Appendix B
Agency and Stakeholder Correspondence

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- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Representatives
- Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse
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- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
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- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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- South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks
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- South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
- State Representatives

Tribal Governments

Local Government Units
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- Other LGUs

Federal Agencies

Federal Aviation Administration

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Request for information and notification of the Facility.
07/22/2026	Email	HDR	FAA	FAA Pre-Screening Tool questions.
07/22/2026	Email	FAA	HDR	Response to FAA Pre-Screening Tool questions.
07/22/2026	Email	HDR	FAA	Response to FAA Pre-Screening Tool questions.
07/22/2026	Email	FAA	HDR	Response to FAA Pre-Screening Tool questions.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Dave Anderson
Assistant Manager
Federal Aviation Administration
2301 University Dr, BLDG 23B
Bismarck, ND 58504

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We are particularly interested in identifying any properties within or adjacent to the corridor that your agency owns or otherwise has an interest in. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your agency may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

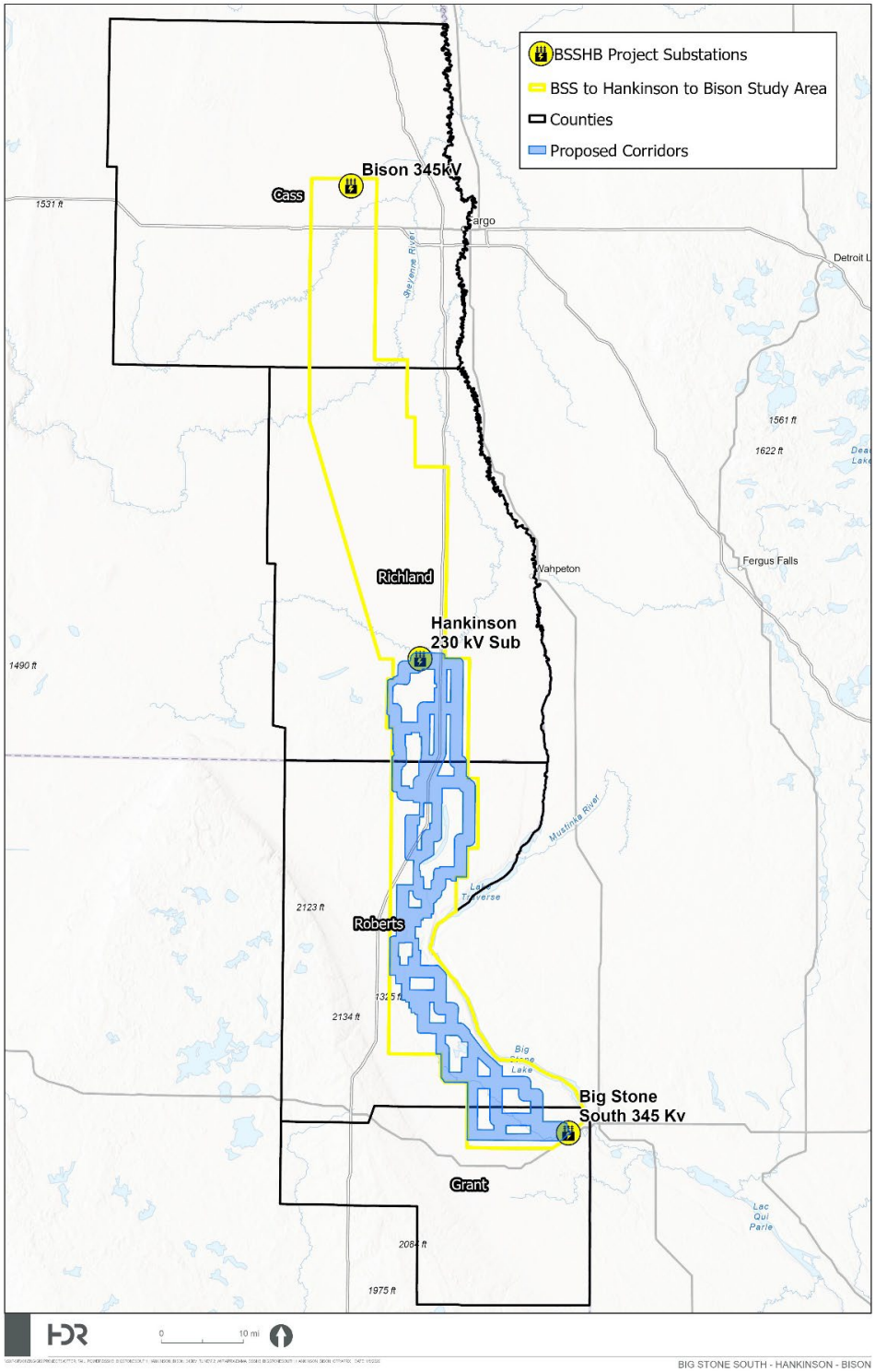
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Wilson, Ashley M (FAA)
To: Pratt, Dylan
Subject: RE: FAA Pre-Screening Tool Question
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 11:29:44 AM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Youll need to file a 7460-1 for further information.

Ashley M. Wilson
Federal Aviation Administration
Obstruction Evaluation Group
AJV-A521
10101 Hillwood Parkway
Fort Worth, TX 76177
Office: 817-222-4244
Ashley.M.Wilson@faa.gov

From: Pratt, Dylan <Dylan.Pratt@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 11:28 AM
To: Wilson, Ashley M (FAA) <Ashley.M.Wilson@faa.gov>
Subject: RE: FAA Pre-Screening Tool Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you, Ashley! Are you able to determine the approach/departure surface of the Sisseton Municipal Airport in South Dakota?

Thank you,

Dylan Pratt
Transmission Line EIT

HDR
1601 Utica Ave South
Suite 600
D 763.591.5411
Dylan.Pratt@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Wilson, Ashley M (FAA) <Ashley.M.Wilson@faa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 11:16 AM
To: Pratt, Dylan <Dylan.Pratt@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: FAA Pre-Screening Tool Question

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

All structures within a certain distance, height, and radial.
An example would be say you are constructing a tower that is 60 feet AGL, at 30,000 feet away it sounds like it might not be an issue assuming the site elevation is the same or lower than the airports. However is that same 60 foot tower is located on a hill or mountain, that would make it taller than the airport and most likely will require filing.
Please keep in mind, we not only evaluate for the airport and how the structure would affect airport operations but we also evaluate structures around NAVAIDS, Radar Sites, Communication facilities, etc.

The FAA advises every structure be checked in the pre-screening tool to determine if you must file notice.

Ashley M. Wilson
Federal Aviation Administration
Obstruction Evaluation Group
AJV-A521
10101 Hillwood Parkway
Fort Worth, TX 76177
Office: 817-222-4244
Ashley.M.Wilson@faa.gov

From: Pratt, Dylan <Dylan.Pratt@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2026 11:11 AM
To: Wilson, Ashley M (FAA) <Ashley.M.Wilson@faa.gov>
Subject: FAA Pre-Screening Tool Question

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Ashley,

I have a general question about the FAA's pre-screening tool. I am looking to install a transmission tower on the outer edge of the airspace of Sisseton Municipal Airport. I am wondering if all obstacles at a certain height within airport space require screening? This location is about 30,000' from the airport runway and will flag at a height of 40'.

Thank you,

Dylan Pratt
Transmission Line EIT

HDR
1601 Utica Ave South
Suite 600
D 763.591.5411
Dylan.Pratt@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

Federal Highway Administration

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Request for input and notification of the Facility.
01/20/2026	Email	FHWA	HDR	FHWA Response to Request for Input and Notification of Facility.
02/05/2026	Email	FHWA	HDR	FHWA has delegated project requirements to South Dakota Department of Transportation.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Wendall Meyer
Interim Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
South Dakota Division Office
116 East Dakota Avenue, Suite A
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Meyer,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Additionally, we are requesting your agency's input regarding potential impacts to federal-aid highways and any requirements for coordination under Title 23 of the U.S. Code. Specifically, we seek guidance on whether the Project will require review or approval under FHWA regulations for utility installations within or adjacent to federal-aid highway rights-of-way, and whether any additional environmental documentation or clearances will be necessary under NEPA for crossings of federally funded transportation facilities.

Please advise if there are specific design standards or clearance requirements for transmission lines crossing federal-aid highways, including minimum vertical clearance and setback requirements. We also request your recommendations regarding coordination for temporary traffic control measures during construction, including any requirements for traffic management plans or notifications for work near federal-aid highways. If there are FHWA utility accommodation policies or permitting processes that apply to this Project, please provide details so they can be incorporated into the Project planning and design.

Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with applicable federal transportation regulations and minimizes impacts on public safety and infrastructure. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

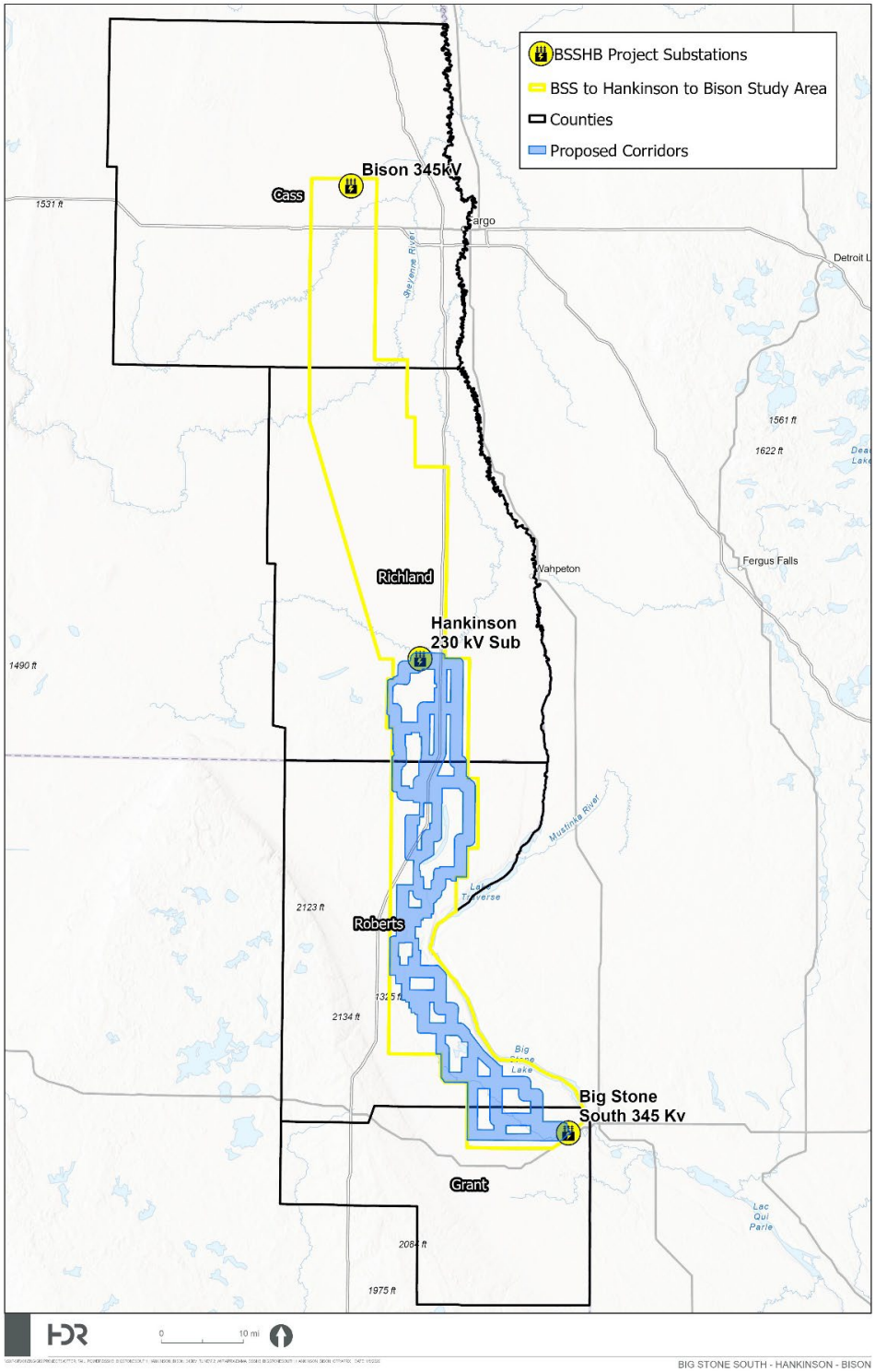
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure: Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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Proposed Corridors
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230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
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1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
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2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Handel, Lindsey (FHWA)
To: Mayer, Michael
Cc: Todd, Pamela (FHWA); FHWA, NorthDakota (FHWA); jketterl
Subject: FHWA Response - Request for Input - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 2:59:27 PM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon Mr. Mayer,

FHWA received your letter regarding the above subject project. It appears the project will cross Interstate 94 in the Fargo area. This likely would require approval of an Interstate Use Agreement, which would also trigger a NEPA environmental analysis. Please coordinate this project with Mr. Jonathan Ketterling at the North Dakota Department of Transportation at jketterl@nd.gov.

Thank you,

Lindsey L. Handel, PE
Deputy Division Administrator, North Dakota Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
4503 Coleman Street, Suite 205
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-221-9469 – Office
360-481-9987 – Cell
Lindsey.Handel@dot.gov

From: Bierne, Jon (FHWA)
To: Mayer, Michael
Subject: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Line Project
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026 10:33:02 AM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Mayer,

I am in receipt of a letter from Mr. Vinson, seeking FHWA input on the proposed project. Our office has shared that letter with the SDDOT. I am confident that they were likely included in the original distribution of the letter and, with that in mind, would encourage you to work directly with SDDOT to handle the project requirements in accordance with their utility accommodation process. These responsibilities have been delegated to the SDDOT. Thank you for including us on the original letter.

Jon Bierne
Deputy Division Administrator
FHWA | Federal Highway Administration
South Dakota Division | (605) 776-1003
116 East Dakota Ave, Suite A
Pierre, South Dakota 57501
jon.bierne@dot.gov

Federal Representatives

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Representative Dusty Johnson, United States House of Representatives	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter.
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Senator Mike Rounds, United States Senate	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter.
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Senator John Thune, United States Senate	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Representative Dusty Johnson
United States House of Representatives – South Dakota
115 4th Ave SE, Suite 107A
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Representative Johnson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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At this preliminary stage a general study area has been defined and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and

take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

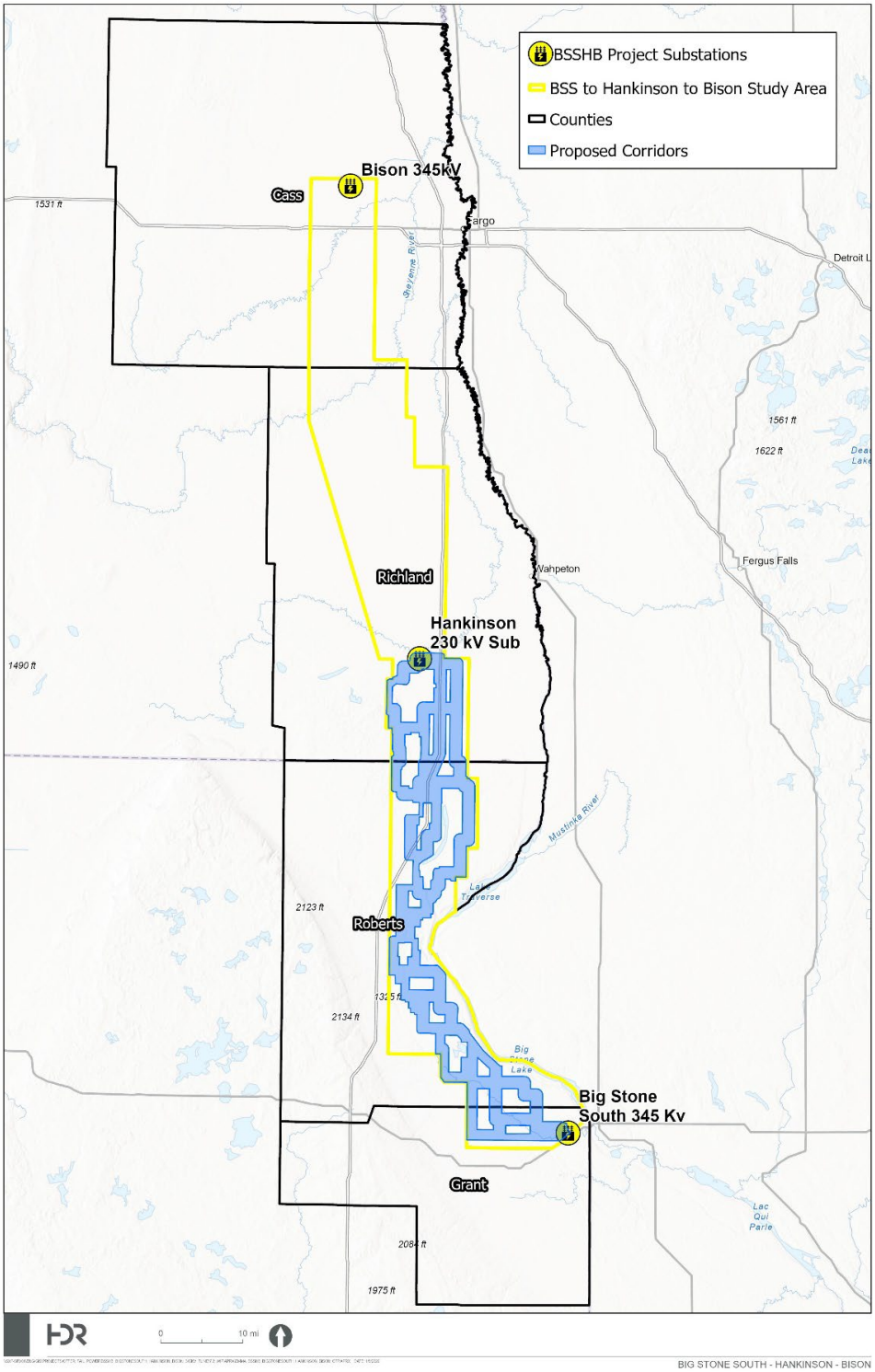
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


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BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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Parle
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1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
1975 ft
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Senator Mike Rounds
United States Senate – South Dakota
111 W Capitol Ave, Suite 210
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Senator Rounds,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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Michael Mayer
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1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
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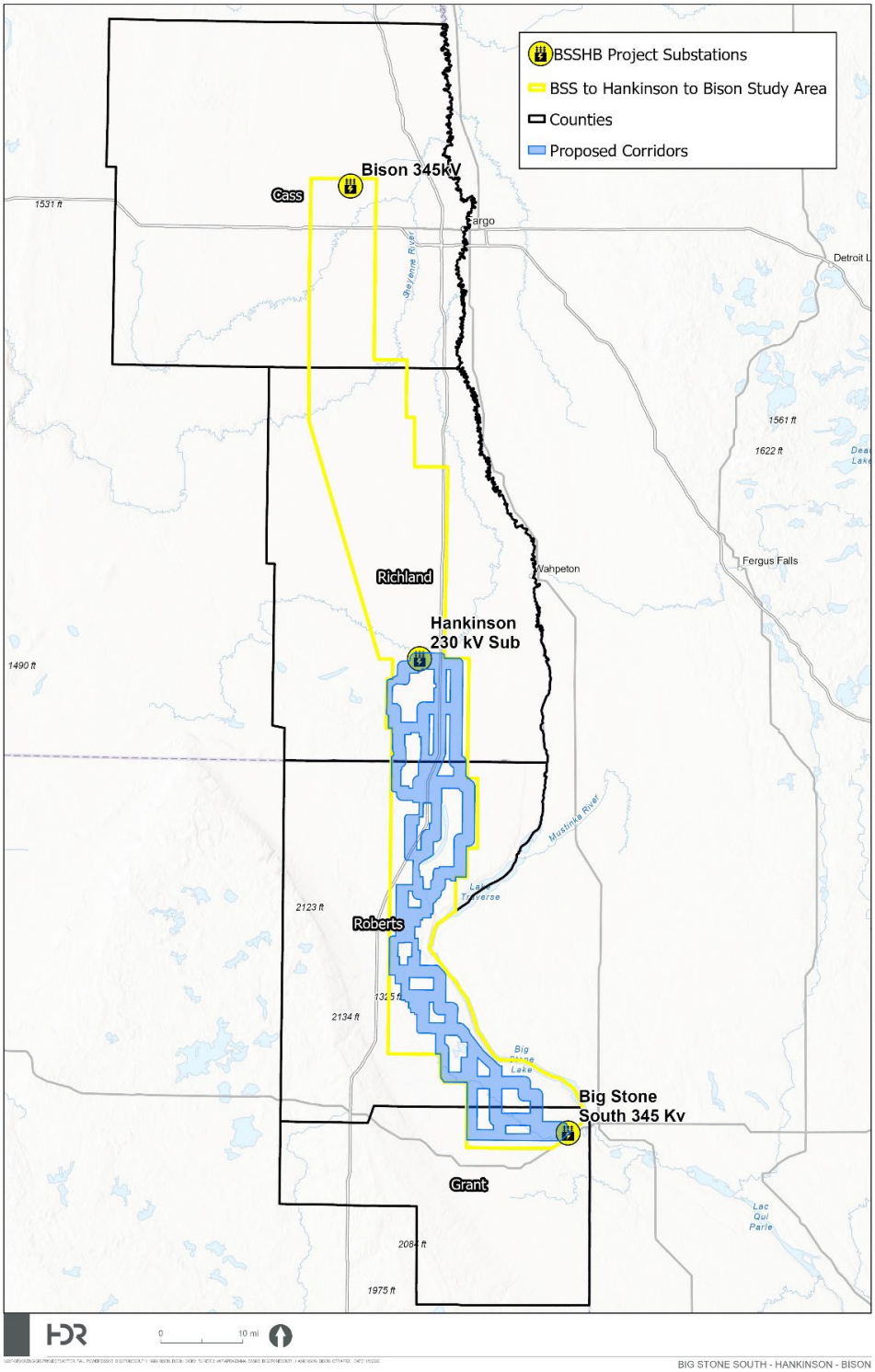
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
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112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


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BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Senator John Thune
United States Senate – South Dakota
205 6th Avenue SE, Suite 202
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Senator Thune,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
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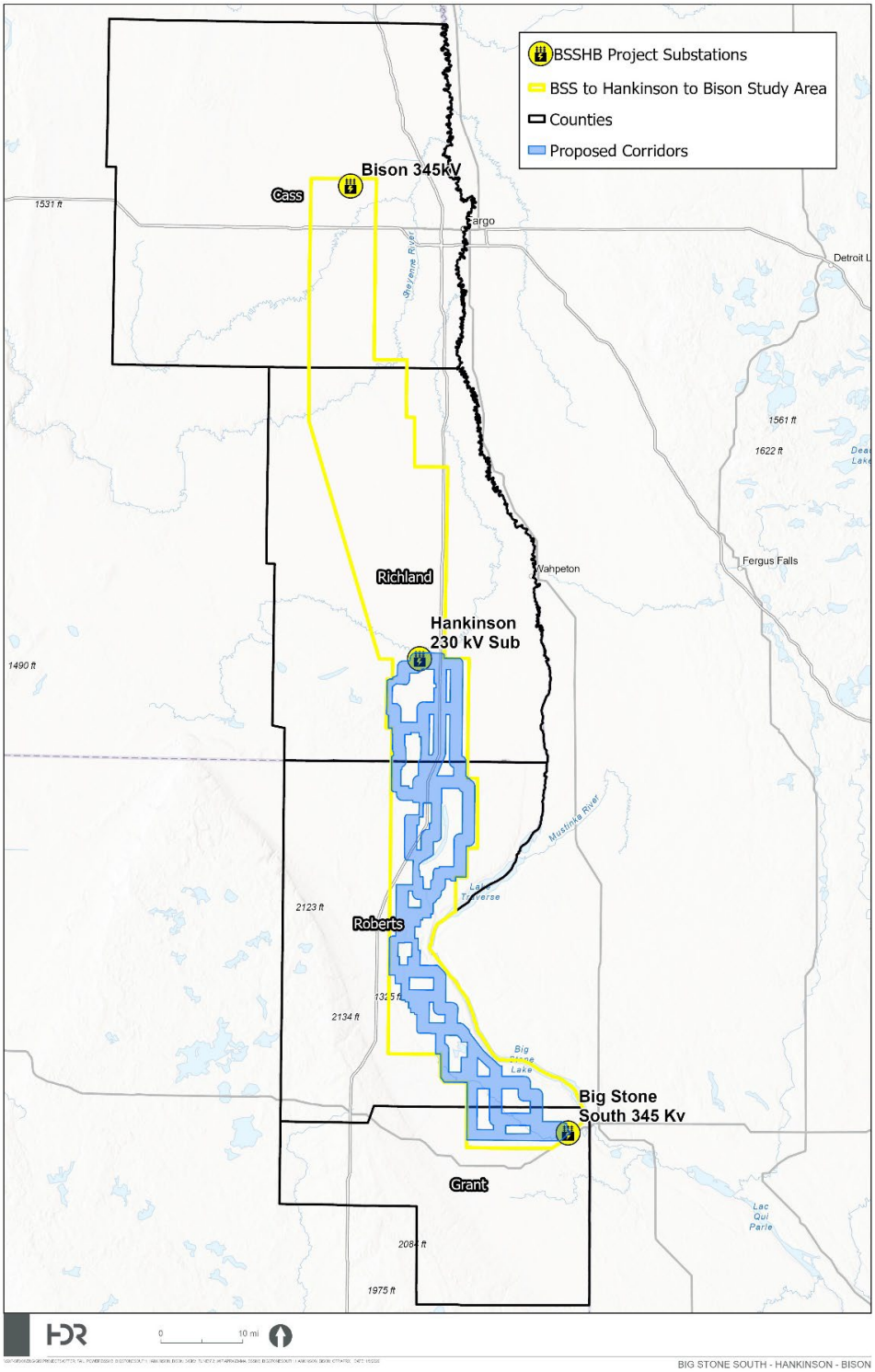
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112 Main Ave S.
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Sincerely,



