



Citizens Energy Task Force (www.cetf.us)

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***MINNESOTA COURT OF APPEALS WILL HEAR CHALLENGE
TO CAPX2020 HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES ON MARCH 17***

ST. PAUL, MN. March 15, 2010— The Minnesota Court of Appeals will hear arguments Wednesday March 17 at 9:30 a.m. in the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul challenging the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) decision last August to approve certificates of need for the CapX2020 power lines. The CapX2020 power lines certified by the Commission are 600 miles of ultra high voltage power lines from North Dakota and South Dakota running through Minnesota to Wisconsin. They will cost ratepayers nearly \$2 billion and be constructed on steel towers up to 170 feet tall, equivalent to a 15-story building.

Citizens Energy Task Force (www.cetf.us) and UCAN have argued that demand forecasts have dropped and that the CapX2020 ultra high power lines are not needed. The La Crosse portion of the line, in particular, would cause harm to critical natural resources, including the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Minnesota's Great River Road National Scenic Byway that local and lower voltage transmission alternatives would avoid. [Details on the appeal [available by clicking here](#)].

The Court of Appeals will be asked to require that the Commission reopen the record to hear new evidence of the drop in electricity demand and to overturn the decision to approve certificates of need for the CapX2020 projects as a whole and for the La Crosse power line, in particular.

The utilities' claim that the CapX2020 power lines are needed to support regional energy demand was based on out-of-date studies assuming annual growth in demand of 2.49 percent a year. New Minnesota laws requiring conservation as well as evidence of the drop in energy use and drop in Xcel Energy forecasts through 2020 make these predictions invalid. Any reasonable forecast puts regional electric demand far below the levels studied to justify the CapX2020 projects.

"Minnesota certificate of need law was written so that facts should matter. Based on actual energy use declines and current forecasts, the Court should require the Commission to reopen the record and reconsider their approval--to ensure that ratepayers don't pay \$2 billion for huge power lines that are not needed," explained Citizens Energy Task Force attorney Paula Maccabee.

Continued Maccabee, "The La Crosse power line, in particular, would cause serious environmental harm to a critical national Wildlife Refuge and Scenic Byways. Smaller more local improvements to the electric system are a feasible alternative to keep the lights on with less environmental harm and lower magnetic fields than the ultra high voltage CapX2020 projects."

A nationally-recognized expert on the health impacts of high voltage power lines recently testified in Minnesota that magnetic fields generated by high voltage power lines are associated with serious health problems. Dr. David Carpenter--a public health physician trained at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Institute for Health and the Environment (State University of New York at Albany) detailed startling connections between these magnetic fields and childhood leukemia, Alzheimer's disease and ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Dr. Carpenter's complete testimony is available by clicking [here](#).

In January, the CapX2020 utilities filed their application for a permit to construct a 345 kV power line from Rochester, Minnesota to La Crosse, Wisconsin. This ultra high voltage power line would cross Minnesota's Great River Road National Scenic Byway and would run through the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Even though the utilities are required by Minnesota law to have at least one alternative, they have provided no alternate route across the Mississippi River and no alternative that would avoid the National Wildlife Refuge.

After crossing the Mississippi River, the CapX2020 power line is proposed to connect at Alma, Wisconsin and would either travel South along the River Road (Hwy 53) to Holmen, and La Crosse WI or extend due east from Alma to Arcadia, and then divert south through Blair, Galesville and Holmen to La Crosse.

Beyond La Crosse, the American Transmission Corporation has announced a proposal to connect another ultra high voltage power line from La Crosse to Madison. CETF and UCAN believe that the CapX2020 power lines are being built to export electricity, including coal power from the Dakotas, across Minnesota to Chicago and other points east as well as to serve Minnesota load.

A community educational effort has been launched to inform citizens of MN and WI about the importance of an energy future that involves local, clean renewable energy. Read more at: www.powerlinetruth.org

Citizens Energy Task Force – is a non-profit grassroots organization of more than 300 citizens from both Wisconsin and Minnesota—and growing fast—who support clean, renewable and sustainable energy. Concerned citizens are encouraged to become members by visiting the website. www.cetf.us, (to view media reports about CapX go to: www.ilsr.org)