

1 SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING
2 SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 - 21-191, 21-190, 21-189
3 BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
4 AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

5
6 In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a
7 Site Permit and Two Route Permits for the up to 460
8 Megawatt Sherco Solar Energy Generating System and
9 Associated 345 Kilovolt Transmission Lines in Sherburne
10 County, Minnesota

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12 MPUC DOCKET NO. E-0002/GS-21-191
13 E-0002/TL-21-190
14 E-0002/TL-21-189

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18 Met telephonically, pursuant to Notice,
19 at 6:00 p.m. in the evening on September 1, 2021.

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25 COURT REPORTER: Bridget E. Kelly

I N D E X

SPEAKER

PAGE

Scott Ek

3

William Risse

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Bill Storm

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Kevin Pranis

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1 OPERATOR: Good day, and thank you for
2 standing by. Welcome to the Sherco Solar Project
3 conference call. At this time all participants are
4 in listen-only mode, and after the speakers'
5 presentation, there will be a question and answer
6 session. To ask a question during the session,
7 you'll need to press *1 on your telephone. Please
8 be advised that today's conference is being
9 recorded. If you require any further assistance,
10 please press *0. I would now like to hand the
11 conference over to your speaker today, speaker Scott
12 Ek. Please go ahead, sir.

13 MR. SCOTT EK: Good evening, and welcome
14 to the public information and environmental
15 assessment scoping meeting for the proposed Sherco
16 Solar Project.

17 Just a moment here.

18 Again, my name is Scott Ek. I am an
19 energy facilities planner with the Minnesota Public
20 Utilities Commission, and as I said, tonight we're
21 here for the Sherco Solar Project public information
22 meeting.

23 For those of you on the phone right now,
24 I wanted to let you know -- it was in the notice,
25 but there is a presentation also on Webex that you

1 would have to go to online to see the PowerPoint
2 presentation. And it was in the notice, and you can
3 navigate your computer, if you'd like to watch it,
4 to Minnesota dot Webex, W-E-B-E-X, dot com and enter
5 the event number 1463280765. And you'll be able to
6 listen along and watch the presentation that's
7 available.

8 And I also want to remind folks that are
9 on the phone that throughout the presentation you
10 may press *1 on your phone if you're interested in
11 asking a question or providing a comment. The
12 operator will place you into a queue, and we'll take
13 your questions and comments at the end of the
14 presentation.

15 So now to get on with the presentation.
16 So this evening, I guess, first, the purpose of
17 tonight's meeting is to provide information about
18 the proposed project, answer questions about the
19 project and the permitting process, and receive
20 comments on topics for potential consideration in
21 the environmental assessment that will be prepared.
22 The meeting will proceed tonight with me providing a
23 brief summary of the permitting process and the
24 state's role in that process, followed by a
25 description of the proposed project by Xcel Energy

1 representatives. And following Xcel will be a
2 summary of the environmental review requirements by
3 Bill Storm with the Minnesota Department of
4 Commerce. And after the presentations we'll open
5 the meeting up, as I said, for questions and
6 comments folks may have.

7 So the Sherco Solar Project is a proposed
8 460-megawatt solar energy-generating system. The
9 project is proposed to be divided into an east block
10 and a west block of solar panels, and those two
11 blocks would connect to the electric transmission
12 system by way of two 345-kilovolt transmission
13 lines, 1.7 miles and 3.2 miles in length
14 respectively. That's just a brief summary. Xcel as
15 I said will provide a much more detailed description
16 of the project, including maps and figures of the
17 proposed project and other details.

18 So we're here tonight because the project
19 as proposed, that's being applied for, requires a
20 total of three permits from the Public Utilities
21 Commission. It requires a site permit because the
22 facility is greater than 50 megawatts in size, and
23 it also will require two route permits because those
24 two high-voltage transmission lines are greater than
25 100 kilovolts and longer than 1500 feet in length.