George Vinson
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Otter Tail Power Company

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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Robbin Beard
Military Aviation and Installation Assurance Siting Clearinghouse
3400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Beard,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We are particularly interested in identifying any properties within or adjacent to the corridor that your agency owns or otherwise has an interest in. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your agency may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

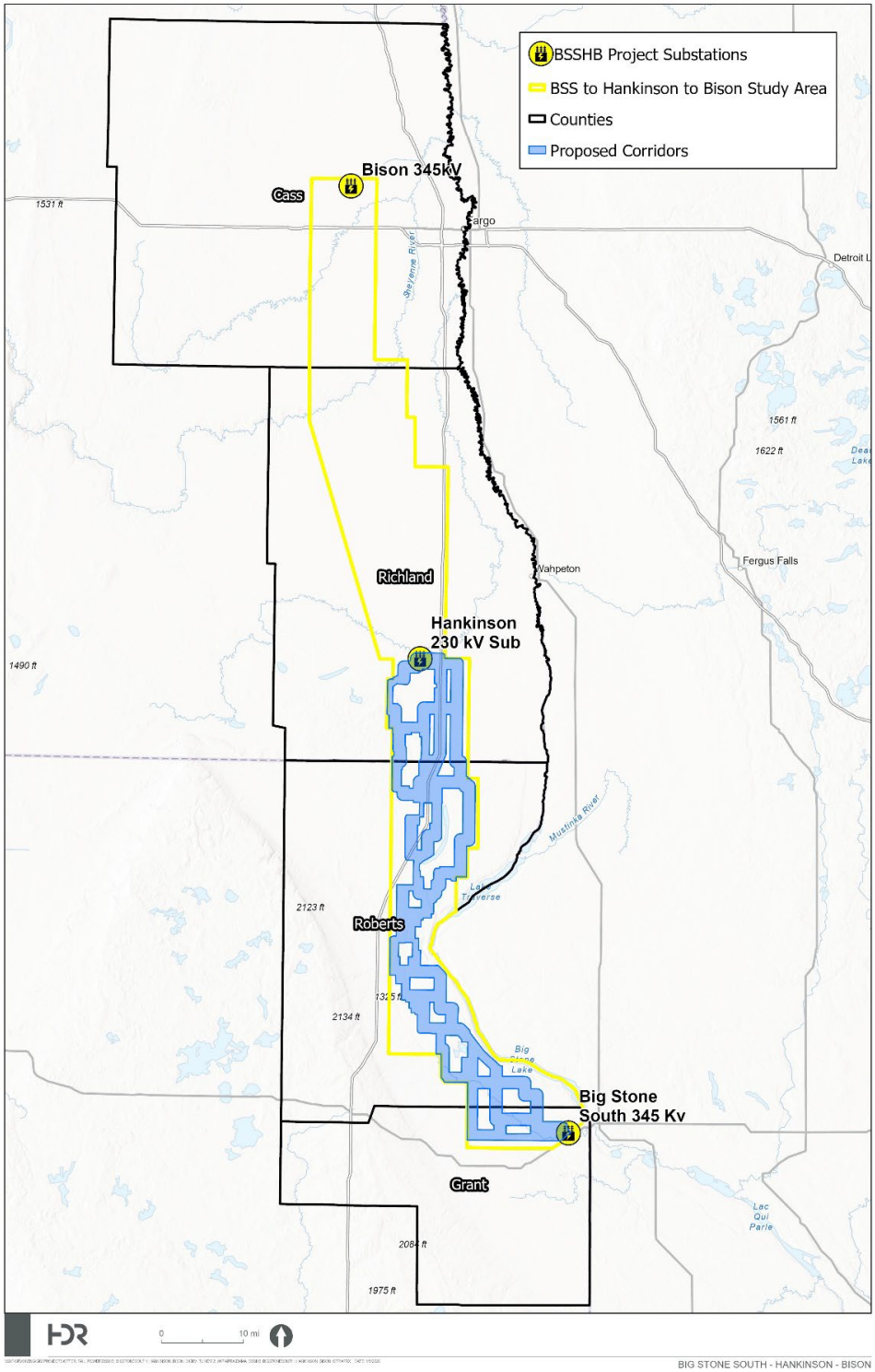
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

National Park Service

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
04/16/2026	Email	HDR	National Parks Service (NPS)	Request for NPS data and notification of the Facility.
04/29/2026	Email	NPS	HDR	Response to request for NPS data and notification of the Facility.

From: Rust, Jill
To: deb_diquinzio@nps.gov
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Parker, Amber
Subject: BSSHB Coordination
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 6:41:32 PM
Attachments: 2026_0416_OTP_BSSHB_NPS_Coordination.pdf

Hi Deb – I'm with HDR, who is assisting Otter Tail Power with their Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison (BSSHB) Project in South Dakota and North Dakota. We met Marvin and Connie Piotter at a recent public meeting and they were kind enough to make us aware of some National Park interests near or within our Study Area. We wanted to reach out to you directly to gather more information about the National Natural Landmarks in the area. Attached is the official coordination letter regarding the project. Would it be possible to share a shapefile of the NNL boundaries so we can compare them to our current preliminary corridors?

We are currently narrowing these corridors to a preferred route and once we have that we will coordinate with you again to provide the location and the potential for any impacts.

Thanks for any input you can provide!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From:	DiQuinzio, Deborah A
To:	Rust, Jill
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Parker, Amber; Kenworthy, Jason P
Subject:	Re: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Coordination
Date:	Wednesday, April 29, 2026 11:06:09 AM
Attachments:	[redacted].pdf [redacted].pdf [redacted].pdf [redacted].zip

You don't often get email from deb_diquinzio@nps.gov. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jill,
Thanks for coordinating with the National Park Service (NPS) regarding National Natural Landmarks (NNL) in the vicinity of the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project. For your use, please find attached a zipped geodatabase file containing boundaries for the three NNLs in closest proximity to the project study area. This data is provided for your organization's use only and is not to be further distributed, as some NNL GIS data is sensitive due to fragile resources or private ownership. Please direct anyone requesting the data to the NPS.

Also attached for your reference are one-page briefs for each of the three NNLs. While included, I do think Sica Hollow, SD is well outside of the study area.

Please let me know if you encounter any issues with the GIS data or require any further information.
We appreciate your consideration of NNLs and efforts to avoid or minimize potential impacts.

Thanks and regards,
Deb

Deb DiQuinzio
National Park Service
National Natural Landmarks Program
deb_diquinzio@nps.gov
(401) 330-7340

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

National Natural Landmarks Program

Name: Cottonwood Slough-Dry Run

Location: Roberts County, South Dakota

Description:

This 5,982-acre site consists of a long, narrow 11-mile strip of wetlands containing potholes, streams, shallow open water, lakes, and marsh areas with dense emergent vegetation. The wetland is actually a glaciated finger outlet of the Pleistocene Lake Agassiz, and the bluffs that parallel the site on the east and west (and correspond with the landmark's boundary) mark the old lakeshore of this glacial lake. The landmark site includes the flood plain and tall grass prairie as a buffer zone for the wetland. The bluffs harbor stands of hardwood forest which, this far west, occur only along bodies of water. Elm, cottonwood, box elder and green ash predominate on these bluffs. The bluffs also offer vantage points for observing the large concentrations of waterfowl that use the area. The site serves as the headwaters of both the Minnesota River to the south and the Red River to the north. The site extends for 11 miles south of Victor, South Dakota.

Significance:

Cottonwood Slough-Dry Run is a glaciated finger outlet of Lake Agassiz, the world's largest Pleistocene glacial lake. The site contains an undisturbed wetland complex and tall grass prairie and serves as a distinct transition zone between the tall grass prairie and eastern deciduous forest biomes. The site is among the top natural areas in this part of the country for the concentrations and production of waterfowl and is one of the best natural riverine wetland complexes remaining in the state.

Ownership: Indian Trust, Private, State

Designation: May, 1975; Reduced, May, 2006

Evaluation: J. W. Vassar, Robert Aukerman, Colorado State University, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, 1974

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

National Natural Landmarks Program

Name: Ancient River Warren Channel

Location: Big Stone County, Minnesota; Traverse County, Minnesota; Grant County, South Dakota; Roberts County, South Dakota

Description:

This site contains a channel cut by the ancient River Warren during the Ice Age when the river drained Lake Agassiz, presumed to be the largest temporary lake in North America. When the continental ice sheet blocked northward flow of the Red River of the north, waters from the melting ice accumulated along the ice sheet edge, forming glacial Lake Agassiz. Water spilled over into the Minnesota River, cutting the great channel 50 to 90 feet below the present level of the Minnesota River as it flowed to the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Finally the ice sheet receded so the Red River could again flow northward. River Warren waters dwindled and deposition of sediments left the channel much as it appears today. The river is named for General G. H. Warren who described the origin of the channel. The steep-walled river channel is from one to two miles wide and 100 to 130 feet deep in the vicinity of Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake on the South Dakota-Minnesota boundary. That portion of the channel, which includes the two lakes and the Hudson Bay-Gulf of Mexico divide between them, is about 50 miles long and one to two miles wide. Brown's Valley, Minnesota lies in the divide area only about three feet above the level of Lake Traverse which is about nine feet higher than Big Stone Lake.

Significance:

A channel cut by the Ancient River Warren during the Ice Age, Ancient River Warren Channel contains the Hudson Bay-Gulf of Mexico divide. A lake on each side of the channel provides evidence of the irregularities in Ice Age sedimentation.

Ownership: Private, State

Designation: 1966

Evaluation:

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

National Natural Landmarks Program

Name: Sica Hollow

Location: Marshall County, South Dakota; Roberts County, South Dakota

Description:

This 810-acre natural area is located along the crest and eastern slope of the most prominent portion of the Coteau des Prairie, which is about 700 feet at this point. The Coteau is characterized by a thick accumulation of drift over an eroded bedrock surface. The upland and fringes of the ravines are prairie while the slopes and ravines are covered with burr oak deciduous forest with a scattering of basswood, elm, hard maple, ironwood, aspen, and ash. The forest floor has typical herbaceous plants of an eastern forest such as bloodroot, wild ginger and trillium. Another feature is the perennial springs arising from the escarpment which form a clear cold stream. Along the edges of the springs, liverworts and ferns grow, enhancing the eastern aspect. Aquatic stream life is abundant. The Coteau overlooks the Red River and the old glacial story of the River Warren. Pothole lakes can be found on the upland of the Coteau. The site is located 10 miles northwest of Sisseton, South Dakota.

Significance:

Sica Hollow displays many facets of natural history, including the glacial story of the River Warren, pothole lakes on the upland of Coteau, grasslands and prairie, and ravines where eastern deciduous forests grow. The site includes the eastern face of the escarpment of the Coteau des Prairies.

Ownership: State

Designation: November, 1967

Evaluation:

Natural Resource Conservation Service

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Request for input and notification of the Facility.
02/10/2026	Letter	South Dakota NRCS	HDR	Response to request for input and notification of the Facility.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Tony Sunseri
State Conservationist
South Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 Fourth Street SW, Room 203
Huron, SD 57350

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Sunseri,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards selecting a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

We are also requesting your agency's input regarding potential impacts to agricultural lands and soil resources within the South Dakota portion of the Project area. Specifically, we seek guidance on compliance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) and any requirements for completing Form AD-1006 or similar documentation to determine whether the Project will affect prime or unique farmland. We also request confirmation of any additional steps needed to ensure FPPA compliance for transmission line projects.

In addition, we request your recommendations regarding best management practices for soil erosion control, compaction prevention, and restoration of agricultural lands following construction. If there are NRCS technical standards or specifications that should be incorporated into the Project's erosion and sediment control plan or revegetation strategy, such as those outlined in the NRCS Conservation Practice Standards for Erosion Control and Vegetative Establishment, please provide those details. We intend to use NRCS-approved seed mixes and stabilization methods where appropriate and would appreciate your input on suitable species and practices for disturbed areas.

Lastly, we also request any available data or mapping related to prime farmland, highly erodible soils, or conservation program lands within the study area to assist in route refinement and permit preparation. Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with applicable federal and state requirements and minimizes impacts on agricultural resources. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

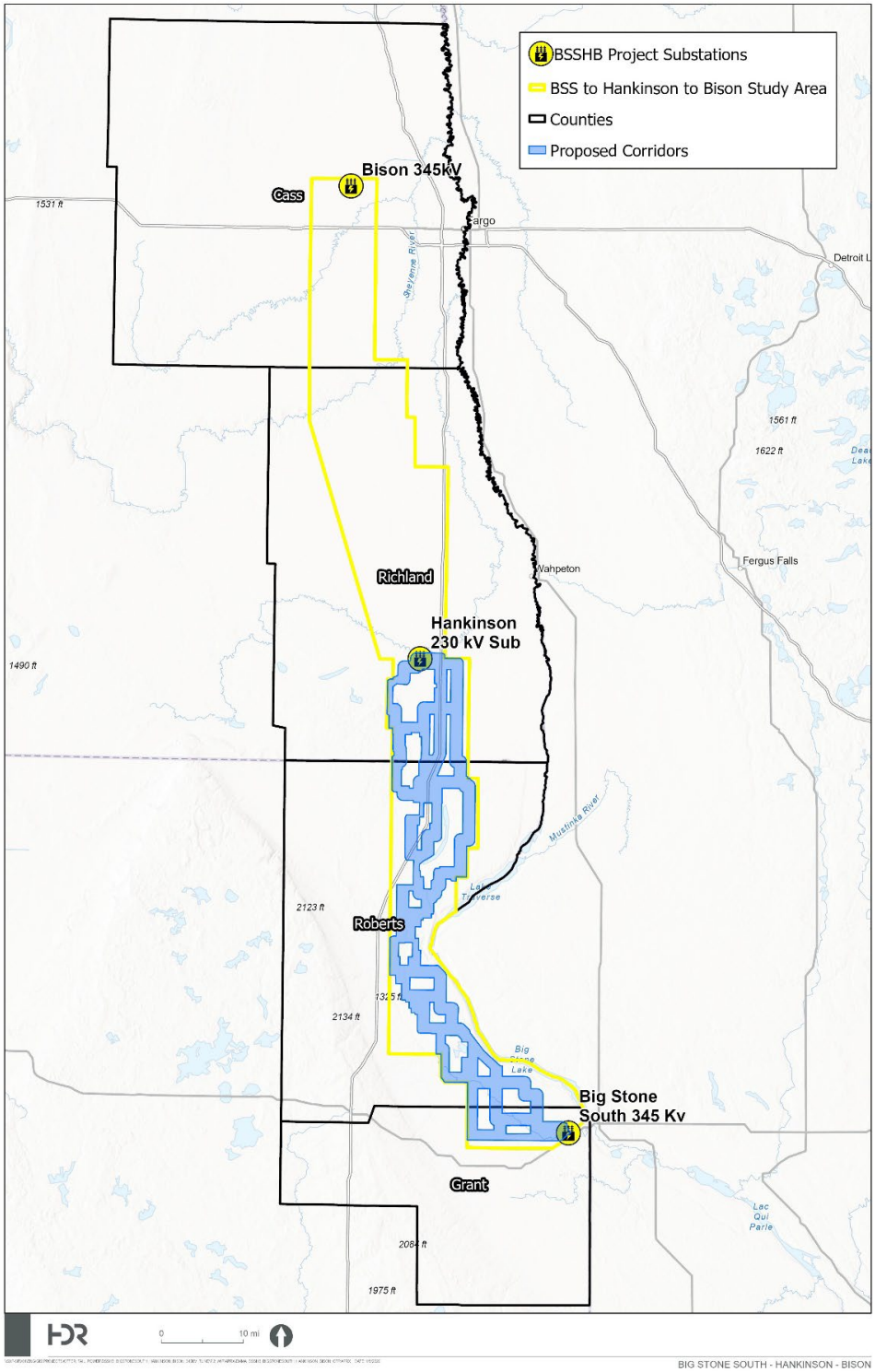
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route.Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure: Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

South Dakota State Office
200 Fourth Street SW, Room 203
Huron, SD 57350

February 10, 2026

Ms. Jill Rust, CEP
HDR
101 South Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104

RE: Environmental Review for:
Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison_ 345 kV Transmission Line project

Dear Ms. Rust:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) review on this project. The project as outlined will likely have **no impact** on prime or important farmland. However, since it is unclear at this time the amount of ground disturbance that will occur at a given site, please work directly with local District Conservationists, Lindsey Otto-Hanson (Roberts County) or Dale Thiel (Grant County) to assist you in developing seeding plans that meet the needs of the sites. They have been carbon copied on this letter for awareness.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (605) 352-1206.

Sincerely,

RYAN KRUSE
Acting State Resource Conservationist

cc:
Nathan Jones, State Soil Scientist, NRCS, Huron SO
Lindsey Otto-Hanson, District Conservationist, Sisseton FO
Dale Thiel, District Conservationist, Milbank, FO

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE)	Request for input and notification of facility
02/19/2026	Email	HDR	USACE	Follow-up on request for input letter and requesting virtual meeting
02/19/2026	Email	USACE	HDR	Response to follow up and request to email initial letter
02/19/2026	Email	HDR	USACE	Response to request for letter and letter attachment
05/27/2026	Email	HDR	USACE	Request for coordination meeting
05/28/2026	Email	USACE	HDR	Response to request for coordination
06/04/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and USACE		Facility Introduction
06/15/2026	Email	HDR	USACE	Request for USACE project number and confirmation on if project will be split based on states
06/25/2026	Email	USACE	HDR	USACE sent project number and confirmed there will be one project for both states
07/16/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	USACE	Aquatic resources delineation report
07/16/2026	Email	USACE	Otter Tail Power Company	Response to aquatic resources delineation report

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Nathan Morey, South Dakota Regulatory Chief
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – South Dakota Regulatory Office
28563 Powerhouse Road
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – South Dakota Portion of Big Stone South to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Morey

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards selecting a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Additionally, we are requesting your agency's input regarding permitting requirements and environmental considerations under your jurisdiction for the South Dakota portion of the Project. Specifically, we seek guidance on whether the Project will require authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for any discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, and whether any Nationwide Permits or Individual Permits may apply.

We also request your recommendations regarding best practices for minimizing impacts to aquatic resources during construction, including measures for wetland protection, stream bank stabilization, and

erosion control. If there are specific requirements for dewatering activities, temporary access roads, or staging areas near jurisdictional waters, please provide those details so they can be incorporated into the Project's design and construction plans.

Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with federal permitting requirements and avoids or minimizes impacts to waters of the United States. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:

Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

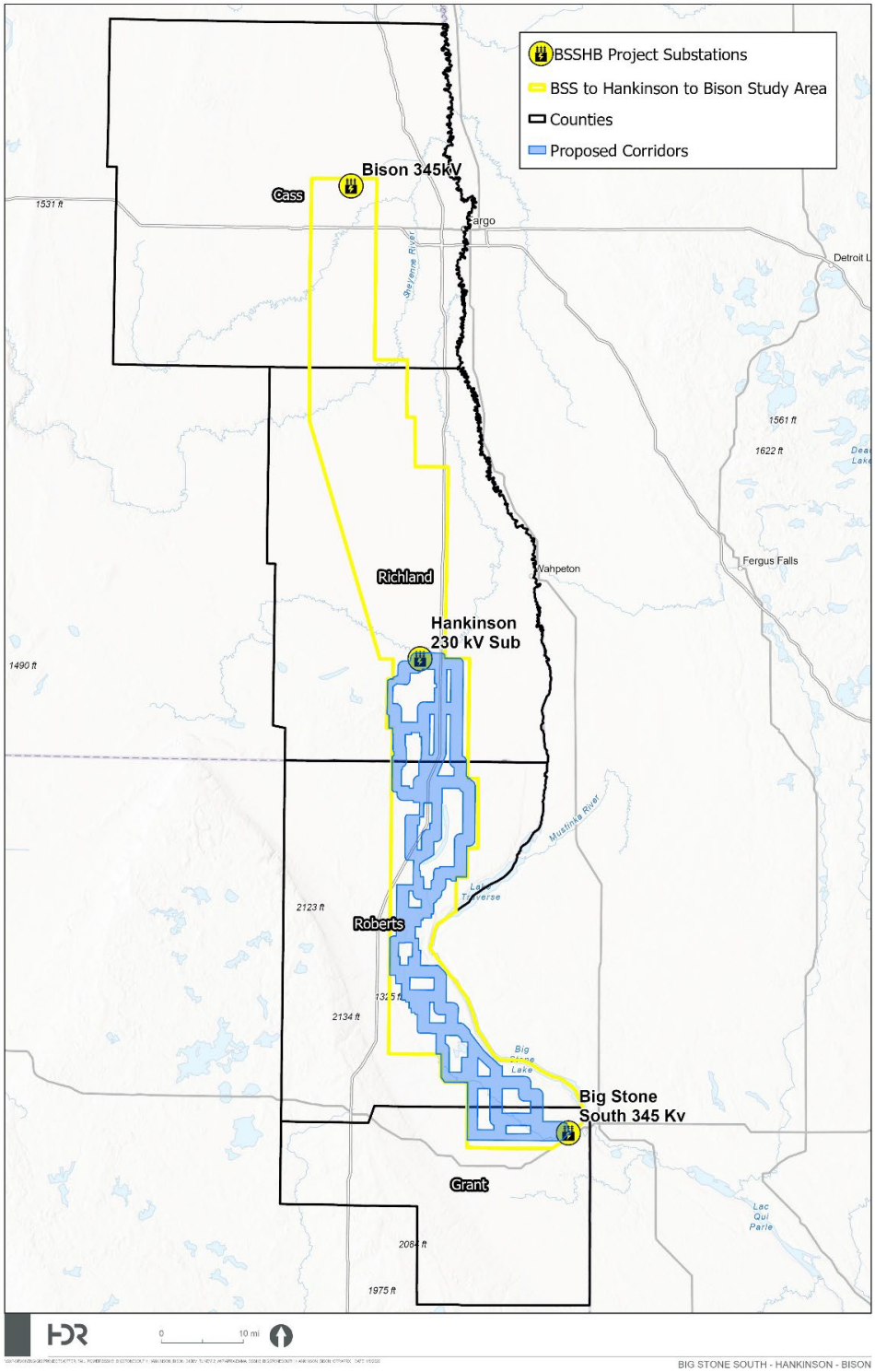
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosures:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
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2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	SDRegulatoryMailbox@usace.army.mil
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Vinson, George H.; Parker, Amber; Brazeal, Alex; Hanley, Jennifer
Subject:	Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date:	Thursday, February 19, 2026 11:16:27 AM

Good morning – I am following up on some correspondence that was sent to your office regarding the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison project. We sent a letter via USPS last month, but I wanted to follow up to set up a virtual meeting to discuss the project and particularly, any recommendations that you may have for potential desktop and field wetland surveys. Has the project been assigned to anyone at this time and if not, would any of the regulatory staff have time in the next couple of weeks to meet and discuss the project? Please let me know if you would like further information.

Thank you,

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: SD Regulatory Mailbox
To: Rust, Jill
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 1:13:17 PM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I don't show that we received the letter, got to love the postal service in SD. Can you email it to us?

