

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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January 30, 2025

Re: Joint Application of Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin and American Transmission Company LLC, as Electric Public Utilities, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Rebuild Existing Transmission Infrastructure and Construct and Operate Long Range Transmission Planning Tranche 1 Project 5, which consists of Expanding the Tremval and Eau Claire Substations, a New Jump River Substation, and a New 345 kV Transmission Line connecting the Tremval-Eau Claire-Jump River Substations, in the Counties of Chippewa, Clark, Eau Claire, and Trempealeau, Wisconsin, to be known as the Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection Project 5-CE-158

To the Person Addressed,

The Public Service Commission (PSC or Commission) received an application¹ from Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin and American Transmission Company LLC (applicants) for construction and rebuilding work on high voltage transmission lines in western Wisconsin, known as the Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection Project. The Commission is sending this letter to property owners along the proposed routes and individuals who have asked to be placed on our mailing list. It is also being sent to public officials in the project area. This letter is also being sent to public officials who may wish to place this notification in a location where it can be viewed by the public.

The project would consist of rebuilding between approximately 42 to 75 miles of existing transmission lines depending on chosen route, which together would support the construction of a new approximately 80 to 94-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the Tremval Substation in Trempealeau County, to an intermediate substation in Eau Claire County (Eau Claire Substation Expansion or the new Elk Farm Substation depending on the selected route), to the new Jump River Substation which would be located either in Clark County or Chippewa County depending on the selected route. Construction would occur in Chippewa, Clark, Eau Claire, and Trempealeau counties, depending on the route chosen.

An online map and links to project documentation is available on the PSC website². A list of known special or unique natural or cultural resources that may be affected by the proposed project is attached to this letter.

¹ Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection Project Application: [Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection Project](#)

² PSC Project Page: [PSC Western Wisconsin Transmission Line Project](#)

Public Comments

Commission and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff are now analyzing the application and conducting a review of the environmental impacts of the proposed project to include in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As part of this effort, the agencies are conducting a public EIS scoping comment process. During this comment period the public is encouraged to submit comments and suggestions to help the state agencies determine the scope of the EIS.

As part of this effort, the agencies are holding public outreach/scoping sessions throughout the project area. At these sessions, Commission staff will explain the regulatory review process and solicit input from the public to help the state agencies determine the scope of the EIS that must be prepared regarding the proposed project. The agencies encourage persons with local information or environmental concerns to attend the scoping sessions and provide comments and suggestions.

The sessions will be held in an open house format. Anyone interested in this proposed project is invited to attend.

Locations and dates of scoping sessions

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 Blair Preston Community Center 103 E. Broadway Street Blair, WI 54616 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., identical sessions.
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library – Riverview Room 400 Eau Claire Street Eau Claire, WI 54701 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., identical sessions.
Tuesday, March 4, 2025 Lake Holcombe Town Hall 26364 County Highway M Holcombe, WI 54745 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., identical sessions.

Comments on the scope of the EIS can be submitted via:

- At these public scoping sessions
- The Commission’s website at <https://psc.wi.gov>, where you can scroll down to the E-Services heading toward the bottom of the webpage, then click “File a Public Comment” in the middle of the page, then locate docket 5-CE-158; or
- A letter addressed to the Commission’s Environmental Review Coordinator for this docket (see contacts at the end of this letter).

Please note that comments will be made available to the public via the Commission’s Electronic Records Filing System. Personally-identifying information is not edited or deleted from submissions. Effective topics to mention in comments on the scope of the environmental assessment may include:

- Any potential human and environmental impacts from the proposed project facilities,
- Any specific comments regarding particular locations of project infrastructure, or
- Any specific actions or changes to the proposed project that could minimize or mitigate potential impacts from the proposed project.

The deadline for submitting scoping comments on the environmental impact statement for the Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection Project is Friday, March 7, 2025.

If you need an interpreter, translator, materials in alternate formats or other accommodations to access this service, activity or program, please contact the PSC Docket Coordinator below by February 14, 2025.

Si necesita un intérprete, un traductor, materiales en formatos alternativos u otras adaptaciones para acceder a este servicio, actividad o programa, comuníquese al número de teléfono que figura a continuación antes del 14 de Febrero de 2025.

Yog hais tias koj xav tau ib tug neeg txhais lus, cov ntawv ua lwm hom ntawv los sis lwm cov kev pab kom siv tau cov kev pab, cov kev ua ub no (activity) los sis qhov kev pab cuam, thov hu rau tus xov tooj hauv qab no ua ntej lub Ob Hlis 14, 2025.

There will be additional public comment periods throughout the review process, including comments on the draft EIS and testimony submitted at the public hearing.

State and Federal Agency Jurisdiction

The proposed transmission line project requires a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity from the Commission before construction can begin. The record of analysis of potential environmental and societal impacts will inform the Commission’s decision whether to approve, modify, or deny the applicant’s proposal.

The DNR will consider the application for wetland and waterway permits, if applicable under Wis. Stat. ch. 30, potential impacts to rare species, and other affected resources under its jurisdiction. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection will produce an Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) under Wis. Stat. § 32.035. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation will consider permits to build in or across state and federal highway rights-of-way and will examine impacts to scenic easements, if applicable. The Wisconsin Historical Society may review the proposed projects for any potential adverse impacts to listed cultural resources under Wis. Stat. § 44.40. Other reviews, approvals, or permits may be necessary from state or federal agencies.

Environmental Impact Statement

The proposed transmission line project is a Type 1 project under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(1). An EIS is required as specified under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act, Wis. Stat. § 1.11. The EIS will cover the siting and need of the project and all of the associated facilities, as well as potential environmental, community, and private property impacts. The draft EIS will likely be issued in the spring of 2025 and will be followed by a 45-day comment period. Comments on the draft EIS will be used to prepare the final EIS.