1 So part of the reason for tonight's
2 meeting and the written comment period that follows
3 this meeting is to get comments on matters that
4 should be addressed in either of the three permits
5 that are being sought. And also, I just want to
6 point out a project of this size typically requires
7 a certificate of need. But the Commission in a
8 separate but related docket, it was Docket 20-891,
9 exempted the project from this requirement because
10 it was already part of an approved bidding process.
11 So a certificate of need is not required in this
12 case.

13 So at the end of this -- at the end of
14 the application review process, the Public Utilities
15 Commission needs to make a final decision on whether
16 to issue permits for the project and, if they do
17 issue permits, what conditions should be put into
18 those permits. When the Commission makes its final
19 decision, it considers the whole record of the case.
20 That includes information provided in the
21 applications; comments received during the review
22 process, such as comments from interested citizens,
23 from local and state government units. It considers
24 information presented in the environmental
25 assessment that will be prepared, as well as the

1 report that's prepared by the administrative law
2 judge. And I'll get to that in a moment.

3 And so all of those decisions are
4 generally made within the context of the potential
5 human and environmental impacts that the project may
6 have. For example the environmental assessment
7 looks at -- I just have a few of the items on
8 screen, but it looks at noise, aesthetics, public
9 health and safety, land-use conflicts, cultural and
10 historic resources, air and water quality, plants
11 and wildlife. And there's a host of other topics
12 that the environmental assessment looks at
13 automatically. And again, one of the reasons we're
14 here tonight is if there are any other impacts that
15 folks that live in the area know about. Those would
16 be considered to be included in the scope and also
17 evaluated in an environmental assessment.

18 So the Commission also, when making its
19 decision, considers methods that have been proposed
20 to minimize, mitigate, or avoid any impacts
21 identified that the project may cause. And the
22 Commission also looks at whether the project is
23 efficient, cost-effective, secure, and conserves
24 resources. So there's a whole host of factors the
25 Commission must look at, at the end of this process,

1 when deciding to issue a permit for a project such
2 as this.

3 And again, I should remind folks, if
4 anything comes to mind, press *1 on your phone, and
5 that will put you in a queue. And the operator will
6 take you in order of -- in the order you pressed *1
7 at the end of the meeting, and we'll answer your
8 questions and comments then.

9 So this slide shows -- generally shows
10 the estimated review timeline. So tonight -- you
11 can see the third box down, the third blue box down,
12 with the star on it -- we're at the public
13 information and scoping meeting. Last night we had
14 the in-person meeting up in Becker. Tonight's the
15 remote meeting, and there's a comment period that
16 follows this meeting that's open -- a written
17 comment period -- that's open till September 15th.

18 After these meetings and the comment
19 period ends, there's -- the next step in the process
20 is the issuing of the environmental assessment
21 scoping decision, followed by the release of the
22 environmental assessment. And Bill Storm with the
23 Department of Commerce will go into greater detail
24 on the scope and the environmental assessment and
25 what he's looking for.

1 Once the environmental assessment is
2 issued, we will be back out in the City of Becker to
3 hold a public hearing. And that public hearing will
4 be -- it's similar to a public meeting such as this;
5 however, the hearing is proceeded over by an
6 administrative law judge from the Office of
7 Administrative Hearings. And the judge will not
8 only -- will take comments and questions about the
9 project as a whole, so the merits of the whole
10 project. So it's an opportunity for folks down the
11 line to provide additional comments on the project,
12 on any items that were -- new items that were
13 identified in the EA, items that may have been
14 missed along the way, or items where there's still
15 disagreement between parties and whatnot. So that
16 would be at the public hearing. And there's a
17 written comment period that also follows the public
18 hearing.

