

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT:

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George Crocker, 651-770-3861, gwillc@nawo.org

John Bailey, 612-379-3815 ext 211, bailey@ilsr.org

CapX Transmission Line Decision Ignored Current Economic Realities

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's decision represents a slap in the face to Minnesota ratepayers and deals another setback for building a homegrown, decentralized energy future.

Minneapolis, Minn.— (April 16, 2009). The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) and the North American Water Office (NAWO) find today's decision by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to approve nearly \$2 billion in ratepayer money for 650 miles of new high voltage transmission lines (known as CapX) to be willfully shortsighted.

As formal parties to the 12 month proceeding, NAWO and ILSR are extremely disappointed that the PUC chose to deny a motion by Citizens Energy Task Force, a coalition of citizens and businesses, to spend more time examining recent economic and energy demand information coming from some of the CapX utilities themselves. The new information showed a steep decline in demand for energy was forecast due to the severe economic downturn. Since the formal hearings had closed months ago, none of this new information about declining energy consumption was contained in the formal record that the PUC was using to base their decision.

"With \$2 billion on the line, you'd think that a Commission that's in place to serve the public might want spend a little extra time and effort to have a complete factual record available to make their decision," expressed John Bailey, Senior Energy Analyst at ILSR. "Unbelievably, the PUC decided that they could make informed decision while simply ignoring the implications of the biggest economic meltdown since the depression," he added.

"The PUC's decision has demonstrated again today that they are stuck in the past and they represent a serious barrier in moving Minnesota toward a smart energy future," said George Crocker, Executive Director of NAWO.

For more information – www.ilsr.org/capx/ - www.nawo.org - www.cetf.us

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