

MN Assoc of County Planning & Zoning Administrators

Implementing Clean Energy Legislation
Renewable & High Voltage Transmission Development

June 1, 2023
Alexandria, Minnesota

Session Agenda

- **Introduction:** Bret Eknes, Public Utilities Commission
- **Review Processes:** Certificate of Need & Siting/Routing
- **Legislation:** 100% carbon free by 2040 & Energy Storage
- **Discussion of Expected HVTL and Solar/Wind Projects**
- **Environmental Review:** Ray Kirsch, Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis
- **Questions and Comments**

MN Public Utilities Commission

- **5 Member Commission:** Appointed by Governor; 6-year staggered terms; no more than 3 members from any one party. Approximately 55 staff.
- **Quasi-Judicial Body:** Court-like proceedings; record-based decisions; Speaks through written orders; and decisions carry the weight of law.
- **Responsibilities:** Regulates the rates, terms, & conditions of service of investor-owned utilities; other financial regulations; approves resource plans; power purchase agreements; utility programs; & several other aspects of utility service
- **Permits:** Large energy facilities – wind, solar, and nuclear electric generation; HVTLs; pipelines; energy storage
- **Restrictions:** The Commission is subject to ex parte restrictions & Open Meeting Law

The Commission is hiring additional Staff in EFP Unit

Review Processes

- **Certificate of Need**

1. Informal Process: Comment & Reply on Merits, Environmental Report
2. Contested Case: Parties, Testimony, Environmental Report, Cross Examination & ALJ Report

- **Siting & Routing Review Process**

1. Full Process: Contested Case, Environmental Impact Statement, & ALJ Report
2. Alternative Process (Solar): Less formal, Environmental Assessment & ALJ Report

- **Wind Siting**

- Draft permit issued for comment & ALJ Report
- Specifically requires Commission to apply County standards unless there is good cause

100% Carbon Free by 2040

100% Carbon Free by 2040

- 80% of retail sales by 2030
- 90% of retail sales by 2035
- 100% of retail sales by 2040

What it means? More:

- Wind
- Solar
- Storage: 10MW or more
- Transmission

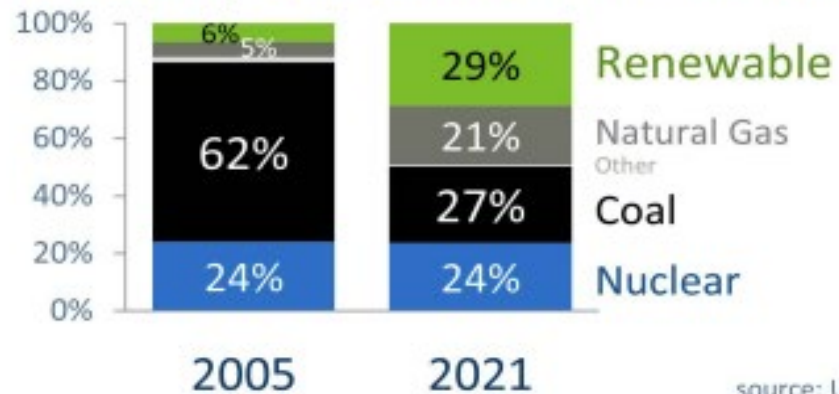
CN Exemption

- Independent Power Producers solar & wind projects exempt from CN requirements if Site Permit filed

Electricity Generated in Minnesota

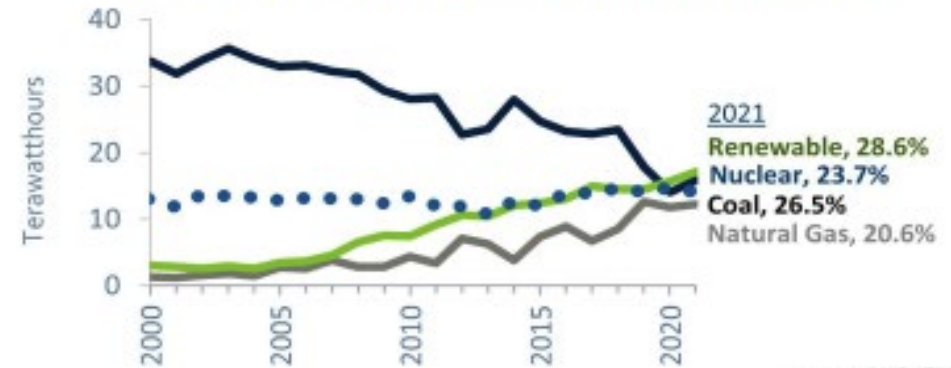
Minnesota Generating Capacity 17,944MW (approximate)	
Coal	4,666MW
Gas	3,786MW
Nuclear	4,307MW
Renewables	5,204MW

