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2016 RES-577

**URGING THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN TO REQUIRE ANALYSIS OF THE
HIGH –CAPACITY TRANSMISSION LINE CARDINAL-HICKORY CREEK PROJECT AND
CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS**

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is currently expecting a joint utility application from the American Transmission Company, ITC, and Dairyland Power Cooperative containing an option for a 345 kV high-capacity transmission line from Middleton, Wisconsin, to Montfort, Wisconsin, to Dubuque County, Iowa, which will have an impact not only on the those in the path of the transmission line, but also on ratepayers in general. This project is known as the Cardinal-Hickory Creek project. High-capacity transmission expansion projects increase the likelihood of additional transmission and electric customer investments in Wisconsin and regionally. The final cost of expansion projects including financing, operation and maintenance over 40 years can reach into billions of dollars and place significant financial burden on all Wisconsin ratepayers in addition to those in other states.

There is currently no demonstrated need for this high-capacity transmission line. Demand for electricity in Wisconsin and adjacent states has been flat or in decline in recent years and utilities in affected service areas have projected no or minimal load growth in planning documents submitted to the PSC. Other means of meeting energy demand claimed by the applicants must be considered, including comparable investment in accelerated energy efficiency, conservation, load management, and local renewable power options before high-capacity transmission is approved.

Wisconsin should strive to mirror national rates of investment in energy conservation as a first approach to avoid investment in greater transmission line capacity. Average ratepayer investment in energy efficiency in the U.S. tripled from 2007 to 2012, thereby lowering end-user costs and harmful pollutant emissions. However, investment in energy efficiency in Wisconsin dropped over the same period.

There are both environmental and economic ramifications to the Cardinal-Hickory Creek Project. Decision makers are responsible for protecting and enhancing natural and local economic assets, including scenic beauty and development potential that would be adversely affected by 110- to 180-foot steel or concrete poles and wires for high-voltage transmission. High-profile transmission lines tend to reduce property values and tourism due to their prominent visibility and perceived negative health effects, creating adverse impacts on local economies in contrast to non-transmission alternatives such as energy efficiency, load management, and local solar, which tend to produce positive economic impacts.

Wisconsin State Statute 1.13(2) encourages local governmental units to define their energy planning priorities and State Statute 1.11(2) encourages the WI PSC to study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action for full public consideration before the scoping stage of utility applications and for preparation of the Impact Statement. This has not yet happened. Detailed explanations of the perceived need for regional transmission expansion have not been combined with a comprehensive comparison of long-term investment costs and returns for all energy investment options. A comprehensive explanation should be provided for Wisconsin ratepayers stated in clear terms of monthly, average potential savings, long-term job creation, and carbon and other air pollutant emission impacts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Dane County Board of Supervisors requests the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin make every effort to develop or enhance the energy system upon which our community relies and

- 54 adhere to these energy investment priorities:
- 55 a) Maximize cost-effective conservation, efficiency, and load management;
 - 56 b) Rely to the greatest extent possible on local, renewable generation;
 - 57 c) Support local ownership of energy generation that includes dispersed
 - 58 renewable energy to support the local economy, including the creation of
 - 59 sustainable jobs;
 - 60 d) Minimize the size, scale, voltage, and environmental impacts of electric
 - 61 transmission and generation.
- 62
- 63 2. Dane County is without sufficient means to evaluate the current proposal in terms of these priorities.
- 64
- 65 3. Dane County requests the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to require the applicants to
- 66 provide both potentially affected land owners within 1500' of potential corridors and Wisconsin
- 67 ratepayers clear, consumer-friendly description of the cost-benefit analysis and assumptions they will
- 68 utilize in assessing the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of non-transmission
- 69 alternatives including accelerated energy efficiency, load management, distributed generation (on
- 70 site/community and other local, non-fossil fuel generation) at the open houses and online in electronic
- 71 format during the pre-application, public information stage of this proposal.
- 72
- 73 4. Following receipt of the application, Dane County requests that the Public Service Commission of
- 74 Wisconsin ensure that the applicants develop this analysis into a comprehensive, easy to understand,
- 75 cost-benefit comparison of the economic, environmental, and public health benefits that would result
- 76 from investments in accelerated energy efficiency, applications of load management and distributed
- 77 generation (on site/community and other local, non-fossil fuel generation). The dollar amount applied
- 78 to each of these non-transmission investment options, alone and in optimized combination, should
- 79 equal the estimated total amount ratepayers would assume for the comprehensive costs of the
- 80 proposed high-voltage transmission project over 40 years, including construction, financing, operation
- 81 and maintenance. This analysis should include clear, easy to understand charts comparing the
- 82 monetary and CO2 emission impacts for the non-transmission alternatives and transmission
- 83 alternatives on average monthly electric bills for Wisconsin residential and commercial customers
- 84 calculated in present dollars/tons and for year 10, 20, 30 and 40, subsequently.
- 85
- 86 5. Dane County requests that the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin require the applicants to
- 87 incorporate the above requested information in their application materials before the agency deems
- 88 the application complete and before Notice of Proceeding is given. The county requests that the
- 89 applicants' analysis of non-transmission alternatives be made available at EIS scoping meetings and
- 90 its availability mentioned in press releases to media outlets in order to notify potentially affected
- 91 electric customers.
- 92
- 93 6. Dane County requests that the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin conduct an equally
- 94 comprehensive analysis and presentation of the economic, environmental, and public health impacts
- 95 of non-transmission alternatives alone and in optimized combination and include this in the agency's
- 96 draft and final Environmental Impact Statements. In addition to environmental impacts, the EIS should
- 97 assess and compare the impacts on typical rural economies along the potential routes created by the
- 98 non-transmission alternatives and transmission configurations.
- 99
- 100 7. To enhance public and agency confidence in these important findings, Dane County requests that
- 101 an unbiased, independent consulting firm be appointed by the Commission to analyze, comment upon
- 102 and augment the cost-benefit analysis of non-transmission alternatives conducted by the applicants
- 103 and the PSC staff and that this independent analysis be made available in time for including in the
- 104 PSC's Environmental Impact Statement when agency recommendations are made.
- 105
- 106 8. Dane County requests the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to record this document in the

107 public record of Docket 05-CE-146 and to include it, in entirety, in the Appendices of the state and
108 federal Environmental Impact Statements for this proposal.
109
110 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Wisconsin Public Service
111 Commission regarding docket #05CE146.