

## **NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD ON APPLICATION COMPLETENESS**

Issued: September 20, 2019

**In the Matter of the Application of Elk Creek Solar, LLC for a Certificate of Need for the up to 80 MW Elk Creek Solar Project in Rock County, Minnesota**

**In the Matter of the Application of Elk Creek Solar, LLC for a Site Permit for the up to 80 MW Elk Creek Solar Project in Rock County, Minnesota**

**PUC Docket Numbers:** IP7009/CN-19-351 and IP7009/GS-19-495

**Comment Period:** Initial comment period closes October 4, 2019 at 4:30pm  
Reply comment period closes October 11, 2019 at 4:30pm

*Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.*

### **Topics for Comment:**

- Does the certificate of need application contain the information required under Minn. R. 7849.0220, subp. 1?
- Does the site permit application contain the information required under Minn. R. 7850.3100?
- Should the application be evaluated using the Commission's informal process or referred to the Office of Administrative Hearings for contested case proceedings?
- Should an advisory task force be appointed for the site permit application?
- Should the site permit application be processed jointly with the certificate of need application (*i.e.*, public meetings, environmental review, and public hearings)?
- Are there any contested issues of fact with respect to the representations made in the applications?

## Background

On September 13, 2019, Elk Creek Solar, LLC, (Elk Creek) a wholly owned subsidiary of Geronimo Energy, LLC, filed a certificate of need (CN) application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for its proposed 80-megawatt (MW) solar energy generating system. On September 17, 2019, Elk Creek filed a site permit application for the project.

The proposed project would be located on approximately 681 acres of land in Vienna Township of Rock County. The primary components of the facility would include photovoltaic panels affixed to a linear axis tracking rack system, inverters, step-up transformers, electrical cables and conduits, electrical cabinets, access roads, a 34.5/161- kilovolt (kV) step-up substation with metering and switching gear, security fencing, below-ground or above-ground electrical collection and communication lines, an operation and maintenance facility, parking lot, up to two weather stations, a 161-kV overhead transmission line (under 1,500 feet in length), a supervisory control and data acquisition system, and temporary laydown areas.

Elk Creek Solar, LLC has entered into a power purchase agreement with Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, whereby Xcel Energy agreed to purchase up to 80 MW of the energy generated by the proposed project to support Xcel Energy's Renewable\*Connect Program.

**Filing Requirements:** Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are **required** to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select *eFiling*, and follow the prompts.

**Submit Public Comments:** Visit [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select *Speak Up!* to find this docket, and add your comments to the discussion or email your comments to [publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us).

**Full Case Record:** See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website at [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (351) and/or (495)), and select *Search*.

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**Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure?** Contact Commission staff, Michael Kaluzniak at [mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us](mailto:mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us) or 651-201-225 or Charley Bruce, Public Advisor, at [publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2251.

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