19 Once that public hearing comment period
20 ends, you can see the administrative law judge will
21 issue a report. And that report is actually a
22 collection of findings, conclusions of law, and a
23 recommendation to the Commission on whether to issue
24 permits and generally includes initial conditions
25 for those permits as recommended by the judge. So

1 at the end of the process, as I said, we get to a
2 final permit decision, which right now is estimated
3 around May or June of next year. And the
4 Commission, as I said, would take all that
5 information in the record into consideration and
6 would make a determination on whether to issue a
7 permit in this case.

8 So with that, that's a quick review of
9 the state review process and how the Public
10 Utilities Commission is involved. I will be on the
11 line at the end of the presentation, along with
12 Department of Commerce and the applicant Xcel
13 Energy, to answer any questions you might have. So
14 I'll turn it over now to Xcel Energy to discuss the
15 greater details of the Sherco Solar Project.

16 MR. WILLIAM RISSE: Yeah, thanks very
17 much, Scott. My name is William Risse. I'm a
18 permitting specialist with National Grid Renewables.
19 We're, at National Grid Renewables, supporting Xcel
20 in the development efforts of this project, and I'll
21 be speaking on behalf of the applicant Xcel Energy
22 tonight.

23 We're here to answer -- to discuss
24 project details and also answer your questions
25 regarding those details following the presentation.

1 If this was in person, I would tell you feel free to
2 connect with us after the meeting if you have any
3 other questions you want answered. But at the
4 conclusion of my presentation, I will be providing
5 you some contact information, if you'd like to reach
6 out to myself or one of my colleagues to get your
7 questions answered or discuss the project in more
8 detail.

9 So with that, if you could go to the next
10 slide, Scott.

11 Just to quantify that relationship
12 between National Grid Renewables and Xcel Energy in
13 a little more detail, National Grid Renewables and
14 Xcel partnered on this project -- I'm kind of
15 bringing those two separate project blocks together
16 -- to push the project forward into development and
17 then through permitting. And then following that,
18 Xcel Energy plans to construct and operate the
19 project in the long-term. And this relationship
20 really allows Xcel to leverage our experience as
21 they move forward to reach their goal of 100 percent
22 carbon-free energy in 2050.

23 So with that, we can get into the project
24 details and a bit more -- and a bit more information
25 here. The project all in all, as Scott mentioned,

1 is 460 megawatts, and each block of the project --
2 so the west block and east block here -- totalling
3 about 3500 acres. Each of those contributes about
4 230 megawatts to the project. I'm sure you're
5 wondering what 230 or 460 megawatts looks like on
6 the ground, and I'll get to that in a bit here on
7 the next slide. In addition, we have two
8 transmission lines from those west blocks where that
9 power will be created by the solar project, and
10 those are about 3.1 and 1.6 miles respectively.

11 As I'm sure most of you listening in are
12 aware, the project is located in Clear Lake
13 Township, Becker Township, and the transmission
14 lines themselves are located in the City of Becker.
15 The expected or anticipated -- kind of the
16 commercial operation date, the COD of the project
17 when we plan to be operational, could be as early as
18 December 31st, 2024.

19 If you'd like to go to the next slide.

20 So I mentioned earlier what does 460
21 megawatts look like? So 460 megawatts is about the
22 equivalent of powering 100,000 homes in a year, and
23 that's also kind of the equivalent of taking 300,000
24 tons of CO2 each year out of the atmosphere or
25 removing 60,000 cars from the road over the course

1 of the year. In terms of just other benefits from
2 the project, we're looking at about \$115 million in
3 wages from 900 union construction jobs and \$240
4 million in local benefits such as taxes and
5 landowner payments over that 35-year project life.

6 So with that, with a little background on
7 what the project looks like -- we go through, as
8 Scott mentioned, some pretty rigorous environmental
9 review and agency coordination as we construct these
10 projects. We do a lot of studies and also
11 consultations with various agencies who have
12 expertise and knowledge to help us through this
13 permitting process. Some of the studies and
14 consultations we've done include wetland
15 delineations, just figuring out where wetlands are
16 on the site, in this case avoiding those wetland
17 resources and also doing a cultural-resource survey
18 to identify any sensitive resources that might need
19 to be avoided.

