

**TOWN OF ANSON**  
**Chippewa County, Wisconsin**

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October 16, 2023

Matt McFarlane  
Xcel Energy  
1414 W Hamilton Ave  
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Dear Mr. McFarlane

We, as the duly elected officials of the Town of Anson, are entrusted by our residents to conduct the business of the township. We are asked to evaluate many different issues throughout a year that affect the lives and livelihoods of our residents. Occasionally, issues arise that will have significant, long-term consequences for our township. The proposed "Route Option 1" of the 345 kV Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection line is one of those issues that will have everlasting negative impacts to our township. "Route Option 1" traverses the entire Town of Anson from south to north, dissecting the township in very critical areas. It is proposed to be built parallel to an existing transmission line corridor that primarily runs along one of our Township's most cherished and utilized resources, the Old Abe Recreational Trail.

Our Township Comprehensive Plan includes specific goals that are not in alignment with this proposed project including: preserving a landowner's right to use their property in a responsible manner and to the best benefit of that landowner, to maintain agricultural land and green space, to expand recreational opportunities that have a positive impact, and to examine development in relation to the preservation of our natural environment. The Vision Statement for our township also directs us to consider any development with an *"eye on the preservation of our agricultural, recreational, and natural resources as well as the overall aesthetics while providing a quality of life preferred by a majority of the Township's residents"*. As a result, we have a substantial interest in the review and consideration of proposed "Route Option 1" of the 345 kV Western Wisconsin Transmission Connection line.

The Town of Anson is purposefully isolated from the commercial and industrial growth occurring in other townships around us. Our focus is on expanding recreational facilities, particularly around the successful Old Abe Recreational Trail. Implementing the 345kv line on the proposed Route Option 1 would permanently alter the pristine trail environment cherished by Anson residents and visitors. This trail plays a vital role in boosting tourism, attracting cyclists, rollerbladers, horseback riders, walkers, runners, snowmobilers, and cross-country skiers on a daily basis. Trail users value the diverse wildlife and natural beauty they are surrounded with while using the Old Abe Recreational Trail. These enthusiasts not only contribute to the local economy by patronizing nearby businesses but also pave the way for new entrepreneurial opportunities. Constructing the transmission line on Route Option 1 would not only jeopardize the quality of life that our residents cherish, but also conflict with our strategic development objectives, which prioritize preserving the area's natural beauty and discourage excessive commercial or industrial expansion.

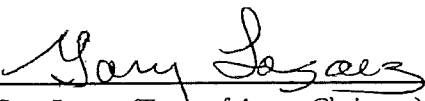
The construction of Route Option 1 will most certainly be detrimental to our Township and to the many users of the Old Abe Recreation Trail who come from near and far to enjoy this resource. Construction of the 345 kV transmission line would necessitate clearing trees and vegetation across a significantly expanded right-of-way directly adjacent to the currently wooded and brushy corridor, forever altering the aesthetics and natural habitat of the resource. Moreover, if Route Option 1 is chosen, property values throughout the township are likely to plummet. Realtors are already witnessing potential buyers being dissuaded by the existing 161 kV line, and a more extensive line of any kind would deter home sales in its proximity. This scenario could force residential development activities away from the transmission line, redirecting them into agricultural land or other townships unaffected by this project. All of these outcomes are out of alignment with our strategic development.

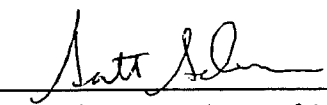
We understand that our concerns are but a small part of a much larger vision for energy sustainably and system resiliency. It appears that MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator) has mandated a 345 kV connection from Eau Claire to Jump River and per their MTEP21 report addendum they clearly state that their plan to execute the urgency of the Long Range Transmission Plan (LRTP) Tranche 1 portfolio requires they make *"use of existing routes, where possible, to reduce the need to acquire additional greenfield right-of-way, which lowers costs and allows a shorter time to implementation. Construction of new transmission routes across navigable waterways, protected areas and high-value property faces extensive cost and regulatory risks that impede progress in meeting future reliability needs. Co-locating new facilities with existing transmission assets enables more efficient development of transmission projects and minimizes the environmental and societal impacts of infrastructure investment needed to achieve the needs identified in MISO's Future 1."*

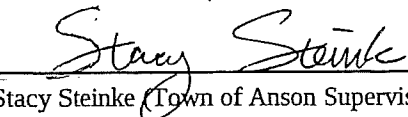
As stated by MISO, construction of new routes in protected areas and across high value property or areas with societal impacts will face costs and risks that impede progress. We would point out that aside from immediate property damage concerns of our township residents, the high value that the many users of the Old Abe Recreational Trail place on its availability and aesthetics would create a significant regulatory risk and societal impacts that are likely to impede progress of construction along Route Option 1, if it is chosen. In addition to the township's justification for opposing Route Option 1, the few build statistics that were provided to the public only offer further rationale. Route Option 1 is approximately 20 miles longer, a minimum of 45% more expensive to construct, and impacts more than twice the number of residents within 300 feet of the line than if Route Option 2 were to be selected across mostly open agricultural land. It is abundantly clear based on attendance at scheduled community engagement open houses thus far that there is significantly more opposition to Route Option 1 than Route Option 2 and this is prior to providing any notification to the many daily users of the Old Abe Recreational Trail who will undoubtedly demonstrate significant societal impacts once they are duly notified of the proposed Route Option 1.

We urge you to thoroughly consider our input. This is not your typical "not in my backyard" scenario but a well-founded rationale explaining why the choice of Route Option 1 not only lacks sound business judgment but also undermines the intent of managed growth and sustainability within the Town of Anson while simultaneously causing adverse impact to many residents and recreational enthusiasts throughout the entire area.

Sincerely yours,

  
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Gary Lazarz (Town of Anson Chairman)

  
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Scott Schemenauer (Town of Anson Supervisor)

  
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Stacy Steinke (Town of Anson Supervisor)