



## ***JUDGE RELEASES REPORT PROPOSING CAPX2020 POWER LINE APPROVAL BACKGROUND FROM CITIZENS ENERGY TASK FORCE***

**What's New:** CapX2020 Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendations were released by the Administrative Law Judge on Feb. 27, 2009.

**What is CapX2020?** Three massive high voltage power lines are being proposed by Xcel, Great River Energy 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).

**What's next?** The project is currently in a "Certificate of Need" process. Recommendations by the Administrative Law Judge (Beverly J. Heydinger) from evidentiary hearings in Saint Paul will be sent to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for review and final decision on whether the high voltage power lines project is "needed."

**What are some of the recommendations?** The Judge recommended that all three of the high voltage power lines proposed by CapX2020 be approved. Additionally, there are no conditions requiring wind or C-BED (Community-Based Energy Development) on any of the power lines. This 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.

**Big Power Line Approach is Contrary to President Obama's Message:** The CapX2020 Report requires no new conservation and no plan for "Smart Grid" technology. The report conflicts with the requests of hundreds of citizens asked that a priority be placed on conservation and energy that is local, dispersed and renewable approach. Large, remotely located power plants linked by power lines to load centers are a decades old technology, a paradigm that is both inefficient and vulnerable to security breaches.

### **Exporting Power Long-Distance—Who Needs It?**

CapX2020 and other projects like ITC's proposed 765 kV line would export power to areas that the US that may not actually need it. Chicago, for example, doesn't need the Midwest's wind--they've already identified 9,000 megawatts of potential wind capacity closer to home. East Coast energy experts also question the need for costly long-distance transmission lines. Gordon van Welie of ISO New England and Stephen Whitley, president of New York Independent System Operator – grid operators for much of the East Coast – issued a pointed dissent from the long-distance transmission plan. "Until additional scenarios that include the development of local resources are analyzed, *we do not believe any single transmission plan can be presented as a solution to the integration of additional renewable energy resources in the United States,*" they wrote in a Feb. 4 letter. Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 18, 2009): <http://features.csmonitor.com/innovation/2009/02/18/americas-future-wind-web/>

**Need for Local Wind Energy: Wind energy is vital,** but we don't believe it should be foreign-owned and sent on inefficient long-distance high voltage lines. Local, community-owned wind development provides long-lasting local jobs. The CapX2020 Report acknowledges that the nearly \$2 billion spent on CapX2020 will provide only a small number of temporary construction jobs.

**Mississippi River/National Wildlife Refuge Impact:** The impacts of the crossing the Mississippi River are highlighted in the Report's findings, but the conclusion is reached that this is an issue requiring mitigation, not an alternative project that doesn't impair the Wildlife Refuge. Environmental experts warn that crossing the protected Mississippi at any location would have significant environmental impacts. Minnesota and Wisconsin legislators have already formally expressed their concerns about this potential environmental impact.

**Coal Power Effects on Dangerous Mercury:** The amount of mercury in our environment—a fall-out from coal burning—is increasing at an alarming rate, creating a risk of brain damage to children and fetuses. A recent MPCA report revealed a sudden 15% increase of methyl mercury in fish from 1996 to 2006. Mercury from coal plants anywhere in the United States will increase mercury in our waters and fish.

### **Another Boondoggle for the Energy Industry?**

With an economic down-turn and efforts to break our addiction to foreign oil, we are witnessing big energy companies that have made a leap from wind to massive new transmission lines in efforts 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. Following the path of big energy would be a costly mistake. . Both [www.capx2020.com](http://www.capx2020.com) and ITC's [www.thegreenpowerexpress](http://www.thegreenpowerexpress) fail to commit to any specific amount of wind on the wires; these are not renewable energy investments, but "green washing."

**Our Energy Future:** We are at a crossroads in the renewable energy debate. CETF supports conservation, efficiency and local, clean, renewable energy

- 1) **Put conservation first** – efficiency is cheaper than new energy, creates local jobs and avoids environmental costs of power plants and power lines. It must become our first priority.
- 2) **Keep energy local** - put energy near where people use it. Develop jobs and build a local economy based on everything from small solar panels in homes and businesses to community owned wind farms.
- 3) **Keep it renewable** - don't open up the grid to coal. Use the type of power line system designed for wind and make sure each state meets its renewable energy standards.
- 4) **Use "Smart Grid" technology** – smart grids will even out the peaks in demand so we don't overbuild power grids. It will Integrate distributed generation so that homes and businesses using solar power or other renewable energy can add to the power grid as well as take away from it.
- 5) **Health issues:** New high voltage power lines create electro magnetic field (EMF) exposure, associated with increases in childhood leukemia. An energy approach based on conservation and small scale facilities takes a precautionary approach to protect human health.
- 6) **Environmental concerns:** Massive 150-300 foot towers upset the ecosystem and harm the environment as well as hurt tourism and decrease home values. CETF proposes that we make energy choices that create the least harm to reliably meet demand.

**Citizens Energy Task Force** – *Citizens Energy Task Force is a grassroots group of more than 200 citizens—and growing—who support clean, renewable and sustainable energy.*

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