Thank you and have a great day!

South Dakota Regulatory Office
US Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District
28563 Powerhouse Road
Pierre, SD 57501
605-224-8531
https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Program/South-Dakota/

We are accepting permit applications and requests for jurisdictional determinations through a website tool, the Regulatory Request System: https://rrs.usace.army.mil/rrs

The Omaha District is committed to providing the highest level of support to the public. To help us ensure we continue to do so, please complete the Customer Satisfaction Survey located at our website at https://regulatory.ops.usace.army.mil/customer-service-survey/

Final Permit Actions: https://permits.ops.usace.army.mil/

From: Rust, Jill
To: SD Regulatory Mailbox
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 1:30:00 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

Absolutely, I have attached. If you need anything else, please let me know!

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Brazeal, Alex <Alex.Brazeal@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 2:05 PM
To: Soiseth, Benjamin N CIV USARMY CENWO (USA) <Benjamin.N.Soiseth@usace.army.mil>; CENWO-OD-RND <cenwo-od-rnd@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Swiontek, Katie Jo. <knelson@otpco.com>; Rust, Jill <jill.rust@hdrinc.com>; Mayer, Michael <Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Request for Coordination Meeting - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Hello,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota (Project). The Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections. The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County.

Previously we have sent correspondence via mail and email but as our routing efforts have become more refined, we would like the opportunity to meet with your office to introduce the project in greater detail and share our plans for aquatic resource evaluation along the proposed route.

Is there a day and time that matches the below schedule where you and your team would have availability to meet and discuss the project?

5/28	10:00-12:00
5/29	9:00-10:00 or after 3:00
6/1	10:30-3:30
6/2	10:00-11:00 & 1:00-3:30
6/3	11:00-12:00 & 2:00-3:30
6/4	10:00-11:00
6/5	after 11:00

We look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Alex T. Brazeal
Environmental Project Manager
HDR
3231 Greensboro Drive, Suite 200
Bismarck, ND 58503
C 701.934.7830
D 701.557.9731

alex.brazeal@hdrinc.com
hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA)
To: Brazeal, Alex
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Rust, Jill; Mayer, Michael
Subject: RE: Request for Coordination Meeting - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026 11:19:40 AM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Morning Alex – June 4, 10:00-11:00 would work best for me. I'll be the Corps Regulatory POC for the project, both North Dakota and South Dakota segments. Once i have more details, likely after this meeting, I'll assign a file number to the project for future reference. I have that date/time blocked out to meet, will keep on look-out for a meeting invite. If any questions come up between now and then, please let me know. Thanks, Jason.

Jason Renschler – Sr. PM
Corps – N.D. Regulatory Office
Bismarck, ND
701-255-0015

From: Brazeal, Alex <alex.brazeal@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2026 9:21 AM
To: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA) <Jason.J.Renschler@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Swiontek, Katie Jo. <knelson@otpco.com>; Mayer, Michael <Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: Request for Coordination Meeting - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Jason,

Good morning! I want to take a moment and check-in to ask if you have had success getting a USACE project number; and if you have an answer on whether we will have two (one for each Dakota), or just one project number to reference as the project continues to develop.

Thank you,

Alex T. Brazeal
C 701.934.7830

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA)
To: Brazeal, Alex
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer
Subject: RE: Request for Coordination Meeting - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2026 10:25:00 AM

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Morning Alex – yes, it was determined that the overall project, both the N.D. and S.D. segments, will processed under one Corps Regulatory file number. The Corps Regulatory file number assigned to this project is: NWO-2026-163-BIS. This file number was included in a previous solicitation of view/scoping response letter this officed generated in March 2026. Thanks, Jason.

From: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2026 6:41 AM
To: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA) <Jason.J.Renschler@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Olson, Nicholas A. <nolson@otpco.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Brazeal, Alex <alex.brazeal@hdrinc.com>; Nelson, Katie Jo <knelson@otpco.com>; Mayer, Michael <michael.mayer@hdrinc.com>; Steingaard, Craig L. <csteingaard@otpco.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] NWO-2026-163-BIS

Re: Aquatic Resources Desktop Survey Report
Big Stone South-Hankinson-Bison Transmission Project

Jason,

Please find attached our Aquatic Resource Desktop Delineation Report for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Project. This report contains information for the South Dakota portion of the project only and is being used to develop our Facility Permit Application to the SD PSC. We will continue to coordinate with the Corp as we begin to make plans for field delineations and any jurisdictional determinations that may be needed.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

From: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA)
To: Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Cc: Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Brazeal, Alex; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Mayer, Michael; Steingaard, Craig L.
Subject: RE: NWO-2026-163-BIS
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2026 7:43:20 AM
Attachments: image001.png

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks Kevin – I'll add it to the administrative file for the project. Jason.

From: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2026 6:41 AM
To: Renschler, Jason J CIV USARMY CENWO (USA) <Jason.J.Renschler@usace.army.mil>
Cc: Olson, Nicholas A. <nolson@otpco.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Brazeal, Alex <alex.brazeal@hdrinc.com>; Nelson, Katie Jo <knelson@otpco.com>; Mayer, Michael <michael.mayer@hdrinc.com>; Steingaard, Craig L. <csteingaard@otpco.com>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] NWO-2026-163-BIS

Re: Aquatic Resources Desktop Survey Report
Big Stone South-Hankinson-Bison Transmission Project

Jason,

Please find attached our Aquatic Resource Desktop Delineation Report for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Project. This report contains information for the South Dakota portion of the project only and is being used to develop our Facility Permit Application to the SD PSC. We will continue to coordinate with the Corp as we begin to make plans for field delineations and any jurisdictional determinations that may be needed.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Request for Input and Notification of Facility.
01/27/2026	Email	BLM	HDR	Response from Request for Input and Notification of Facility Letter.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Wendy Warren
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Eastern Montana/Dakotas District Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, MT 59301

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Warren,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We are particularly interested in identifying any properties within or adjacent to the corridor that your agency owns or otherwise has an interest in. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your agency may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

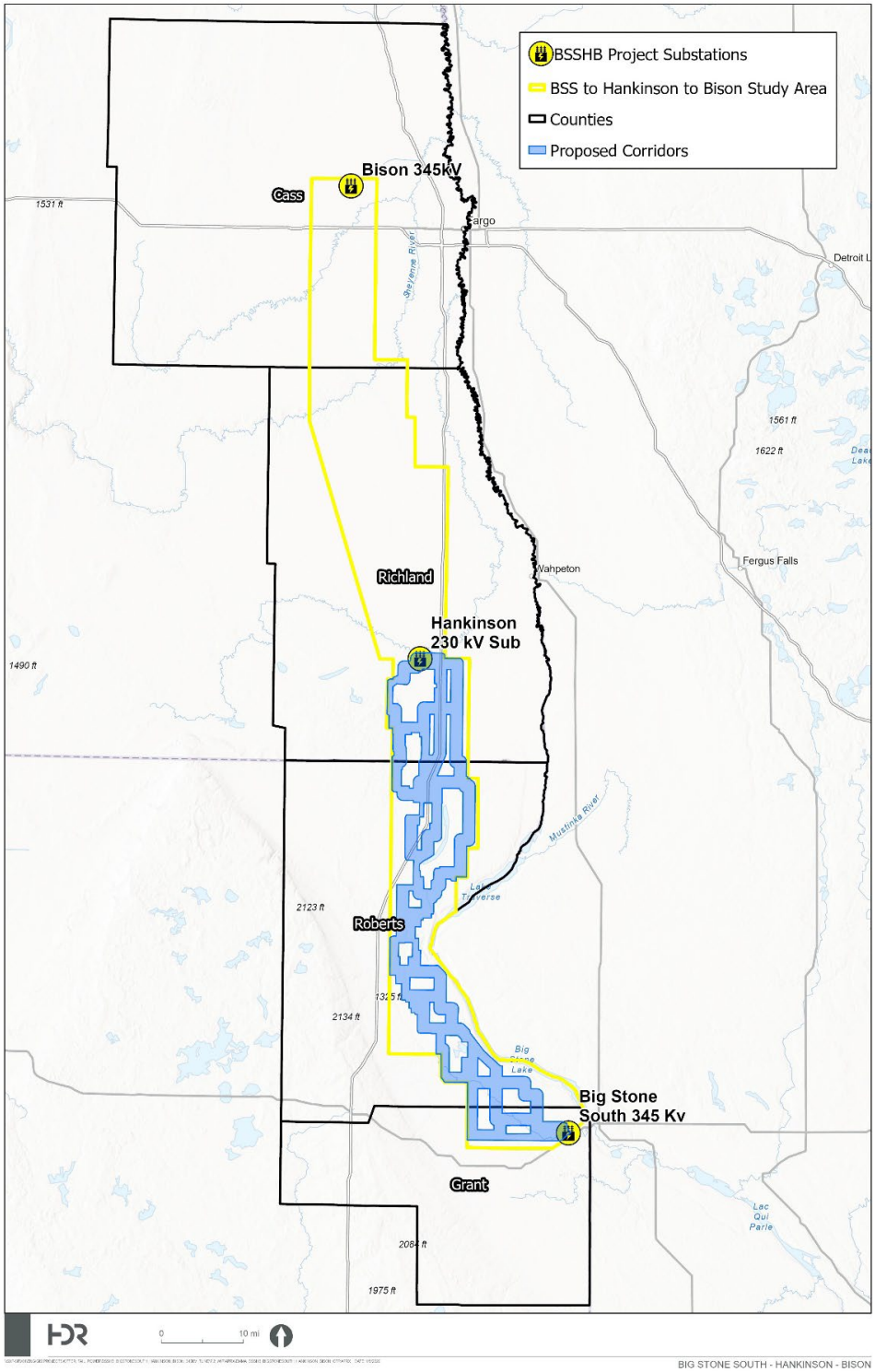
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principle, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Warren, Wendy M
To: Rust, Jill
Subject: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 12:26:42 PM

You don't often get email from wwarren@blm.gov. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms. Rust,

The BLM received a letter indicating opportunity for input on your project. There appears to be no BLM land as indicated in your proposed project location and the BLM has nothing to provide or any concerns at this time.

Wendy Warren
District Manager
Eastern Montana/Dakotas District BLM - Miles City, MT
406-233-2827

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Farm Service Agency

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	U.S. Department of Agriculture – Farm Service Agency	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Roger Chase
South Dakota State Executive Director
USDA Farm Service Agency
200 Fourth Street SW, Room 308
Huron, SD 57350

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Chase,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Your comments on farmland protection, soil conservation, and any other agricultural resource concerns would be greatly appreciated. If there are specific requirements under the Farmland Protection Policy Act or other USDA Farm Service Agency programs that apply to this Project, we ask for your guidance on compliance measures. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

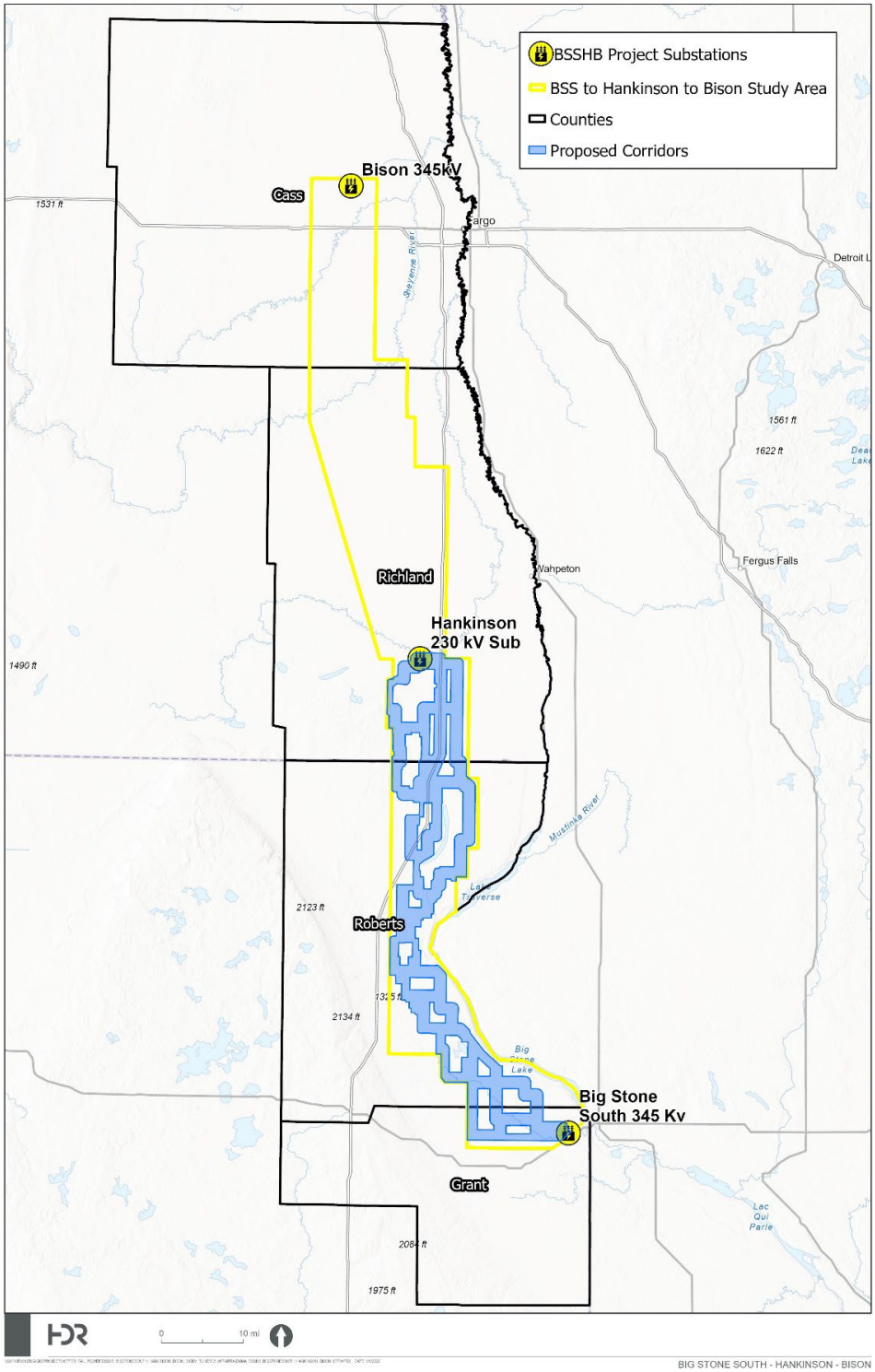
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

U.S. Department of Defense

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	HDR	Department of Defense (DOD)	Request for input and notification of the Facility

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We are particularly interested in identifying any properties within or adjacent to the corridor that your agency owns or otherwise has an interest in. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your agency may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

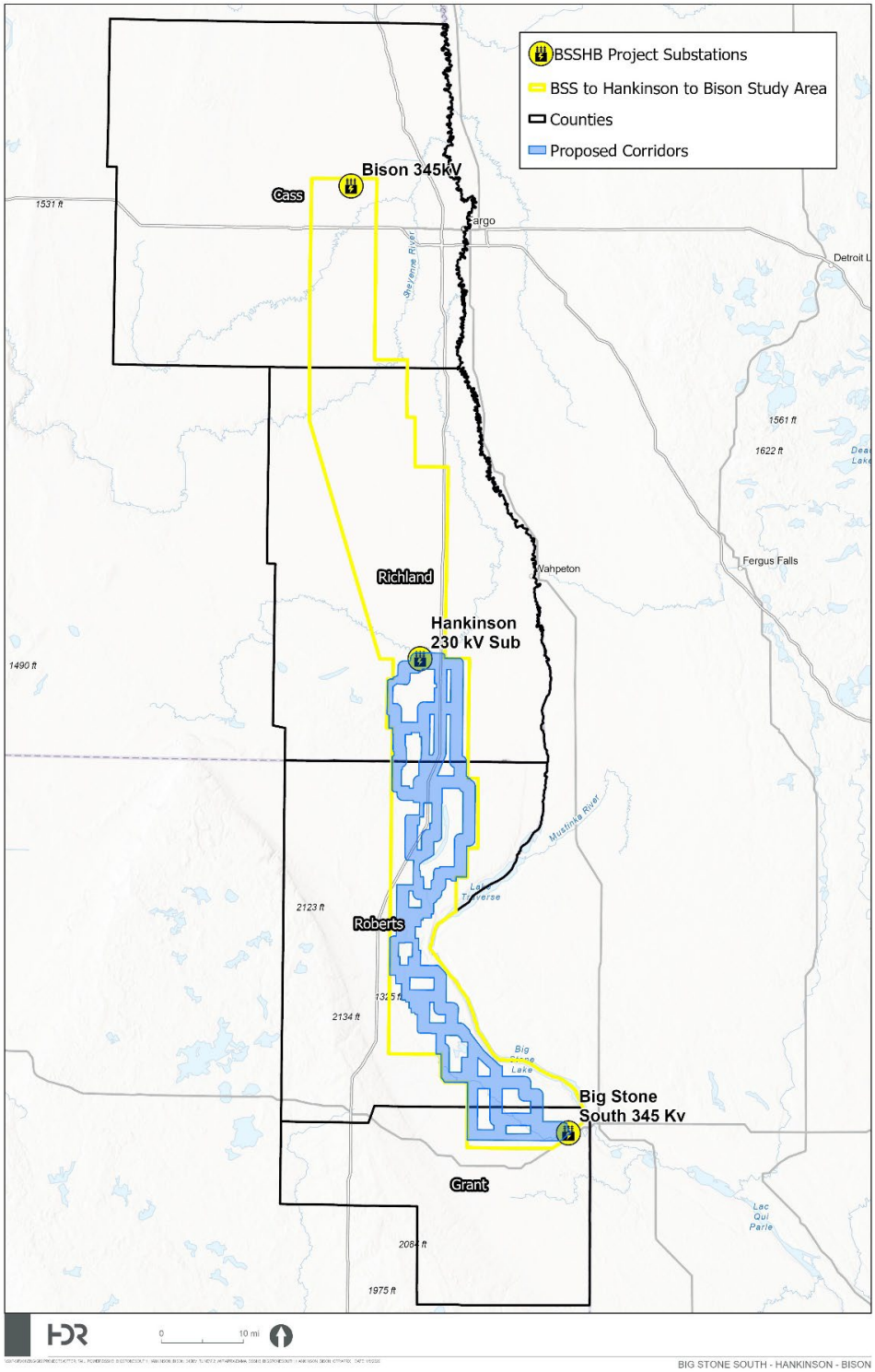
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Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Study Area Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
1531 ft
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230 kV Sub
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2123 ft
2134 ft
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
2084 ft
1975 ft
Lac
Qui
Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Cyrus Western
Administrator, Mountains and Plains Region (Region 8)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Western,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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We respectfully request your review of the preliminary Project information and Project map enclosed herewith. Your comments on any applicable federal environmental requirements, including those related to air and water quality, hazardous materials, and other regulatory considerations under EPA jurisdiction, would be greatly appreciated. If there are specific compliance measures or permitting requirements that apply to this Project, we ask for your guidance. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

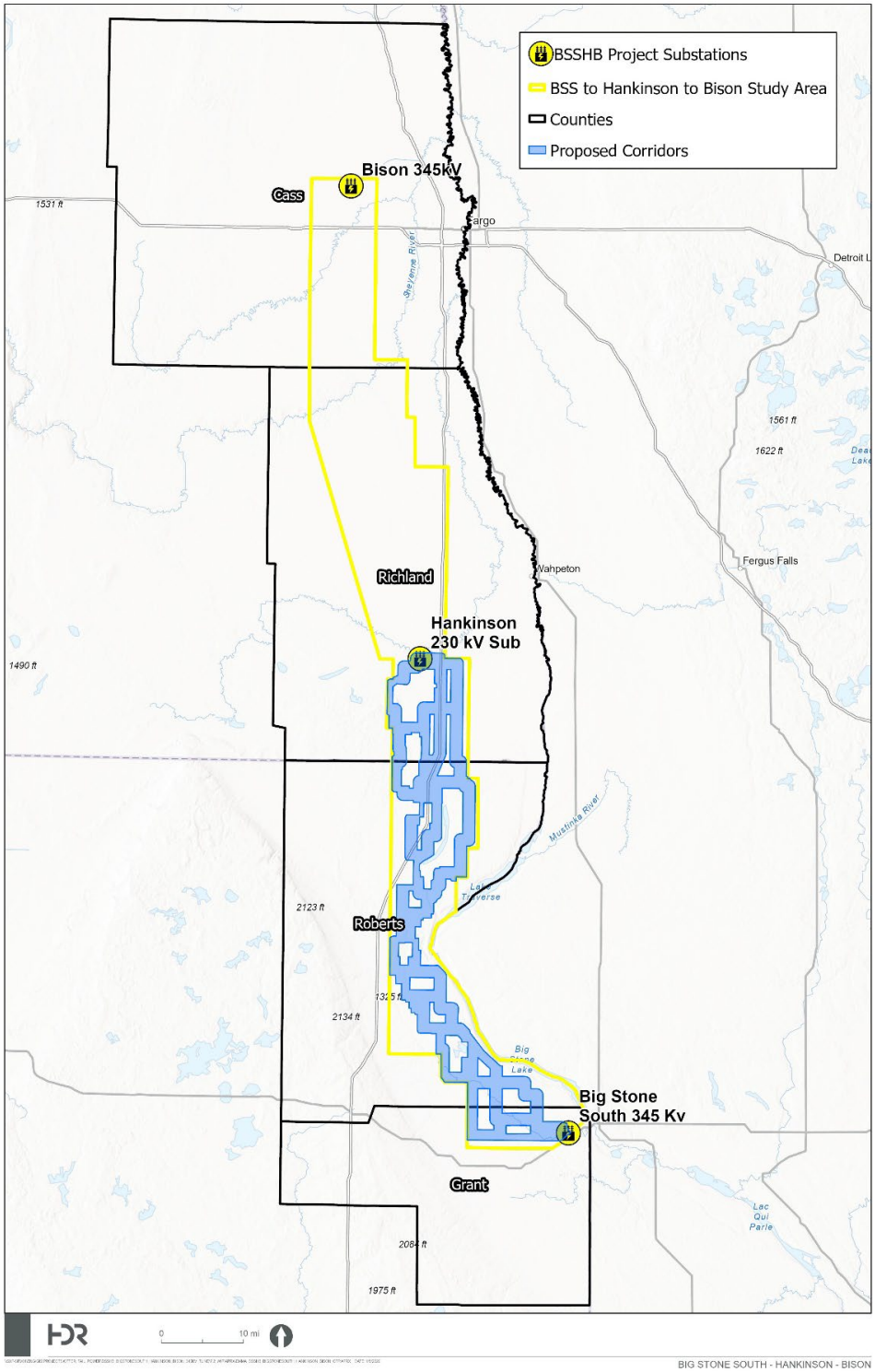
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Request for input and notification of facility
01/21/2026	Email	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	HDR	Request for corridor shapefiles and KMZs
01/21/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	Response to request for corridor shapefiles and KMZs
01/30/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	Request for meeting
02/9/2026	Email	USFWS, Tewaukon Wetland Management District	HDR	Request for shapefiles
02/9/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Tewaukon Wetland Management District	Response to request for shapefiles
02/13/2026	Email	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	HDR	Response to initial request for input and notification of facility
02/13/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	Request for shapefiles if they differ from the website given
02/13/2026	Email	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	HDR	USFWS confirmed shapefiles are the same from website
02/16/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	Follow-up on request for meeting
02/17/2025	Email	USFWS, Tewaukon Wetland Management District	HDR	USFWS land interests
02/17/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Tewaukon Wetland Management District	Response to USFWS land interests
02/19/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	Request for meeting to discuss desktop and field surveys

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
02/19/2026	Email	USFWS, South Dakota	HDR	Response to request for meeting and gave generalized guidance on routing
02/19/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	HDR sent draft survey methodology
02/23/2026	Email	USFWS, South Dakota	HDR	Requested that the meeting be pushed until more defined routes and requested to enter facility in IPaC
02/24/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	IPaC number was provided
03/18/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	Request for meeting to discuss narrowed routes
04/01/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and USFWS Waubay Wetland Management District		Facility Introduction and Discussion of USFWS Easements, Fee Lands, and Requirements
04/01/2026	Email	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	HDR	USFWS confirmed the main contact point is for the Wetland Management District
04/10/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, South Dakota	Request for meeting to discuss proposed route
04/10/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	Meeting summary
05/04/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and USFWS		Facility introduction and USFWS recommendations, concerns, and future coordination
05/13/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	Requested wetland shapefile boundaries
05/27/2026	Email	USFWS, Waubay Wetland Management District	HDR	Response to request for wetland shapefile boundaries
05/29/2026	Email	HDR	USFWS	Request for meeting
05/29/2026	Email	USFWS	HDR	Response to request for meeting

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Luke Toso, Acting South Dakota Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Dakota Ecological Services Field Office
420 South Garfield Avenue, Suite 400
Pierre, SD 57501-5408

Re: Request for Input – South Dakota Portion of Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Toso,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankison, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

Based on the IPaC resource list generated for the South Dakota segment, several federally listed species under USFWS jurisdiction may occur within or near the proposed corridors. These include the Northern Long-eared Bat (endangered), the Rufa Red Knot (threatened, with proposed critical habitat nearby), and the Dakota Skipper (threatened, with designated critical habitat overlapping portions of the project area). Other species of concern include the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid, Monarch Butterfly, Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee, and Western Regal Fritillary, which range from threatened to proposed endangered status. In addition, final critical habitat for both the Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling overlaps portions of the South Dakota study area. No designated critical habitat for the Northern Long-eared Bat or Monarch Butterfly occurs within this segment.

