

# Scoping Summary Report

December 2005

## Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement



**Prepared for:**

**Lead Agency:**  
Western Area Power Administration

**Cooperating Agencies:**  
Rural Utilities Service  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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# SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

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## 1.0 Introduction

One of the primary principles of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is full disclosure and open public participation in the decision-making process. Western Area Power Administration (Western) is the lead Federal agency for the Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project (Big Stone II Project) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Rural Utilities Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been designated as cooperating Federal agencies for the EIS. The agencies are required to provide notification and opportunity for public involvement to take place during the preparation of the EIS. Throughout the process, the lead agency must inform the public of all public meetings and hearings and the availability of documentation and information about the project.

The purpose of public scoping is to actively solicit and acquire input from the public and other interested Federal, state, tribal and local agencies about the proposed project. Information received during scoping assists the agencies in identifying potential environmental issues/impacts, alternatives and mitigation measures associated with development of the project. The process provides a mechanism for focusing and clarifying the issues so the EIS can address and analyze the primary areas of concern.

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Proposed Project

Seven local utilities are proposing to construct a nominal 600-megawatt (MW) coal-fired electric generating facility adjacent to the existing Big Stone Plant in Grant County, South Dakota. The existing Big Stone Plant is east of Milbank and northwest of Big Stone City. The power would be used to meet future growth in the seven utilities' base power loads. To bring the additional power to consumers, the transmission system in the local area would need to be changed to ensure the system remains reliable and does not overload. If approved, construction of the proposed Big Stone II Project would begin in spring 2007, and the plant would begin operating in 2011.

The proposed Big Stone II Plant would require approximately 920 additional acres of land adjacent to the 2,200-acre existing Big Stone Plant. Constructing the Big Stone II Plant at the site of an existing facility would considerably reduce the construction costs of a new plant. The proposed plant would share existing infrastructure, including the cooling water intake structure, pumping system and delivery line; plant road and rail spur; coal unloading facilities; and solid waste disposal facilities. A visual simulation of the proposed power plant facilities was provided at the scoping meetings.

Electric output from the proposed Big Stone II Plant would be stepped up to 230 kilovolts (kV) and connect to the transmission system at the existing Big Stone Plant site. The Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO), a non-profit organization that assures the reliability and nondiscriminatory operation of the transmission system in many mid-western states, conducted an Interconnection Study for the project that identifies changes to the current transmission system to accommodate the additional power output from the proposed Big Stone II Power Plant. The study identifies two different possible interconnection point configurations, Alternatives A and B. Possible transmission lines corridors between the proposed Big Stone II Power Plant and the interconnection points were developed by the project applicant and displayed on aerial photographs at the scoping meetings. The Alternatives are briefly described here:

Alternative A: Would include approximately 56 miles of new transmission line and approximately 80 miles of line upgrades: a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Ortonville, Minnesota (about seven miles) with an upgrade of the Ortonville-to-Johnson Junction-to-Morris, Minnesota line (about 41 miles) from 115-kV to 230-kV, and a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Canby, Minnesota (about 49 miles) with an upgrade of the Canby-to-Granite Falls, Minnesota line (about 39 miles) from 115-kV to 230-kV. The lines would interconnect at Western's Morris and Granite Falls substations. Modifications to these substations would be required.

Alternative B: Would include approximately 129 miles of new transmission line and approximately 39 miles of line upgrades: a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to just east of Spicer, Minnesota (about 80 miles), and a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Canby (about 49 miles) with an upgrade of the Canby-to-Granite Falls, Minnesota line from 115-kV to 230-kV (about 39 miles). Western owns the Granite Falls Substation where the latter line would interconnect. Modifications to the Granite Falls Substation and a new substation at Spicer would be required.

A detailed project description of the power plant and both transmission alternatives will be included in the EIS.

## **2.2 NEPA Process**

Interconnection of the proposed Big Stone II Project would incorporate a major new generation resource into Western's power transmission system. The proposed project would require upgrades to existing substations and construction of new transmission lines. Western has determined that an EIS is required under U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) NEPA Implementing Procedures. Western is the lead federal agency for preparing the EIS.

In addition to the proposed action, the no action alternative and alternatives defined as a result of the EIS scoping process also will be addressed in the EIS. The EIS process will comply with NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA and DOE NEPA implementing procedures.

## 2.3 State Processes

In addition to the Federal EIS process, the Big Stone II Project will require permitting and approvals from the states of South Dakota and Minnesota. State and Federal permitting and approval processes are conducted independently, but will be coordinated to ensure consistency. Since the state and Federal processes are being conducted concurrently, members of the public have numerous opportunities to provide input.

### 2.3.1 South Dakota Processes

Plant facility siting falls under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) Energy Facility Siting Rules. The permit application was filed in July 2005 and is expected to take approximately 1 year to complete. The PUC held a formal public hearing on September 13, 2005, to receive public input. Portions of the proposed transmission lines located within South Dakota also fall under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota PUC. The permit application is scheduled to be filed in December 2005. Voluntary public information meetings were held on Tuesday, November 15 and Wednesday, November 15, 2005. Additional opportunities for public input are identified in **Table 1**.

### 2.3.2 Minnesota Processes

The project transmission lines that would be located within the state of Minnesota require a Certificate of Need (CON) through the Minnesota PUC. This process requires preparation of an Environmental Report (ER) prepared under direction of the Minnesota Department of Commerce (MDOC). The PUC will issue the Final Decision. The CON application was filed in October 2005 and the process is expected to take approximately 12 months. Opportunities for public input during the CON permitting process are identified in Table 1.

In addition to the CON, a High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit is required from the MDOC. Under this permit, the applicant must provide alternative corridors and route alternatives within the corridors for evaluation in a state EIS that addresses the potential for impacts resulting from transmission line construction and/or upgrades. Application for the permit is scheduled for December 2005; the process takes approximately 12 months. Opportunities for public input during the permit process are identified in Table 1.

**Table 1: Public Input Opportunities During the State Processes\***

State	State Process	Scheduled Date
South Dakota	Public Meetings	January 2006
Minnesota	Public Hearings (PUC & MDOC)	March 2006
	Final Decision Period	September 2006
	Minnesota EIS Scoping Period	January 2006
	Information Meetings	April 2006
	PUC Decision	September 2006

\*Actual opportunities for public participation in the state processes could vary as the project progresses.

## 3.0 Scoping Meetings

### 3.1 Notices

The initial step in the EIS process is to notify the public and other government agencies of the agency’s intent to prepare an EIS. Western published a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Big Stone II EIS in the *Federal Register* on May 27, 2005, and included a summary of the proposed project; the locations, dates, and times of public scoping meetings; and Western contact information (see Appendix A).

Western mailed scoping meeting notices directly to Federal and state agencies and Native American tribes that have the authority or specialization regarding an environmental impact that could potentially occur as a result of the proposed project (see Appendix B). In addition to notifying them about the project, they were encouraged to attend the scoping meetings and provide input to the project.

Additionally, Western announced the scoping meetings through news releases and by placing display advertisements in local newspapers throughout the affected region. Newspapers and publication dates of the display advertisements are provided in **Table 2**. A copy of a press release and display advertisement are provided in Appendix A.

**Table 2: Local Notices for Federal Scoping Meetings**

Community	Newspaper	Dates Published
Canby, Minnesota	Canby News	6/1/05, 6/8/05
Appleton, Minnesota	Appleton Press	6/1/05, 6/8/05
Benson, Minnesota	Swift County Monitor-News	6/1/05, 6/8/05
Kerkhoven, Minnesota	Kerkhoven Banner	6/1/05, 6/8/05
Clinton, Minnesota	The Northern Star	6/2/05, 6/8/05
Ortonville, Minnesota	Ortonville Independent	5/31/05, 6/7/05
Chokio, Minnesota	Chokio Review	6/2/05, 6/9/05
Morris, Minnesota	Morris Sun Tribune	6/1/05, 6/8/05, 6/15/05
Granite Falls, Minnesota	Advocate-Tribune	6/2/05, 6/9/05, 6/16/05
Milbank, South Dakota	Grant County Review	6/1/05, 6/9/05
Milbank, South Dakota	Midland Publishing and Printing	5/31/05, 6/6/05
Watertown, South Dakota	Watertown Public Opinion	6/3/05, 6/11/05
Willmar, Minnesota	West Central Tribune	6/2/05, 6/11/05
Spicer, Minnesota	Kandiyohi County Times	5/30/05, 6/6/05

## 3.2 Meetings

### 3.2.1 Federal Scoping

Public scoping meetings provide an opportunity for information exchange about the proposed project and public input. The scoping meetings were conducted in an open house format. The dates, locations and number of attendees for three federal scoping meetings are shown in **Table 3**. Attendees were provided information about the project and given the opportunity to ask resource specialists questions and to express their concerns about the project. Display boards showing project location, resource information, the NEPA process and the Minnesota and South Dakota state permitting processes aided in the information exchange with meeting attendees. Western developed a project newsletter and the

first issue was available at the scoping meetings. A complete list of all handouts available at the scoping meeting are identified in **Table 4**. These handouts are available from Western on request.

