

# Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

## Board Meeting Attendance Record

Date: May 13, 2025

Name	Please check the boxes that apply		
	Aitkin County Citizen	Aitkin County Employee	Company Representative – Please list
Chris Suted		✓	I.T.
Zach GOLKOWSKI			Minnesota Power
DJ Thompson		✓	Land
Jeanne Schram			Aitkin Age
Andrew Carstrom		✓	ESPZ
Ammy Wyant			CARE
Reggie	X		
Christina	X		
Lynn Mizner	✓		Chengwatana Farm
John Chute	✓		

**Date:** MAY 13

[illegible]

Lynn Sue Mizner  
47513 334th Pl.,  
Palisade, MN 56469

**To:**  
Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

**Date: May 13, 2025**

**Subject: Formal Objection to Proposed Feedlot Operation at 28096 480<sup>th</sup> St, Palisade, MN 56469**

Dear Board Members,

Aitkin County, more than 90 percent of which is classified as wetland, has a closer relationship with groundwater than most places. Almost all rural residences and businesses rely on groundwater for drinking water. The county is prone to major flooding, and the Mississippi, Willow and Rice rivers drain the county every time it rains, sending nutrients and contaminants downstream.

The property being considered for construction of this concentrated cattle feeding operation, or feedlot, is adjacent to County Rd 3 (480th St.), a major thoroughfare that connects Palisade and McGregor, Minnesota. It is surrounded by residential and recreational properties, as well as other farm properties.

On its website, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that feedlots (concentrated animal feeding operations or CAFOs) can contaminate groundwater.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/agricultural-water/about/animal-feeding-operations-contaminated-water-flood.html>)

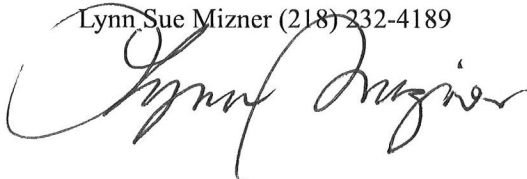
It explains that animal waste (manure) from animal feeding operations can contaminate surface water when flooding of these sites occurs. Animal waste (manure) from animal feeding operations and wastewater from commercial/industrial operations may contain:

- Pathogens such as E. coli
- Hormones
- Antibiotics
- Chemicals such as nitrates, phosphorus, and ammonia
- Heavy metals such as zinc and copper

Surrounding residents are concerned about the effect of the proposed CAFO on air and water quality, health and safety, noise, traffic and the quality of life we value in Logan Township. In Logan Township, we believe in the inherent right of people to enjoy their properties in peace, to have clean water and clean air.

I ask you to deny this permit on the grounds that it will affect water quality, air quality, and the enjoyment of life in Logan Township. It would be an inappropriate use for this wetland property so close to the Mississippi River.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Sue Mizner (218) 232-4189



**Mike and Michelle Pieterse**  
28503 480<sup>th</sup> St, Palisade, MN 56469  
mpietersemn@gmail.com  
320.703.8009

**To:**  
Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

**Subject: Formal Objection to Proposed Feedlot Operation at 28096 480<sup>th</sup> St, Palisade, MN 56469.**

Dear Board Members,

We are writing to formally object to the proposed feedlot operation, due to significant environmental, infrastructure, and public health concerns. We are residents of Logan Township, within Aitkin County, and this development directly threatens our watershed, roads, and overall quality of life.

### **Environmental Risks**

The proposed feedlot poses a serious threat to the Mississippi River watershed. Runoff from Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) contains manure, antibiotics, nitrogen, and phosphorus—substances that are known contributors to water pollution and the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. Without adequate safeguards and transparency regarding waste management, there is a substantial risk of violating the Clean Water Act and damaging one of the nation's most vital waterways.