The Project will comply with the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. While IPaC indicates no eagle observations in the immediate South Dakota

Project Area, Otter Tail will implement avoidance and minimization measures consistent with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines and conduct preconstruction nest surveys as appropriate. Potential wetland impacts within South Dakota will be addressed through coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review the attached species list and project map and provide confirmation of species and critical habitat concerns specific to South Dakota and any recommended avoidance and minimization measures. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will be valuable in helping the Owners develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

Additionally, we request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards selecting a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:

Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

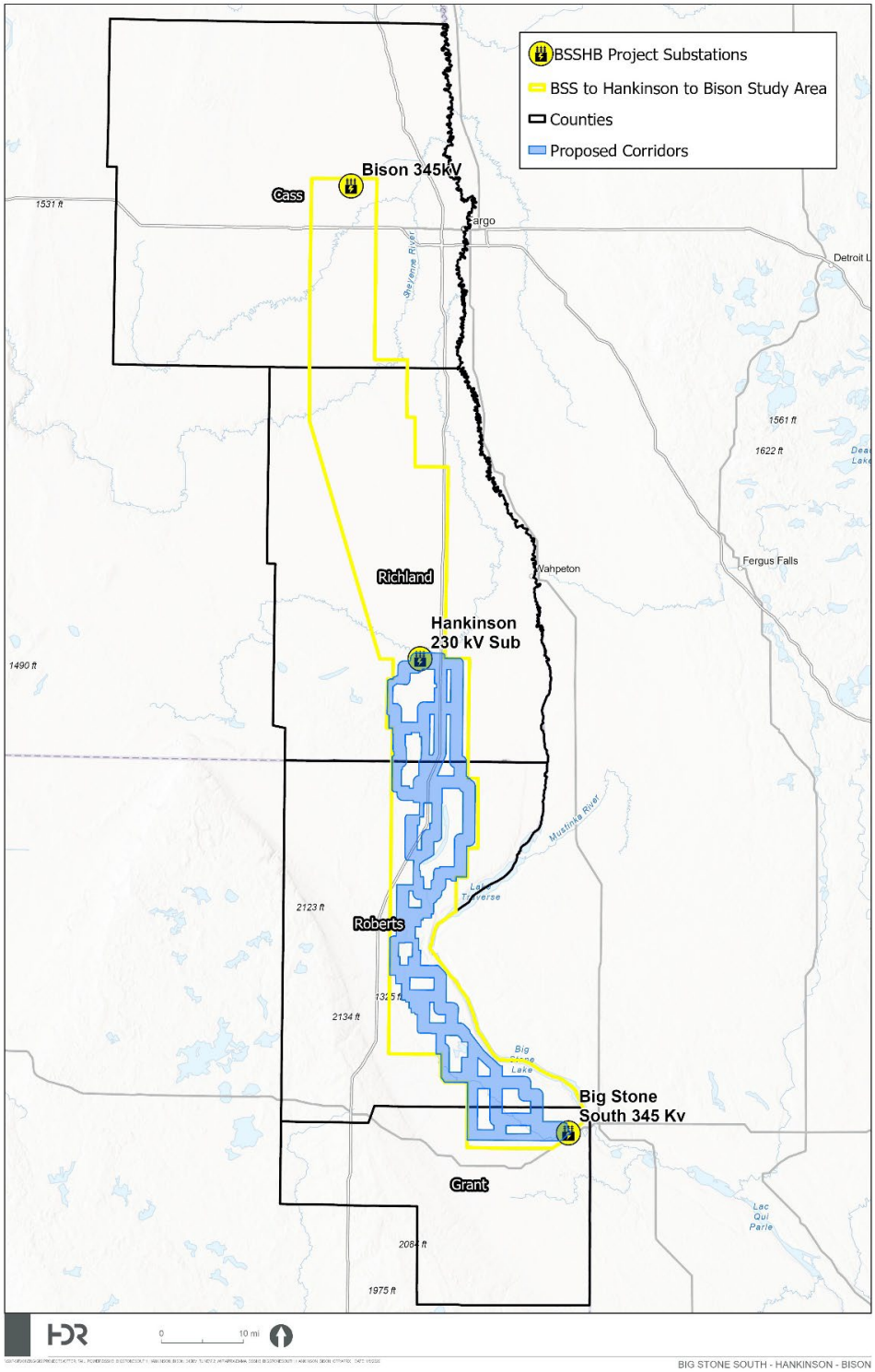
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosures:
IPaC Resource List (December 2025)
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Dowler, Jessica F
To: Rust, Jill
Subject: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 1:49:58 PM

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CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jill,

We received your request for information for the transmission line project that will be running from Big Stone to Hankinson. To properly respond to your request I will need a shapefile or kmz of the prospective routing corridors so I can check them against our fee title and easement lands. If you could please send them to me, I will start working on this so I get back to you by February 16. Thanks!

Jessica Dowler
Acting Station Manager
Waubay NWR & WMD
44401 134A St
Waubay, SD 57273
(605)989-2324 x5
(605)290-9141 cell

Wildlife Biologist
Western SD Complex
Sand Lake NWR
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, SD 57433

From: Rust, Jill
To: Dowler, Jessica F
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject: BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 3:17:13 PM
Attachments: BSSH_Corridors_20260121.zip

Hi Jessica – Thanks for reaching out on this! I have attached a zipped shapefile of the prospective corridors for you to review. Please let me know if you have any other needs or questions on this project.

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Rust, Jill
To: southdakotafieldoffice@fws.gov
Cc: Brazeal, Alex; Wandrie, Lucas; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 2:56:00 PM

Good afternoon – I'm working with Ottertail Power on their permitting efforts in South Dakota for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison project. We sent a letter earlier this month, but I wanted to follow up to also set up a virtual meeting to discuss the project and recommendations for species data collection. If this project has been assigned to any staff yet, would they mind reaching out to me to find a good time in the next month to meet and let me know if they would like further information before that meeting?

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

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From: Wilson, Eric D
To: Rust, Jill
Subject: Xcel Energy Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Monday, February 9, 2026 7:29:34 AM

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Hi Jill,

Would you be able to send me some shapefiles for your study area and proposed corridors for this project?

Thanks,

Eric Wilson
Wildlife Refuge Manager
Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge
Tewaukon Wetland Management District
9754 143 ½ Ave SE
Cayuga, ND 58013
O) 701-724-5702
C) 701-403-0041

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Wilson, Eric D
Cc:	Parker, Amber; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael
Subject:	RE: Xcel Energy Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date:	Monday, February 9, 2026 8:31:14 AM
Attachments:	[redacted].zip [redacted]0121.zip

Good morning, Eric – No problem, I have attached the shapefiles for both the study area and the corridors. Note that at this time we only have corridor options identified for the Big Stone South to Hankinson section of the project. Please let me know if you have any further question or need anything else.

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From:	Dowler, Jessica F
To:	Rust, Jill
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject:	Re: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date:	Friday, February 13, 2026 12:55:22 PM

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Jill and others,
I have looked over your proposed routes. I think in most areas you will be able to avoid USFWS (Service) interests in SD but there are some places where it will be difficult, if not impossible, to avoid them. I will attach some snapshots of the route in SD along with our fee title and easement lands shown. Our fee title land will be outlined in black, grassland easements in orange and wetland easements outlined in yellow with the protected wetlands within those easements drawn in pink or blue. We also some FMHA easements outlined in pink but I don't believe we have any of those in the proposed routes. If there are areas where you need a closer look, just let me know and I can send in a zoomed in map, or you can check out on our public website - FWS NWRS NFH Experience. This will show you where all the easements and fee title land is as well but it will not show the protected wetlands.

If the proposed lines are in the path of an existing utility easement, we need to determine when the utility easement was established to see if the utility easement predates our interests. If the utility easement was established previous to the Service interests, then you can install lines without formal federal coordination in the form of a Service permit. However, if the Service established interest predates the utility easement, then you will have to coordinate with our office to obtain a permit or work with our office to avoid our interests. Part of the permit process includes completing compliance documents for Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This consultation process can take months once we get it started but with a 2030 anticipated start date, that shouldn't be an issue.

If you have any other questions or need any more information, please let me know.
Thanks!

Jessica Dowler
Acting Station Manager
Waubay NWR & WMD
44401 134A St

From: Rust, Jill
To: Dowler, Jessica F
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date: Friday, February 13, 2026 1:07:52 PM

Jessica – I double checked with our GIS team and they have downloaded the data from the linked site, so as long as they are the same as what you provided, we should be good to go and no need for shapefiles!

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Rust, Jill
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 12:58 PM
To: 'Dowler, Jessica F' <jessica_dowler@fws.gov>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Parker, Amber <Amber.Parker@hdrinc.com>; Swiontek, Katie Jo. <kswiontek@otpco.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line

Thank you, Jessica! Are you able to provide shapefiles of these areas by chance? We can put them in our database we are using to help us decide on a more refined corridor and route. Once we know more, we'll be sure to have further coordination with your office.

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Dowler, Jessica F
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date: Friday, February 13, 2026 1:09:17 PM

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Perfect! Yes, they should be the same.

Jessica Dowler
Acting Station Manager
Waubay NWR & WMD
44401 134A St
Waubay, SD 57273
(605)989-2324 x5
(605)290-9141 cell

Wildlife Biologist
Western SD Complex
Sand Lake NWR
39650 Sand Lake Drive
Columbia, SD 57433

From: Rust, Jill
To: southdakotafieldoffice@fws.gov
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 11:18:00 AM

Good morning – I wanted to get this back on the radar for a possible meeting to discuss this project. Who should I reach out to directly to set something up?

Thanks!

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Wilson, Eric D
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Parker, Amber; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Xcel Energy Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 10:50:21 AM
Attachments: Xcel_study[redacted]ichland.zip

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Hi Jill,

I've attached the USFWS interests in my district within your study area. Most of them are wetland easements, however there are a few grass and waterfowl production areas included. If there are any of these areas that you will not be able to avoid with your route, please let me know.

Let me know if you have any questions, or would like any additional information.

Thanks,

Eric Wilson
Wildlife Refuge Manager
Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge
Tewaukon Wetland Management District
9754 143 ½ Ave SE
Cayuga, ND 58013
O) 701-724-5702
C) 701-403-0041

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Wilson, Eric D
Cc:	Parker, Amber; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael
Subject:	RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Xcel Energy Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project
Date:	Tuesday, February 17, 2026 12:11:11 PM

Thank you, Eric! We've added this information to our database as we continue to evaluate potential route corridors. Once we've refined our corridors, we'll re-coordinate with your office regarding potential for impacts.

Thanks!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Turner, Dylan R
To: Rust, Jill
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 8:12:06 AM

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Hi Jill!

I sent this message to Dan Kim in our office. He will be able to help you out.

Thnak you!

Dylan Turner
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Dakota Ecological Services
Phone: 605-280-6704

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Daniel_kim@fws.gov
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Vinson, George H.; Hanley, Jennifer; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Wandrie, Lucas; Brazeal, Alex
Subject:	Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date:	Thursday, February 19, 2026 11:11:37 AM

Hi Dan – Dylan Turner asked me to reach out directly to you regarding the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Electric Transmission project. We sent a letter last month, but I wanted to follow up to set up a virtual meeting to discuss the project and particularly, any recommendations that you may have for potential desktop and field surveys. Would you or have time in the next couple of weeks to meet and discuss the project? Please let me know if you would like further information.

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

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From: Kim, Daniel H <daniel_kim@fws.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 3:11 PM
To: Rust, Jill <Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project

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Jill,

How many people would be on the chat? Without a final corridor, it is hard to provide solid conservation recommendations. BUT, Co-locate lines when possible. If you create new transmission lines, follow APLIC guidelines to avoid electrocutions and line strikes. This means deploying diverters if the lines are in a waterfowl dense area, especially near rivers and larger lakes. Avoid grasslands whenever possible, especially native grasslands. Really avoid Dakota Skipper Critical habitat (you can find critical habitat description and shape file here https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1028). Avoid staging on native grasslands.

Please see the return correspondence for additional information.

Dan

Daniel H. Kim Ph.D.
Grassland Bird and Prairie Pollinator Biologist

Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
420 South Garfield Avenue, Suite 400
Pierre, South Dakota 57501
Cell Phone: (605)-280-6090
Fax: (605)-224-1416
Email: daniel_kim@fws.gov

From: Rust, Jill
To: Kim, Daniel H
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 5:06:53 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

Thanks, Dan – We'd have me, HDR's biologist and Ottertail representatives on a call. Overall, we wanted the opportunity to coordinate as early as possible and provide you additional details on the project. We'd appreciate your input about our approach to surveys. I've attached our proposed draft survey methodology, which we can update per your input. If you prefer to wait, we should have refined corridors in about 2-3 weeks at which time I can re-connect with you on setting something up.

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Kim, Daniel H
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 4:46:53 PM
Attachments: BSSHB_DRAFT_[redacted]_20260123.pdf

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Hello Jill,

I do prefer to wait for a more defined corridor. Also, the USFWS is tracking all aspects of the consultation process. As you requested guidance, we would like to tie that guidance to a project, which will require the project be entered into IPaC. Please let me know when the project is entered into IPaC. All you need to do is send me the IPaC project number. The Service can designate interactions as pre-project planning, basically information exchange that will facilitate future consultations.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Dan

Daniel H. Kim Ph.D.
Grassland Bird and Prairie Pollinator Biologist
Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
420 South Garfield Avenue, Suite 400
Pierre, South Dakota 57501
Cell Phone: (605)-280-6090
Fax: (605)-224-1416
Email: daniel_kim@fws.gov

From: Rust, Jill
To: Kim, Daniel H
Cc: Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 3:01:39 PM

Hi Dan – see below for the IPaC number for this project.

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Wandrie, Lucas <Lucas.Wandrie@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:57 PM
To: Rust, Jill <jill.rust@hdrinc.com>
Cc: Parker, Amber <Amber.Parker@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project

Hi Jill,

The Project's IPaC number is 2026-0037033.

Thanks,

Lucas Wandrie
M 612.496.8242

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From: Rust, Jill <Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 8:47 AM
To: Kim, Daniel H <daniel_kim@fws.gov>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Wandrie, Lucas <Lucas.Wandrie@hdrinc.com>; Parker, Amber <Amber.Parker@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project

Thanks, Dan! We'll plan to re-connect with you when we have a better idea of our corridor; we should have that within the next month. We'll also get the project into IPaC as soon as possible.

Thanks!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Dowler, Jessica F
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Hanley, Jennifer
Subject:	RE: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB Shapefiles RE: Big Stone to Bison Transmission Line
Date:	Wednesday, March 18, 2026 3:23:21 PM
Attachments:	[redacted]

Hi Jessica – We've narrowed down our routes to a few options within South Dakota. With a 500 foot buffer, some of these routes cross over USFWS easements or fee lands in a few areas. I was hoping our team could meet with your virtually next week to discuss the areas and walk through requirements/concerns if any route crosses over or if a structure is placed within the fee or easement lands. Our next step would be to use agency input to determine a preferred route.

I've attached a shapefile of the route buffers for your review. Would you have any time next week to meet via Teams to chat through these?

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From:	Hanan, Mick D
To:	Rust, Jill; Swanson, Christopher (Chris); Dowler, Jessica F; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Hanley, Jennifer; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Cc:	Vinson, George H.; Parker, Amber; Whitworth, Wade; Rohlck, Thomas R
Subject:	Re: Fw: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB - USFWS Easements/Fee Lands Waubay WMD
Date:	Wednesday, April 1, 2026 12:01:02 PM
Attachments:	Outlook-[redacted].png

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Hi all,
Thank you for the call today. I just wanted to follow up that Tom Rohlck will be your main point of contact for the Wetland Management District moving forward. I cc'd Tom in this as well. His email is thomas_rohlck@fws.gov and his phone number is 605-461-0755.
Thank you,
Mick

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Mick Hanan
Acting Deputy Project Leader
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Eastern & Western SD WMD Complexes
38741 291st Street
Lake Andes, SD 57356
Cell - (605) 481-2347
Phone - (605) 910-5534
mick_hanan@fws.gov
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Kim, Daniel H
Cc:	Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer
Subject:	RE: [EXTERNAL] Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Project
Date:	Friday, April 10, 2026 11:54:40 AM

Hi Dan – I am reaching back out to you as we are close to having our proposed route. I was hoping to get a meeting on the calendar for early May to discuss and I should have a shapefile for you by the end of this month. We can also update our IPaC with the new information if needed once we have it. We have also completed a desktop/windshield review of the area that we can share with you.

Just as an FYI, we have also met with the Waubay WMD (Tom Rohlck is our PoC) to discuss the project and we'll re-coordinate with them as well to discuss our final route.

Are there any days/times the week of May 4th that would work for you?

Thanks!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Scheidecker, Kevin J.
To: Dowler, Jessica F; Hanley, Jennifer; Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Swiontek,Katie Jo; Vinson, George H.; Parker, Amber; Whitworth, Wade; christopher_swanson@fws.gov; thomas_rohlck@fws.gov; mick_hanan@fws.gov; Rust, Jill
Cc: Bergquist, Holly M.
Subject: BSSHB-USFWS Meeting Summary
Date: Friday, April 10, 2026 10:36:54 AM
Attachments: [redacted]

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Good Morning,

Please find attached the meeting summary from last week's coordination meeting. Please make sure everything is accurate and reflects what was stated at the meeting.

Thank you and have a great weekend.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	thomas_rohlck@fws.gov
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer; Brazeal, Alex; Olson, Nicholas A.; Steingaard, Craig L.
Subject:	BSSHB - Routes and WMD Wetland Boundaries
Date:	Wednesday, May 13, 2026 12:36:00 PM
Attachments:	[redacted].zip [redacted].zip

Hi Tom – I am following up from the meeting that was held with the the Waubay WMD at the beginning of April. The Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison project team has selected a proposed route for the Big Stone South to Hankinson Section. I have attached zipped shapefiles of the proposed route and easement area for your review. We'll set up a follow up meeting with you in the coming weeks to discuss potential impacts to USFWS interests.

One thing we were hoping to receive are the wetland easement shapefiles so we have a clear understanding of the protected areas and which are pre/post 1976 boundaries. Is this something you are able to provide?

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Rohlck, Thomas R
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer; Brazeal, Alex; Olson, Nicholas A.; Steingaard, Craig L.
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] BSSHB - Routes and WMD Wetland Boundaries
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 10:08:10 AM
Attachments: [redacted].zip

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hey Jill!

I have attached the shapefile for the protected wetland areas. Let me know if it doesn't work.

Thanks!

Thomas Rohlck
Realty Specialist
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Huron Wetlands Acquisitions Office
Lake Andes, South Dakota
(605) 461-0755

From: Brazeal, Alex <Alex.Brazeal@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2026 8:42 AM
To: Toso, Luke B <luke_toso@fws.gov>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Swiontek, Katie Jo. <knelson@otpco.com>; Mayer, Michael <Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <Jennifer.Hanley@hdrinc.com>; Rust, Jill <jill.rust@hdrinc.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request for Coordination - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project.

Hello,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota (Project). The Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections. The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County.

Previously we have sent correspondence via mail and email and on May 4, 2026, we had the opportunity to meet with Daniel Kim to discuss the Project. In our meeting, Daniel mentioned that he may be a reviewer working with us for the entire project and not only the South Dakota portion. However, we agreed that it would be best to coordinate with you and your office as well.

Is there a day and time that matches the below schedule where you and your team would have availability to meet and discuss the project?

5/29	9:00-10:00 or after 3:00
6/1	10:30-3:30
6/2	10:00-11:00 & 1:00-3:30
6/3	11:00-12:00 & 2:00-3:30

6/4	10:00-11:00
6/5	after 11:00

Sincerely,

Alex T. Brazeal
Environmental Project Manager
HDR
3231 Greensboro Drive, Suite 200
Bismarck, ND 58503
C 701.934.7830
D 701.557.9731

alex.brazeal@hdrinc.com
hdrinc.com/follow-us

From:	Toso, Luke B
To:	Brazeal, Alex
Cc:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer; Rust, Jill
Subject:	Re: [EXTERNAL] Request for Coordination - Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project.
Date:	Friday, May 29, 2026 11:05:02 AM
Attachments:	Outlook-[illegible]s.png

You don't often get email from luke_toso@fws.gov. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Alex -

Thanks for the note, and appreciate being looped in. Dan would be lead for this work across both North and South Dakota, and his comments in SD should also apply to the ND portion. If necessary, I'm available to meet next Tuesday from 1-130 if there's a desire to discuss in more detail.

Thank you,

Luke

_____

Luke Toso
Acting Field Supervisor
ND/SD Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Text or Call: 720-793-6797

State Agencies

South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter.