When completed, the final EIS will be made available, and a notice of its availability will be provided to the public.

Public Hearings and Commission Decision

In addition to the environmental scoping meetings listed above, in late summer 2025 the Commission will hold technical and public hearings on the proposed project. The final EIS will be available at least 30 days before the hearing. At least 30 days before the hearings, the Commission will issue a Notice of Hearing. The Notice will include the time, date, and location of the hearings, as well as instructions regarding how to provide testimony for the hearing record. Comments made during this EIS Scoping period do not become part of the record of decision, so members of the public may want to provide comments now as well as at the later hearing stage of the project review. The Commission must base its decisions about the project, in part, on the record of the hearings. The Commission will discuss the record for this project at a meeting open to the public as it makes its decisions.

Information and Contacts

For more information about the Commission's review procedures and information about how to participate, please see the Commission's website: <https://psc.wi.gov/>. To receive electronic notifications when new documents are filed in this docket, go to ERF - [EZ Subscriptions](#)³ and follow the instructions to subscribe to this docket. With a subscription, a notification will be sent when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been uploaded to the docket.

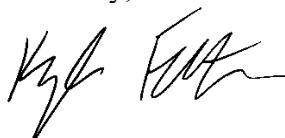
To Review Project Application Materials and Additional Related Documents

- Local libraries and municipal clerks' offices in the project area.
- PSC website (<https://psc.wi.gov/>) under the docket's "eServices" tab, click "Docket Search (CMS)" link, and search case number 5-CE-158.
- A project specific webpage is available at: [PSC Western Wisconsin Transmission Line Project](#).

Agency Contacts:

- PSC Environmental Review Coordinator: Kyle Feltes, (608) 267-6718, kyle.feltes@wisconsin.gov, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854.
- PSC Docket Coordinator: Bryan Rooney, (608) 261-9407, bryan.rooney@wisconsin.gov.
- PSC Media Contact: Meghan Sovey-Lashua, (608) 267-3871, meghan.ovey1@wisconsin.gov.
- DNR Contact: Weston Matthews, (608) 228-9164, weston.matthews@wisconsin.gov.

Sincerely,



Kyle Feltes
Environmental Analysis & Review Specialist, Adv.
Division of Digital Access, Consumer, and Environmental Affairs

KJF:bs DL:02054939

Attachments: Special or Unique Natural or Cultural Resources

³ PSC ERF EZ Subscriptions <https://apps.psc.wi.gov/ERF/ERF/ERFhome.aspx>

Resources Type	General Description	Project Segments that May Affect the Resource
Buffalo River State Trail		
Eau Claire County Forest land	An existing transmission line crosses a portion of this 52,000-acre forest, managed by the county for public recreation, wildlife habitat development, and timber production. Routes 1 and 2 would follow the same path as the existing line, crossing the Eau Claire River, and maintain the existing 100-foot ROW within this land.	1A, 2A
Eau Claire County L.L. Phillips Park	Two proposed transmission structures, S1-47 and S1-48, are located on the boundary of this 70-acre county managed park. Both Routes would cross the southwest corner of the park and would be double-circuited with an existing transmission line and maintain the existing 100-foot ROW at this location.	1A, 2A
Several Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters and trout streams	Several designated Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters and trout streams are intersected by both proposed routes; refer to Section 8.1 for additional information.	1A, 2A, 2B
Old Abe State Trail	This 20-mile asphalt trail connects Lake Wissota State Park and Brunet Island State Park and is open year-round for various recreational activities. The project crosses the trail multiple times and parallels the trail for the majority of its length.	1C
Brunet Island State Park	The proposed project crosses two parts of this state managed property within existing 100-foot ROW that would be maintained and not expanded.	1C
Jean Brunet Woods State Natural Area	Proposed Route 1 would cross the eastern edge of this state property, which overlaps with the Brunet Island State Park in this location. The project would be double circuited with existing transmission line in this location and would not expand the existing 100-foot ROW.	1C
Hallie Marsh State Wildlife Habitat Area	Both proposed routes would cross the wildlife area managed by Chippewa County. Route 1 would cross the western side of the area for approximately 0.75-mile with a new 150-foot ROW that would require tree clearing. The new 150-foot ROW of Route 2 would overlap the eastern edge of the wildlife area with the proposed structures on the eastern side of 160 th street.	1C, 2B
Chippewa County Mill Yard Park	This approximately 10-acre property is managed by the City of Cornell and includes two ball fields, a visitor center, a pavilion, playground, public restrooms, and parking for the Old Abe State Trail. The proposed Route 1 would cross the eastern edge of the park to be double circuited with an existing transmission line, expanding the existing 100-foot ROW to 150 feet. One existing structure would be replaced within the park to accommodate the double-circuited lines.	1C
Riverview Reserve	The proposed Route 1 would cross this Chippewa County managed property as a new transmission line	1C

Resources Type	General Description	Project Segments that May Affect the Resource
	with a 150-foot ROW. Two structures are proposed within the reserve, one would be installed just north of the Chippewa River and the other would be northeast of the parking lot along Seymour Cray Sr. Boulevard.	
Chippewa County Forest Lands, Ruby Section	The proposed Route 1 would cross the Ruby Section of this 33,000-acre noncontiguous forest managed by the county approximately 3.5 miles east of the Town of Holcombe. The proposed transmission line would be double circuited with an existing line within this forest and the existing 100-foot ROW would be expanded to 150 feet.	1C
The Huettner Preserve	This 67-acre parcel owned by the Chippewa County Land Conservancy is open to the public for recreational activities. Route 2 is proposed to cross where existing transmission lines cross the preserve, and the existing 100-foot ROW would be expanded to 150 feet.	2B