20 We've also engaged the DNR in a
21 natural-resource heritage information system review.
22 This is kind of an aggregate of data that shows if
23 there's any known sensitive resources in the area
24 that we may need to do specific mitigation or
25 protection of those species or resources. In

1 consultation with the Department of Agriculture,
2 we've also developed an agricultural
3 impact-mitigation plan, and we've coordinated with
4 the Department of Agriculture on this. And the end
5 goal of that plan is to really establish a solar
6 project and decompact those soils to ensure the
7 long-term viability of the agricultural land. I'll
8 get a little bit into decommissioning here a bit
9 later and touch on that, what the land will look
10 like post-construction and operation.

11 And finally, we've been coordinating
12 closely with agencies on a vegetation management
13 plan. Xcel's really excited in this project to
14 develop a very robust plan for pollinator friendly
15 species, and they're coordinating with the Board of
16 Water and Soil Resources, also known as BWSER, to
17 push this plan forward and become what's known as a
18 pollinator-certified site within the state.

19 So now that we've gone into kind of some
20 of the review we've done ahead of construction and
21 operation of this project and ahead of permitting,
22 we'll get into what the components look like on the
23 ground and kind of how those are installed. So you
24 can see on the left here that the first thing that
25 needs to go in the ground out there are the pilings.

1 And these piling support the racking system, which
2 is the middle photo here.

3 So the type of racking system we're
4 looking at for this project is what's known as a
5 tracking rack system. And that tracks the sun
6 throughout the day, facing east in the morning, kind
7 of straight up in the middle of the day, noon hour,
8 and then west in the afternoon and evening. The
9 roads are oriented generally north and south as
10 well. And then on the right you can kind of see an
11 example of that racking more built out to
12 accommodate the solar panels. If we want to go to
13 the next slide, I can touch on those.

14 So as you can see on the racking, the
15 most important part of the project, in my opinion,
16 are the solar panels. These are what generate the
17 electricity on the site. These will generally be
18 located throughout the east and west blocks that I
19 touched on earlier. And here I've kind of touched
20 on three types of solar panels: The monocrystalline
21 bifacial, which actually collects sunlight on both
22 sides of the panels. So any light that's reflected
23 off the ground, off the vegetation is also
24 collected. But alternatively, thin film and
25 polycrystalline panels.

1 The way I like to look at this is kind of
2 -- we like to keep our options open on what panel's
3 selected for the project. It's kind of like when
4 you're going shopping for your car tires, you want
5 to wait till there's the best deal and really wait
6 until you're sure of what you need and just, yeah,
7 that best bang for your buck upon purchase of those
8 panels.

9 Just to touch on some other components of
10 the project. So you can see the installation of
11 panels at left here. So once that electricity is
12 produced by the panel, it's what's known as DC
13 electricity. It's low voltage. That's routed to
14 what's known as an inverter, which is the upper
15 right photo here. And the inverters, they step up
16 -- we call it stepping up the energy -- so it can be
17 transmitted a longer distance at kind of a medium
18 voltage to get to, the lower right photo here, the
19 collector substation. So the power goes from the
20 panels to the inverters and then onto the collector
21 substation, at which point its fed into those two
22 transmission lines I mentioned earlier, and then
23 interconnects at the existing substation within
24 Sherco's facility that's already there. And that's
25 where the power's transmitted to the greater

1 electric grid.

2 One question we get about all these
3 components quite a bit is what do these sound like
4 out there? So a good comparison is for the
5 inverters, which are kind of the primary
6 power-producing or sound-producing equipment out
7 there. At about 150 feet, your kind of
8 run-of-the-mill standard inverter, you're looking at
9 noise no more than, like, that of a high-efficiency
10 dishwasher in your home. That's about what you'd
11 hear out there. So we've taken great care to site
12 these even more internally within the project to
13 avoid any sort of noise impact to the surrounding
14 community.