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts
116 N Euclid Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Sir/Madam,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Your comments on soil conservation, erosion control, and any other resource protection measures that may be relevant would be greatly appreciated. If there are specific conservation practices or recommendations that should be considered during construction and restoration, we ask for your guidance. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

101 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

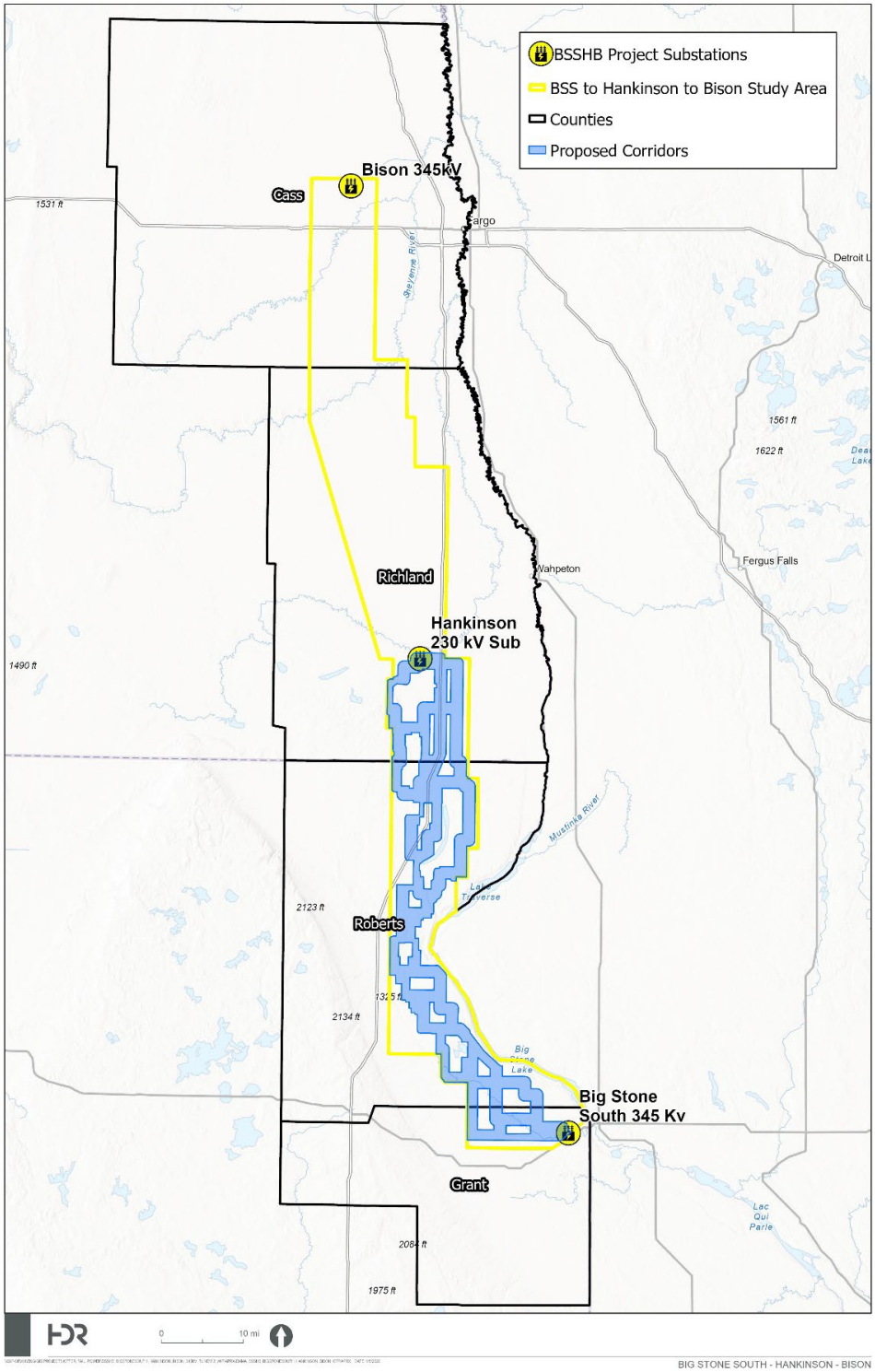
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
08/11/2026	Email	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	HDR	Response to Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter; No Record of Letter
08/11/2026	Email	HDR	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Resubmission of Facility Notification Letter and Request for Feedback
08/11/2026	Email	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	HDR	Request for Public Records Request Portal Submission
08/14/2026	Email	HDR	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Confirmation of Public Records Request Portal Submission
8/28/2026	Letter	South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources	HDR	Environmental Review – Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Hunter Roberts
Department Secretary
South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Additionally, we request your agency's input regarding permitting requirements and environmental considerations under your jurisdiction for the South Dakota portion of the Project. Specifically, we seek guidance on stormwater management and erosion control requirements, including compliance with the South Dakota General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities. Please advise if water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act will be required for any stream or wetland crossings, and whether additional coordination is necessary for activities in floodplain areas.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

We also request your recommendations for best practices to minimize impacts to wetlands, riparian areas, and other sensitive water resources during construction. If there are specific standards or guidelines for sediment and erosion control, revegetation, or dewatering activities that should be incorporated into the Project's plans, please provide those details. Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with state environmental regulations and avoids or minimizes impacts on aquatic habitats.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:

Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1011 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

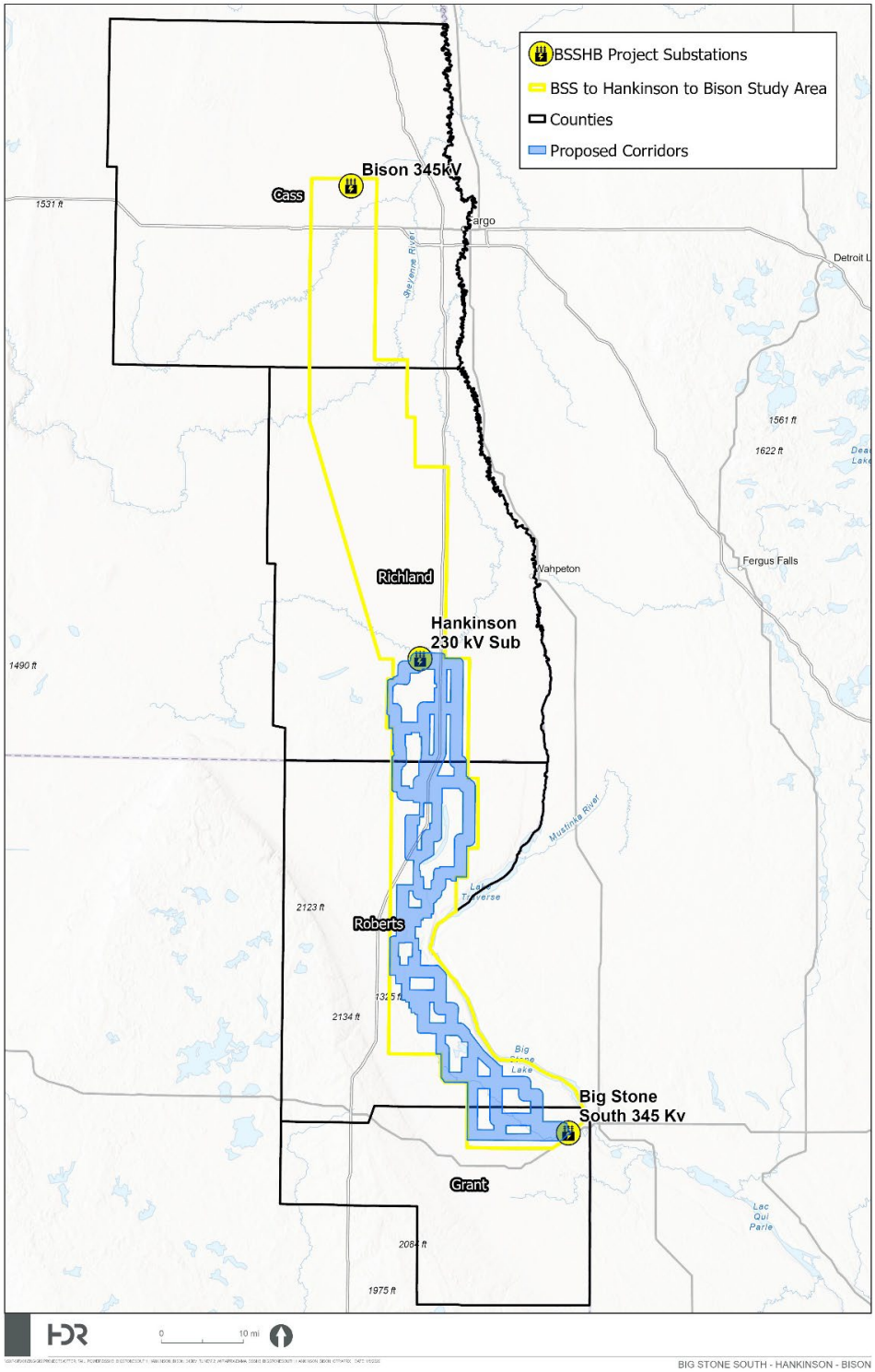
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Kruger, Sean <Sean.Kruger@state.sd.us>
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 1:25 PM
To: Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Smith, Jamison <Jamison.Smith@state.sd.us>
Subject: Environmental Assessment

You don't often get email from sean.kruger@state.sd.us. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jamison,

Jennifer indicated they sent a letter in January. They didn't get anything back from us, and I don't see any record of them in the folder. I think she going to send a new request.

Sean Kruger
Water Quality Standards
Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
523 E. Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501
danr.sd.gov

From: Hanley, Jennifer
To: Kruger, Sean; Smith, Jamison
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Raine, Katie; Brazeal, Alex; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject: RE: Environmental Assessment
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 1:33:15 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

Thank you for connecting Sean!

Jamison,

I've attached the letter that was sent on January 15, 2026. We are looking for feedback on a 345kV transmission line that will go from the Big Stone South substation in Big Stone City, SD to Hankinson, ND. Since this mailing we have narrowed down to a single route (see the Facility Location map attached) and plan to file our Facility Permit Application with the SD PUC in early September.

We were/are looking for feedback from SD DANR on the route. Please let me know if you like to set up a call to discuss the project or if you if you have any questions.

Jen

Jennifer Hanley, PE*
D 701.353.6139

hdrinc.com/follow-us

*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

From: Smith, Jamison
To: Hanley, Jennifer; Kruger, Sean
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Raine, Katie; Brazeal, Alex; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject: RE: Environmental Assessment
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2026 1:50:54 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jennifer,

Requests for comments on projects such as this must now be submitted through the Public Records Request Portal. I've attached a PowerPoint tutorial to walk you through the process, and you will need to create a 'my SD' account if you do not already have one. Once a request is made you will have to exit out of the confirmation page and re-access from the dashboard to add attachments. If the request is submitted this week, I should be able to send a response letter by the end of the month (our programs are usually given a few weeks to provide all of their responses). If you would like this request to be expedited, please let me know.

Here is a link to the records request page: https://www.sd.gov/cs?id=cs_guided_cat_item&sys_id=f7f939eddbd4b150b2fb93d4f39619c0

Thanks,
Jamison

Jamison Smith| Environmental Scientist I
Inspection, Compliance, and Remediation Program
SD Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
523 East Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501
Office: 605.773.3296
24-Hour Spill Reporting: 605.773.3231
Spills Reporting Info

From: Hanley, Jennifer
To: Smith, Jamison; Kruger, Sean
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Parker, Amber; Raine, Katie; Brazeal, Alex; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject: RE: Environmental Assessment
Date: Friday, August 14, 2026 4:38:22 PM

Jamison,

I have entered the project request and the reference number is PUBRECREQ0006583. Please let me know if you need any additional information. I could send shapefiles if that helps expedite your review.

Jen

Jennifer Hanley, PE*
D 701.353.6139

hdrinc.com/follow-us

*MN, ND, SD, MT and TX

DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE and NATURAL RESOURCES
JOE FOSS BUILDING
523 E CAPITOL AVE
PIERRE SD 57501-3182
danr.sd.gov

August 28, 2026

Jennifer Hanley
HDR Inc.
South Dakota Citizens Portal
Record Request Number: PUBRECREQ0006583

Subject: Environmental Review – Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Hanley:

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) has reviewed the above-referenced project for potential impacts to natural resources. Based on the information submitted, DANR has the following comments and permitting requirements.

Air Quality
This project is unlikely to have adverse impacts to air quality in the area. Should the parameters of the project change, please reach out to Tanner Turk at Tanner.Turk@state.sd.us or (605) 773-3151.

Drinking Water
This project will not have adverse environmental effects to drinking water in this area. Should the parameters of your project change, please reach out to Eric Fuehrer at (605) 394-6745 or Eric.Fuehrer@state.sd.us.

Forestry
Resource Conservation & Forestry (RCF) has reviewed your request and has the following comments:

Construction can have detrimental effects to surrounding trees if no protective measures are taken. Special construction measures may have to be taken to preserve and protect tree health by avoiding damage to tree roots, stems, or branches.

At a minimum the storage of equipment, machinery, or trucks under or against a tree should be avoided.

Barriers or sturdy fencing should be placed around trees that will remain on site following construction. Barriers should be placed a minimum of 1 foot radius from the

base of the tree's trunk for every 1 inch in diameter measured 4.5 feet above the ground. This will protect against soil compaction, alteration of the natural soil level under the live canopy and any damage from occurring to the trunk of the tree.

Eighty-five to ninety percent of a tree's root system lies within the top 6-12 inches of soil extending out one to one and a half times the height of the tree. Trenching through this critical root zone could severely destabilize a tree and adversely affect its health. Tunneling under or around the root system is much less damaging and encouraged.

Trees often do not die immediately following construction damage but can decline over several months/years. A tree that sustains damage meeting or exceeding the following limits must be removed and, if conditions allow, replaced to maintain the canopy and ecosystem benefits of tree cover:

a. The top or main stem of the tree is broken.
b. The live crown of the tree is reduced below 30 percent.
c. More than 1/3 of the circumference of a tree's main root system (a root 4 inches in diameter or larger) is injured such that the cambium layer (living tissue) is exposed.
d. More than 1/3 of tree's total root system is severed or torn.
e. More than 1/3 of the circumference of the trunk's cambium layer exposed.

For a list of suitable replacement trees or if you have any questions, please contact Amanda Morrison at Amanda.morrison@state.sd.us or (605) 394-2279.

Groundwater
This project is unlikely to have adverse effects on ground water quality. Should the parameters of your project change, please reach out to Matt Hicks at (605) 773-5337 or Matt.Hicks@state.sd.us. If this project impacts tribal lands, DANR recommends you also consult the tribe's environmental coordinator for any additional conditions.

Solid and Hazardous Waste
It appears, based on the information provided, there is no solid waste information available for the described project area. If any solid waste is generated that will not be reused in some beneficial manner, it must be disposed or managed at a permitted solid waste facility. Regional landfills able to accept all solid waste generated are listed on our website: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/bd93e05a265c449d99a571e1d19c82d4. Only Regional landfills are permitted to accept all wastes generated. If you have any questions, please contact Waste Management at (605) 773-3153.

It is not expected that any hazardous wastes sites will be encountered within the vicinity of your project area. However, if road construction is planned for areas within a city or town, the contractor should contact this Department prior to construction. Should any hazardous waste be generated during the implementation of this project, the generator must abide by all applicable hazardous waste regulations.

To determine whether your project may generate hazardous waste, visit: https://www.epa.gov/hwgenerators/ managing-your-hazardous-waste-guide-small-businesses. If you have any questions, please contact the Waste Management Program at (605) 773-3153.

Demolition or renovation of a building structure may be subject to the South Dakota asbestos requirements. If the scope of the project changes to include demolition or renovation, please contact the Asbestos Program at DANR.Asbestos@state.sd.us or (605) 773-3153.

Surface Water

All surface waters are considered waters of the State and are protected under ARSD 74:51:01. This includes all rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands regardless of federal waters of the United States jurisdictional status. Any project proposing to impact, alter, use, or discharge any substance including fill materials must contact the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources prior to engaging in the proposed activity.

The project work will cross the North Fork of the Whetstone River and the Jorgensen River. These waterbodies are classified by the South Dakota Surface Water Quality Standards and Uses Assigned to Streams for the following beneficial uses: (6) Warmwater marginal fish life propagation waters; (8) Limited contact recreation waters; (9) Fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering waters; and 10) Irrigation waters. Because of these beneficial uses, special construction measures may have to be taken to ensure that the 30-day average total suspended solids criterion of 150 mg/L and the daily maximum total suspended solids criterion of 263 mg/L are not violated.

The project work will cross the Little Minnesota River. This waterbody is classified by the South Dakota Surface Water Quality Standards and Uses Assigned to Streams for the following beneficial uses: (5) Warmwater semipermanent fish life propagation waters; (8) Limited contact recreation waters; (9) Fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering waters; and (10) Irrigation waters. Because of these beneficial uses, special construction measures may have to be taken to ensure that the 30-day average total suspended solids criterion of 90 mg/L and the daily maximum total suspended solids criterion of 158 mg/L are not violated.

The project work will cross a Big Slough. Ecological assessment work indicates that this waterbody supports beneficial uses under South Dakota Surface Water Quality Standards and Uses Assigned to Streams for: (6) Warmwater marginal fish life propagation waters; (7) Immersion recreation waters; (8) Limited contact recreation waters; (9) Fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering waters; and (10) Irrigation waters. Because of these beneficial uses, special construction measures may have to be taken to ensure that the 30-day average total suspended solids criterion of 150 mg/L and the daily maximum total suspended solids criterion of 263 mg/L are not violated.

If this project impacts tribal lands, EPA Region 8 may require a NPDES permit for stormwater discharges from construction activities (1 acre or larger) or if any construction dewatering should occur; contact EPA Region 8 NPDES Staff. DANR recommends you contact the proper tribal authorities for any additional conditions.

At a minimum and regardless of project size, appropriate erosion and sediment control measures must be installed to control the discharge of pollutants from the construction site. Any construction activity that disturbs an area of one or more acres of land must have authorization under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activities. A Surface Water Discharge permit may be required if any construction dewatering should occur because of this project. Contact the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources for additional information or guidance at 1-800-SDSTORM +1(800) 737-8676 or https://danr.sd.gov/OfficeOfWater/SurfaceWaterQuality/default.aspx.

The discharge of pollutants from any source, including indiscriminate use of fill material, may not cause destruction or impairment except where authorized under Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. Please contact the United States Army Corps of Engineers for more information (605) 224-8531. Additionally, please refer to South Dakota's Statewide 401 Water Quality Certification for conditions to Nationwide Permits when crossing flowing or classified waters. https://danr.sd.gov/OfficeOfWater/SurfaceWaterQuality/docs/DANR_SD_401_Statewide_Certification.pdf

Mineral Development

The Minerals, Mining, and Superfund Program maintains databases of licensed construction aggregate mine sites and permitted oil & gas well sites. To find the location of construction aggregate mine sites and access related data, please visit https://sdgis.sd.gov/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=4096d702a381439abb9f42bec307f6bc.

To find the location of permitted oil & gas wells and access related data, please visit https://usd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e54c5063b19c49629560a86a7be2eb3d.

To access the locations of or information pertaining to permitted mining operations, regulated mineral exploration areas, or to review the department's list of known historic abandoned mine sites, please contact Roberta Hudson at 605-773-4201 or at Roberta.Hudson@state.sd.us.

Tanks and Spills

The Inspection, Compliance, and Remediation Program (ICRP) maintains a database of registered storage tanks and spills/environmental events, including petroleum and chemical releases in South Dakota. For information about currently known petroleum storage tanks and spills/environmental events at or surrounding your project area (including PDF copies of case files), please review our online database:

https://apps.sd.gov/nr42interactivemap. If you have specific questions about a particular case file, feel free to contact this office by calling (605) 773-3296. However, if your question pertains to a spill/environmental event labeled as a Superfund, CERCLIS, FUD, or National Guard case, direct your questions to DANR Superfund Program staff at (605) 773-4201.

ICRP recommends you recheck the online database as your project progresses, to ensure you have up to date information about new spills/environmental events or newly installed registered tanks at or near your project area. While we do our best to maintain accurate information about spills/environmental events and registered tanks, in some cases the location information provided to us may have been inaccurate. For this reason, if contamination is encountered or if a spill occurs during onsite construction activity, that contamination or spill must be reported to DANR at (605) 773-3296 (605-773-3231 after hours). Contaminated soil that has been excavated should be segregated from clean soil and sampled to determine disposal requirements.

Please be aware if this project impacts property subject to tribal jurisdiction, state records may be incomplete. DANR recommends that you contact the proper tribal authorities for additional information. Thank you for providing DANR the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions regarding the information provided, please contact me at Jamison.Smith@state.sd.us or (605) 773-3296.

Sincerely,

Jamison Smith

Jamison Smith
Environmental Scientist I
SD DANR
Phone: (605) 773-3296
Email: Jamison.Smith@state.sd.us

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGFP)	Request for input and notification of the Facility
01/30/2026	Email	HDR	SDGFP	Meeting request and ERT information questions
02/03/2026	Email	SDGFP	HDR	Response to meeting request and SDGFP requests that the Project be put into ERT
02/05/2026	Email	HDR	SDGFP	Meeting request timeframe
02/05/2026	Email	SDGFP	HDR	Meeting request confirmed
02/18/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and SDGFP		Facility introduction and approach, environmental review, and environmental considerations
03/26/2026	Email	HDR	SDGFP	Follow-up meeting request
03/27/2026	Email	SDGFP	HDR	Response to follow-up meeting request
03/27/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	SDGFP	Confirmation of time for follow-up meeting
04/30/2026	Email	HDR	SDGFP	Shapefiles, KMZs, and meeting agenda sent for review before meeting
05/01/2026	Email	SDGFP	HDR	Response to shapefiles, KMZs, and agenda
05/04/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and SDGFP		Facility update, potential species and habitat considerations
05/13/2026	Email	HDR	SDGFP	Request for survey recommendations for Leks
05/13/2026	Email	SDGFP	HDR	Response to survey recommendations for Leks
06/12/2026	Email/ Letter	SDGFP	HDR	Official response letter
07/16/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	SDGFP	State and Federally Protected Species Habitat Assessment report for SD

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Mandy Pearson, Environmental Review Senior Biologist
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – South Dakota Portion of Big Stone South to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Pearson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Study Area identified within the South Dakota portion of the project to help identify opportunities or constraints as we move toward selecting a route. We are particularly interested in the list noted below and would also appreciate information on any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the Study Area to assist our siting analysis and studies.

- Wetland Locations
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Refuges
- SDGFP Game Production Areas
- SDGFP Recreation Areas
- Parks
- Land and Water Conservation Funded Properties
- Aquatic Invasive Species

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Please advise if there are specific recommendations for minimizing impacts to wildlife during construction, including measures to avoid disturbance to nesting birds and raptors, and any requirements for coordination related to Game Production Areas or other state-managed or owned lands. If SDGFP has guidelines for siting transmission infrastructure to reduce fragmentation of grasslands or avoid wetland complexes, we request that you share those resources. We also welcome any recommendations for post-construction restoration, including seed mixes and revegetation practices that promote native species and discourage invasive plants.

Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with state wildlife conservation objectives and minimizes impacts on sensitive resources. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. We understand that SDGFP offers an online Environmental Review Tool (ERT) for project planning and would appreciate confirmation of the process for submitting project information through that system.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jill Rust, CEP
Environmental Section Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1011 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Phone: 605-782-8124
Email: Jill.Rust@hdrinc.com

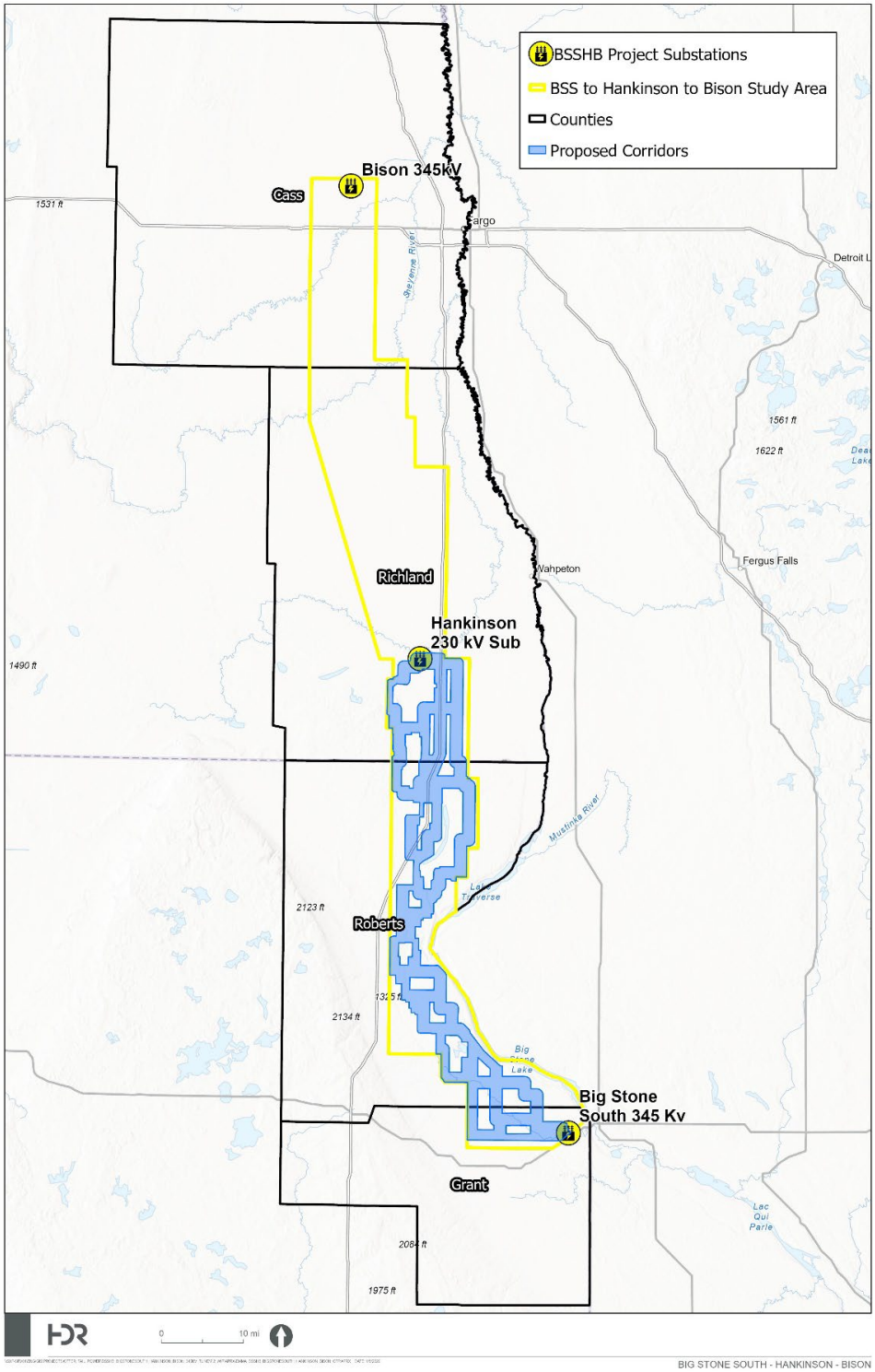
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	mandy.pearson@state.sd.us
Cc:	Parker, Amber; Bade, Lucas; Brazeal, Alex; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject:	Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date:	Friday, January 30, 2026 3:18:43 PM

Hi Mandy - I'm working with Ottertail Power on their permitting efforts in South Dakota for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison project. We sent a letter earlier this month, but I wanted to follow up to see if we should also provide information in the ERT? I also would like to set up a virtual meeting to discuss the project and particularly, any recommendations the SDGFP may have for data collection. Would you or someone on your staff have time in the next month to meet and discuss the project? Please let me know if you would like further information.