Electricity Generated in Minnesota



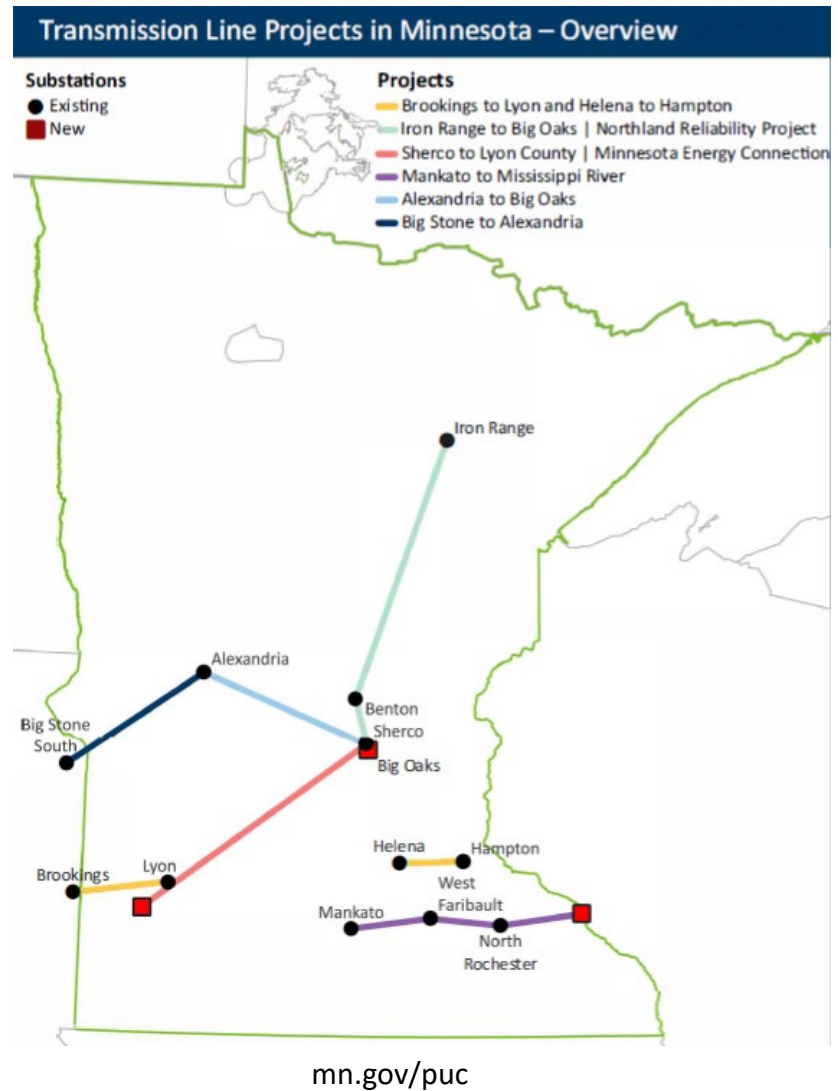
source: U.S. EIA

Electricity Generated in Minnesota



source: U.S. EIA

Transmission Line Projects in Minnesota - Overview



HVTL Projects Expected

Congestion & Coal Replacement

- **Proposed 2nd Circuit Project** (58 & 39-mile sections mostly existing poles) 345kV
 - Brookings - Lyon County & Helena - Hampton
- **Gen-tie line from Sherburne to Lyon County** (160–180 mile) 345kV double circuit

MISO LRTP

- **Iron Range-Becker-Big Oaks** (150-mile) 345kV double circuit
- **Big Stone-Alexandria-Big Oaks** (190-mile) 345kV single circuit
- **Mankato-Mississippi River** (150-mile) 345kV single circuit

- **Other transmission projects**

Wind & Solar Projects

- **4 Projects Approved & Awaiting Construction**

- Plum Creek Wind - 414MW (Cottonwood, Murray, & Redwood Counties)
- Regal Solar - 100MW (Benton County)
- Elk Creek Solar - 80MW (Rock County)
- Big Bend Wind - 300MW (Cottonwood & Watonwan Counties)

- **2 Projects Currently Under Review**

- Dodge County Wind - 259MW (Dodge, Mower, & Steel Counties)
- Lake Wilson Solar - 150MW (Murray County)

Wind & Solar Projects

- **9 Projects Expected to File (1-6 months)**
 - Sherco Solar 3 - 250MW (Sherburne County)
 - Three Water Wind - 300MW (Jackson County)
 - Enbridge Solar - 130MW (Red Lake County)
 - Winnebago Solar - 150MW (Faribault County)
 - Timberwolf Solar - 100MW (Mower County)
 - Cotton River Wind - 200MW (Lyon County)
 - Enbridge Solar - 130MW (Red Lake County)
 - Winnebago Solar - 150MW (Faribault County)
 - Benton Solar - 100MW (Benton County)

County Participation

- **Pre-Application:** Applicants should be meeting and communicating with Counties and Local Units of Government before an application is filed.
- Each Review process offers at least 3 opportunities for input and participation
- County participation is important to the Commission and to the development of appropriate site and route permit conditions

Final Issue – Legislation passed this Session that places CO2 pipelines under the Commission's jurisdiction

Starting Points

- **Environmental review for energy facilities is prescribed by statute – 216E, 216F, 216G**
- **Environmental review is conducted by the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) unit on behalf of the Commission**

Energy Environmental Review and Analysis Roles

Pre-Application
Meetings; Guidance
Materials

Environmental Review and
Permitting

Permit Compliance

Environmental Review and Permitting

- **Conduct public meetings, with Commission staff, to inform and gather input regarding local concerns and local knowledge**
 - Local governments, tribes, agencies
- **Provide the Commission with recommendations on the scope of the environmental review**
- **Prepare environmental review documents**
- **Participate in public hearings – provide comments to aid the development of permits for the project**

County Participation

- **Early coordination is important – project and process**
- **Continue communication throughout the project**
- **Ensure that county concerns are in the record**
- **The Commission values county input!**

Contact Information

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