15 With that, I've kind of touched on the
16 components a little bit about the construction. But
17 here's kind of the general tasks listed out in
18 order. Starting with site preparation, grading of
19 the project out there. As many of you who are
20 listening and are probably familiar with the area,
21 it's very flat. But there will be some minimal
22 grading, as well as installing site access to allow
23 for the installation equipment to get in there.

24 Following kind of that general site
25 preparation, the next step is pile installation; and

1 then, on top of that, the racking installation,
2 which I already mentioned; followed by the module
3 installation; and then completing that
4 interconnection process, so connecting the collector
5 substation within the east and west block to the
6 transmission line and the grid; and then at the end
7 of that process, the re-vegetation, establishing per
8 the vegetation-management plan that I already spoke
9 about, getting that native vegetation established
10 beneath the panels.

11 Just something to mention, the pile
12 installation does involve a little bit of noise out
13 there. But in any one area, it's pretty condensed
14 into a short amount of time. They'll quickly get
15 those piles installed and then kind of move across
16 the project site, and the components after that are
17 generally pretty light-duty, vehicles, a lot of foot
18 traffic, and then install of those panels on the
19 site.

20 If we can flip to the next slide.

21 Just to touch a little more on that
22 re-vegetation process. So at left here you can kind
23 of see. Here's what it looks like after that
24 initial panel install. You can see in the middle,
25 in this case, there's a waterway adjacent to the

1 solar project, but just doing a little bit of
2 implementation of matting to ensure that heating
3 establishes. And then at right there you can kind
4 of see what that vegetation looks like around the
5 panels once it's established and that native
6 vegetation is able to take hold.

7 So with that, we have just the general
8 site overview just to give everybody an idea again
9 of what things look like out here. You can see the
10 west block and the east block, which will contain
11 the panels, inverters, and those collector
12 substations, as they're called out here, and then
13 those two high-voltage transmission lines that I
14 talked about earlier, connecting all of that project
15 to the electric grid.

16 If you want to go the next slide.

17 So here, just a couple visual renderings
18 of what this will look like. These are actually
19 photos we collected on the ground kind of late last
20 summer, last fall, and then we added solar panels
21 into those photos. So at bottom right here, you can
22 see kind of the view of about -- it's about a tenth
23 of a mile looking south on 115th Avenue towards
24 River Road Southeast or Highway 8. I mean, you can
25 kind of see the panels in the background. I think

1 this is just, from my perspective, a good example of
2 how quickly at a distance these really start to
3 blend into the background. And at top left here,
4 this is actually further up River Road near the
5 western boundary of the west block, just kind of a
6 closer view of the panels with some vegetation,
7 which you can kind of see that vegetation really
8 blocks the view of the panels quite quickly, just
9 the existing vegetation that's in the area.

10 So we've touched on kind of what this
11 will look like post-construction and the
12 construction process. I'll just touch a little bit
13 on operations and maintenance. There will really be
14 after construction minimal onsite traffic. We're
15 talking about four to six regular onsite techs
16 daily, some other deliveries and such for components
17 and stuff but relatively minimal. In addition to
18 that, you're going to look at route inspections of
19 those transmission lines and just general electrical
20 maintenance of the panels. There's quite a few
21 components going on out here, so just keeping those
22 in good working condition. We'll do semiannual
23 drone inspections of those panels, just doing
24 flyovers to note anything of concern or anything
25 that needs repair out there, with those repairs

1 being completed as needed.

2 And in addition I've already mentioned
3 kind of that vegetation-management plan, maintaining
4 those native-pollinator species, making sure they
5 establish in those first few years, and then doing
6 that occasional mowing two to three times a year
7 during the initial establishment. And then our hope
8 is actually to mow this as little as possible in the
9 long-term, but likely looking at about one year
10 following that.

