CapX2020 Certificate of Need Hearing - June 26, 2008

Testimony of Jeff Otto, Chair

Eureka Township Board of Supervisors

25580 Dodd Blvd. in Eureka Township, Post Office Lakeville, Minnesota

I happen to be an industrial engineer by education. My career in the railroad industry was devoted to project planning, cost analysis, and transportation network planning. I also had responsibilities for computer networking and planning.

First, on behalf of the residents and property owners of Eureka Township, I submit for your record and consideration Eureka Township Resolution Number 67 dated April 14, 2008. It is entitled "Regarding CapX 2020 Application for a 345kV Transmission Line Project with Associated System Connections". It acknowledges support for the "Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Initiative" policy and describes numerous areas of concern for potential impacts to our residents and property owners and the need for adequate study of alternatives.

I would also like to ask in this opportunity you allow me that your deliberations be guided by the context of the overall mission of these proceedings. The core question is how best to accomplish the goal. The goal is not simply to build another high-capacity link in the power grid. Is not the real goal to determine how best to meet the projected power and reliability needs for the foreseeable future?

I hope we learn from the lessons of dramatic growth and evolution of our transportation network. There is no question that the development of the Interstate Highway network, as with the national power grid, has been essential to our economic growth and well being. But by the 1980's urban and suburban areas began to realize and understand that simply building more freeways and expressways was not automatically a goodness when the social and economic impacts of the disruption and division of communities was factored in. Our transportation goals are now recognized to be better addressed by a coordinated balance of road, rail, water, and airways, not a one-dimensional devotion to super highways alone. Each has a vital role to complement the others.

I believe we must now accelerate the evolution of our power grid in a similar, coordinated manner. It is true that one way to improve the reliability of a network is to build more links between origins and destinations, sources and need locations. Another way is to diversify and distribute the sources so more can be closer to where the needs are. This improves reliability both by diversification and by reducing transport distances. This also leverages existing infrastructure and places less burden on the heavy duty national links so that we don't needlessly overbuild in one area if a better solution may exist.

Another analogy exists with the evolution of computers. To improve reliability, performance, and economy while delivering more computing power to where it is needed, computer strategies have changed dramatically. We have evolved from a mainframe-centric big box to the use of

multitudes of smaller, distributed computers networked together as well as with big central computers. In the past, a single failure could affect hundreds or even thousands of users. A single failure in the new paradigm will only affect one user or a small number, normally not large numbers. And backup reserve and redundancy is less expensive. Fully backing up one big computer requires another big computer. But 10 small computers at a location may be adequately backed up by only one more small computer.

We ask that more analysis of the very real alternatives available with today's technology be considered to be sure another super highway is really the best answer. Those of us in the path of this super power line deserve the best answer, not simply the quick answer.

Thank you for your consideration on this truly complex subject.

Jeff Otto