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Pearson, Mandy
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Parker, Amber; Bade, Lucas; Brazeal, Alex; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 1:56:01 PM
Attachments: image001.png

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Hi Jill,

Yes, if you could also enter this project into ERT, that would be very helpful. It would allow me to identify any rare species occurrences or state lands within the project area so I can better recommend appropriate survey efforts. I would be very interested in meeting to discuss this further. Aside from next week, I have good availability for the remainder of the month. Let me know if there is a particular week that works best for you and I can relay my availability.

Thanks,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Wildlife Diversity and Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From: Rust, Jill
To: Pearson, Mandy
Cc: Parker, Amber; Bade, Lucas; Brazeal, Alex; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026 4:10:29 PM
Attachments: image001.png

Hi Mandy – We've uploaded everything into the ERT for this project. Please let me know if you need anything else to review the project. As far as time slots to meet, do any of these dates and times work for you? I'm thinking an hour should suffice.

All times are Central Time Zone
2/16: 10:30-12:00
2/17: 9:30 – 11:00, 1:00-3:00
2/18: 11:00-1:30, 2:00-3:30
2/23: 10:30 – 2:00
2/24: 9:00-11:00
2/26: 11:00-1:00

Thanks!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Pearson, Mandy
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Parker, Amber; Bade, Lucas; Brazeal, Alex; Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Subject: RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison - Meeting Request
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026 5:27:55 PM
Attachments: ~~image001.png~~

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Hi Jill,

Thanks for submitting that into ERT. I will look at that prior to our meeting. Any of the times I highlighted below work for me.

All times are Central Time Zone
2/16: 10:30-12:00
2/17: 9:30 – 11:00, 1:00-3:00
2/18: 11:00-1:30, 2:00-3:30
2/23: 10:30 – 2:00
2/24: 9:00-11:00
2/26: 11:00-1:00

Thanks,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Wildlife Diversity and Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From:	Rust, Jill
To:	Pearson, Mandy
Cc:	Parker, Amber; Mayer, Michael; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject:	BSSHB - Follow-up Meeting
Date:	Thursday, March 26, 2026 2:49:35 PM

Hi Mandy – we're close to having our identified route for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison project. I was hoping to get something on your calendar to meet and discuss specifics at the end of April or beginning of May. Would any day April 30 through May 8th work for you? If so, we'll get something on the calendar.

Thank you!

Jill

Jill Rust, MS, CEP
Dakotas & Wyoming Environmental Section Manager

HDR
101 S. Phillips Avenue, Suite 401
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500
jill.rust@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Pearson, Mandy
To: Rust, Jill
Cc: Parker, Amber; Mayer, Michael; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject: RE: BSSHB - Follow-up Meeting
Date: Friday, March 27, 2026 1:43:31 PM
Attachments: [redacted].png

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Hi Jill,

Right now I am free anytime on April 30, May 1st, and May 4th, if any of those days work for you all.

Thanks,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Wildlife Diversity and Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From: Scheidecker, Kevin J.
To: Pearson, Mandy; Rust, Jill
Cc: Parker, Amber; Mayer, Michael; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas
Subject: Re: BSSHB - Follow-up Meeting
Date: Friday, March 27, 2026 1:49:12 PM
Attachments: image001.png
Outlook-cid_image002.png

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Thanks, Mandy. Jill, OTP is available from 11:00-3:30 on May 1 and 10:30 to 3:30 on May 4th.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

From: Pearson, Mandy <Mandy.Pearson@state.sd.us>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 1:43 PM
To: Rust, Jill <jill.rust@hdrinc.com>
Cc: Parker, Amber <Amber.Parker@hdrinc.com>; Mayer, Michael <Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com>; Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Hanley, Jennifer <jennifer.hanley@hdrinc.com>; Wandrie, Lucas <Lucas.Wandrie@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: BSSHB - Follow-up Meeting

This Message Is From an External Sender
This message came from outside your organization.

Hi Jill,

Right now I am free anytime on April 30, May 1st, and May 4th, if any of those days work for you all.

Thanks,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Wildlife Diversity and Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From: Rust, Jill
To: Pearson, Mandy; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Cc: Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber
Subject: FW: BSSHB Follow Up Meeting - OTP/SDGFP
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026 5:04:16 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

Hi Mandy – The project team has narrowed down the BSSHB to one preferred route. I am attaching a shapefile and kmz file of the route and 150-ft corridor in case you want to review prior to our meeting on Monday. I am also attaching the agenda for that meeting. Looking forward to chatting with you!

Jill

Jill Rust MS, CEP
D 605.782.8124 **M** 605.690.3500

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From: Pearson, Mandy
To: Rust, Jill; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Cc: Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas; Parker, Amber
Subject: RE: BSSHB Follow Up Meeting - OTP/SDGFP
Date: Friday, May 1, 2026 11:37:19 AM
Attachments: [redacted]

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Hi Jill,

Thank you so much. I will review this before our meeting. I'm looking forward to meeting with you all again.

Have a great weekend,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Nongame Conservation & Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

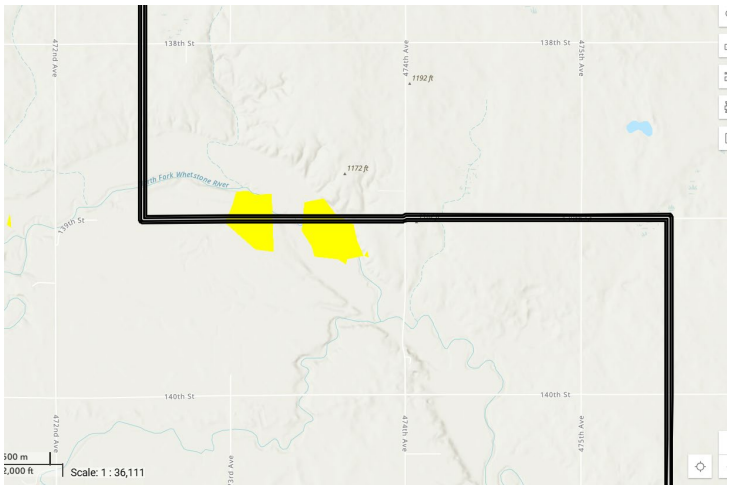
From:	Wandrie, Lucas
To:	Pearson, Mandy
Cc:	Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Rust, Jill
Subject:	RE: BSSHB Follow Up Meeting - OTP/SDGFP
Date:	Wednesday, May 13, 2026 11:46:57 AM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png image003.png

Hello Mandy,

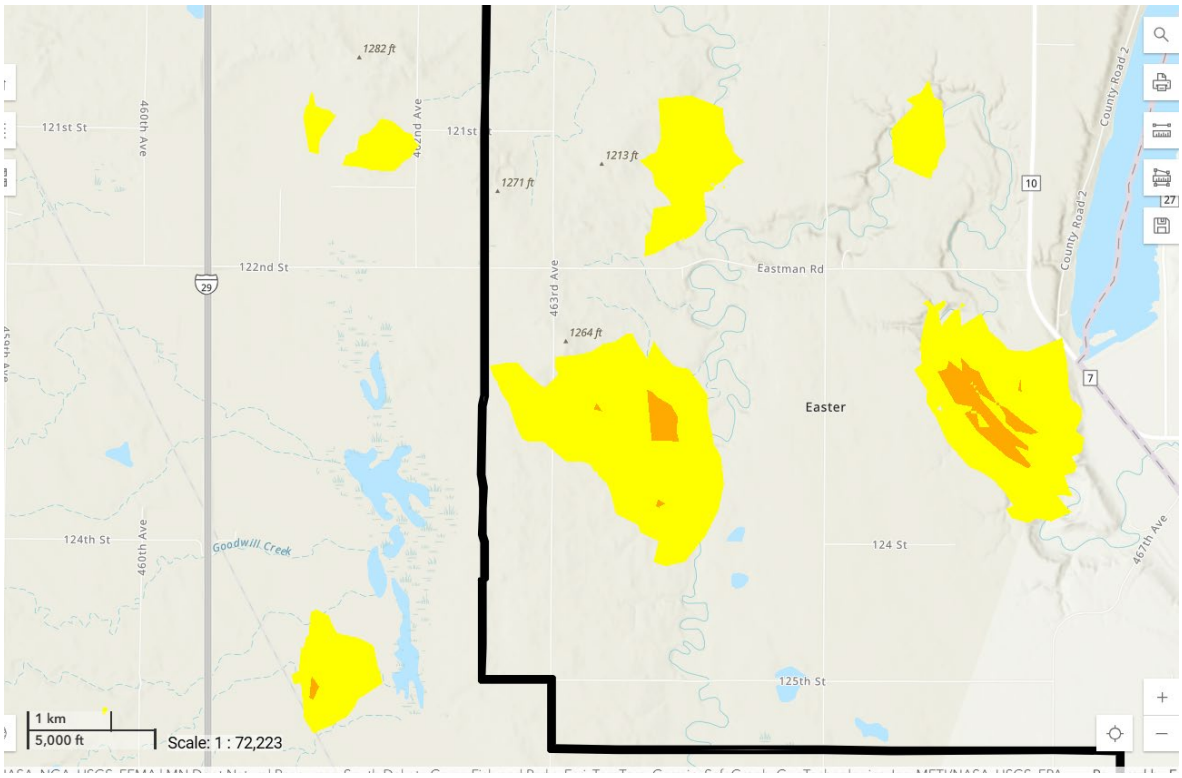
I reviewed the overlap of the sharp-tailed grouse prioritization areas and the proposed route. We are outside of the priority greater prairie chicken area for SD.

There are 2 areas that are crossed by the route and a couple that are close to the ROW (see screenshots below). All the yellow areas are Tier 3 or low priority areas for immediate conservation action. As such, will lek surveys be required/recommended?

Route crosses:



ROW is close:



Thanks,

Lucas Wandrie
M 612.496.8242

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From:	Pearson, Mandy
To:	Wandrie, Lucas
Cc:	Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Rust, Jill
Subject:	RE: BSSHB Follow Up Meeting - OTP/SDGFP
Date:	Wednesday, May 13, 2026 1:51:08 PM
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png image003.png

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Hi Lucas,

Since you are outside of the core area, grouse surveys won't be needed. We just ask that you try to minimize intersecting intact grasslands wherever possible, which you have been doing. Both areas you outlined below aren't an issue. I appreciate you checking. I will work on getting any further recommendations I have onto official letterhead and get that over to you asap.

Thanks,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Nongame Conservation & Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From: Pearson, Mandy
To: Wandrie, Lucas; Rust, Jill
Cc: Mayer, Michael; Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Parker, Amber; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Rust, Jill
Subject: RE: BSSHB Follow Up Meeting - OTP/SDGFP
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 3:30:35 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

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Hi everyone,

Attached is the response letter for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Line project. I addressed it to Jill but please let me know if I should change that. Also, let me know if you have any further questions.

Best,

Mandy Pearson | *Senior Wildlife Biologist*
Nongame Conservation & Environmental Review
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks
4130 Adventure Trail | Rapid City, SD 57702
605.394.6052 | mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
GAME, FISH AND PARKS
523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE | PIERRE, SD 57501

June 12, 2026

Jill Rust, CEP
HDR Engineering, Inc. on behalf of Otter Tail Power Company
1011 S Phillips Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

RE: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Line

Dear Jill,

Thank you for contacting the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) regarding the proposed construction of a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, and terminating at the Bison Substation.

A search of the South Dakota Nongame Conservation Database, formerly the South Dakota Natural Heritage Database, was conducted for the above-referenced project by project staff on 2/4/2026. This database tracks species at risk, including those legally designated as threatened or endangered, as well as rare species. Rare species are those with restricted distributions, specialized habitat requirements, declining populations, or populations that are isolated due to geographic or climatic factors. Please note that many areas of South Dakota have not been surveyed for rare or protected species, and the absence of a species from the database does not preclude its presence.

Additionally, GFP met with staff from HDR Engineering, Inc. and Otter Tail Power Company on 5/4/2026 and 2/18/2026 to discuss mitigation techniques and survey recommendations.

Based on the information provided from these meetings and from the database search, no significant impacts to fish and wildlife resources are anticipated. We expect this determination to remain unchanged provided the following recommendations are considered during project planning and construction:

Fish Recommendations

- If any work is proposed within streams, or if fish passage could be blocked during construction, fish surveys should be completed beforehand and fish should be relocated from affected areas as necessary. Please coordinate with GFP if this is needed.

Wetland and Riparian Habitat Recommendations

- Avoid placing towers within streams or riparian areas adjacent to streams.
- Disturbance to riparian and wetland areas should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- If riparian vegetation is removed, it should be quantified and replaced on-site. Seeding with native species should occur immediately following construction to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
- Power structures located within one-half mile to one mile of a water body should include perch and nest deterrents, as well as effective insulating covers over energized equipment. Line markers to reduce avian collisions should be considered in areas known for bird migration or travel corridors, particularly near wetlands and river crossings.

Grassland Habitat and General Habitat Recommendations

- Avoid further fragmentation of native prairie and intact grassland habitat. There are several high-quality grassland areas within the project area. Transmission lines should be routed outside intact grasslands whenever possible and placed within existing rights-of-way (ROWs), this will also help reduce the impact on rare plant species.
- Regal Fritillaries (*Argynnis idalia*; federally threatened) were identified close to your project area. We recommend coordinating with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine the best mitigation strategies.
- A site-specific sediment and erosion control plan should be developed for the project.
- Any disturbed grassland habitat should be reseeded with native species following construction.

Grouse Recommendations

- To minimize disturbance to lekking grouse, avoid construction activities adjacent to known leks from March 25 through April 30 when feasible. If construction must occur during this period, activities should begin after 10:00 a.m. when possible.

Migratory Bird and Nesting Recommendations

- The Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) published "Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines" and "Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines: State of the Art" in 2012. We recommend following applicable APLIC guidance.
- If tree clearing is necessary, particularly between May 1 and August 1, trees should be inspected for active bird nests prior to removal. Active nests of state-protected birds (SDCL 41-11-10) and federally protected birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

(MBTA) may not be moved, disturbed, or destroyed until nesting activity has concluded (SDCL 41-11-7).

- While no raptor nests were found within the 150 foot buffer, if additional raptor surveys encounter bald eagle nests, or other nests protected under the MBTA, we recommend coordinating with USFWS and SDGFP for proposed buffer distances for infrastructure placement.

Bat Tree-Clearing Recommendations

- Tree clearing should be avoided from June 1 through August 15 to prevent impacts during the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*; federally endangered) pup-rearing season. During this time, most bat species may have non-volant young, and tree removal can be detrimental. If tree clearing during this period cannot be avoided, surveys should be conducted to determine whether bat roosts are present. If bat roosts are identified, please notify GFP as soon as possible to discuss appropriate next steps.
- If you suspect that the northern long-eared bat or tricolored bat (*Pipistrellus subflavus;* proposed federally threatened) are using trees that need to be removed, please coordinate with USFWS.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project. Please keep GFP involved in future correspondence regarding project planning and implementation. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 605.394.6052.

Sincerely,

Mandy Pearson

Mandy Pearson
Senior Wildlife Biologist
4130 Adventure Trail
Rapid City, SD 57702
mandy.pearson@state.sd.us

From: Scheidecker, Kevin J.
To: Pearson, Mandy
Cc: Olson, Nicholas A.; Hanley, Jennifer; Wandrie, Lucas; Swiontek, Katie Jo.; Mayer, Michael; Steingaard, Craig L.
Subject: T&E Species Desktop Report for BSSHB Transmission Project
Date: Thursday, July 16, 2026 7:10:32 AM
Attachments: [redacted]
[redacted]Reduced.pdf

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Mandy,

Please find attached our State and Federally Protected Species Habitat Assessment for the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison Transmission Project. The report is only for the South Dakota portion of the project and is being used to develop a Facility Permit Application to the SD PUC. We will continue to coordinate with the SDGFP as we conduct field surveys and develop the project.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

South Dakota Department of Transportation

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT)	Request for information and notification of the Facility
01/20/2026	Email	SDDOT	HDR	Response to the request for information and notification of the Facility

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

South Dakota Department of Transportation
700 East Broadway Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Sir/Madam,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards selecting a corridor. We are particularly interested in any property located within or adjacent to the corridors which your agency may own or have an interest in. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be contemplating within the corridors in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

Additionally, we are requesting your agency's input regarding transportation-related considerations within the South Dakota portion of the Project area. Specifically, we seek guidance on permitting requirements for activities within or adjacent to state highway rights-of-way, including any restrictions on structure placement, setbacks, or crossing requirements. We understand that compliance with the South Dakota DOT Utility Accommodation Manual will be required for any installations within state highway rights-of-way, and we request confirmation of the applicable standards and review process.

Please advise if utility occupancy permits, approach permits, or oversize/overweight load permits will be required for construction activities such as hauling poles and equipment. We also request your recommendations regarding coordination for temporary traffic control measures during construction,

including any requirements for traffic management plans or notifications for work near state highways. If there are specific design standards or clearance requirements for transmission lines crossing state highways, such as the minimum vertical clearance of 22 feet or greater, please provide those details so they can be incorporated into the Project design.

Your input will help ensure that the Project complies with all applicable transportation regulations and minimizes impacts on public safety and infrastructure. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

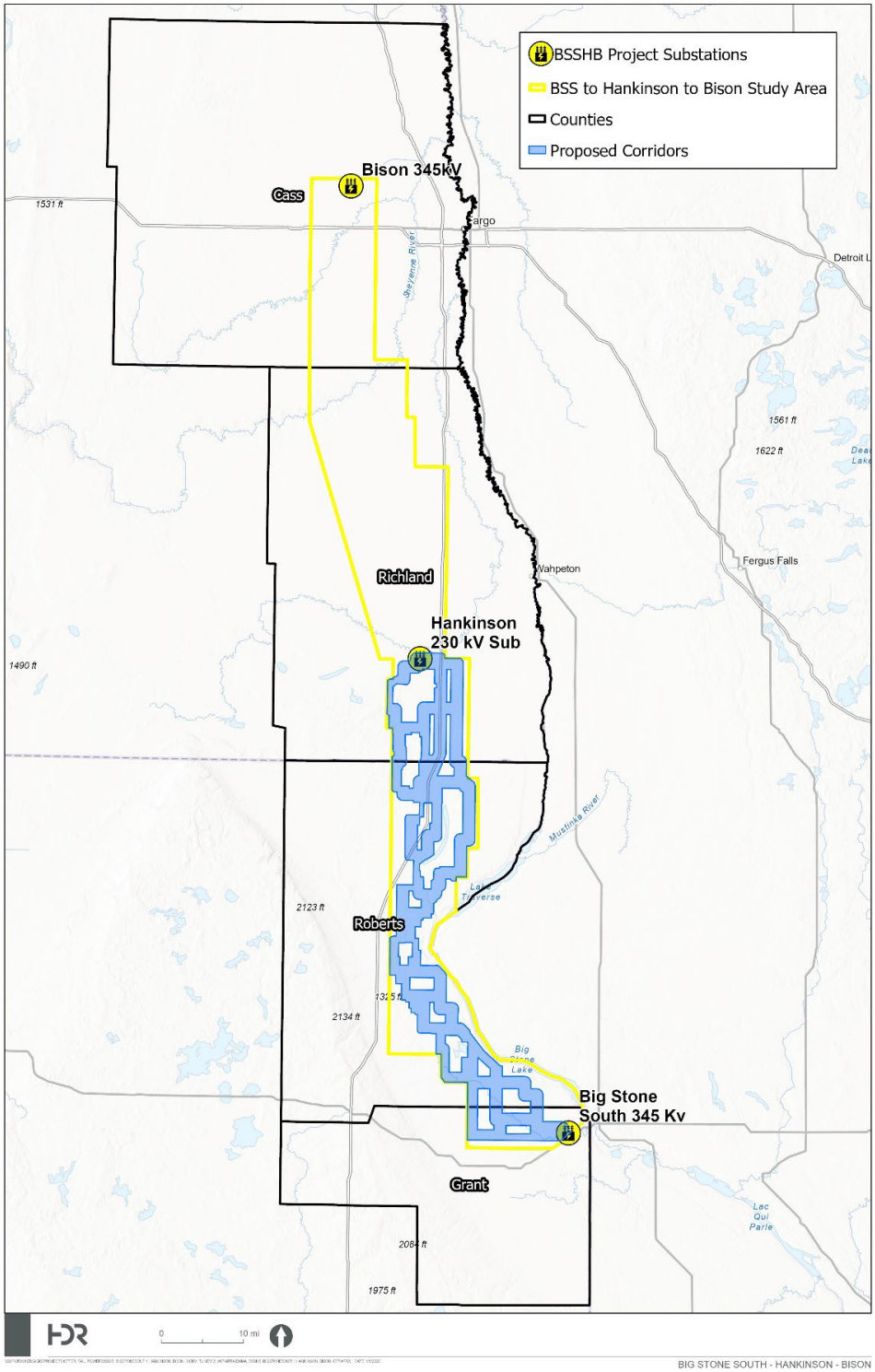
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure: Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
2084 ft
1975 ft
Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Brey, Matt
To: Mayer, Michael
Subject: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345kV Transmission line project
Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 4:04:22 PM
Attachments: ~~image001.png~~
~~DOT200 (Utility Permit Application).docx~~
~~DOT166 Access Permit App.pdf~~

You don't often get email from matt.brey@state.sd.us. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I received correspondence today in the mail regarding the future project from Big Stone to Hankinson.

The project is in the preliminary stage and I will give the best answers I can with the information given to me in the email.

Permitting for any structures, wires, or overhang into state Right of Way would be covered by completing a Utility Permit (DOT-200, attached). If facilities are proposed in our right of way, we seek to have the utilities as close to the right of way line as possible. We also look to maintain a clear zone off the traveled way. Crossing of state highways would involve a minimum clearance requirement and the placement of poles off the right of way if possible.

Any temporary accesses needed would be handled through our access permit (DOT-166 attached) process. Temporary accesses may be installed and left in place for a one-year period, after which time they need to be removed.

Traffic control during construction of the power line would need to be in accordance with the MUTCD. Any overwidth/overweight permitting would be through our Ports of Entry.

The review process for utility and access permits is relatively short – in most cases less than a week unless additional information is needed.