### **Road and Infrastructure Inadequacy**

Our local roads were not designed to accommodate the heavy truck traffic associated with industrial feedlots. These roads are narrow, and frequently used by school buses, farm equipment, and emergency vehicles. Increased traffic from feedlot operations poses a risk to public safety and will likely result in significant wear and repair costs—burdens that will fall on local taxpayers.

### **Community Health and Livability**

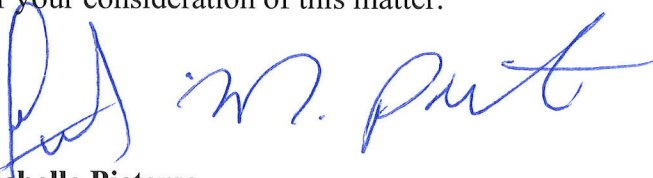
Residents face a diminished quality of life due to odor, dust, noise, pests, diseases, and air pollution. CAFOs also raise public health concerns related to airborne pathogens and contaminated drinking water. The location of this operation, in proximity to homes and community areas, makes these risks absolutely unacceptable.

### **Conclusion**

We respectfully request that the Board deny any permit or approval related to this feedlot until a full Environmental Impact Assessment and Traffic Study are conducted, and public concerns are meaningfully addressed. Industrial livestock operations of this scale do not belong near sensitive waterways, in recreational areas, or in rural communities with inadequate infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



**Mike and Michelle Pieterse**



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## **1. Environmental Danger**

- Runoff from this feedlot will absolutely enter the Mississippi River system—impacting not just our community, but millions downstream.
- Overgrazing will create additional runoff onto the recreational trail directly in front of it which could also facilitate the spread of unwanted bacteria to other parts of the state.
- Feedlot operations are known to release nitrates, phosphorus, and pathogens—contributing to toxic algal blooms and dead zones.
- There are many full-time residents as well as vacation homes within close proximity and almost all have ground water wells. This can have an effect on our own water sources.
- We need assurance and proof that our water and recreational waters are protected, and right now, we don't have it.
- The Minnesota Board of Animal Health has been monitoring the New World screwworm fly which the US eradicated approximately 60 years, something that took livestock operations almost 30 years to recover from. If any cattle are moved to this feedlot from a state bordering Mexico, or cattle that were from Mexico before the suspension of cattle from Mexico, this could bring this parasite into our state and propose a risk to other livestock in the area. Who would be responsible?

## **2. Roads Can't Handle This**

- Our rural roads are too narrow and fragile for this level of truck traffic for constant movement of large loads of cattle and manure.
- This increases danger to school buses, residents, and emergency responders.
- Constant movement of manure can also leave residue from tires/movement on roads that can be tracked to other nearby homes and farms. Bio-security is important for all who have animals of their own and this can breach that.
- Who pays for the road repairs? Likely, us—the taxpayers.

## **3. Threat to Public Health**

- Feedlots emit dust, odors, ammonia, and even antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- These pollutants harm lungs, trigger asthma, and affect vulnerable populations, especially children and the elderly.
- This property in its totality has documented wetlands and is in a low-lying area which when there is rain and snow melt breeds additional pests like mosquitoes, flies, etc. which are a public health concern.
- A large population of animals in a small area are known to bring diseases; one in particular that has no sign of slowing down is the Avian Bird Flu which is known to affect large cattle operations where the cattle are held in tight areas. While most reports show dairy operations to be affected, this is only because the milk is tested. Meat operations don't generally test the milk of their herd. This location has a large wild bird migration due to the nearby rivers, lakes, and wetlands. This is sure to help spread this virus – which there is no cure for at this time. This can absolutely affect local wildlife, other local farms, the cattle on the proposed feedlot, and even the health of those living and/or working within the feedlot.

## **4. Livability and Property Values**

- No one wants to live or spend time near a facility that smells, pollutes, and damages roads.
- The owner of the cattle has multiple acres but wants to place the feedlot far away from their home – why is that?
- This project threatens our property values and long-term viability as a community – which also includes recreational visitors.
- When the property values decrease, will the County reassess and what impact will this have on revenue for the County, Townships, and the roads and schools within them?