11 So finally, we're kind of through the
12 operations process. We know what it's going to look
13 like a bit on the ground during operations. So
14 let's talk a bit about the end of the project life.
15 So there's a few things that could happen here. The
16 project may be repowered. There might be new
17 technology available, a better solar panel. So we
18 could repower this project, or alternatively, the
19 project could be decommissioned, meaning that all of
20 that equipment would be removed. Maybe there's a
21 new technology, something better out there, that's
22 producing energy and this solar project's no longer
23 needed.

24 In the case of decommissioning, those
25 components are removed and reused or recycled at the

1 end of the project's life. And the end goal, per
2 the agricultural impact-mitigation plan I mentioned
3 earlier, is that we can restore the site to its
4 previous agricultural use, or if the landowner
5 wished to do something else with their property, it
6 would be up to their wishes. We could certainly --
7 in an agreement with the landowner or something, if
8 they wanted an access road maintained out there or
9 something, we would be willing to work with them on
10 that.

11 Generally, just something we also like to
12 touch on per that ag impact-mitigation plan and
13 vegetation-management plan is that the soil is
14 allowed to rest and lie fallow. Those deep roots
15 really have benefits and can add nutrients, fixate
16 nitrogen into the soil, and improve that soil health
17 over time. So our hope is that we leave the site in
18 a better condition than we found it when all things
19 are said and done and that agricultural use can
20 continue upon decommissioning.

21 So with that, I appreciate everybody's
22 time. Our contact information is listed here. We
23 do have a few panelists, myself and representatives
24 from Xcel Energy, to answer your questions following
25 the remainder of this presentation, and we look

1 forward to working with the community as we continue
2 to develop this project. So thank you.

3 MR. SCOTT EK: Okay. Now we'll turn it
4 over to Bill Storm with the Minnesota Department of
5 Commerce, who will explain the environmental review
6 part of the permitting process. And I just also
7 again wanted to remind folks on the phone, if you
8 have a question or a comment, press *1 and you'll be
9 placed into a queue. And the operator will -- we'll
10 address your questions/comments at the end.

11 All right. Go ahead, Bill.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Good evening. My
13 name is Bill Storm. As Scott said I work for the
14 Department of Commerce. The Department of
15 Commerce's role here is we conduct the environmental
16 review for the Commission on large energy projects
17 that come to the Commission for a final decision.
18 As Scott noted the Commission is the final
19 decision-maker.

20 Basically, what is an environmental
21 review? Well, the goal of environmental review is
22 to result in informed decision-making. So the final
23 decision-makers, the Commission, are well informed
24 of the facts.

25 The environmental review basically

1 consists of two parts, the first part being scoping,
2 which is what we're doing here tonight, what we did
3 at last night's meeting, and what the comment period
4 is set up to do. And scoping basically just seeks
5 input from the public and from local units of
6 government of what they would like to see in the
7 environmental-review document, in this case the
8 environmental-review document is an EA,
9 environmental assessment. So basically, scoping is
10 me asking the public and local units of government
11 to help me build the table of contents. What
12 potential impacts and possible mitigations and
13 minimizations do you want me to discuss in the
14 document?

15 The second part is the document itself.
16 The document is basically an objective assembly of
17 the facts, and it enables all the parties to use the
18 information to form their opinions and their
19 recommendations going forward. The
20 environmental-review process does not advocate for
21 or against the project. It's basically just a
22 fact-finding tool.