**Table 3: Federal Scoping Meetings**

Meeting Location	Meeting Date	Number of Attendees
Milbank, South Dakota	June 14, 2005	16
Morris, Minnesota	June 15, 2005	6
Granite Falls, Minnesota	June 16, 2005	12

**Table 4: Federal Scoping Meeting Handouts**

Handouts	Handout Description
Western’s Big Stone II Project Newsletter June 2005	Letter from Western’s Project Manager Introduction to Western Area Power Administration Public Scoping Meeting Date, Time, and Location What is Scoping? Multiple Approval Processes – Federal, Minnesota, South Dakota Project Timeline Project Description and Project Features Tips for Providing Effective Comments Contact for more information
USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Brochure/Poster (December 2000)	Explanation about RUS’s Programs – Electric, Telecommunications, Water and Environment Role in Rural Development
Western Area Power Administration Brochure (August 2003)	Description of Western services – selling and delivering power; map of Western’s service area
Western’s Upper Great Plains Region Brochure (August 2003)	Description of Western services – selling and delivering power; map showing Western’s Upper Great Plains Region
Western’s Brochure “Living and Working Around High-Voltage Power Lines” (1992)	Sample Topics Safety Do’s and Don’ts Using the Right-of-Way Irrigation Systems Underground Pipes and Cables, etc.
Western’s Brochure “Electric and Magnetic Fields Facts” (August 2005)	Brochure describing electric and magnetic fields; exposure sources – natural, in the home, overhead lines, underground lines, substations; description of stray voltage; discussion about research.
Otter Tail Power Company Fact Sheet - “Big Stone II Air Emissions Control” (June 2005)	Description of factors considered in selecting air emission-control technologies Technologies selected Advantages to technologies selected
Otter Tail Power Company Fact Sheet - “Alternative Site Evaluation Summary” (June 2005)	Selection of Candidate Sites Candidate Site Evaluation Selection of Preferred and Alternative Sites
Otter Tail Power Company Brochure - “Big Stone II” (April 2005)	Project Description Need for the Project Reasons Behind the Proposed Site Advantages of Coal Environment is Primary Concern Contact Information
Otter Tail Power Company Fact Sheet - “Right of Way” (May 2005)	Information for landowners regarding right of way (e.g., abstract of title, survey permission/staking, document preparation, acquisition process, negotiations) Commonly asked questions regarding transmission line rights-of-way and easement.
Otter Tail Power Company Fact Sheet - “Transmission Route Alternatives” (June 2005)	Description of the two alternative transmission routes an typical needs for transmission right-of-way
Written Comment Sheets (May 2005)	Forms for writing comments about the project and submission to Western.

Western received verbal comments from the public during the scoping meetings; the verbal comments were noted by resource staff. Public comment sheets were available for the public to complete and submit to Western at the meeting or for mailing in at a later date (see Appendix C). In addition to the public scoping meetings, Western representatives met with the MDOC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to receive input on the project.

The public scoping period for the Big Stone II Project originally ended on July 26, 2005; however, Western extended the scoping comment period to incorporate public comments received during the landowner informal meetings required for the Minnesota permitting process. On July 26, 2005, Western placed a notice in the *Federal Register* extending the scoping comment period to August 29, 2005 (see Appendix A). All comments received during the entire scoping period were compiled into a scoping report document (this publication), which is available to the public, and is part of the project's official Administrative Record.

### **3.2.2 Minnesota State Landowner Meetings**

Five landowner meetings were held as part of the Minnesota state permitting process for the transmission line portion of the project. The meetings were conducted in an open house format similar to the federal public scoping meeting previously described. Public comment cards were available for attendees to record their comments (see Appendix C). Comments received from the public during the state permitting process meetings were included in the compilation of comments received during the federal scoping process. Meeting dates, locations and number of attendees for the five state landowner meetings are shown in **Table 5**.

**Table 5: Minnesota State Landowner Meetings**

<b>Meeting Location</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Granite Falls, Minnesota	August 1, 2005	27
Benson, Minnesota	August 2, 2005	43
Willmar, Minnesota	August 3, 2005	59
Canby, Minnesota	August 8, 2005	22
Ortonville, Minnesota	August 9, 2005	41

### **3.2.3 South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Hearing**

The South Dakota PUC held a public hearing on September 13, 2005, in Milbank, South Dakota, for the application submitted by Otter Tail Power Company on behalf of the Big Stone II co-owners for an energy conversion facility permit for the construction of the Big Stone II Project. Public notice for the meeting was provided on August 11, 2005 (see Appendix A). Three PUC commissioners, six commission staff and 50 individuals attended the hearing. The applicants presented information on the project to the Commission and members of the public. Following the presentation, the Commission began receiving public testimony.

Adam Sokolski provided testimony on behalf of the Izaak Walton League of America, Minnesota for Energy Efficient Economy and The Union of Concerned Scientists. Mr. Sokolski discussed concerns about the proposed facility, including the increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, and submitted written testimony for the record. Deanna White, representing the Sierra Club, had a few questions regarding the presentation and noted that the Sierra Club had submitted official comments in writing as part of the scoping process.

Nancy Werdel, representing Western, stated that Western will be preparing an EIS under the NEPA for the project. Ms. Werdel encouraged those present to engage in all of the various Federal and state permit processes and to provide comments. Nettie Myers, President of Utility Shareholders of South Dakota and representing more than 2,000 members, indicated that her organization wholeheartedly supports this project. Mr. Liebe, a local resident and member of the board of directors of Utility Shareholders, indicated he was definitely in favor of the project.

Jim Peterson (State Senator), Val Rausch (State Representative), and Steve Street (State Representative) all spoke in favor of the project and indicated they would like to see the project go forward. Grant County Commissioners Clayton Tucholke and Gene Mann both spoke in support of the project and indicated it would be good for the local economy. Mary Joe Stueve, representing Clean Water Action South Dakota, submitted written testimony for the record and spoke on wind energy, mercury emissions, and total maximum daily loads for water resources.

## 4.0 Comments

Western received 445 scoping comments during the public scoping period for the Big Stone II Project. One form letter was received during scoping from 334 Sierra Club members.

It is important that every scoping comment, either verbal or written, be considered in preparing a comprehensive environmental analysis. Each comment was reviewed and evaluated, then compiled in an electronic database. The database allowed Western, the cooperating agencies, and the EIS Team to manage comment information systematically and efficiently. As comments were entered, contact information from the commenter was automatically fed into a mailing list to ensure all interested parties receive information throughout the duration of the project.

Once the individual comments were entered in the database, reports were generated. The flexibility of the database to generate reports in a variety of ways (e.g., topic, origination, author, etc.) provided Western and the EIS Team an efficient way for retrieving and compiling comment data, which expedited the comment analysis process. Comments were reviewed to identify data entry errors and eliminate duplications. A summary table of the scoping comments compiled by topic is found in Appendix D.

## 5.0 Cooperating Agencies

Western mailed letters on June 2, 2005, to six agencies inviting them to participate in the Big Stone II Project as a cooperating agency. They are:

- Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (now under the Minnesota Department of Commerce)
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
- South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Rural Utilities Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

As of this date, RUS and the USACE have formally accepted the offer to participate as a cooperating agency. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will work closely with Western as an informal participant.

## **6.0 Preparation of the EIS**

The EIS will include analysis of effects from construction and operation of all components of the proposed project. Once the environmental analysis is complete, a Draft EIS will be prepared for public review and comment. During the public review period, formal hearings will be conducted to allow the public to participate by providing public comments on the Draft EIS. Public comments will be compiled and evaluated and responses will be prepared and incorporated into the Final EIS. A Record of Decision will be prepared by Western and the cooperating agencies that will document agency decisions for the proposed project.

Several organizations will be involved in providing information, analyzing data and information and preparing and reviewing the EIS:

Lead Agency:	Western Area Power Administration
Cooperating Agencies:	Rural Utilities Services U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
EIS Contractor:	ENSR

In addition, the applicant will provide information on its proposed project as needed so the agencies can analyze the project components and determine their environmental effects:

Applicant:	Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency (dba Missouri River Energy Services)
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## **7.0 Other Environmental Review And Consultation Requirements**

The major Federal and state permits and other compliance actions that potentially apply to the Big Stone II Project are identified in **Table 6**. A number of federal environmental statutes address environmental protection, compliance or consultation that will be addressed in the EIS. In addition, certain environmental requirements have been delegated to state authorities for enforcement and implementation. It is Western's policy to conduct its operations in an environmentally safe manner and in compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and standards.

Many other environmental regulations and requirements will apply to the evaluation, construction and operation of the Big Stone II Project. Most of these regulations are overseen through permitting, agency approvals and annual environmental reports. Some of these regulations and requirements are coordinated with the NEPA process by the federal agencies.

**Table 6: List of Permits/Approvals**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>
<b>Federal</b>	
Western Area Power Administration	Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Interconnection (including NEPA)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 Permit Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 Permit
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification CWA Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit
Federal Aviation Administration	Notice of Proposed Construction Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration "No Hazard Declaration"
Federal Highway Administration	Permit to Cross Federal Highway
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation Compatibility Analysis of Disturbed Easements Right-of-way Permit Special Use Permit
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Farmland Protection Policy Act/Farmland Conversion Impact Rating
Rural Utilities Service (RUS)	NEPA RUS finance loan
<b>South Dakota</b>	
Public Utility Commission of South Dakota	Energy Facility Permit Energy Conversion Facility Transmission Line Permit
Water Rights Program, South Dakota	Water Appropriations
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Clean Air Act and Amendments, Prevention of Significant Deterioration Permit CWA 401 Certification NPDES Storm Water Permit for Construction
Aeronautics Commission, South Dakota	Aeronautical Hazard Permit
Game, Fish, and Parks	State-listed endangered species consultation
State Historic Preservation Office	National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation
Department of Transportation	Utility permit for highway crossing Permit to occupy right-of-way
<b>Minnesota</b>	
Public Utility Commission of Minnesota	Certificate of Need for High Voltage Transmission Line High Voltage Transmission Line Route Permit
Department of Natural Resources	License to Cross Public Lands and Waters State-listed endangered species consultation
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	NPDES Storm Water Permit for Construction
Department of Transportation	Utility permit for highway crossing
State Historic Preservation Office	NHPA Section 106 consultation
<b>Local, South Dakota</b>	
Grant County, South Dakota	Zoning approval
Deuel County Board of Adjustment	Zoning approval
County highways	Permit to work in right-of-way
County or township	Driveway permits
<b>Local, Minnesota</b>	
Multiple local governmental units	Permit for work on the beds of wetlands to install new wires or towers Zoning permits if necessary
County highways	Permit to work in right-of-way
County or township	Driveway permits
<b>Other</b>	
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad	Temporary Occupancy Permit Wire Line Crossing or Longitudinal Communication and Electrical Permit
Twin City and Western Railroad	Overhead/Underground Permit

Certain statutes and regulations require Western to consider consultations with Federal, state and local agencies, and federally recognized Native American groups regarding the potential for the proposed project and alternatives to disturb sensitive resources. The consultations must occur in a timely manner and are generally required before any land disturbance can begin. Most of these consultations are related to biological, cultural and Native American resources. Biological resource consultations generally apply to the potential for activities to disturb sensitive species or habitats. Cultural resource consultations apply to the potential to destroy important cultural or archeological sites. Finally, Native American consultations are required when there is a potential to disturb Native American ancestral sites or traditional practices.