## **Closing:**

- We aren't anti-farming or anti-feedlot—we're pro-community, pro-clean water, pro-tourism in our small town, and pro-safety.
- Please deny this feedlot proposal as this just isn't the proper place for one.



## Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

**3A**  
Agenda Item #

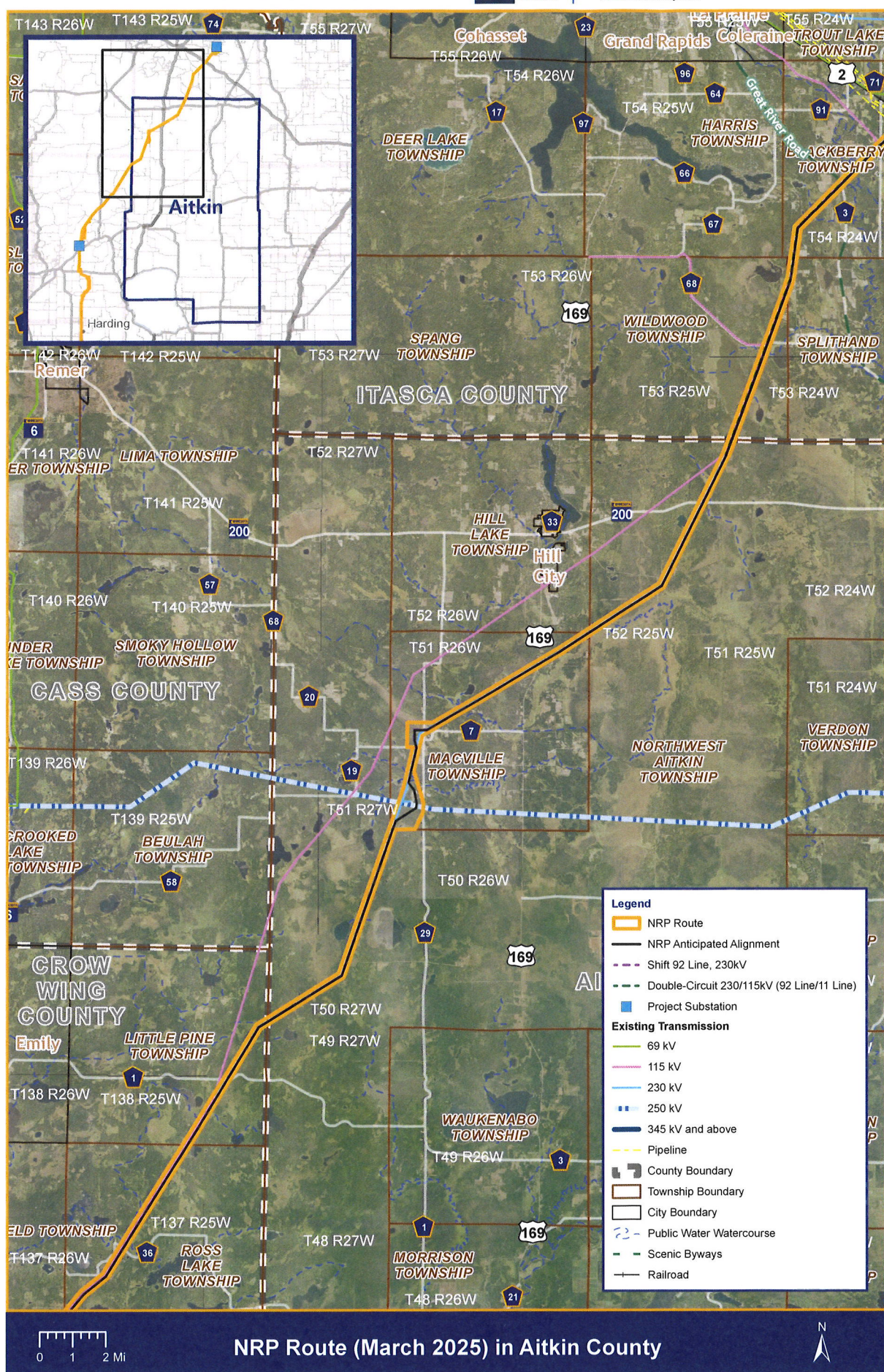
**Requested Meeting Date:** May 13, 2025