23 Go ahead, Scott.

24 And then what is scoping? Scoping --
25 what we do in scoping is we want to focus the

1 environmental assessment on the most relevant
2 information. It provides an opportunity for the
3 public to provide input into the table of contents.
4 Examples would be: What potential human and
5 environmental impacts should be studied? Are there
6 ways to minimize, mitigate, or avoid these potential
7 impacts? Are there any unique characteristics of
8 the proposed site of the project that should be
9 considered? This is a big part. This is where I
10 look to the local unit of government and the local
11 citizenry to -- what do you know about the area that
12 you want to make sure I capture in the environmental
13 document? And the last part in scoping is if you
14 read the applications and you feel there is data
15 that's either mischaracterized or just missing, this
16 is an opportunity to mention that and bring it
17 forward so I can capture and fill what holes there
18 may be in the application in the EA.

19 Okay, Scott.

20 The environmental assessment is the
21 document that I'll prepare. The Department of
22 Commerce's role is to do that. The document will
23 contain a description of the project and any
24 alternatives that make it in the scope. It assesses
25 the potential human and environmental impacts of the

1 project and identifies strategies to avoid or
2 mitigate the impacts. And the environmental
3 assessment that I produce will cover both the solar
4 sites and the transmission line.

5 So basically, what I'm seeking, through
6 last night's meeting and tonight's meeting and the
7 comment period, is to get the public and the local
8 units of government to provide me some information.
9 Give me some information so I can build that table
10 of contents of the scope. And then once the scope
11 is determined, I will start assembling the actual
12 document.

13 So you can move forward on that slide
14 there, Scott.

15 So here's how to comment. Here's how to
16 get your comments. You can comment tonight. You
17 can complete -- if you go to the MPCA or you go to
18 the -- I forgot which agency I'm going for. If you
19 go to the Department of Commerce's website and look
20 up the Sherco Solar site, you'll find a registry
21 that has documents listed, and one of the documents
22 is a comment form. And we had the comment forms at
23 the physical meeting last night. That's one way you
24 can comment, by completing that form. You can --
25 you don't have to use our form. You can use your

1 own stationery.

2 You can go the website that's listed
3 there, the Commerce website, and you can
4 electronically comment. When you go to that
5 website, you'll see a link for if you want to
6 comment. If you click that link, it will show you
7 what dockets are open. Sherco Solar is the docket
8 we're talking about tonight. Click on that, and
9 then you can submit a comment to me electronically.

10 Again, you can mail, fax, e-mail your
11 comment to me. My information is there on the
12 slide. I need to have your comments by the close of
13 business day on Wednesday, September 15th. So get
14 your comments to me by that date so they can be
15 considered.

16 Okay, Scott.

17 This slide is pretty much a remnant from
18 last night's meeting, our real, in-person, physical
19 meeting. But at the end of this presentation, Scott
20 will -- through the queue that the operator sets,
21 will take -- will allow you to have an opportunity
22 to comment. Since we're all not sitting in a room
23 personally, some of this doesn't really apply, but
24 -- because you only have one speaker at a time the
25 way this is set up. But be respectful. That still

1 stands. Please state and spell your name for the
2 record so we know who's making a comment.

3 Direct your comments and questions to the
4 scope of the EA for my purposes. If you have
5 general comments that you'd like to ask the
6 applicant, you can also do that at this time too.
7 But for my needs, I'd like your comments on issues,
8 concerns you may have. Focus them on the scope of
9 the EA, what you would like to see in that EA
10 document. Again, the last line, just keep your
11 comments curt, I guess. You know, we can always
12 circle back and give everybody a chance to talk.

13 Okay, Scott, go forward.

14 Again, this is just another reminder of
15 how to focus your comments tonight. What potential
16 human and environmental impacts should be studied in
17 the environmental assessment? Are there ways that
18 could minimize, mitigate, or avoid the impact? Are
19 there unique characteristics that you know about the
20 site or the area that you want to make sure I
21 capture in the document? And again, is there
22 anything missing or mischaracterized in the
23 application? Again, remember, the comment period
24 closes September 15th, end of business day.

25 Next step.

1 The next slide is just our information so
2 you can contact us. And with that, Scott you can
3 open it up for questions and comments.