## **8.0 Decisions to be Made Through the EIS**

Western's decision for the Big Stone II Project would be whether to grant an interconnection and make modifications to its substations and any other facilities and/or systems to meet the interconnection requirements.

## **9.0 Schedule**

Notice of Intent	May 27, 2005
Scoping Period	May 27, 2005 – August 29, 2005
EIS Scoping Meetings	June 14, 15 and 16, 2005
Notice of Availability for Draft EIS	March 24, 2006
Comment Period	March 27, 2006 – May 11, 2006
Pubic Hearings	April 17 – 20, 2006

The schedule for the Final EIS and Record of Decision will depend on the number and scope of the agency and public comments received on the Draft EIS.

**APPENDIX A**  
**SCOPING NOTICE**

Constructing Big Stone II at the site of an existing facility would considerably reduce the construction costs of a new plant. The proposed plant would share existing infrastructure, including cooling water intake structure, pumping system, and delivery line; plant road and rail spur; coal unloading facilities; and solid waste disposal facilities. The existing plant road and rail spur would provide site access. No changes are expected to these existing features to accommodate the Project.

The Project co-owners would construct a nominal 600 MW (net) electric generating station using a single pulverized coal fired steam generator (boiler) with balanced-draft combustion and a single reheat steam turbine. The plant would be designed to burn approximately 2.5 to 3 million tons of Powder River Basin sub-bituminous coal annually. This fuel is relatively high-moisture, low-sulfur coal with excellent combustion but low grindability qualities. Big Stone II would be designed to normally operate at its maximum continuous rating output. The Project would serve the co-owners' customer base loads.

Subject to a final design and regulatory approval, emissions control equipment would likely include selective catalytic reduction for nitrogen oxide reduction, a fabric filter (baghouse) for particulate collection, followed by a wet scrubber for sulfur dioxide removal. The proposed emission control technologies are configured to provide the greatest mercury emission reductions.

Treated cooling water for the water-cooled surface condenser at the proposed plant would be provided from a closed-loop circulating water system that includes a new mechanical draft cooling tower and circulating water pumps. Raw water for the cooling system would be supplied from the existing Big Stone Plant cooling pond. The water for the cooling pond would be supplied from Big Stone Lake via an existing water line and intake structure. Potable water for drinking fountains, washrooms, showers, and toilet facilities would be supplied from the area's rural water system.

The design of the wastewater treatment system for Big Stone II would maintain the "zero discharge" design of the existing Big Stone Plant. Design features would include containment areas around equipment, oil/water separator, brine concentrator, and on-site storm water collection system. In addition, oil collected from the oil/water separator and other plant-generated waste oils would be burned in one of the two coal-fired boilers for

energy recovery. Sanitary waste from showers, wash basins, and toilets would be collected for treatment in the existing Big Stone Plant treatment system.

The Project co-owners intend to market ash as a commodity suitable for use in a number of applications including replacement of Portland cement in concrete, soil stabilization, and structural fill. Excess ash, and ash not meeting marketable specifications, would be disposed of in the existing Big Stone Plant on-site ash landfill. The existing Big Stone Plant and the proposed Big Stone II would produce approximately 300,000 to 350,000 cubic yards of ash annually, based on expected average coal characteristics. Operating both units until 2040 could require development of approximately 95 acres of new landfill.

Electric output from the proposed Big Stone II would be stepped up to 230 kilovolts (kV) and interconnected to the transmission system at the existing Big Stone Plant site. The existing plant site currently has four transmission outlets. Two of these outlets are operated at 230 kV, one terminates north of the existing plant site near Hankinson, North Dakota, and the other terminates south of the existing plant site near Blair, South Dakota. The other two transmission outlets are operated at 115 kV; one terminates north of Big Stone City on the Graceville-Morris 115-kV line, and the other terminates at Western's Granite Falls Substation in Minnesota.

The Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) conducted an Interconnection Study for the Project (MISO project number G392, queue number 38020-01) that outlines required upgrades for interconnecting the proposed Big Stone II to the current interstate transmission system. The study proposed two different interconnection alternatives to meet the steady-state system requirements:

A. Alternative A would include approximately 56 miles of new transmission line and approximately 80 miles of line upgrades: A new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Ortonville, Minnesota (about seven miles) with an upgrade of the Ortonville to Johnson Junction to Morris, Minnesota line (about 41 miles) from 115 kV to 230 kV, and a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Canby, Minnesota (about 49 miles) with an upgrade of the Canby to Granite Falls, Minnesota line (about 39 miles) from 115 kV to 230 kV. The lines would interconnect at Western's Morris and Granite Falls substations, and modifications to these substations would be required.

B. Alternative B would include approximately 129 miles of new transmission line and approximately 39 miles of line upgrades: a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to just east of Spicer, Minnesota (about 80 miles), and a new 230-kV line from the existing Big Stone Plant site to Canby (about 49 miles) with an upgrade of the Canby to Granite Falls, Minnesota line from 115 kV to 230 kV (about 39 miles). Western is the owner of the Granite Falls Substation where the latter line would interconnect. Modifications to the Granite Falls Substation and a new substation at Spicer would be required.

Under the current MISO tariff and Western interconnection requirements, further analysis is required before firm transmission service can be granted for the Project. This analysis will be performed through a System Impact (or "Delivery Service") Study. The results of this study and other regional planning may also identify additional transmission system improvements or other design criteria needed to accommodate the reliable delivery of the electric output from the Project to the co-owners' systems. These additional improvements would be analyzed for environmental impacts. Any necessary transmission line construction would be owned and maintained by one or more of the Project co-owners.

The states of Minnesota and South Dakota require the project co-owners to meet certain requirements for siting private transmission lines within their states. In Minnesota, a Certificate of Need from the Public Utilities Commission and a Route Permit for a Large High-Voltage Transmission Line from the Environmental Quality Board for the portion of the transmission lines located in Minnesota would be required. In South Dakota, a Transmission Facility Route Permit for the portion of the transmission lines in South Dakota would be required.

Interconnection of the proposed Big Stone II Project would incorporate a major new generation resource into Western's power transmission system, including upgrades to existing substations and construction of new transmission lines. Therefore, Western has determined that an EIS is required under DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, 10 CFR part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix D, class of action D6. Western will be the lead Federal agency for preparing the EIS, as defined at 40 CFR 1501.5. In addition, Great River Energy anticipates applying for a loan from the RUS to finance its portion of the proposed Project, so RUS has been

designated a cooperating agency. Western will invite other Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to be cooperating agencies on the EIS, as defined at 40 CFR 1501.6. Such agencies may also make a request to Western to be a cooperating agency. Designated cooperating agencies have certain responsibilities to support the NEPA process, as specified at 40 CFR 1501.6 (b).

Full public participation and disclosure are planned for the entire EIS process. Western anticipates the EIS process will take about 15 months, and will include the open-house public scoping meetings; consultation and involvement with appropriate Federal, state, local, and tribal governmental agencies; public review and hearings on the published draft EIS; a review period; a published final EIS; and publication of a record of decision expected in mid-summer 2006. Additional informal public meetings may be held in the proposed Project area if public interest and issues indicate a need. Western will also mail newsletters to the proposed Project mailing list to communicate Project status and developments.

Western will hold a 60-day scoping period to ensure that interested members of the public and representatives of groups, and Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies have an opportunity to provide input on the scope of the process and the alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS. Western will also hold public open-house scoping meetings near the Project area during the scoping period. The purpose of the scoping meetings will be to provide information about the proposed Project, answer questions, and take written comments from interested parties.

The open-house public scoping meetings will be held on June 14, 2005, at the Lantern Inn, 1010 S. Dakota Street, Milbank, South Dakota; on June 15, 2005, at the Best Western Prairie Inn, 200 E. Highway 28, Morris, Minnesota; and on June 16, 2005, at the Kilowatt Community Center, 600 Kilowatt Drive, Granite Falls, Minnesota. Members of the public and representatives of groups, Federal, state, local and tribal agencies are invited to attend anytime between 5 and 8 p.m. Attendees at the scoping meetings will have the opportunity to view proposed Project and NEPA process displays and other information. The open-house scoping meetings will be informal, with Western and Project representatives available for one-on-one discussions with attendees. Written comments

regarding the scoping process may be left with one of Western's representatives at the scoping meetings, or may be provided by fax, e-mail or U.S. Postal Service mail to Western as noted above.

