

Homeowners fight proposed transmission line

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Dozens of homeowners gathered at a public hearing today to voice their opposition to a proposed transmission line that would run from Madison to La Crosse.

American Transmission Company and Xcel Energy submitted a proposal about eight months ago to construct the \$500 million Badger Coulee Transmission Line.

Officials from both companies believe the high-voltage line would better enable Wisconsin to import power, including wind power, from other states. Officials also claim it will improve grid reliability and ultimately reduce costs to consumers.

The approximately 160-mile line would run from the North Madison Substation in Verona to the Briggs Road Substation near Holmen in La Crosse County. From the North Madison Substation, it would also run to the Cardinal Substation in Middleton.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin will decide whether to permit the project.

At a public hearing held in Waunakee, homeowners from affected towns voiced their concerns about the impact to personal health and property values.

"I had saved my entire life to buy a nice home and now I find out in the future I might not be able to sell it because no one else wants to live in this area," said Jeannie Bettsworth.

Several citizens also questioned the need for the line.

"You don't need to get your power from thousands of miles away," said Roman Statz.

The proposal includes two suggested routes the Public Service Commission can choose from, if they decide to permit the project. The Commission will have five public meetings throughout the next week, and these meetings will be citizens' final opportunity to voice their opinions out loud. Written comments will be accepted through January 5th.

"All of the information is tabulated and put together for the record, and the record is what commissioners base their decision on, and by April of next year, we will have a decision rendered," said Nathan Conrad, spokesman for the Public Service Commission.

Some speakers questioned why the Public Service Commissioners, who will ultimately decide the fate of the project, were not in attendance at the hearing. Conrad said every statement is transcribed and each commissioner will go through the transcripts.

To submit a public comment to the commissioners, click the first link below.