4 MR. SCOTT EK: Thanks, Bill.

5 Yeah, and I'll leave this last slide up
6 for folks that are viewing on the Webex. You can
7 take down any of that information. So that will
8 stay up through the remainder of the meeting.

9 But, Norah, can you please -- oh, I
10 should say we're at the point we're going to do
11 questions and comments. So again, press *1 on your
12 phone if you do have a question or a comment. And
13 the operator will put you in a queue, and we'll go
14 answer your questions in an orderly manner.

15 So, Norah, if you want to start.

16 OPERATOR: Again, as a reminder, to ask a
17 question, you'll need to press *1 on your telephone,
18 and to withdraw your question, press the pound key.
19 Please stand by while we compile the Q and A roster.

20 Okay, once again, if you'd like to ask a
21 question, please press *1 on your telephone keypad.

22 There are no questions at this time. You
23 may proceed, presenters.

24 MR. SCOTT EK: Okay. Maybe we should
25 wait a minute or two. Maybe there's a delay in how

1 folks get into the queue here. But again, please
2 press *1 if there's any questions or comments you
3 have on the scope or questions about the
4 application-review process or any other matter.

5 OPERATOR: Presenters, we have a person
6 on queue who would like to ask a question. And the
7 question comes from the line of Kevin Pranis. Your
8 line is open.

9 MR. KEVIN PRANIS: Thanks. Just to
10 clarify, is this an opportunity to provide comments
11 or just questions?

12 MR. SCOTT EK: Hello, Mr. Pranis. No,
13 comments or questions.

14 MR. KEVIN PRANIS: Great. So I just
15 wanted to, you know, comment. I work with LIUNA
16 Laborers' Union. I represent 12,000 workers
17 including many who live near Becker in this area
18 and, you know, have worked for generations in power
19 plants. And we think one of the -- one thing that's
20 really unique about this project that seems
21 important to be part of the environmental analysis
22 is the economic impact it has in this area.

23 You know, as I know that -- you know, and
24 all the staff know that most of the real projects,
25 and the sort of jobs associated with those, are

1 happening in other parts of the state, mostly in
2 southern and southwestern Minnesota, pretty far from
3 the Twin Cities metro area. So this project has
4 unique potential to provide jobs and opportunities
5 near both where power plants are going to be
6 retiring and where those are needed and where we
7 have to figure out how folks make this transition
8 now.

9 So, you know, relatively near the cities,
10 and so hope that that's something that can be
11 incorporated in the report. It's a significant
12 potential benefit of the project.

13 MR. SCOTT EK: Thank you, Mr. Pranis. Is
14 that all you have?

15 MR. KEVIN PRANIS: Yeah.

16 MR. SCOTT EK: All right. Thank you very
17 much.

18 Norah, are there any other folks on the
19 -- waiting in the queue?

20 OPERATOR: There are no further questions
21 at the moment, sir. You may proceed.

22 MR. SCOTT EK: Well, okay, I think we
23 gave it enough time. Hopefully, you received enough
24 information here tonight, and maybe some of you were
25 at last night's meeting. Again, I want to reiterate

1 there is a written-comment period that's open until
2 September 15th. Comments should be received by
3 September 15th, by close of business that day.

4 Information is provided on the screen.
5 As Bill said you can submit comments online to
6 mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment and also
7 e-mail them to bill.storm@state.mn.us. Fax,
8 651-539-0109 or U.S. mail to Bill Storm, Minnesota
9 Department of Commerce, 85 Seventh Place East,
10 Suite 280, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101. And so I
11 encourage you to submit your comments, and please
12 feel free to call any one of us, Bill, myself, or
13 William, to ask questions if you have questions
14 about the project or the process.

15 So thank you for joining tonight, and
16 that will end the meeting. Thank you.

17 OPERATOR: Thank you for participating.
18 You may now disconnect.

19 (Meeting concluded at 6:42 p.m.)
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