**R. Jack Dodd,**

*Assistant Administrator for Washington Liaison.*

[FR Doc. 05-10662 Filed 5-26-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-6663-8]

### Environmental Impact Statements and Regulations; Availability of EPA Comments

Availability of EPA comments prepared pursuant to the Environmental Review Process (ERP), under section 309 of the Clean Air Act and section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended. Requests for copies of EPA comments can be directed to the Office of Federal Activities at 202-564-7167.

An explanation of the ratings assigned to draft environmental impact statements (EISs) was published in the *Federal Register* dated April 1, 2005 (70 FR 16815).

#### Draft EISs

EIS No. 20050052, ERP No. D-FHW-F40429-WI, US-131 Improvement Study, from the Indiana Toll Road (1-80/90) to a Point One Mile North of Cowling Road, U.S. Army COE Section 404 Permit, St. Joseph County, MI and Elkhart County, IN.

*Summary:* EPA has environmental objections to two alternatives under consideration (Alternatives PA-3 and PA-4) because of direct and indirect impacts to high quality wetlands, impacts to trout habitat in the St. Joseph River, wildlife corridor impacts for the White Pigeon, St. Joseph, and Rocky Rivers, and migratory bird impacts.

Rating EO2.

EIS No. 20050095, ERP No. D-FTA-K54030-CA, Warm Springs Extension, Proposing 5.4 mile Extension of the BART System in the City of Fremont, Funding, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Alameda County, CA.

*Summary:* While EPA has no objection to the proposed action, but requested clarification on mitigation for noise and aquatic resource impacts.

Rating LO.

EIS No. 20050099, ERP No. D-AFS-L65478-OR, Big Butte Springs Timber

Sales, To Implementation Management Direction, Roque River-Siskiyou National Forest, Butte Falls Ranger District, Cascade Zone, Jackson County, OR.

*Summary:* EPA has environmental concerns about potential adverse impacts to water quality and natural resources.

Rating EC1.

EIS No. 20050119, ERP No. D-AFS-L65479-OR, Timberline Express Project, To Improve the Winter Recreational Opportunities, Implementation, Zigzag Ranger District, Mt. Hood National Forest, Clackamas County, OR.

*Summary:* EPA has environmental concerns about water resources, habitat fragmentation, and whether infrastructure constraints will accommodate the proposed ski expansion.

Rating EC1.

#### Final EISs

EIS No. 20050098, ERP No. F-FAA-D51050-PA, Philadelphia International Airport, Runway 17-35 Extension Project, Construction and Operation, US Army COE Section 404 Permit, NPDES Permit, Delaware and Philadelphia Counties, PA.

*Summary:* EPA's previous issues have been resolved, therefore, EPA has no objection to that action as proposed.

EIS No. 20050150, ERP No. F-NAS-A12042-00, PROGRAMMATIC—Mars Exploration Program (MEP) Implementation.

*Summary:* No formal comment letter was sent to the preparing agency.

EIS No. 20050159, ERP No. F-NIH-D81035-MD, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Master Plan 2003 Update, National Institutes of Health Main Campus—Bethesda, MD, Montgomery County, MD.

*Summary:* The FEIS adequately addressed EPA's comments.

Dated: May 24, 2005.

**Robert W. Hargrove,**

*Director, NEPA Compliance Division, Office of Federal Activities.*

[FR Doc. 05-10675 Filed 5-26-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-6663-7]

### Environmental Impacts Statements; Notice of Availability

*Responsible Agency:* Office of Federal Activities, General Information (202)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 20, 2005

CONTACT: LaVerne Kyriss, 720-962-7054, [kyriss@wapa.gov](mailto:kyriss@wapa.gov)

**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS SET FOR BIG STONE II POWER PLANT AND  
TRANSMISSION PROJECT EIS**

LAKEWOOD, Colo.—Seven utilities in the South Dakota and Minnesota area are proposing construction of a 600-MW, coal-fired electric generating station and associated transmission facilities, called the Big Stone II Project.

Western Area Power Administration and the Rural Utility Service intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed project. Public scoping meetings will be held to provide the public with project information and identify public concerns to be considered in the EIS. Meetings will be held:

- June 14, 5 to 8 p.m., Lantern Inn, 1010 S. Dakota St., Milbank, S.D.
- June 15, 5 to 8 p.m., Best Western Prairie Inn, 200 E. Highway 28, Morris, Minn.
- June 16, 5 to 8 p.m., Kilowatt Community Center, 600 Kilowatt Dr., Granite Falls, Minn.

Growth in the Minnesota and South Dakota area continues to increase the demand on the area's interconnected transmission system. To support local base loads, seven local utility companies have come together to build the proposed Big Stone II powerplant adjacent to the existing Big Stone Plant (unit I) located east of Milbank and northwest of Big Stone City, S.D.

While the Big Stone II Project would share some existing infrastructure with the existing Big Stone facility, the project will require transmission system upgrades, including new 230-kV transmission lines and upgrades to existing lines in Minnesota and South Dakota. The proposed project is scheduled to begin construction in spring 2007 and will come online in 2011.

Deadline for public comments is midnight, July 27. Send input to NEPA Document Manager, Big Stone II EIS (A7400), Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213.

Comments may also be e-mailed to: [BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov](mailto:BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov), or faxed to 720-962-7269. Fax verification is 1-800-336-7288.

Western Area Power Administration annually markets and transmits more than 10,000 megawatts of power from hydroelectric powerplants owned and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 15 western and central states. It is part of the Department of Energy. The Rural Utility Service may provide financing assistance to Great River Energy for their portion of the project and has been designated a cooperating agency.

and considered by the Commission. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal (including alternative locations and routes), and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please carefully follow these instructions to ensure that your comments are received in time and properly recorded:

- Send an original and two copies of your letter to: Magalie R. Salas, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., NE., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426.
- Label one copy of the comments for the attention of Gas Branch 2.
- Reference Docket Number CP05-361-000.
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before August 22, 2005.

Please note that the Commission strongly encourages electronic filing of any comments or interventions or protests to this proceeding. See 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> under the "e-Filing" link and the link to the User's Guide. Before you can file comments, you will need to create an account which can be created on-line.

#### Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding known as an "intervenor". Intervenor play a more formal role in the process. Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must send one electronic copy (using the Commission's eFiling system) or 14 paper copies of its filings to the Secretary of the Commission and must send a copy of its filings to all other parties on the Commission's service list for this proceeding. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214, see Appendix 2).<sup>4</sup> Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing of the Commission's decision.

Affected landowners and parties with environmental concerns may be granted intervenor status upon showing good cause by stating that they have a clear

and direct interest in this proceeding which would not be adequately represented by any other parties. You do not need intervenor status to have your environmental comments considered.

#### Environmental Mailing List

If you wish to remain on our environmental mailing list, please return the Information Request Form included in Appendix 3. If you do not return this form, you will be removed from our mailing list.

#### Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at 1-866-208-FERC or on the FERC Internet Web site (<http://www.ferc.gov>) using the eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on "General Search" and enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field. Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at [FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov](mailto:FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov) or toll free at 1-866-208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202)502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission now offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries and direct links to the documents. Go to <http://www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm>.

Magalie R. Salas,  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. E5-3962 Filed 7-25-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Western Area Power Administration

#### Construction and Operation of the Proposed Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project, South Dakota and Minnesota

**AGENCY:** Western Area Power Administration, DOE.

**ACTION:** Extension of scoping period.

**SUMMARY:** This notice advises the public that the Western Area Power Administration (Western), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), is

extending the scoping period for the Construction and Operation of the Proposed Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project, South Dakota and Minnesota, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to August 29, 2005.

**DATES:** The scoping period for the EIS is extended from July 27, 2005, to August 29, 2005. Written comments are requested by the end of the day on August 29, 2005, to help define the scope for the EIS. Other opportunities to comment will be provided during the EIS process.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments regarding the scoping process should be addressed to NEPA Document Manager, Big Stone II EIS, A7400, Western Area Power Administration, PO Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213, telephone (800) 336-7288, fax (720) 962-7263 or 7269, e-mail [BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov](mailto:BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** NEPA Document Manager, Big Stone II EIS, A7400, Western Area Power Administration, PO Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213, telephone (800) 336-7288, fax (720) 962-7263 or 7269, e-mail [BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov](mailto:BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov). For general information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review procedures or status of a NEPA review, contact Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director of NEPA Policy and Compliance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** By notice dated May 27, 2005 (70 FR 30716), Western announced the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the construction and operation of the proposed Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project in South Dakota and Minnesota. In that notice, Western described the schedule for scoping meetings for the EIS, and advised that the scoping period would close Wednesday, July 27, 2005. The public meetings were held as scheduled.

Otter Tail Power Company, as part of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission permit requirements for siting high-voltage transmission lines, intends to notify landowners about the proposed transmission corridors in late July 2005. To provide the landowners ample opportunity to provide input to the scope of the EIS, Western will extend the scoping period to August 29, 2005.

Dated: July 19, 2005.