This is a pretty cursory summary of the processes that are involved in permitting. If you need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Matt Brey
Area Engineer | South Dakota Department of Transportation
Better Lives Through Better Transportation
5000 9th Avenue SE Watertown, SD 57201
O: 605.882.5166 | F: 605.882.5117 | C: 605.881.7148 dot.sd.gov

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Public Utilities Commission	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Chairman Gary Hanson
South Dakota PUC Commission
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Chairman Hanson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

At this preliminary stage a general study area has been defined and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and

take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

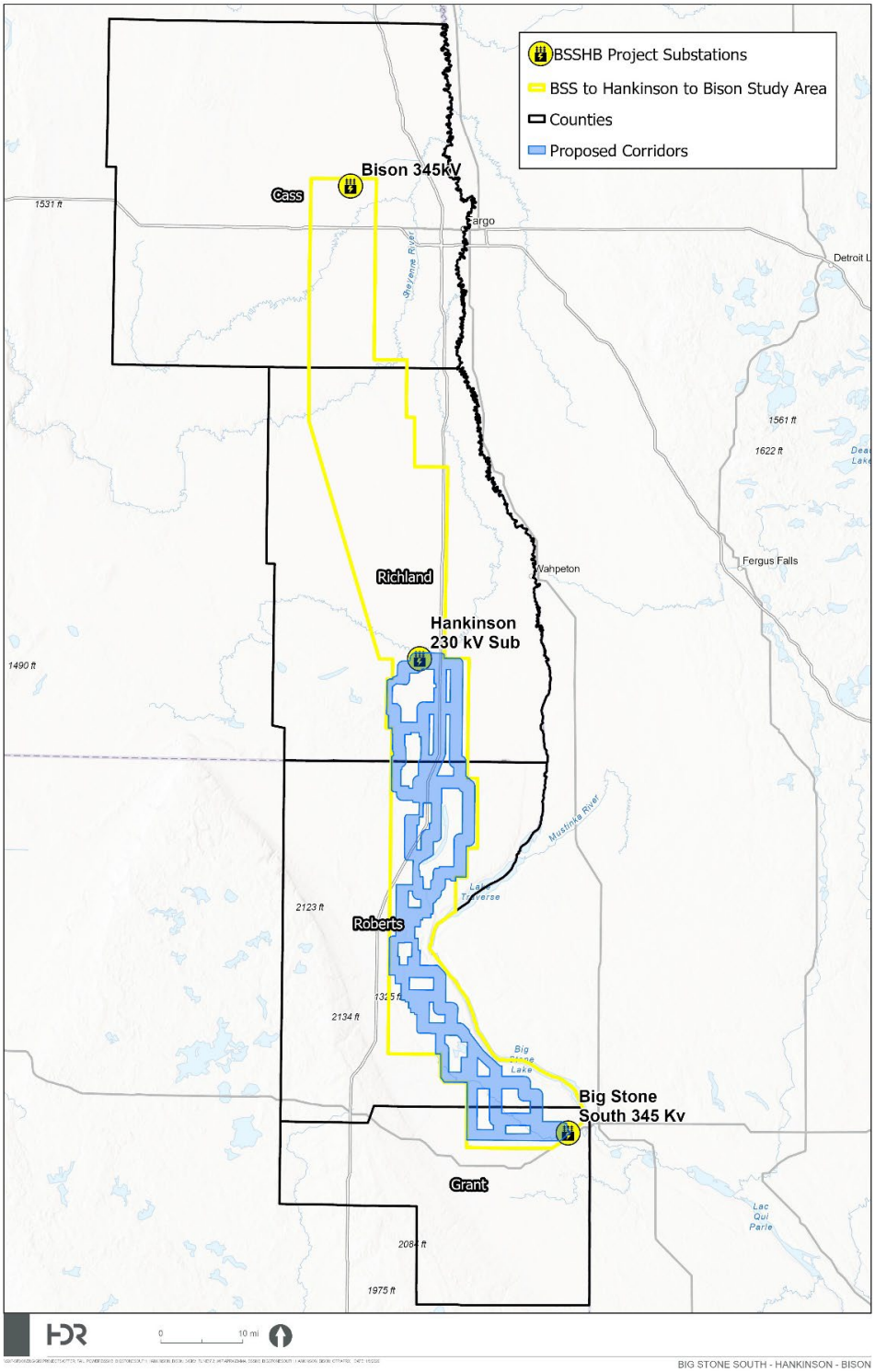
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
1975 ft
Lac
Qui
Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Historic Preservation Office (SDSHPO)	Request for input and notification of the Facility
01/20/2026	Email	SDSHPO	HDR	Requested clarification on recipient of letter
01/21/2026	Email	HDR	SDSHPO	Response to clarification on recipient of letter
01/27/2026	Email	SDSHPO	HDR	Follow-up question on submittal to the SHPO office via ERC system
01/27/2026	Email	HDR	SDSHPO	Response to follow-up questions on submittal to the SHPO office via ERC system
02/19/2026	Email/Letter	SDSHPO	HDR	ERC Review Response Letter
02/20/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, HDR, and SDSHPO		Discussion of proposed methodology and recommendations

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Garry Guan
State Historic Preservation Officer
South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
900 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Guan,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We are requesting your agency's input regarding cultural resource considerations within the South Dakota portion of the Project area. Specifically, we seek guidance on compliance with South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) 1-19A-11.1 and any requirements for consultation under state preservation laws. If federal funding, licensing, or permitting becomes applicable, we understand that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act may also apply, and we will coordinate accordingly.

Additionally, we request your review of the study area for the Project to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards selecting a corridor. We would also appreciate being made aware of any proposed developments your agency may be aware of within the Study Area in addition to any information that might assist us in our siting analysis and studies.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

We intend to submit project information through your Electronic Review & Compliance (ERC) system to facilitate tracking and commenting. We will submit additional information regarding cultural resources studies completed in the future but, please confirm any additional documentation you require for this initial submission.

In addition, we plan to coordinate with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and Tribal governments with an interest in cultural resources within or near the Study Area to address potential effects on Traditional Cultural Properties and properties of religious or cultural significance. Please advise if there are specific protocols or contacts your office recommends for this coordination.

Your input will help ensure that the Project meets all applicable requirements and avoids or minimizes impacts on historic properties. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jennifer Bring
Cultural Resource Lead, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 651-324-0432
Email: jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com

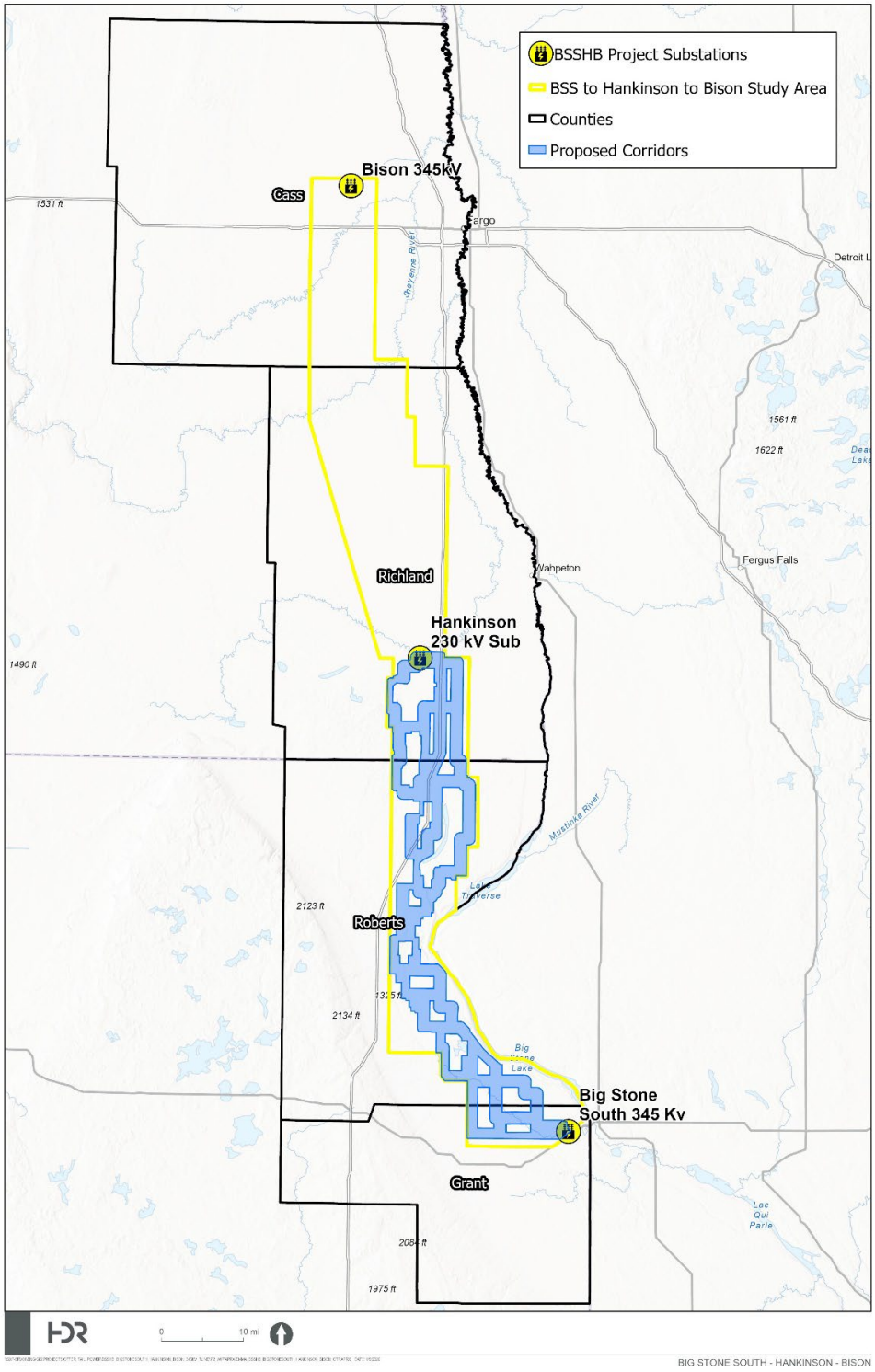
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

Kevin Scheidecker

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure: Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
Lac
Qui
Parle
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
1975 ft
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Wasley, Katie
To: Bring, Jennifer
Subject: RE: Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 10:48:35 AM
Attachments: ~~image001.png~~

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jennifer,

Garry just passed it along to me. As we'll need the information submitted into ERC in order to assign a number and send compile all project information, would you have the time today to submit this project information?

Thank you,

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
katie.wasley@state.sd.us
605-773-2906 | 900 Governors Drive, Pierre | history.sd.gov

From: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 10:35 AM
To: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Subject: RE: [EXT] Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

Hi Katie,

Yes, a separate letter was sent to Garry Guan. It should have been delivered by now but, please let us know if you/Garry do not see it.

Jenny

Jennifer Bring
M 651.324.0432

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 9:01 AM

To: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Subject: FW: Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Jennifer,

I wanted to follow-up on my email from last week to see if a project letter will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office, separate from the Archaeological Research Center?

Thank you,

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
katie.wasley@state.sd.us
605-773-2906 | 900 Governors Drive, Pierre | history.sd.gov

From: Wasley, Katie
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 9:13 AM
To: 'Bring, Jennifer' <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: [EXT] Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

Just a quick follow-up – will a letter be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office via the Electronic Review & Compliance (ERC) system?

Thank you,

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
katie.wasley@state.sd.us
605-773-2906 | 900 Governors Drive, Pierre | history.sd.gov

From: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 8:53 AM

To: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Subject: RE: [EXT] Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

Wonderful. Thanks so much!

Jennifer Bring
M 651.324.0432

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 8:52 AM
To: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Subject: RE: Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

You don't often get email from katie.wasley@state.sd.us. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Jenny,

I can send this out to Cassie in the mail today.

Thank you,

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
katie.wasley@state.sd.us
605-773-2906 | 900 Governors Drive, Pierre | history.sd.gov

From: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 8:46 AM
To: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Subject: RE: [EXT] Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

Hi Katie – Thanks for reaching out. The letter was meant for Cassie Voigt – apologies for the error in the address. Is it possible to forward the letter to Cassie? If not, we can send out a new letter with the correct address.

Thanks,

Jenny

Jennifer Bring
M 651.324.0432

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Wasley, Katie <Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 4:25 PM
To: Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Subject: Question: Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project

You don't often get email from katie.wasley@state.sd.us. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon Jennifer,

In today's mail, the Cultural Heritage Center received the attached letter regarding the proposed Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Project, which included your contact information. I am reaching out as I am hoping we can get some clarification on who this letter is supposed to go to. Is it supposed to go to Cassie Vogt, the State Archaeologist, at the Archaeological Research Center in Rapid City, SD or to Garry Guan, the State Historic Preservation Officer, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre, SD?

Thank you,

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
katie.wasley@state.sd.us
605-773-2906 | 900 Governors Drive, Pierre | history.sd.gov

From: SD.gov Portal
To: Bring, Jennifer
Subject: ERC Review Response Letter - 260128010S
Date: Thursday, February 19, 2026 3:00:38 PM
Attachments: [redacted]

You don't often get email from contactus@portal.sd.gov. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Jennifer,

Attached, please find a letter from SHPO regarding the Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345kV Transmission Line Project (SHPO Project Number: 260128010S). SHPO will continue review of the project under SDCL 1-19A-11.1 upon receipt of the additional information.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Wasley at Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us or at 605-773-2906.

Sincerely,

DOE - State Historical Society Request

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Ref:MSG2173456_5IArU02UKNEbO5zOHiF6

February 19, 2026

Kevin Scheidecker
Otter Tail Power Company
215 South Cascade Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

SDCL 1-19A-11.1 Consultation
Project: 260128010S – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345kV Transmission Line Project
Location: Grant, Roberts
PUC - South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

Dear Mr. Scheidecker,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project pursuant to SDCL 1-19A-11.1. SDCL 1-19A-11.1 outlines a specific process that must be followed prior to any governmental action, including the issuance of permits, that may harm any historic property that is included in the National or State Registers of Historic Places. The South Dakota Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) would like to provide the following comments concerning effect of the proposed project on the non-renewable cultural resources of South Dakota.

On January 27, 2026, the SHPO received your letter dated January 21, 2026, along with a map of the proposed study area regarding the above-referenced project to construct an approximately 60-mile long 345 kV transmission line with steel monopoles with concrete bases and associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South substation within Roberts and Grant Counties, South Dakota.

As a project seeking a permit from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the project will be subject to the permitting requirements of the PUC in addition to SDCL 1-19A11.1. Outlined in the Administrative Rules of South Dakota (ARSD) at 20:10:22:23, the applicant seeking a permit from the South Dakota PUC shall include an identification and analysis of the proposed project, which includes “a forecast of the impact on landmarks and cultural resources of historic, religious, archaeological, scenic, natural, or other cultural significance."

To assist the Otter Tail Power Company and Xcel Energy in meeting the requirements of the South Dakota PUC permit Application, SHPO recommends that the applicant:

1. Provide a copy of the original official record search from the Archaeological Research Center that identifies the previously recorded cultural resources within one mile of the proposed project area.
2. Have a qualified archaeologist complete an intensive field survey of the project area.
3. Conduct an analysis of the visual effects that the transmission line and substation will have on cultural resources within one mile of the project area.

4. Follow up with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and Tribal governments that indicated an interest in cultural resources within or near the project area concerning the project's potential effects on Traditional Cultural Properties associated with American Indian Tribes and/or properties of religious and cultural significance to them.

Once the additional information has been obtained regarding historic properties and cultural resources which could be affected by the project, please submit that information to SHPO for review and comment under SDCL 1-19A-11.1.

Please note that this letter does not relieve the responsible party/parties of requirements regarding compliance with any other historic preservation laws. Should the project ever be federally funded, licensed, permitted, or approved, the project would be considered a federal undertaking for which the responsible federal agency must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Should you require any additional information, please contact Katie Wasley at Katie.Wasley@state.sd.us or at 605-773-2906. Your concern for the non-renewable cultural heritage of our state is appreciated.

Sincerely,
Garry Guan
State Historic Preservation Officer

Katie Wasley
Review & Compliance Coordinator

CC: Jennifer Bring - HDR Engineering, Inc.

State Representatives

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Office of the Governor, South Dakota	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Legislature, District 1	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Legislature, District 4	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Governor Larry Rhoden
Office of the Governor, State of South Dakota
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Governor Rhoden,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

At this preliminary stage a general study area has been defined and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available information, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

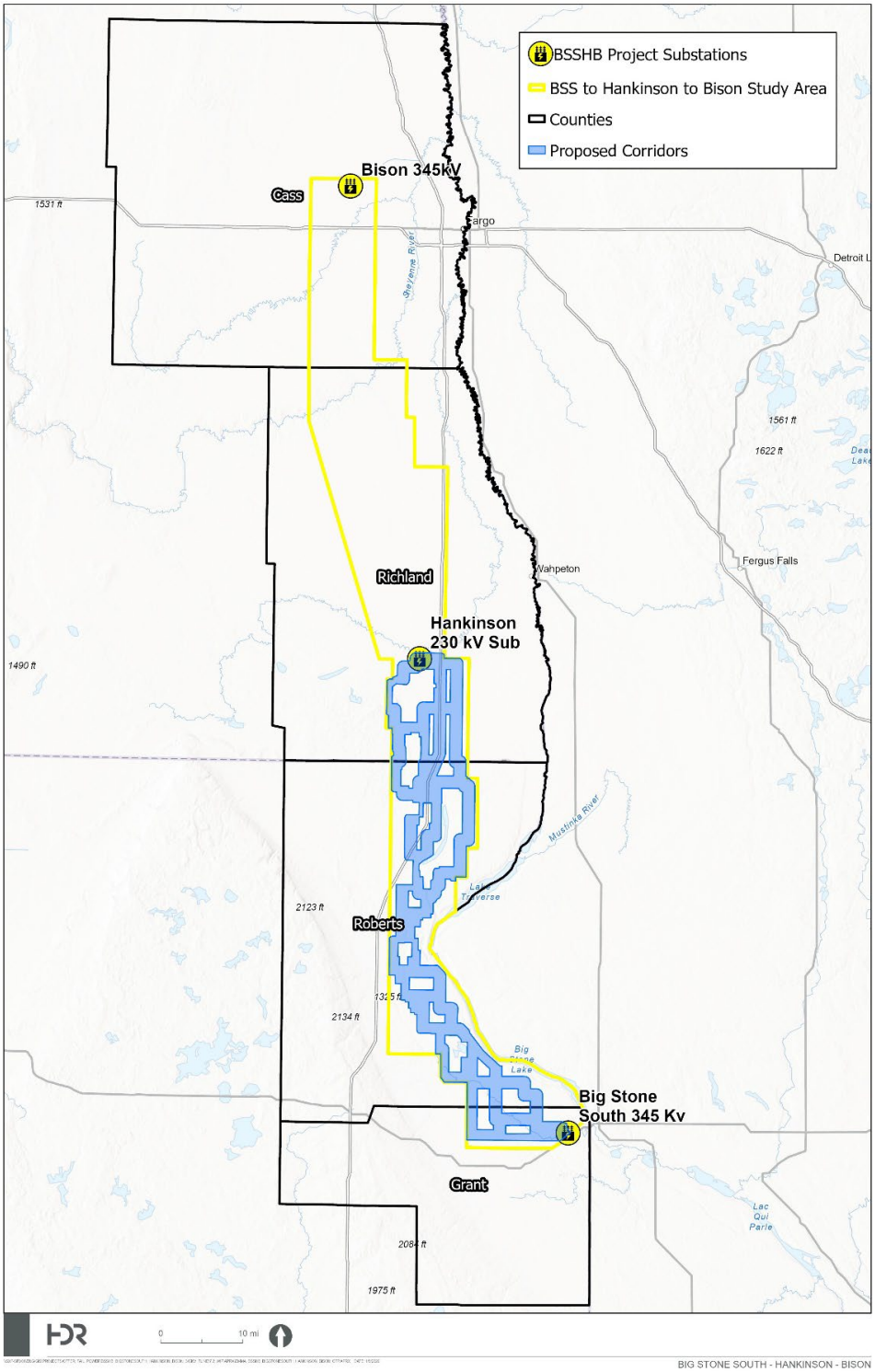
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure: Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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Proposed Corridors
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Fargo
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Qui
Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Representative Logan Manhart
South Dakota Legislature, District 1
2640 130th St NW, Lot 81
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Representative Manhart,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

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take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

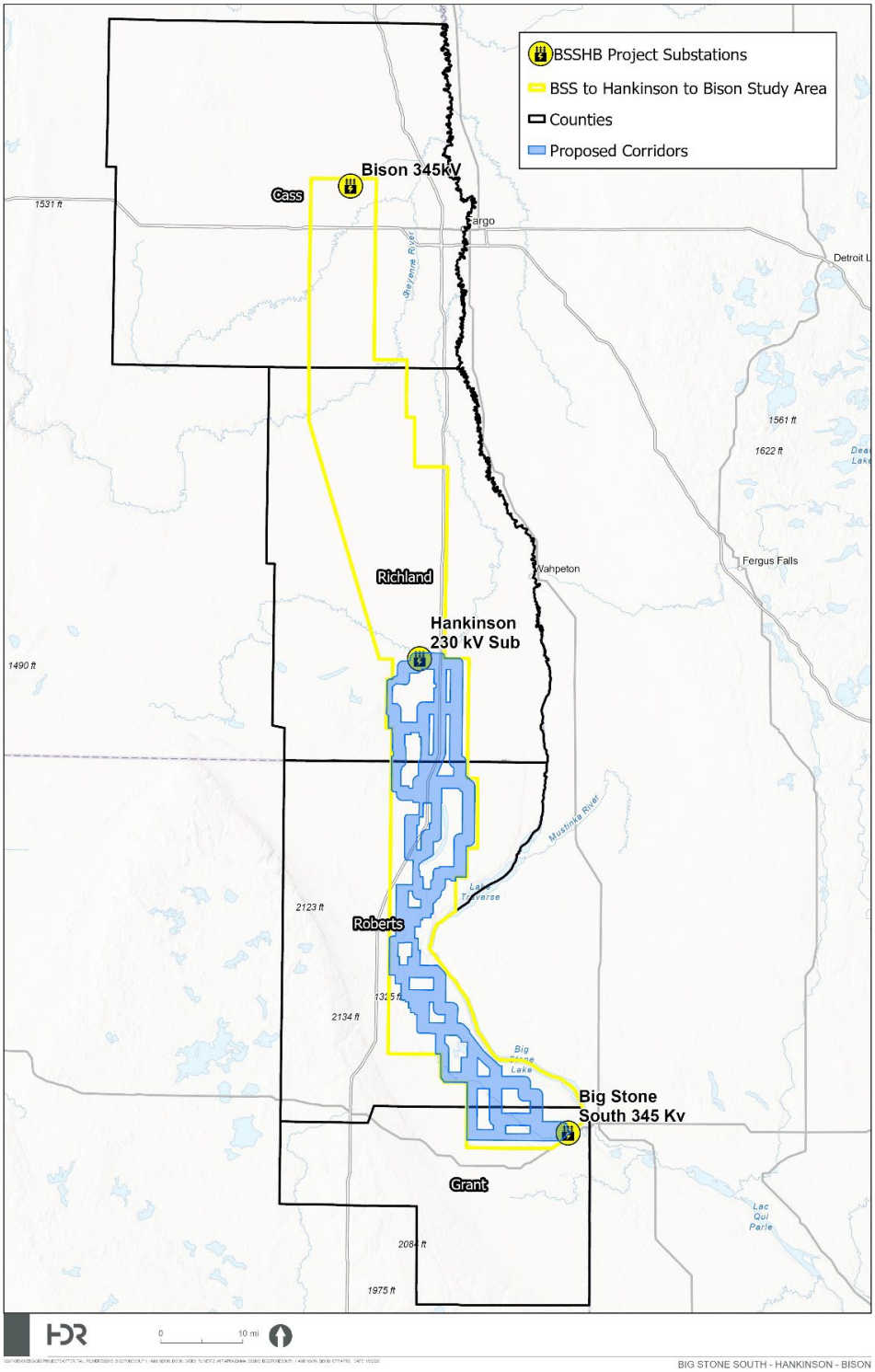
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


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BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
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1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
1975 ft
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Representative Dylan Jordan
South Dakota Legislature, District 4
PO Box 651
Clear Lake, SD 57226

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Representative Jordan,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

At this preliminary stage a general study area has been defined and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and

take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

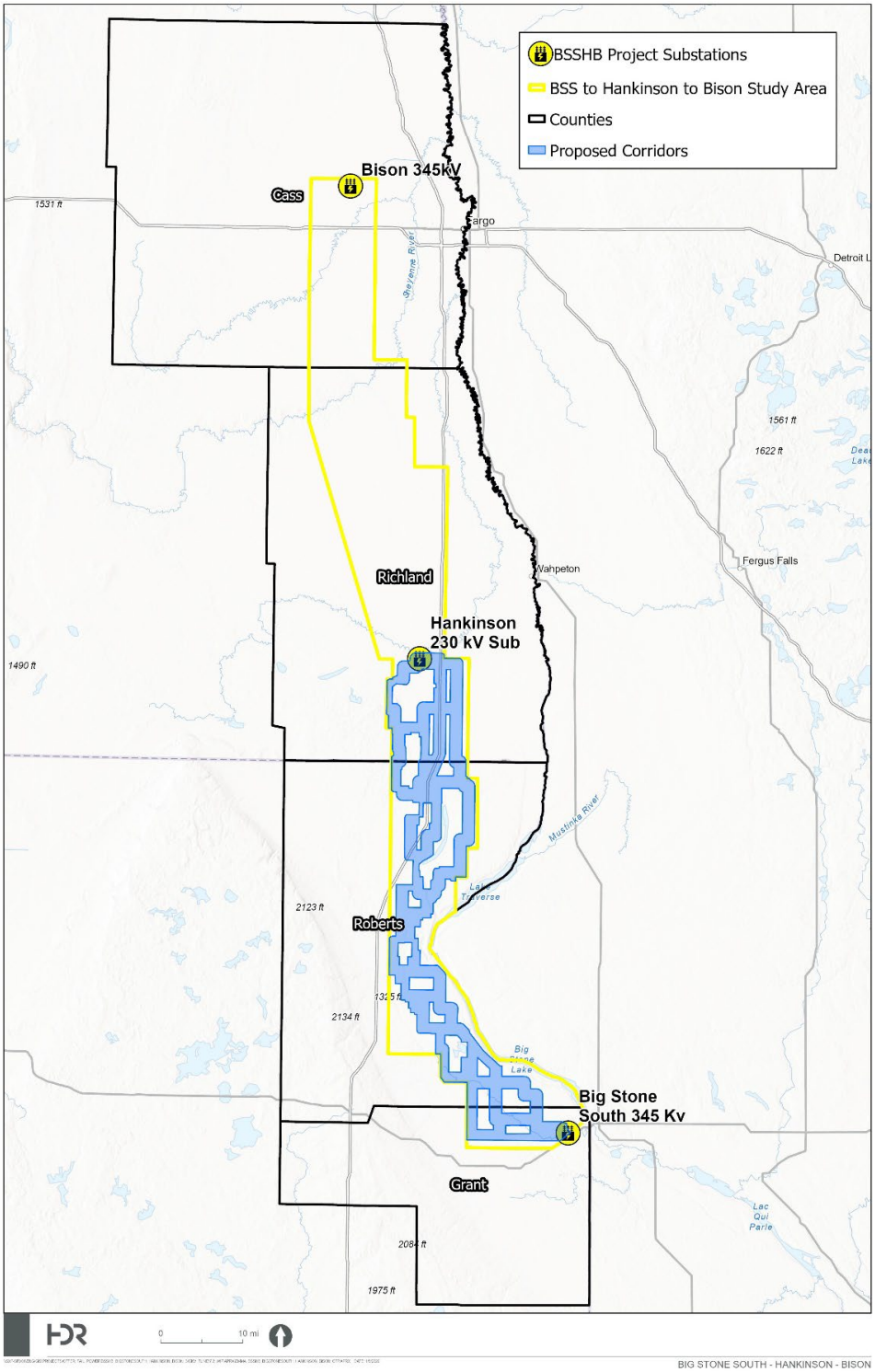
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
Richland
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
Lac
Qui
Parle
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
1490 ft
2123 ft
2134 ft
1975 ft
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