**Title of Item:** Northland Reliability Project Presentation

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA  <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only
<b>Submitted by:</b> April Kellerman		<b>Department:</b> Administration
<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Northland Reliability Project Team		<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 30 minutes
<b>Summary of Issue:</b> Northland Reliability Project Team will be presenting project updates to the Board.		
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>		
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b> Information only.		
<b>Financial Impact:</b> <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.







# Northland Reliability Project

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## Project Updates

Aitkin County, May 2025

# PUC Approved Route

28 February 2025

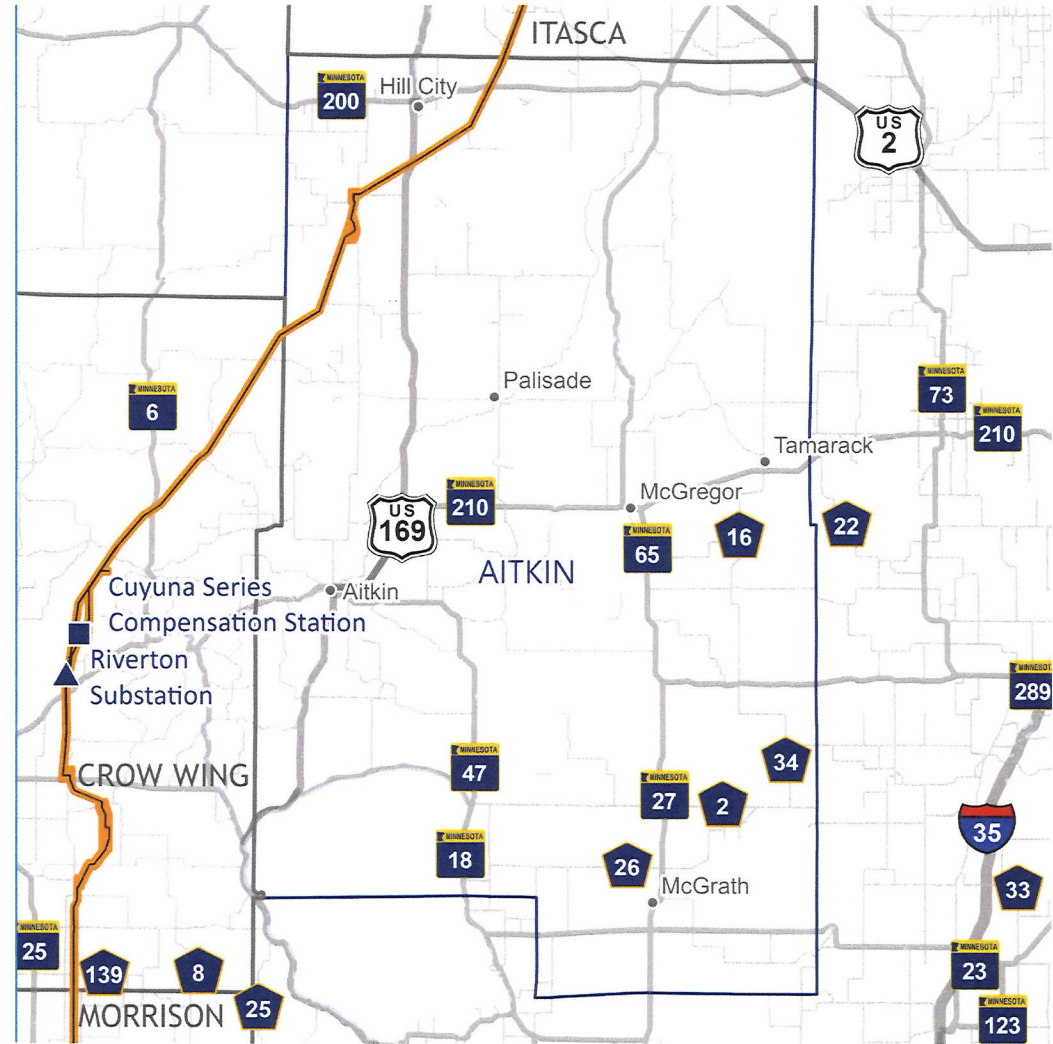
- 90% following HVTL, increased from 85%
- Consolidates existing lines, reduces new right-of-way needed for NRP
- Expands around Swatara to avoid residences
- Crosses the Mississippi River primarily within existing right-of-way
- Rebuild existing transmission lines through Riverton, no longer on east side of Cuyuna Country State Rec Area
- Increases use of tax forfeit lands in new right-of-way