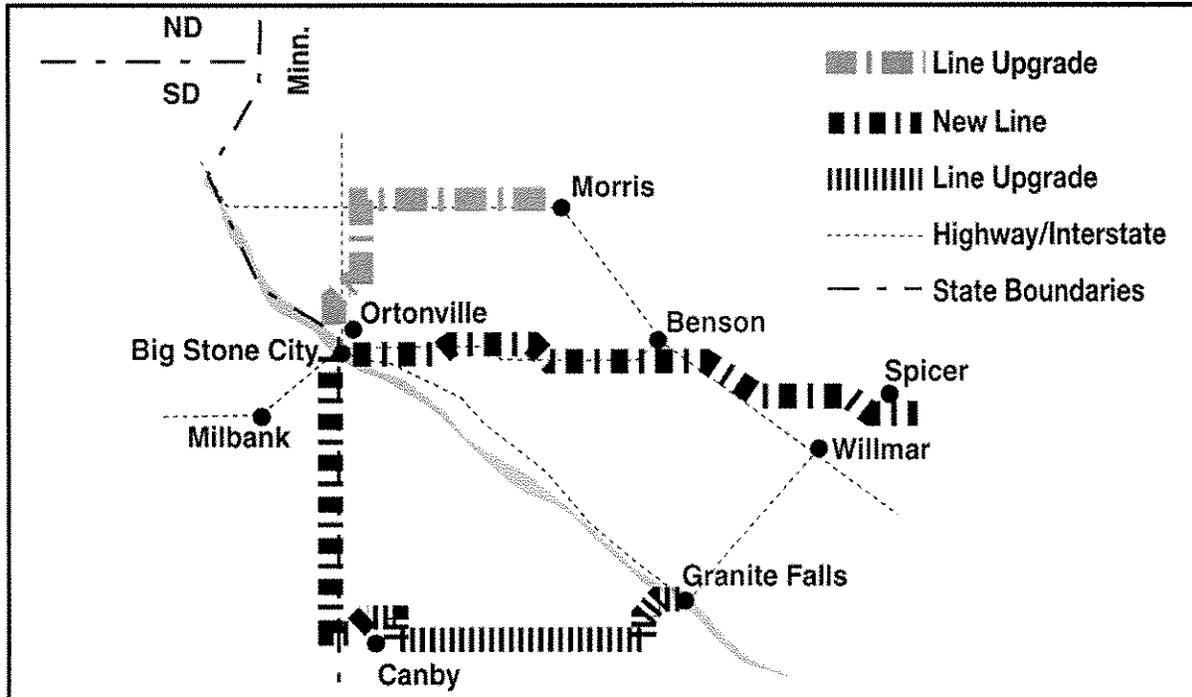
Michael S. HacsKaylo,  
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 05-14690 Filed 7-25-05; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

<sup>4</sup> Interventions may also be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See the previous discussion on filing comments electronically.

# We need your ideas!



We need your comments to help us define the issues and alternatives as we evaluate the environmental impacts of a proposal to build a power plant and associated transmission system upgrades near Milbank and Big Stone City, S.D.

Western will host three public meetings to help define the scope of the Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement.

## Join us on June 14, 15 or 16 to learn more about this project and to share your ideas:

**June 14, 5 to 8 p.m.**

Lantern Inn  
1010 S. Dakota Street  
Milbank, S.D.

**June 15, 5 to 8 p.m.**

Best Western Prairie Inn  
200 E. Highway 28  
Morris, Minn.

**June 16, 5 to 8 p.m.**

Kilowatt Community Center  
600 Kilowatt Drive  
Granite Falls, Minn.

### Need more info?

Contact Nancy Werdel, NEPA Document Manager  
Western Area Power Administration  
P.O. Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213  
phone: 1-800-336-7288, fax: 720-962-7262 or 7269  
e-mail: BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED ENERGY CONVERSION FACILITY

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing on an application submitted by Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) on behalf of the Project Co-Owners, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Great River Energy, Heartland Consumers Power District, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., a Division of MDU Resources Group, Inc., Otter Tail Corporation d/b/a Otter Tail Power Company, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency for a permit to construct an Energy Conversion Facility. The proposed site is located East of Milbank and Northwest of Big Stone City, in Grant County, South Dakota. The proposed Energy Conversion Facility is a nominal 600 MW coal-fired electric generating facility and associated facilities, which the Project Co-Owners have named Big Stone II, to be located on an industrial site adjacent to the existing Big Stone Plant Unit I in Grant County, South Dakota.

The Commission finds that good cause exists to schedule a public input hearing pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15 and 49-41B-16. The purpose of the hearing is to hear public comment regarding Otter Tail's application. The public input hearing will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2005, at 7:00 p.m., at the Lantern Inn, 1010 South Dakota Street, Milbank, South Dakota. At the public input hearing, interested persons may appear and present their views and comments regarding the application. A copy of the application is on file with the Grant County Auditor pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15(5). Filing in the docket, including the application, may be accessed on the Commission's website at [www.puc.sd.gov](http://www.puc.sd.gov).

The Commission further finds that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, the parties to this proceeding are Otter Tail and the Commission. Further, each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the area where the facility is proposed to be sited; any non-profit organization, formed in whole or in part to promote conservation or natural beauty, to protect the environment, personal health or other biological values, to preserve historical sites, to promote consumer interests, to represent commercial and industrial groups, or to promote the orderly development of the area in which the facility is to be sited; or any interested person, may be granted party status in this proceeding by making written application to the Commission on or before September 19, 2005. Forms for intervening as a party will be available at the hearing or may be obtained from the Commission.

Otter Tail must show that the proposed energy conversion facility will comply with all applicable laws and rules; that the energy conversion facility will not pose a threat of serious injury to the environment nor to the social and economic condition of inhabitants or expected inhabitants in the siting area; the energy conversion facility will not substantially impair the health, safety or welfare of the inhabitants; and the energy conversion facility will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region with due consideration having been given to the views of governing bodies of affected local units of government. The Commission will decide whether the permit should be granted,

denied, or granted upon such terms, conditions or modifications of the construction, operation or maintenance as the Commission finds appropriate.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, this hearing is being held in a physically accessible location. Please contact the Commission at 1-800-332-1782 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing if you have special needs so arrangements can be made to accommodate you.



Gary Hanson, Chair  
Bob Sahr, Vice-Chair  
Dustin Johnson, Commissioner

## SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070  
[www.puc.sd.gov](http://www.puc.sd.gov)

Capitol Office  
(605) 773-3201  
(605) 773-3809 fax

Transportation/Warehouse  
(605) 773-5280  
(605) 773-3225 fax

Consumer Hotline  
1-800-332-1782

August 11, 2005

Watertown Public Opinion  
120 3rd Avenue N.W.  
Watertown, SD 57201

Attention: Faye

Re: In the Matter of the Application by Otter Tail Power  
Company on behalf of Big Stone II Co-Owners for  
an Energy Conversion Facility Permit for the  
Construction of the Big Stone II Project  
Docket EL05-022

Dear Faye:

Please publish the enclosed Notice of Public Hearing for Proposed Energy Conversion Facility in the Watertown Public Opinion as a display advertisement for one issue on August 18, 2005. Please send us your Affidavit of Publication, together with your invoice, and we will promptly remit.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Karen E. Cremer  
Staff Attorney

KEC:dk



Gary Hanson, Chair  
Bob Sahr, Vice-Chair  
Dustin Johnson, Commissioner

## SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070  
[www.puc.sd.gov](http://www.puc.sd.gov)

Capitol Office  
(605) 773-3201  
(605) 773-3809 fax

Transportation/Warehouse  
(605) 773-5280  
(605) 773-3225 fax

Consumer Hotline  
1-800-332-1782

VIA FAX: (605) 698-3641

August 11, 2005

The Sisseton Courier  
117 East Oak  
Sisseton, SD 57262

Attention: Ronda

Re: In the Matter of the Application by Otter Tail Power  
Company on behalf of Big Stone II Co-Owners for  
an Energy Conversion Facility Permit for the  
Construction of the Big Stone II Project  
Docket EL05-022

Dear Ronda:

Please publish the enclosed Notice of Public Hearing for Proposed Energy Conversion Facility in The Sisseton Courier as a display advertisement for one issue on August 16, 2005. Please send us your Affidavit of Publication, together with your invoice, and we will promptly remit.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Karen E. Cremer  
Staff Attorney

KEC:dk  
Enc.



Gary Hanson, Chair  
Bob Sahr, Vice-Chair  
Dustin Johnson, Commissioner

## SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070  
[www.puc.sd.gov](http://www.puc.sd.gov)

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(605) 773-3201  
(605) 773-3809 fax

Transportation/Warehouse  
(605) 773-5280  
(605) 773-3225 fax

Consumer Hotline  
1-800-332-1782

August 11, 2005

Valley Shopper  
203 South 3rd Street  
Milbank, SD 57252

Attention: Jeannie

Re: In the Matter of the Application by Otter Tail Power  
Company on behalf of Big Stone II Co-Owners for  
an Energy Conversion Facility Permit for the  
Construction of the Big Stone II Project  
Docket EL05-022

Dear Jeannie:

Please publish the enclosed Notice of Public Hearing for Proposed Energy Conversion Facility in the Valley Shopper as a display advertisement for one issue in your paper that is going to print tomorrow. Please send us your Affidavit of Publication, together with your invoice, and we will promptly remit.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Karen E. Cremer  
Staff Attorney

KEC:dk  
Enc.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SCOPING LETTERS**

**Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project  
Agencies, Tribes, and Organizations that Received Scoping Letters**

**Federal Agencies**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

- Bloomington, MN
- South Dakota Field Office

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Omaha District
- St. Paul District

U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Rural Utilities Service
- Farm Service Agency
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Department of Commerce

- Intergovernmental Affairs Division, Economic Development Administration

U.S. Department of Energy

- Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory Board

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Division of Real Property & Management Program

U.S. Department of Transportation

- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration

Department of Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (Denver, CO; Chicago, IL)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Office of Federal Activities
- NEPA Program
- Environmental Planning & Evaluation

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

- Office of Energy Projects

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

**Tribal Governments**

Upper Sioux Indian Community

Prairie Island Indian Community

Lower Sioux Indian Community

Spirit Lake Tribal Council

Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Nation

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

Santee Sioux Nation

Yankton Sioux Tribal Tribe

Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe

Lower Brule Sioux Tribe

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

**Minnesota State Governments**

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office

Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Minnesota Dept of Agriculture

Minnesota Dept of Transportation

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**Minnesota Local Governments**

