



Citizens Energy Task Force ([www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us))

Contact: Jeremy Chipps, 608-317-5700

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***JUDGE'S REPORT-- PROPOSED CAPX2020 POWER LINE APPROVAL -- ACTIVISTS CHARGE  
WRONG DIRECTION FOR LOCAL, CLEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY***

***CapX2020--Recommendations Released 2/27/09***

St. Paul, MN—CapX2020 Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendations from the evidentiary hearings were released by the Administrative Law Judge Beverly J. Heydinger on Feb. 27, 2009. The project of three massive high voltage power lines is being proposed by Xcel, Dairyland and 9 other utilities. (view maps at [www.capx2020.com](http://www.capx2020.com)). The lines are named: 1) Twin Cities to La Crosse 345 kV project (La Crosse Project); 2) Twin Cities to Fargo 345 kV project (Fargo Project) and 3) Twin Cities to Brookings 345 kV project (Brookings Project).

The project is still in a “Certificate of Need” process. Recommendations by the Administrative Law Judge from the hearings in Saint Paul will now be forwarded to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for review and final decision on whether the high voltage power line project is in fact, truly “needed” or not.

The Judge recommended that all three of the high voltage power lines proposed by CapX2020 be recommended for approval. Additionally, there are no conditions requiring that wind-generated power be used on the transmission lines. Additionally, the much reviewed C-BED (Community-Based Energy Development) studies and their findings were not considered in the report. The lack of specifics in the recommendations means that dirty coal, nuclear or any energy source can travel on these wires, keeping us in an old energy delivery system that is costly and dangerous for our environment. Additionally, there are no plans for any “Smart Grid” technology or energy efficiency methods in the CapX2020 proposal.

“The recommendations for approval for the CapX2020 projects demonstrate that the regulatory system is broken,” stated Paula Maccabee, Attorney for Citizens Energy Task Force. “Utilities may soon impose nearly \$2 billion in costs to ratepayers, condemn private property through eminent domain, and substantially impair the environment without demonstrating either that there are no better alternatives to the huge power lines or that they will use them for wind, rather than dirty coal.”

The impacts of the crossing the Mississippi River are highlighted in findings, but the conclusion is reached that this is an issue requiring mitigation, not an alternative action. Environmental experts warn that crossing the protected Mississippi at any location would have enormous environmental impacts. Minnesota and Wisconsin legislators have already expressed their concerns about the potential impact.

“The judge’s report does not address the real concerns of the people,” says Jeremy Chipps, member of CETF: “We want the clean, green energy future that President Obama has been proposing, not the large polluting power systems of the past. We ask that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission take a closer look at the evidence put forward by groups such as CETF, NAWO and ILSR who hold steadfast that energy needs can be met by taking the more “intelligent” approach which is conservation, Smart Grid Technology and distributed, community-owned renewable energy.”

Chipps expressed a connection between a recent push for transmission line projects and the economy: “We have all felt the country reeling from a massive economic turn-down as well as the effects of an

addiction to foreign oil. But in the process of breaking that addiction, the big energy companies have made a leap from wind to massive new transmission lines to increase their bottom line. We've become a nation of sheep, while lobbyists, ad agencies and PR firms hype the message that "clean" coal and the huge power lines that will carry "green" power are the answer to almost everything. The truth is—we're getting green-washed."

CETF explained that expensive long lines of transmission are not needed to provide wind east of Minnesota. Chicago has already identified 9,000 megawatts of potential wind capacity. Likewise, East Coast energy experts question the need for costly long-distance transmission lines that would send power from the Midwest to their Coast.

We must take these new long-distance transmission proposals out of the equation in order to serve public interests at this time." says Crocker. "We can bring on dispersed and community-owned generation now at much less cost and quicker than the proposed CapX power lines, putting the focus where it should be—on community-owned wind energy."

CETF and NAWO will continue to challenge the construction of the CapX2020 power lines and other projects, such as and other huge transmission facilities and propose alternatives requiring conservation, smart grid technology and local dispersed community-owned renewable generation.

For more information: [www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us), [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org) (view media reports about CapX2020), [www.nawo.org](http://www.nawo.org)

Citizen's Energy Task Force ([www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us)), North American Water Office ([nawo.org](http://nawo.org)), Institute for Local Self Reliance ([www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org)), and Nocapx2020 ([www.nocapx2020.info](http://www.nocapx2020.info)) are all formal intervening parties in the Certificate of Need process.

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**Citizens Energy Task Force** – is a grassroots group of more than 200 citizens—and growing fast--who support clean, renewable and sustainable energy. Concerned citizens are encouraged to become members by visiting the website. [www.cetf.us](http://www.cetf.us)

**Media Contact: Jeremy Chipps**, Member, 608-317-5700 **Attorney Paula Maccabee** 651-646-8890