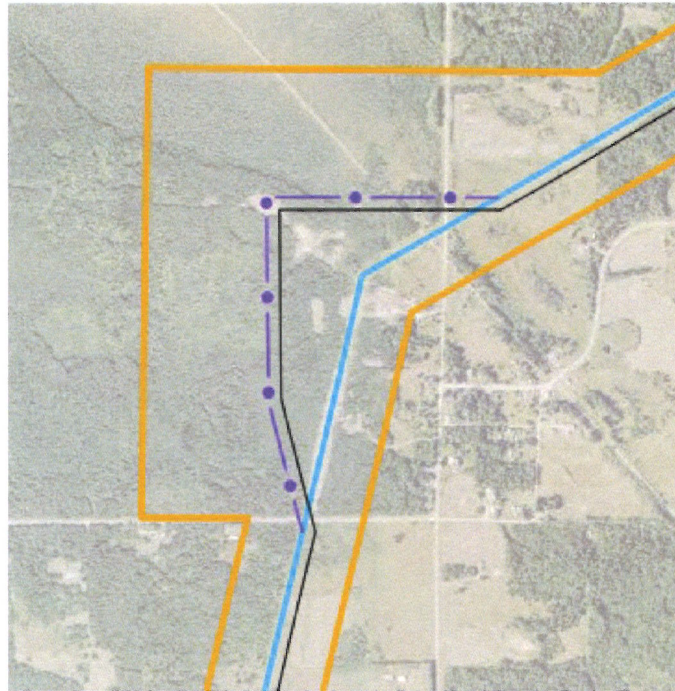


# PUC Approved Route – Aitkin County

- Co-location of 92 and 11 Lines in north Aitkin County
- Co-location reduces amount of new right-of-way for about 11 miles total
- Alignment shifted to the west of Swatara onto tax forfeit lands to avoid residences