Big Stone County, MN

Ortonville Public County  
City of Clinton  
City of Graceville  
City of Johnson  
City of Ortonville  
City of Correll  
City of Odessa

Ortonville Township  
Big Stone Township  
Otrej Township  
Malta Township  
Moonshine Township  
Akron Township  
Odessa Township

Swift County, MN

City of Benson  
City of Clontarf  
City of Kerkhoven  
City of Murdock  
City of DeGraff  
City of Danvers  
City of Holloway  
City of Appleton

Pillsbury Township  
Dublin Township  
Kildare Township  
Six Mile Grove Township  
Marysland Township  
Moyer Township  
Shible Township  
Hayes Township

Yellow Medicine County, MN

City of Canby  
City of Clarkfield  
City of Hazel Run  
City of St. Leo  
Florida Township  
Friendship Township  
Hammer Township

Hazel Run Township  
Minnesota Falls Township  
Omro Township  
Oshkosh Township  
Stony Run Township  
Tyro Township

Stevens County, MN

Stevens County Commissioner  
City of Alberta  
City of Chokio  
Baker Township  
Darnen Township  
Scott Township

Kandiyohi County, MN

City of Spicer  
City of Willmar  
Dovre Township  
Green Lake Township

Chippewa County, MN

City of Granite Falls  
Granite Falls Township

**State Parks, MN**

Lac Qui Parle State Park

## **South Dakota State Governments**

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission  
South Dakota State Historical Society  
South Dakota of Environment and Natural Resources  
South Dakota Dept of Game, Fish and Parks

- South Dakota Natural Heritage Database
- Environmental Review and Management

South Dakota Dept of Transportation  
Brookings County Planning Office

## **South Dakota Local Governments**

### Deuel County, SD

Deuel County Commissioner  
City of Gary  
Antelope Valley Township  
Glenwood Township  
Herrick Township

### Grant County, SD

Grant County  
Grant County Highway Department  
City of Big Stone  
City of Milbank  
Adams Township  
Alban Township  
Big Stone Township  
Vernon Township

## **State and Local Associations**

Western Interstate Energy Board

## **Nongovernmental Associations**

American Coal Ash Association  
American Petroleum Institute  
Coal Exporters Association of the U.S.  
American Public Power Association  
Energy Communities Alliance  
Environmental Defense  
Friends of the Earth  
The Minnesota Project  
National Coal Council

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
National Resources Defense Council  
National Wildlife Federation  
Sierra Club

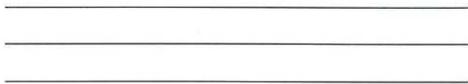
- Midwest Office
- Northern Plains Office

Audubon Minnesota  
United States Energy Association

**APPENDIX C**  
**SCOPING COMMENT RESPONSE FORMS**



Fold 2



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**Western Area Power Administration**  
**NEPA Document Manager**  
**Big Stone II EIS, A7400**  
**P.O. Box 281213**  
**Lakewood, CO 80228-8213**



Fold 1

**Big Stone II mailing list**

To have your name added or removed from our mailing list for this project, please check the appropriate box and return this response sheet to us. Be sure to fill out the contact information on the reverse side. If you do not ask us to remove your name from our mailing list, we will send you future EIS-related announcements.

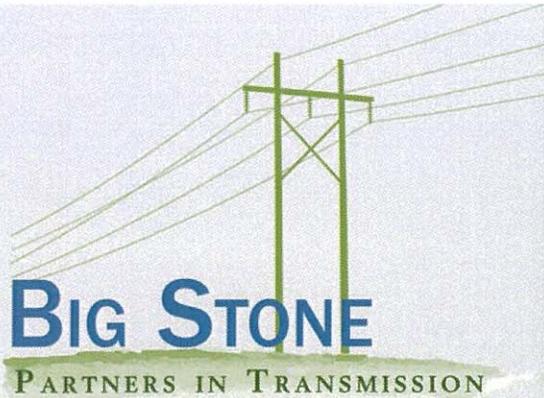
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, add my name to the mailing list to receive future information | <input type="checkbox"/> No, please remove my name from your mailing list |
|---|---|

**Sign up to receive the Draft EIS**

To receive the Draft EIS check the box below and tell us which format you would like.

- Send me the Draft EIS in the following format:
- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CD-rom | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Summary only (about 50 pages) |
|---------------------------------|--|

Printed copies of the Draft EIS (about 500 pages) will be available at your local library or on Western's Web site at <http://www.wapa.gov/transmission/interprojects.htm>.



# Big Stone Transmission Project

Please write any comments, questions, or concerns you would like addressed on the Big Stone Transmission Project in the space below. Your comments may also be sent to the address on the reverse side of this postcard.

## Contact information

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Affiliation:**

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## Mailing list

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**APPENDIX D**  
**PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENTS BY TOPIC**

Public Scoping Comments by Topic

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Air Quality</b>	
An Air Emission Risk Analysis should be conducted as part of the EIS analysis.	Chapter 3
Thoroughly examine the impacts of all criteria pollutants with emphasis on sulfur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) and nitrous oxides (NO <sub>x</sub> ) since these pollutants travel widely.	Chapter 4
Modeling results should be included in the EIS on impacts of mercury emission on local deposition and accumulation in regional water bodies.	Chapter 3, Chapter 4
Document the variance in greenhouse gas emission on the proposed project and on all the alternatives.	Chapter 2, Chapter 4
Include an analysis of adverse impacts from increased road and rail traffic and the resulting increased emissions.	Chapter 4
Examine the effectiveness of brominated carbon injection technology for mercury removal from coal-fired plants.	Chapter 2
Examine whether the proposed pollution control is most effective for mercury removal.	Chapter 1, Chapter 4
Examine the impacts to air quality from acid rain and mercury deposition to areas down wind of the proposed power plant.	Chapter 4
Fully assess increased carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) emissions as well as capture and sequestration of CO <sub>2</sub> .	Chapter 4
Analysis of CO <sub>2</sub> emissions should be consistent with the President’s stated mission to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the 8 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals case (“Mid States Coalition for Progress v. Surface Transportation Board”).	Chapter 4
Identify the point of maximum concentration of direct and indirect PM <sub>2.5</sub> .	Chapter 4
Address impacts to ambient air quality for the seven-county Twin Cities areas, as well as Rochester and Duluth.	Chapter 4
Include a description of existing controls and emissions at the existing plant and an analysis for reducing emissions to offset the increased emission from Big Stone II.	Chapter 1, Chapter 4
Modeling protocol should be developed and shared with affected state agencies along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).	Chapter 3
Air quality analysis should include a wind rose representing conditions in Grant County, South Dakota, to inform local residents of downwind directions from the proposed plant.	Chapter 3
Air quality analysis should discuss the area’s attainment status with both state and federal air quality standards as well as identify any PSD Class I areas.	Chapter 3
Air dispersion modeling should show compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for CO, NO <sub>x</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> and particulate matter for both the existing facility and the proposed facility.	Chapter 3
Long-range air quality impacts resulting from coal combustion such as acid rain, mercury deposition, greenhouse gas and air toxics emissions should be discussed including downwind impacts on ozone levels in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.	Chapter 4
<p>The following additional concerns were expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The power plant’s contributions and impacts to global warming</li> <li>• Radioactive emission from burning coal, which could contain trace amounts of radionuclides</li> <li>• Impacts to the environment and fish due to acid rain and mercury contamination</li> <li>• Visibility impacts to Minnesota’s Class I areas</li> <li>• NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in Minnesota since South Dakota is not part of the Clean Air Interstate Rule and therefore not subject to a nationwide emissions cap</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4 Chapter 4 Chapter 4 Chapter 3, Chapter 4 Chapter 3, chapter 4</p>

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Realty/Land Use</b>	
Several questions regarding easement acquisition process, payment and compensation, and when landowners would be contacted.	Chapter 4
Impacts to the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is a concern.	Chapter 4
Why can't the transmission lines be located on government/Department of Natural Resources/wildlife refuge land?	Chapter 4
<p>The following concerns were expressed regarding project impacts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The old dump ground in southern Granite Falls</li> <li>• Personal property located near Long Lake and Ringo Lake</li> <li>• Proposed new sewage plant in Willmar</li> <li>• Newly annexed area southeast of Willmar that is zoned for a new business park and commercial property</li> <li>• DeGraff cemetery, Oak Park Church cemetery in Fahlun Township, and cemetery located on the southwest corner of Hazel Run</li> <li>• State and national parks and natural and cultural resource areas</li> <li>• Land use in Dovre Township identified in the Dovre Township's Comprehensive Land Use Plan as suitable for agriculture</li> <li>• Property values along County Road 27, Long Lake and areas to the north and Highway 12</li> <li>• Conservation Reserve Program lands</li> <li>• NWR or Wetland Management District properties</li> <li>• Wildlife management areas (WMAs) including the Brouillet WMA, Omro WMA and the Lanners WMA located within proposed corridors</li> </ul> <p>Additional concerns expressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interference with the new airport in Willmar, future air strip being constructed in Hazel Run Township and expansion of airport in Minnesota Falls Township</li> <li>• Construction impacts of the transmission lines to Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA), specifically to the Mound Spring SNA located within the proposed transmission line corridor</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Agriculture</b>	
Land use in Dovre Township west of County Road 5 has been identified in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as suitable for agriculture.	Chapter 3
Single-pole structures are preferred in agricultural fields.	Chapter 2
Address impacts to plant-related ozone formation from plant emissions on crops.	Chapter 4
<p>Additional concerns expressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to center pivot irrigation and farming activities, particularly along Highway 12</li> <li>• Electrical effects of the transmission lines on Global Positioning System units used for guiding farm machinery and interference with UH7 two-way radio</li> <li>• Transmission line structures interfering with aerial sprayers and ground spraying equipment</li> <li>• Potential for damage to farm machinery striking power line poles</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Solid Waste/Hazardous Materials</b>	
Thoroughly address the adequacy of the existing on-site waste/ash management site.	Chapter 2
Discuss the chemical characteristics of fly and bottom ash and proposed methods for disposal.	Chapter 4

Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>General Alternatives</b>	
Provide in comparative form impacts associated with each reasonable alternative.	Chapter 2
Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and discuss reasons why any alternatives were eliminated from further study.	Chapter 2
Supports project alternatives and design analyses that would avoid adverse impacts to USFWS Trust lands and resources.	Chapter 2, Chapter 4
<b>Alternative Technologies</b>	
Analyze an alternative which addresses energy efficiency and demand side management.	Chapter 2
Analyze the use of wind power with ancillary utility services as an alternative.	Chapter 2
Consider the use of wind power in combination with hydroelectric generation.	Chapter 2
Evaluate the use of wind power plus the use of new thermal generation sources as an alternative.	Chapter 2
Consider community-based energy projects using local fuels (agricultural waste, forestry wood waste, municipal waste, etc.) as an alternative.	Chapter 2
Consider industrial co-generation as source such as ethanol plants as an alternative to coal-fired generated energy.	Chapter 2
Evaluate the alternative of coal gasification with carbon capture and storage.	Chapter 2
Wind power combined with a smaller coal-fired power plant should be considered as an alternative.	Chapter 2
Supports wind energy on ridges near Spicer instead of coal-fired power plant.	Chapter 2
Nuclear power plants should be considered as an alternative to coal-fired power plants.	Chapter 2
Consider photovoltaic sources as an alternative to coal-fired generated energy.	Chapter 2
Disclose a range of power generating technologies alternatives and feasibility for the Big Stone II plant.	Chapter 2
Thoroughly analyze alternatives to the Big Stone II plant, particularly wind-generated power and biomass.	Chapter 2
Provide additional information on the economies of scale for connecting into the transmission system.	
Analyze an alternative that incorporates the maximum wind energy potential with an Integrated (coal) Gasification Combined Cycle plant that utilizes carbon capture technology.	Chapter 2
Consider an alternative that incorporates the majority of baseload generation from wind and backup with natural gas or biomass instead of coal-fired generated energy.	Chapter 2
Analyze an alternative that incorporates the Oxyfuel process and state-of-the-art pollution controls.	Chapter 2
Advanced combined cycle gas facility should be considered an alternative.	Chapter 2
Evaluate as an alternative state-of-the-art emission control technologies.	Chapter 2
Address alternative coal technologies using various combinations of state-of-the-art emission control technologies for mercury recovery and SO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>x</sub> emission reductions that would result in overall emissions reduction for the combined Big Stone facility.	Chapter 2
<b>Power Plant Siting Alternative</b>	
Suggests building the plant at the existing NSP plant in Granite Falls.	Chapter 2
<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>	
Address other sources affecting the climate when evaluating cumulative impacts of the project.	Chapter 4
The cumulative analysis should include the existing plant and the new plant, as well as other pollution sources.	Chapter 4
Air dispersion modeling should show compliance with NAAQS standards for CO, NO <sub>x</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> and particulate matter for both the existing facility and the proposed facility and results included in the cumulative impacts.	Chapter 4

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Transmission Line Corridor/Routing Alternatives</b>	
The transmission line corridor alternative south of Willmar is preferred.	Chapter 2
The Big Stone to Willmar transmission line corridor is preferred as an alternative.	Chapter 2
Consider an alternative transmission line corridor that avoids Highway 12 and follows the Big Stone line along the Lac qui Parle refuge from Ortonville to Appleton, then south to the south side of Willmar.	Chapter 2
An alternative transmission line corridor alignment should be sited south of Willmar.	Chapter 2
Transmission line corridor Alternative 2B south of Willmar is preferred and avoids wetland areas.	Chapter 2
The transmission line corridor Alternative 1 north to Morris is preferred.	Chapter 2
Use an alternative transmission line corridor along the Minnesota River or Highway 7 south to Granite Falls.	Chapter 2
Rebuilding transmission lines should be considered an alternative over a new transmission line.	Chapter 2
Consider an alternative that would avoid routing of transmission lines through “Sites of Biodiversity Significance.”	Chapter 2
Adjust the transmission line route from Ortonville to Morris to run north along Highway 75 from Ortonville to County Road 10, then east on County Road 10 to County Road 21, before following the existing line north and east to Morris.	Chapter 2
An east-west corridor in the Dawson or Madison area is recommended rather than the Canby area to avoid sensitive natural resource areas.	Chapter 2
Preference to single-pole structures.	Chapter 2
Dovre Township has voted against construction of power lines through the area.	Chapter 2
Opposes transmission line routing near Ringo Lake.	Chapter 2
Supports additional transmission lines be sited within existing corridors.	Chapter 2
A 4-lane road to avoid a large agricultural system and future prime building area was suggested due to concern regarding the proposed transmission line being sited passed the junction of Highway 12 and County Road 9 east of Willmar.	Chapter 2
Route the transmission line along County Road 56 between Ortonville and Benson.	Chapter 2
Transmission lines should be sited along existing transmission and transportation corridors.	Chapter 2
Transmission line alignments should be located underground.	Chapter 2
Transmission lines should be located along county road rights-of-way.	Chapter 2
Site transmission lines along roads and not cross-country.	Chapter 2
Locate transmission lines south of Danvers.	Chapter 2
No preference to H-frame or single pole structures.	Chapter 2
Route transmission line corridors along county roads to avoid sensitive wildlife areas such as Lanners Lake.	Chapter 2
Include a complete evaluation of impacts associated with the new substation in Spicer, Minnesota.	Chapter 2
South Dakota and Minnesota regulatory agencies, tribes (including the Upper Sioux and Sisseton Wahpeton), and towns should be included as contacts for this project.	Chapter 1
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmission line routing near the Dominick’s Pit</li> <li>• Negative impacts of transmission line siting to the lakes and watersheds within the Dovre Township</li> <li>• What is the reason for siting the transmission line 1 mile from existing lines?</li> <li>• Can existing lines be relocated?</li> </ul>	Chapter 2

Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Purpose and Need</b>	
Review the utilities' demand forecast to determine if additional energy is needed.	Chapter 1
Concern regarding the need for additional power and transmission in the Willmar area.	Chapter 1
Supports the purpose and need and that the additional generation is needed for future capacity.	Chapter 1
<b>Project Description</b>	
Project description needs to clarify where the transmission lines would be located within the corridor in order to effectively comment.	Chapter 2
The project should include retrofitting Big Stone I with state-of-the-art emission control technologies to reduce overall emission reduction for the combined plant facility.	Chapter 2
<b>Federal NEPA Process</b>	
Address the large-scale, long-term environmental impact of coal-fired power plants; the net benefits should be broken down into each individual unit.	Chapter 4
The federal EIS should be conducted before the state agency permitting processes reach their respective public comment stages so the public is informed of the impacts that will be at issue in the South Dakota and Minnesota regulatory proceedings.	Chapter 1
Questions regarding how the public can be involved and whether there would be additional public meetings.	Chapter 1, Chapter 6
Include a complete evaluation of impacts associated with the new substation in Spicer, Minnesota.	Chapter 2
Recommend that the South Dakota and Minnesota regulatory agencies, tribes (including the Upper Sioux and Sisseton Wahpeton), as well as towns be included as contacts for this project.	Chapter 1
<b>Other Federal Permitting</b>	
The proposed project involves navigable waters of the United States (U.S.), such as the Minnesota River, and therefore may be subject to the USACE' jurisdiction under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.	Chapter 1
The proposed project may be subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act if project activities include deposition of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S.	Chapter 1
Placement of aerial lines that cross navigable waters of the U.S. requires authorization under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.	Chapter 1
Underground utility lines through waters of the U.S., including wetlands, are regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.	Chapter 1
Connecting points for installation of underground lines installed by vibratory plow and directional bore method, that requires excavation and backfill in waters of the U.S., including wetlands, would require a permit.	Chapter 1
Temporary placement of fill material into any water body or wetland for purposes of access roads, temporary stream crossings, etc. may require a permit.	Chapter 1
The proposed project will require Section 7 consultation with USFWS under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 since two federally listed and candidate species (bald eagle and Dakota skipper) may be present in four counties affected by the project.	Chapter 1
Include a discussion that informs the public of the potential requirement of a Section 404 permit.	Chapter 2
The 404 permit process should be conducted concurrently with the NEPA process and a draft 404(b)(1) analysis should be prepared for the preferred alternative and appended to the NEPA document.	Chapter 1
<b>State Permitting Process</b>	
Some landowners in South Dakota have not been notified, particularly the Nassau area in Vernon Township.	Chapter 1
There is some confusion regarding where the transmission lines would be sited since landowners within and outside of the proposed corridor were notified.	Chapter 1

