

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Summer Strand, Chairperson
Kristy Nieto, Commissioner
Marcus Hawkins, Commissioner

4822 Madison Yards Way
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

January 30, 2025

Re: Joint Application of American Transmission Company LLC and Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin, as Electric Public Utilities, for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Rebuild Existing Transmission Infrastructure and Construct and Operate LRTP Tranche 1 Project 6, a New 345 kV Transmission Line Connecting the Tremval-Arpin-Columbia Substations in the Counties of Trempealeau, Wood, and Columbia, Wisconsin, to be known as the Grid Forward Central Wisconsin Project

5-CE-157

To the Person Addressed,

The Public Service Commission (PSC or Commission) received an application¹ from American Transmission Company LLC (ATC) and Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin (NSPW) (applicants) for construction and rebuilding work on high voltage transmission lines in central Wisconsin, known as the Grid Forward Central Wisconsin 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 approximately 175 miles of existing transmission lines, which together would support the construction of a new approximately 200 to 205-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the Tremval Substation in Trempealeau County, to an intermediate substation, the expanded Arpin Substation, in Wood County, and connecting that expanded Arpin Substation to the Columbia Substation in Columbia County. Construction would occur in Adams, Clark, Columbia, Green Lake, Jackson, Marquette, Portage, Trempealeau, Waushara, and Wood counties, depending on the route chosen.

An online map and links to project documentation is available on the PSC website.² A list of known special or unique natural or cultural resources that may be affected by the proposed project is attached to this letter.

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

¹ Grid Forward Central Wisconsin Project Application: <http://apps.psc.wi.gov/pages/viewdoc.htm?docid=520576>

² PSC Project Page: <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/CommissionActions/CasePages/GridForwardCentralWisconsin.aspx>

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.
Thursday, February 20, 2025 Nekoosa Community Center 416 Crestview Lane Nekoosa, WI 54457 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., identical sessions.
Thursday, February 27, 2025 Portage Public Library – Bidwell Room 253 W. Edgewater Street Portage, WI 53901 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., identical sessions.
Wednesday, March 5, 2025 Waushara WWII Veterans Memorial 440 W. Main Street Wautoma WI 54982 Time: 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 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-157; 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 Grid Forward Central Wisconsin 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.

Project Description

The applicants have filed an application with the Commission for approval to rebuild approximately 175 miles of existing transmission lines to support the construction of a new 200 to 205 mile 345 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line from the Tremval Substation in Trempealeau County to an intermediate substation, the expanded Arpin Substation, in Wood County, and connecting the expanded Arpin Substation to the Columbia Substation in Columbia County. The line, if approved, would be constructed, owned, and operated by ATC and NSPW.

The new 345 kV line would be approximately 200 to 205 miles long depending on the route selected. This mileage includes the full or partially rebuilt facilities, which constitute approximately 175 miles of the route, or over 88 percent. The application contains two proposed routes: the Primary Route and the Alternate Route, along with a Common Segment and several

associated Companion Segments that are not unique to any specific route but required to make room for the new 345 line.

The proposed routes cross ten counties and 53 municipalities. The proposed project cost for construction and placing into service is estimated to be between approximately \$1.60 and \$1.63 billion, depending on route selection.

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, later in 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 hearings. 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.

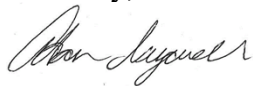
To Review Project Application Materials and Additional Related Documents

- 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-157.
- A project specific webpage is available at:
<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/CommissionActions/CasePages/GridForwardCentralWisconsin.aspx>.

Agency Contacts:

- PSC Environmental Review Coordinator: Andrew Craft, (608) 266-3375, andrew.craft@wisconsin.gov, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854
- PSC Docket Coordinator: Colton Bushey, (608) 267-0511, colton.bushey@wisconsin.gov
- PSC Media Contact: Meghan Sovey-Lashua, (608) 267-3871, meghan.ovey1@wisconsin.gov
- DNR Contact: Geri Radermacher, (262) 239-0994, geri.radermacher@wisconsin.gov

Sincerely,



Adam Ingwell
Environmental Affairs Coordinator - Supervisor
Division of Digital Access, Consumer, Environmental Affairs

ALC:bs DL:02033592

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
Silver Mound Historic District and Silver Mound National Historic Landmark	Upgrades to an existing transmission line situated approximately 0.16-mile (0.26 kilometer) southeast of the Silver Mound National Historic Landmark and directly intersecting Silver Mound Historic District are proposed.	2E, C8, 3A, 8A
Clark County Forest	The Clark County Forest covers nearly 135,000 acres and is managed for forestry purposes including recreation, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection.	3, 8
Black River State Forest	The Black River State Forest is a 68,000-acre forest comprised of pine and oak woods under high sandstone abutments. This central Wisconsin property offers many recreational opportunities, including camping, canoeing, hunting, hiking, skiing, and ATV riding.	8
Jackson County Forest	Jackson County manages, conserves, and protects a 120,000-acre forest. The forest is used for forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil conservation and recreational activities.	3, 8
Wood County Forest	The Wood County Forest encompasses approximately 37,593 acres of public land, generally located in the southern half of the county. The forest is managed for recreation, timber, watershed protection, and protected species.	9, 12
The Wisconsin River	The Project would cross the Wisconsin River at an existing transmission line crossing near Port Edwards.	14, C14
Important Bird Areas (IBAs), designated by the WDNR, including the Buena Vista-Leola State Wildlife Areas IBA, Lunch Creek Sedge Meadow IBA, and Paul Olson State Wildlife Area IBA	An Important Bird Area (IBA) is a site that provides essential habitat to one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds. Sites may vary in size, but are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat, or ornithological importance from surrounding areas. They may include public or private land. The recognition of a site as an IBA does not confer any legal status or regulatory requirements. An existing transmission line crosses each of the IBAs listed.	6, C6, C7, 10, C10, 15, 17, C17
WDNR White River Fishery Area – Waushara	An existing transmission line crosses this state managed property. The White River System Fishery Area includes high-quality trout waters.	17, C17, R17
WDNR Upper Fox River Public Access – Green Lake	An existing transmission line crosses a portion of this state managed property. This land is comprised of a small parcel that is managed for recreational fishing and provides free recreational boat access to the Upper Fox River.	18
Several trout streams as identified in Section 8.1 (Waterways) of the application	Several designated Exceptional Resource Waters and trout streams are intersected by the proposed routes; refer to Section 8.1 for additional information.	See Appendix F, Table 2 of the application