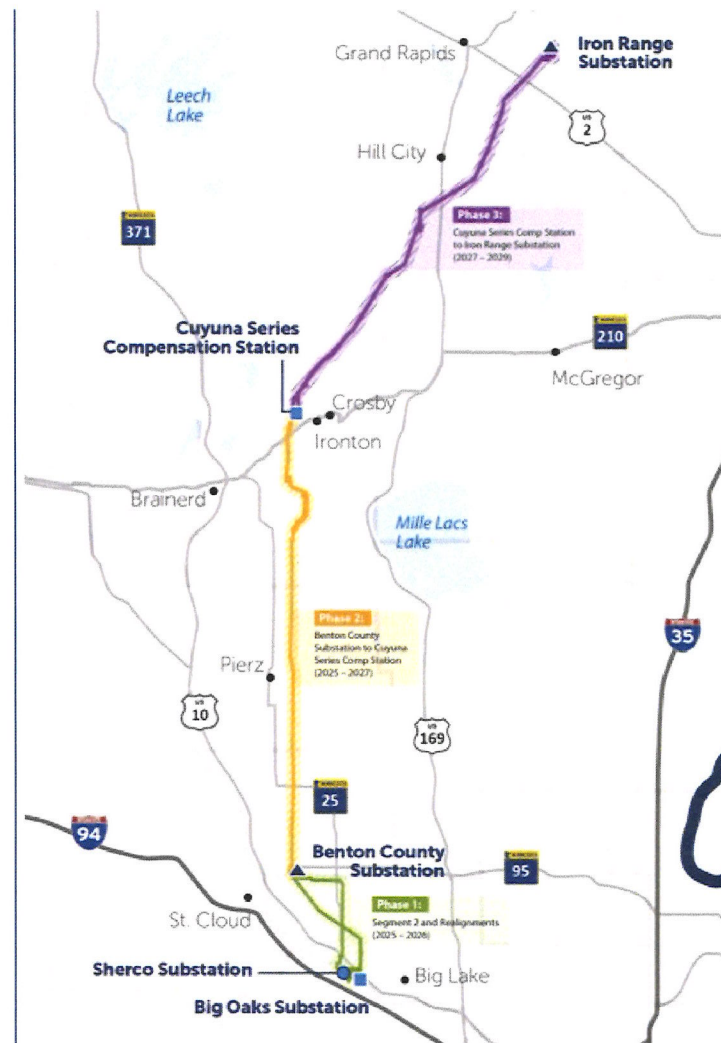


# PUC Approved Route – Aitkin County



# Three construction phases

- **Phase 1:** Segment 2 and Realignments (Oct. 2025 – 2026)
- **Phase 2:** Benton County Substation to Cuyuna Series Comp Station (2025 – 2027)
- **Phase 3:** Cuyuna Series Comp Station to Iron Range Substation (2027 – 2029)





# On-going and upcoming milestones

## - Aitkin County



Engineering design for transmission line



Field surveys in some locations



State, federal, and local permitting



Collecting soil borings

# On-going and upcoming milestones

## - Project-wide



Engineering design for substations and transmission line



State, federal, and local permitting



Road Use Agreement and Road crossing / driveway permitting (Phase 1)



Collecting soil borings (Phases 2 and 3)



Field surveys in some locations (Phases 2 and 3)



Material delivery and access matting in Aug/Sept 2025 (Phase 1)



Foundation construction Oct 2025 (Phase 1)



# Contractors

## Right-of-Way and Real Estate



## Surveying and Environment

**BRAUN**  
**INTERTEC**

The Science You Build On.