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Water Resources/Quality</b>	
Modeling and the results on local mercury deposition and accumulation in regional water bodies should be included in the EIS. (Also refer to comments under air quality, public health, wildlife.)	Chapter 3, Chapter 4
Evaluate the plant’s impacts on the water quality of Big Stone Lake and the Minnesota River.	Chapter 4
Describe current groundwater and surface water conditions at the plant facility and the potential for impacts.	Chapter 4
The water quality analysis in the EIS should describe coal pile runoff and potential impacts.	Chapter 4
The water quality analysis should include information regarding boiler blowdown capture and treatment, whether the current blowdown pond is sufficient for both plants.	Chapter 2, Chapter 4
Identify all stream crossing for each transmission line corridor alternative and whether streams would be impacted by impaired waters.	Chapter 3, Chapter 4
404 Permit process – see comments under Other Federal Permitting.	Chapter 1
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to groundwater supplies resulting from waste disposal and pollutants such as sulfate, chloride and boron from coal-fired power plants</li> <li>• Water quality issues associated with the loss of isolated wetlands</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Wetlands/Riparian</b>	
Concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to the Minnesota River and riparian habitat</li> <li>• Impacts to USFWS wetlands easements located in the Big Stone II to Gary, South Dakota, corridor</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
Address isolated wetland destruction and present potential alternatives to that destruction.	Chapter 4
Thoroughly describe where and to what extent mercury emissions will affect wetlands.	Chapter 4
Describe existing wetlands, including acreage, type and ecological role as well as how the acreage and function will be protected in accordance with Executive Order 11990.	Chapter 3
Consultation on wetlands permitting should be conducted with USEPA, the USACE and USFWS.	Chapter 1
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on wetlands of the Prairie Pothole Region</li> <li>• Water quality issues associated with the destruction of wetlands</li> <li>• Impacts to wetlands located within the Alternative Transmission Line Corridor 2</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Special Status Species</b>	
Include and consider the 35 special status state species for South Dakota.	Chapter 3
Address the ESA by including a biological assessment and associated USFWS Biological Opinion or other formal consultation.	Chapter 3
Known locations of threatened and endangered species must be avoided by the proposed project.	Chapter 4
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project’s impacts to the bald eagle, Topeka shiner and the Western prairie-fringed orchid</li> <li>• Adequate protection of the bald eagle nest located near the plant site and identified in the siting permit</li> <li>• Impacts on state and federal endangered and threatened species due to the deposition of coal plant emissions</li> <li>• Impacts to rare, threatened and endangered, and special concern mussel species resulting from project construction over streams and rivers including the Lac qui Parle River</li> </ul>	Chapter 4

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Wildlife</b>	
<p>Concerns expressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of mercury pollution to the bald eagle, loons and otters (Also refer to comments under air quality, public health, water resources.)</li> <li>• Long-term impacts to species and game and nongame wildlife habitat associated with the loss of isolated wetlands</li> <li>• Impacts to bird species and migratory birds resulting from the continued loss of wetlands</li> <li>• Impacts to bald eagle nests on Long Lake</li> <li>• Impacts to habitat resulting from transmission line construction</li> <li>• Impacts to the DNR-protected island known as Long Lake Herondry where known migratory birds, bald eagle, Franklin’s gull and American white pelican nests are located</li> <li>• Interference with high voltage power lines with migratory bird species</li> <li>• Address impacts on existing wildlife corridors, habitat fragmentation and migratory birds</li> <li>• Impacts to pheasant habitat</li> <li>• Impacts to migratory birds using the Minnesota River corridor caused by the proposed transmission lines</li> <li>• Impacts to Waterfowl Production Areas and Wildlife Management areas primarily in the northern corridor alternatives</li> <li>• Impacts to the migratory bird area near the Salt Lake on the South Dakota/Minnesota border</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Aquatic/Fisheries</b>	
<p>Concerns expressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts from the power plant on fish and aquatic ecosystems of the Big Stone Lake and the Minnesota River</li> <li>• Impacts to fisheries due to acid rain and mercury contamination</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Vegetation</b>	
<p>Concerns expressed include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endangered plants, such as the ball cactus and fame flower located on the granite outcrops within the Big Stone NWR</li> <li>• Impacts to USFWS grassland easements located in the Big Stone II to Gary, South Dakota corridor</li> <li>• Impacts to the Northern Tallgrass Prairie NWR USFWS easements near the Canby area</li> <li>• Impacts to prairie lands south of Granite Falls</li> <li>• Project impacts to a 4-square-acre tree claim in Six Mile Grove Township.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to invasive species associated with construction (Refer to comments in construction impacts.)</li> <li>• Transmission line pole sites as a weed source and infecting nearby areas</li> <li>• Impacts to “Railroad Rights-of-way Prairie” areas located within the proposed alternative transmission line corridors</li> <li>• Impacts to rock outcrop areas where habitat for several rare plant species are located within proposed corridors</li> <li>• Impacts to mesic prairie native plant communities, Prairie Mimosa, special concern plants and threatened and special concern butterfly species known to occur within the proposed alternative transmission line corridors</li> <li>• Impacts to dry prairie native plant communities located within proposed alternative transmission line corridors</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Noise</b>	
Concern was expressed about noise impacts from high-voltage transmission lines and applicability under the Noise Control Act and Quiet Communities Act.	Chapter 4

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Will Be Addressed
<b>Recreation</b>	
The private hunting area (near airport) on the Big Stone to Morris transmission line corridor alternative should be avoided.	Chapter 4
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to the Environmental Learning Center and recreational clay shooting south of the Dovre Township</li> <li>• Impacts to fishing, hunting, birding and outdoor enthusiasts near the Big Stone Lake and the Whetstone River</li> <li>• The loss of wildlife and recreational hunting as a result of wetlands loss</li> <li>• Impacts of mercury emissions on recreational and subsistence fishing</li> <li>• Impacts from the transmission line to tourism at the Glacial Ridge Trail</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Cultural/Historical</b>	
The following concerns were expressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects of the transmission lines on historical buildings</li> <li>• Impacts to the Glacial Ridge Trail, which is of historical significance to the Dovre Township</li> <li>• Impacts to tee pee ring south of Highway 75 at curve in the road</li> <li>• Impacts to the old railway trestle near the City of Canby currently being considered historical</li> <li>• Impacts to a railroad stone arch bridge trestle, possibly eligible for listing, located on the proposed transmission line corridor between Big Stone and Granite Falls</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electromagnetic field and stray voltage associated with transmission lines to human safety and questions regarding the safe distance for homes</li> <li>• Potential for electrocution when it is misting outside</li> <li>• Transmission lines would act as a lightning rod</li> <li>• Impacts from air pollution (including contribution of NO<sub>x</sub> to ozone formation and mercury emissions) on the health of communities in the vicinity of the plant site</li> <li>• Fish and game consumption resulting from mercury deposition in area lakes</li> <li>• Impacts associated with the disposal of coal ash on human health</li> <li>• Health impacts from coal dust and the increased coal handling operations at the plant site</li> <li>• Risk for increased accidents associated with transmission line structures</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Visual</b>	
Quantify the extent that pollutants from the plant would limit visibility in the region.	Chapter 3
A visual impacts analysis should be conducted for the project, particularly where new transmission lines would be constructed.	Chapter 4
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual impacts associated with construction of transmission lines near Long Lake</li> <li>• Visual impacts to hobby farms along Transmission Line Corridor Alternative 2</li> <li>• Visual impacts associated with the power plant stack</li> <li>• Visual impacts associated with the transmission lines from the bluffs in Granite Falls</li> <li>• Would there be a difference in the visual impacts from a 345-kV transmission line and a 230-kV transmission line?</li> </ul>	Chapter 4

**Public Scoping Comments by Topic (continued)**

Comment	EIS Chapter Where Comment Addressed
<b>Socioeconomics</b>	
Examine the economic impacts (e.g., healthcare costs and lost productivity) associated with mercury pollution as well as other air pollutants such as lead, arsenic, beryllium, nickel and cadmium.	Chapter 4
Address the economic impacts on pollution control, water quality and flood control due to the loss of wetlands.	Chapter 4
Address the costs associated with reducing CO <sub>2</sub> emissions, including the costs of retrofitting both plants and capture and sequestration.	Chapter 4
Address environmental justice and comply with the “EPA Guidance for Consideration of Environmental Justice in Clean Air Act Section 309 Reviews (July 1999).”	Chapter 3, Chapter 4
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of transmission lines reducing property values</li> <li>• The loss of economic opportunities in terms of jobs, taxes and local income, including South Dakota, as a result of the proposed project</li> <li>• Costs to ratepayers and residents in all states affected by the proposed project</li> <li>• Economic impacts (e.g., healthcare costs) associated with the disposal of coal ash disposal and air emissions</li> <li>• Additional costs to ratepayers associated with compliance of future carbon regulations to reduce global warming</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Construction Impacts</b>	
Question regarding the differences in transmission line construction and pipeline construction. [Note: The proposed project does not include pipeline construction.]	Chapter 4 (transmission line construction)
Address impacts to wetlands and riparian areas during construction.	Chapter 4
Additional concerns expressed include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control of noxious and invasive weeds during construction</li> <li>• Impacts to soils, vegetation and wildlife during transmission line construction</li> </ul>	Chapter 4
<b>Mitigation</b>	
Provide detailed mitigation plans to minimize impacts to isolated wetlands.	Chapter 4
Include an analysis of a detailed solid waste/ash management plan for coal handling from construction through operation of the plant.	Chapter 4
Provide mitigation measures to reduce the project’s mercury emissions to the maximum achievable control levels.	Chapter 2, Chapter 4
The opportunity to avoid wetlands should be considered prior to mitigation.	Chapter 4
Spring Creek (spring-fed) should be monitored.	Chapter 4
Include storm water runoff monitoring and/or collection and treatment.	Chapter 4
Include methods to mitigate offsite impacts associated with coal pile runoff.	Chapter 4
Include mitigation measures to prevent potential impact to groundwater contamination associated with boiler blowdown.	Chapter 4
Include measures to avoid stream crossings for routing transmission lines and mitigation for streams not avoidable.	Chapter 4
Visual impacts resulting from the project should be mitigated, particularly where new transmission lines are proposed to be constructed.	Chapter 4
Use of native plant species in disturbed areas by the project are recommended as well as integrated pest management.	Chapter 4
Sound erosion and sediment control practices should be implemented during project construction to avoid impacts to sensitive species mussels.	Chapter 4