
- Wildlife Management Area
- NWI Wetlands
- MDNR Stream/River

Sites of Biological Significance
- Moderate
- Below

Figure 4 Blue E Alternative Route Segment