**MNR**  
MIDWEST NATURAL RESOURCES



## Construction and Restoration

**MICHELS®**

**Westwood**

# Construction steps

## SEGMENT 2

Landowner notices provided in advance of construction

Starting 2025



Continuing into 2026

### Pre-construction through restoration



1. Tree clearing



2. Structure staking, surveying and soil investigations



3. Foundation installation



4. Assemble and set structures



5. Wire installation



6. Cleanup and restoration

## SEGMENT 1

Landowner notices provided in advance of construction

Starting 2026



Continuing into 2030





# Field surveys

*Landowner notices provided in advance of surveys*

**Started**  
October 2023



**Continued**  
May – November 2024



**Continuing**  
Into 2025

## Types of surveys



Biological



Cultural  
resources



Noxious weeds



Wetlands



Soil borings

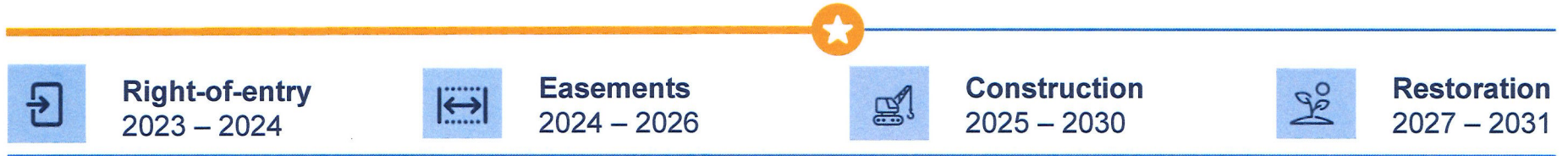


Land

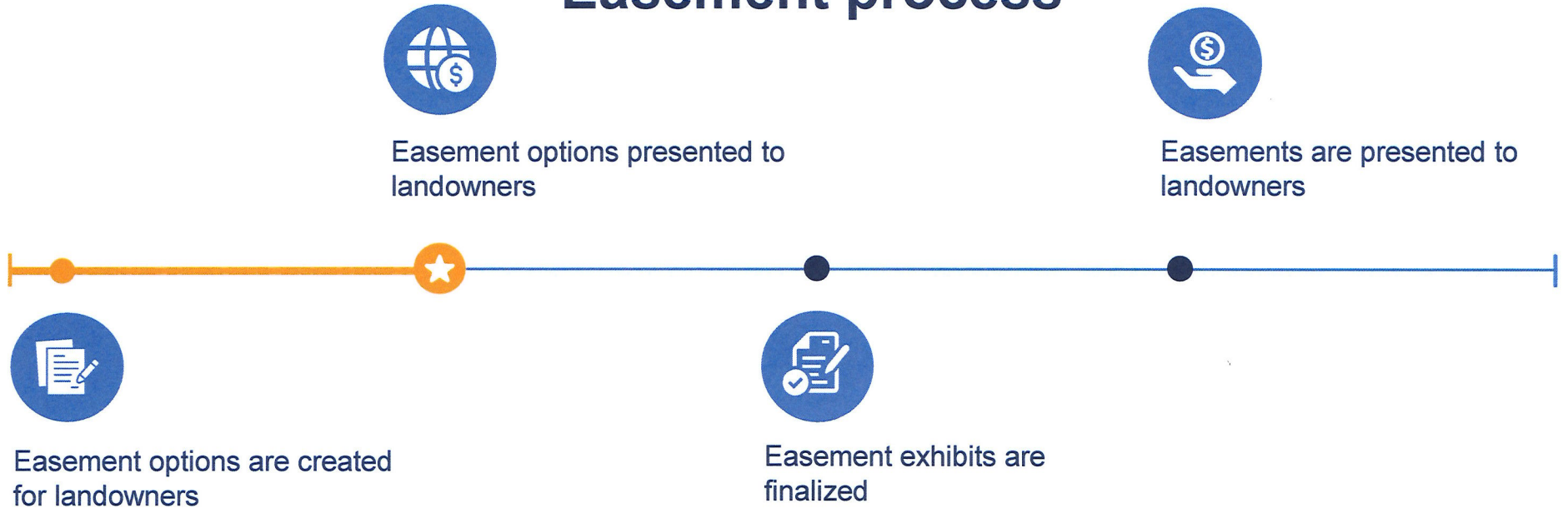
## Geo-tech soil boring surveys



# Real estate process



## Easement process



# What landowners can expect during construction



**Right-of-entry**  
2023 – 2024



**Easements**  
2024 – 2026



**Construction**  
2025 – 2030



**Restoration**  
2027 – 2031

*We will do our best to minimize impacts during construction. However, the following temporary impacts will occur:*

- Construction staking
- Noise, dust and lights for nearby residents
- Equipment, materials and construction crews moving
- Temporary lane and road closures
- Work during daylight hours, which are 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Vegetation clearing within the easement area
- Erosion control measures



# Northland Reliability Project

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## Connect with us!



[northlandreliabilityproject.com](http://northlandreliabilityproject.com)



Call our hotline at  
218-864-6059



Send us an email at  
[connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com](mailto:connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com)