Tribal Governments

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
11/18/2025	Meeting	Otter Tail Power and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe		Facility Introduction
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Tribes	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/15/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Bureau of Indian Affairs	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
02/11/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe		Facility Discussion and Cultural Training
02/12/2026	Email/Letter	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	Otter Tail Power Company	Response to Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
03/24/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, Grant County Commission, and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe		Facility Status Update
06/08/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate	Project Update and Request for Feedback
07/13/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate	Reintroduction of Project and Discussion of Next Steps

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
07/14/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate	Request for Review of Level I Cultural Resources Report
07/14/2026	Email	Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate	Otter Tail Power Company	Response to Request for Review of Level I Cultural Resources Report

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Dianne Desrosiers
THPO
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
12554 BIA Hwy 711, PO Box 907
Agency Village, SD 57262

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Desrosiers,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034. At this early stage, it is unknown if compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will be needed.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We are requesting your review of the preliminary Project information and study area maps enclosed to help identify opportunities and constraints as we move towards defining the preliminary routes. We appreciate and value your input for us to avoid or minimize impacts to tribally significant resources, if they are present. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help us to develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Jennifer Bring
Cultural Resource Lead, HDR Engineering, Inc.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 651-324-0432
Email: jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com

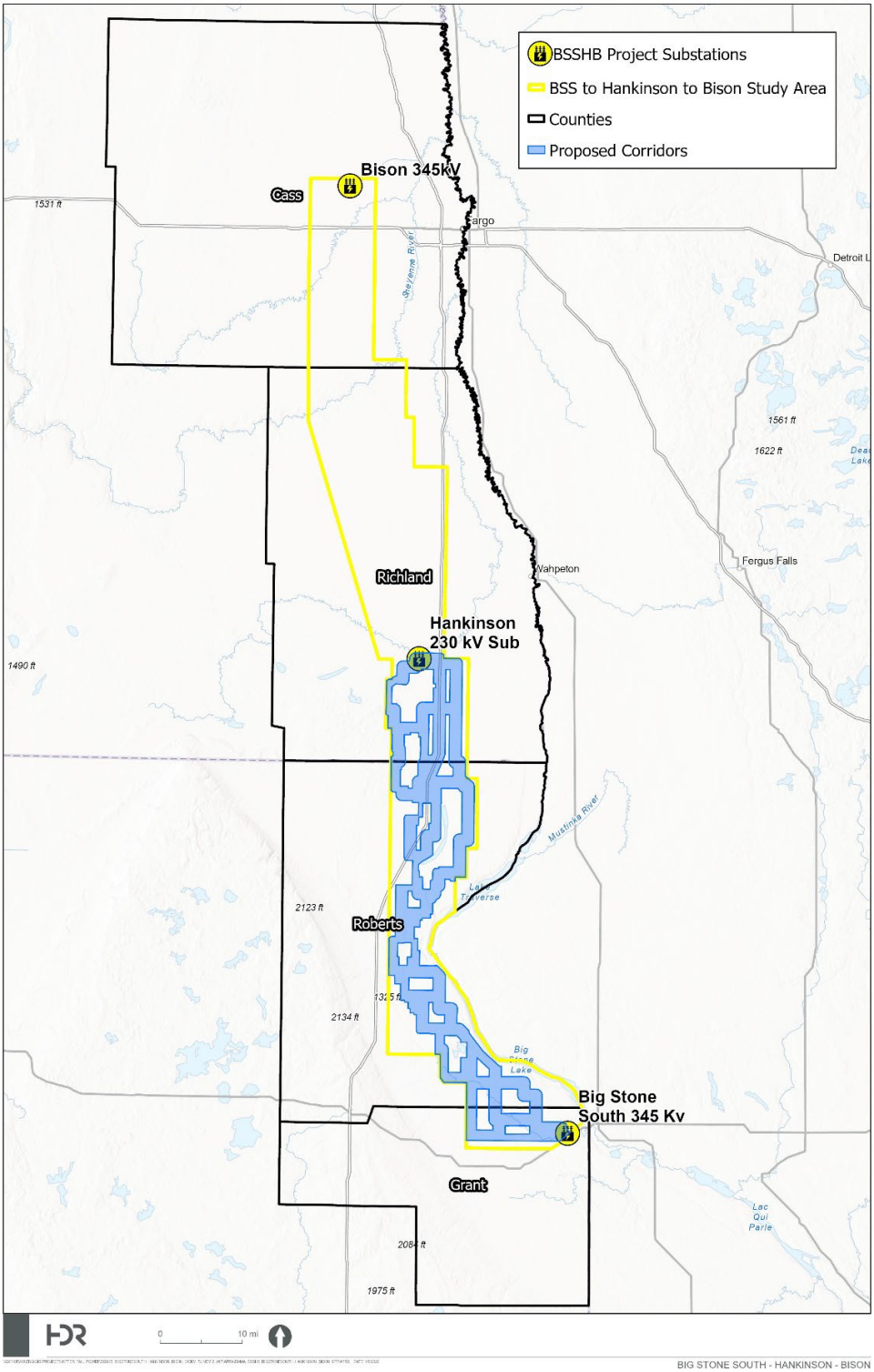
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, Tribes, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Olson
Senior Project Manager
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Study Area Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Richland
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
Wahpeton
Fergus Falls
Roberts
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
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Parle
1531 ft
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2123 ft
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Red River
Buffalo River
Mustinka River
Lake Traverse
Big Stone Lake
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10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

Olivia Steve
Regional Director, Great Plains Region
Bureau of Indian Affairs
115 4th Avenue Southeast, Suite 400
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Steve,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

We respectfully request your review of the preliminary Project information and Project map enclosed herewith. Your comments on tribal interests, cultural and historic resources, and any other relevant regulatory or permitting issues would be greatly appreciated. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 16, 2026. Your input will help the Owners develop a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and complies with applicable laws.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 15, 2026

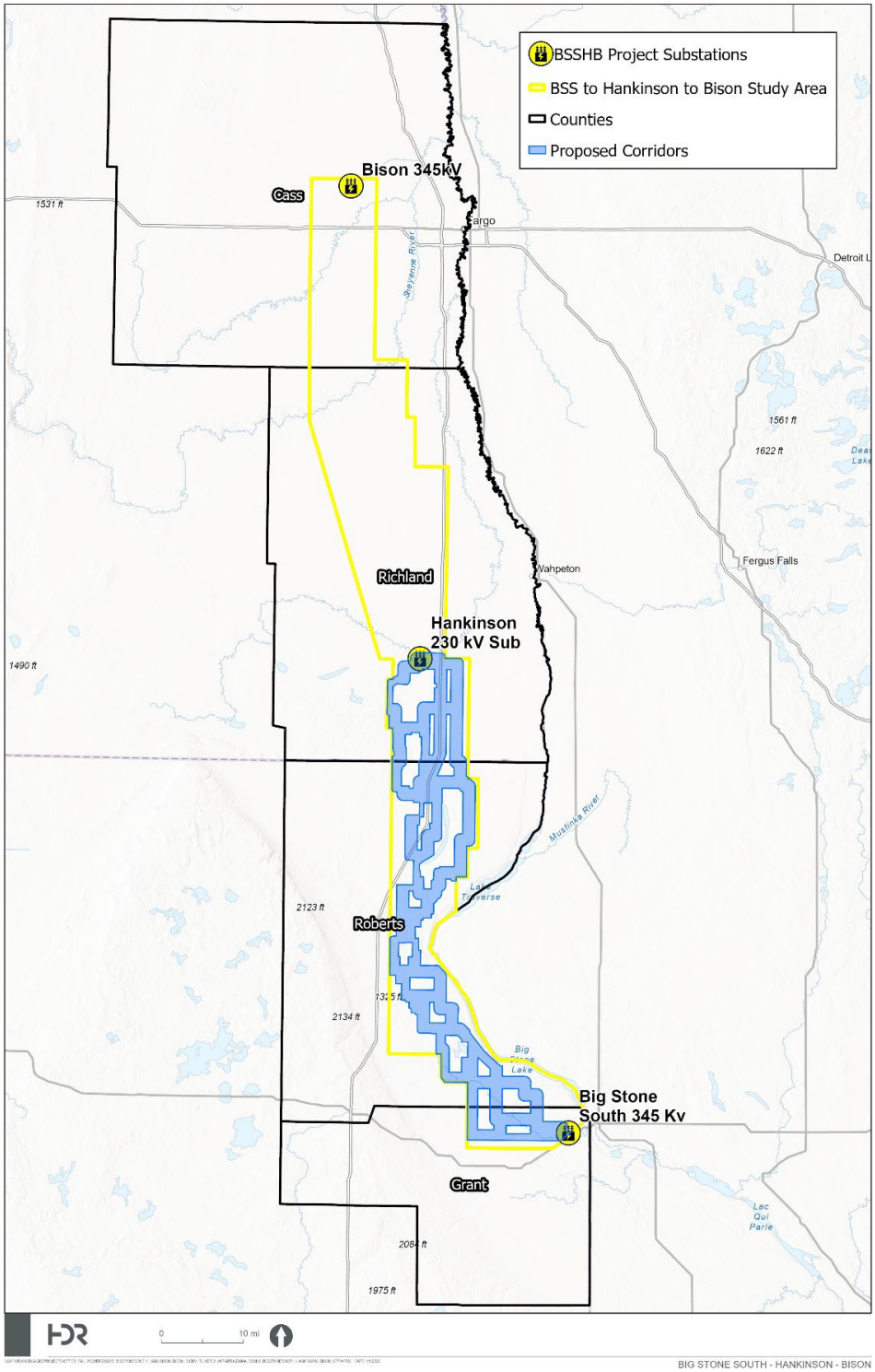
Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Olson
Senior Project Manager
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
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Sheyenne River
Mustinka River
Lac Qui Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Gina M Lemon, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Anita M Cloud, Tribal Historic Preservation Assistant

February 6, 2026 Via Internet

HDR, Inc.
Attn: Jennifer Bring, Cultural Resource Lead, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South – Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416

RE: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project.
Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345 kV high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, SD, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, ND, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, ND.
Cass, Richland Co's., ND
Grant, Roberts Co's., SD

LL THPO No. 26-046-NCRI

Dear Jennifer Bring,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project. This has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given to the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992, and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (38CFR800).

I have reviewed the documentation. After careful consideration of our records, I have determined that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe does not have any recorded historic properties, within this area. ** This does not mean there are not any cultural resources present, at this time. **

Should any human remains or suspected human remains be encountered, all work shall cease and the following personnel should be notified immediately: County Sheriff's Office, Office of the State Archaeologist, and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe along with other interested parties.

Please note the above determination does not "exempt" future projects from Section 106 review. In the event of any other tribe notifying you of an issue or us (LLBO) of concerns for this specific project, we may reenter into the consultation process.

You may contact me at **(218) 335-2940** if you have questions regarding our review of this project. Please refer to the **LL-THPO Number** as stated above in all correspondence with this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina M Lemon
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

From: Olson, Nicholas A.
To: dianned; Wayne Cloud
Cc: Mayer, Michael; Bring, Jennifer; Scheidecker, Kevin J.; Steingaard, Craig L.
Subject: Re: BSSHB: Proposed Route KMZ for southern segment
Date: Monday, June 8, 2026 9:20:30 AM
Attachments: [redacted]

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hau Dianne and Wayne,

I hope you've been doing well. Thank you again for taking the time to review the proposed route from Big Stone South to Hankinson. I truly appreciate your continued engagement and the perspective you bring as we work through this segment of the BSSHB 345-kV Transmission Project together. Here are some updates on the project:

1. **Big Stone South to Hankinson** (southern segment)
   - I wanted to provide an update on the status of our cultural resources survey planning for the southern segment of the project. We have received the cultural resources literature review completed by our consultant, HDR, and will be meeting with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) soon to begin developing a field survey plan. The timing of field survey work is not yet scheduled, and we will continue to coordinate closely with SWO THPO as we schedule the next steps.
   - As the route is drawn today (see KMZ files sent May 4 or the BSSHB website), we are beginning to look ahead to potential field surveys during the summer of 2026. Before developing next steps, I wanted to check in to see whether the current alignment raises any early awareness, sensitivities, or considerations you would like to share with Otter Tail Power at this stage. Your early insight is always very helpful for us.
   - After you've had an opportunity to consider the proposed route and this update, I would appreciate the chance to connect and discuss any feedback you may have, as well as potential next steps. At that time, I would also like to include our consultant, HDR, as we begin planning upcoming work. I have copied Mike Mayer and Jenny Bring from HDR on this e-mail.

2. **Hankinson to Bison** (northern segment)
   - Public open houses have been scheduled for June 16-17:
     - June 16 11:00-1:00 pm in Mapleton, ND

  - June 16 4:00-6:00pm in Colfax, ND
  - June 17 11:00-1:00pm in Mooreton, ND
- Feedback from these open houses will help inform routing efforts in late summer to identify 2-4 preliminary routes. And a second round of open houses is targeted for fall 2026 for the northern segment. A single proposed route would be identified sometime around the end of the year for the northern segment. Therefore, field surveys are expected to take place in 2027 for the northern segment.

As always, I appreciate your willingness to work with us on this project. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you again for the time and care you put into this process.

Kind regards,
-Nic

Nicholas Olson
Sr. Project Manager
215 S. Cascade Street
Fergus Falls MN 56537
Office: 218-739-8417
Cell: 218-301-1765
otpco.com

From: Olson, Nicholas A. <nolson@otpco.com>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 8:21 AM
To: dianned <dianned@swo-nsn.gov>; Wayne Cloud <waynec@swo-nsn.gov>
Cc: Scheidecker, Kevin <kscheidecker@otpco.com>; Mayer, Michael <michael.mayer@hdrinc.com>; Bring, Jennifer <jennifer.bring@hdrinc.com>
Subject: BSSHB: Cultural Resources Coordination and Next Steps

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dianne and Wayne,

I hope you are doing well.

As we advance the work within the BSSHB 345kV Transmission Line Project, I would like to re-introduce my team: **Kevin Scheidecker**, Otter Tail Power's Principal Environmental Services, who is OTP's primary cultural resources representative for this effort. I would also like to introduce **Jenny Bring** from HDR, who will participate in the next steps associated with cultural resources and Tribal engagement activities. **Mike Mayer**, HDR Project Manager, will continue to provide project coordination support.

The BSSHB team has been working to develop a coordinated plan for next steps. Kevin will be sending a follow-up communication soon outlining the proposed path forward, engagement opportunities, and the consultation process we intend to use moving forward.

I am committed to approaching this work with transparency, respect, and seeking SWO input as we advance the BSSHB project. We welcome your questions, feedback, and perspectives as we work together moving forward.

Respectfully,
-Nic

OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY

Nicholas Olson
Sr. Project Manager
215 S. Cascade Street
Fergus Falls MN 56537
Office: 218-739-8417
Cell: 218-301-1765
otpco.com

From: Scheidecker, Kevin J.
To: dianned; WayneC@swo-nsn.gov
Cc: Olson, Nicholas A.; Mayer, Michael; Bring, Jennifer; Hanley, Jennifer; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject: BSSHB: Cultural Resources Level I Report
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 8:04:12 AM
Attachments: image001.png
20260626_SD_BSSHB_Level I Cultural Report.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Dianne and Wayne,

Our consultant HDR has completed a Level I Cultural Resources Review report for our Big Stone South-Hankinson-Bison 345kV Transmission Project in South Dakota. The report was submitted to SD SHPO on July 9th for their review. At this time, we are also submitting the report to the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe for your review. It is our hope that the Tribe will assist us in conducting field surveys in order to identify cultural resources that need to be protected and preserved as we work to site and construct this project.

We will meet with SD SHPO to finalize our field survey plan once they have reviewed the report. After that, we would like to meet with the SWO Tribe to make plans for conducting the field survey with HDR field staff and SWO THPO staff. We are planning to conduct field surveys in SD late this summer and early fall as conditions allow. We also hope that the Tribe is able to assist with future field surveys for the North Dakota portion of the project and monitoring for the entire project when we move into ground disturbing activities related to geotechnical or construction work.

Let me know if you need any other information that would assist you with your review.

Thank you for your assistance and, as always, we look forward to working with the SWO Tribe.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

From:	dianned
To:	Scheidecker, Kevin J.
Cc:	WayneC@swo-nsn.gov; Olson, Nicholas A.; Mayer, Michael; Bring, Jennifer; Hanley, Jennifer; Swiontek, Katie Jo.
Subject:	Re: BSSHB: Cultural Resources Level I Report
Date:	Tuesday, July 14, 2026 11:56:44 AM
Attachments:	image.png

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning,

Thanks for the report. Yes, our office is awaiting the field schedule and final updates for the field surveys. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Dianne Desrosiers

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate

P.O. Box 907

Sisseton, S.D. 57262

605.698.3584

"Every part of this Earth is sacred to my people. We are part of the earth and it is part of us".~Chief Seattle,1854

On Tue, Jul 14, 2026 at 8:03 AM Scheidecker, Kevin J. <kscheidecker@otpco.com> wrote:

> Good Morning Dianne and Wayne,
>
> Our consultant HDR has completed a Level I Cultural Resources Review report for our Big Stone South-Hankinson-Bison 345kV Transmission Project in South Dakota. The report was submitted to SD SHPO on July 9th for their review. At this time, we are also submitting the report to the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe for your review. It is our hope that the Tribe will assist us in conducting field surveys in order to identify cultural resources that need to be protected and preserved as we work to site and construct this project.

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Let me know if you need any other information that would assist you with your review.

Thank you for your assistance and, as always, we look forward to working with the SWO Tribe.

Kevin Scheidecker
Principal, Environmental Services
Environmental Services
Direct: 218-739-8773
kscheidecker@otpco.com

Local Government Units

South Dakota Counties

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
11/04/2025	Meeting	Otter Tail Power and Grant County Board of Commissioners		Facility Introduction
11/18/2025	Meeting	Otter Tail Power and Roberts County Board of Commissioners		Facility Introduction
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Grant County Commission	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Grant County Highway Department	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Grant County Planning and Zoning	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Roberts County Auditor	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Roberts County Commission	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	Roberts County Highway Department	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
03/24/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company, Grant County Commission, and Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe		Facility Status Update
06/02/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Roberts County Commission		Status Update, Proposed Route, and Roberts County Landfill
06/30/2026	Email	Otter Tail Power Company	Roberts County Planning and Zoning	Request for Information Regarding Required Permits
07/08/2026	Email	Roberts County Planning and Zoning	Otter Tail Power Company	Response to Request for Information Regarding Required Permits

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

William Tostenson
Grant County Commission
210 E. 5th Avenue
Milbank, SD 57252

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Tostenson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your office to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your office may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

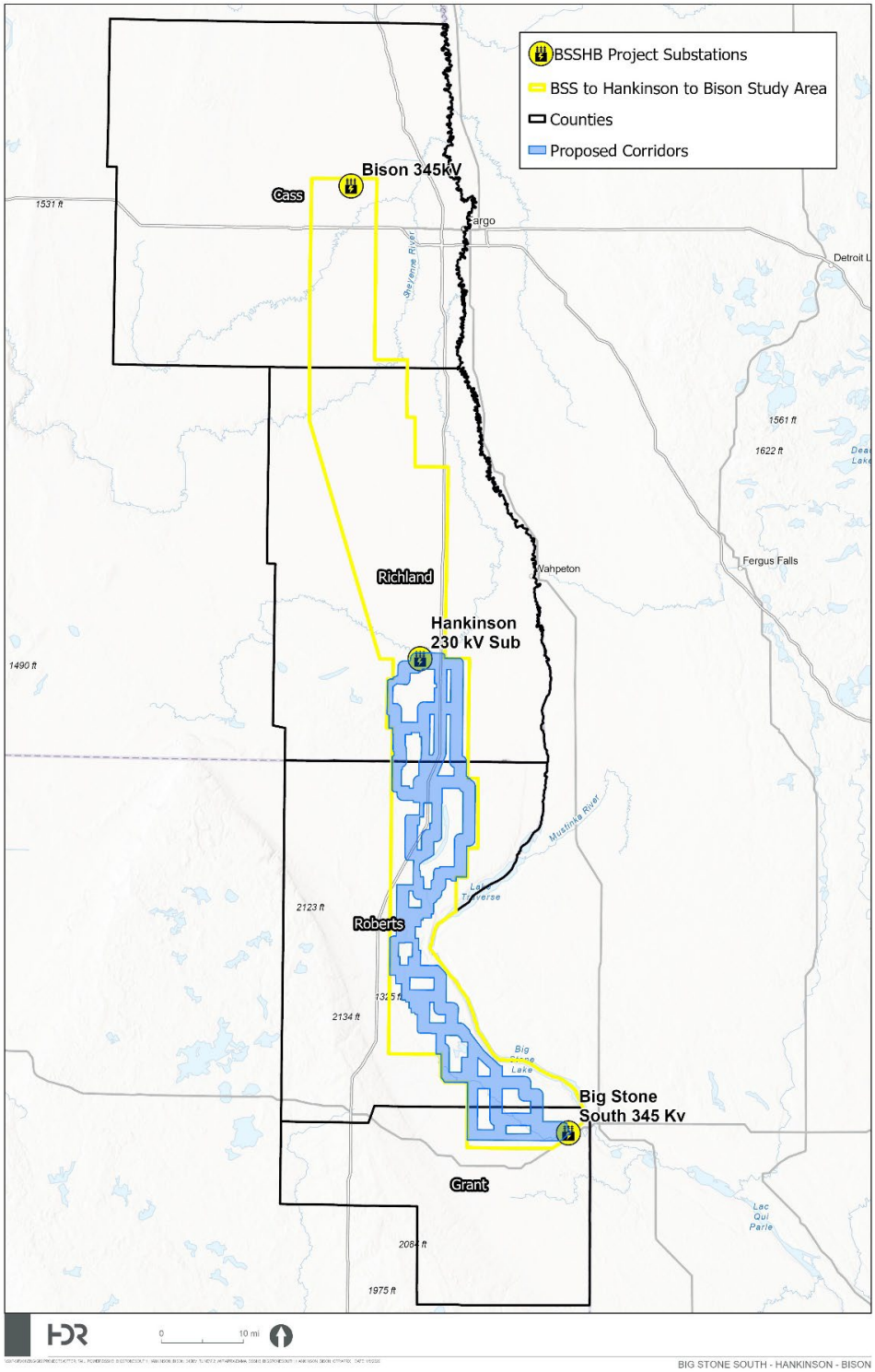
Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
Fergus Falls
Wahpeton
Richland
Hankinson
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1490 ft
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2134 ft
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
2084 ft
1975 ft
Lac
Qui
Parle
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10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Daren Peterson
Grant County Highway Superintendent
47789 151st St
Milbank, SD 57252

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Peterson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your office to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your office may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

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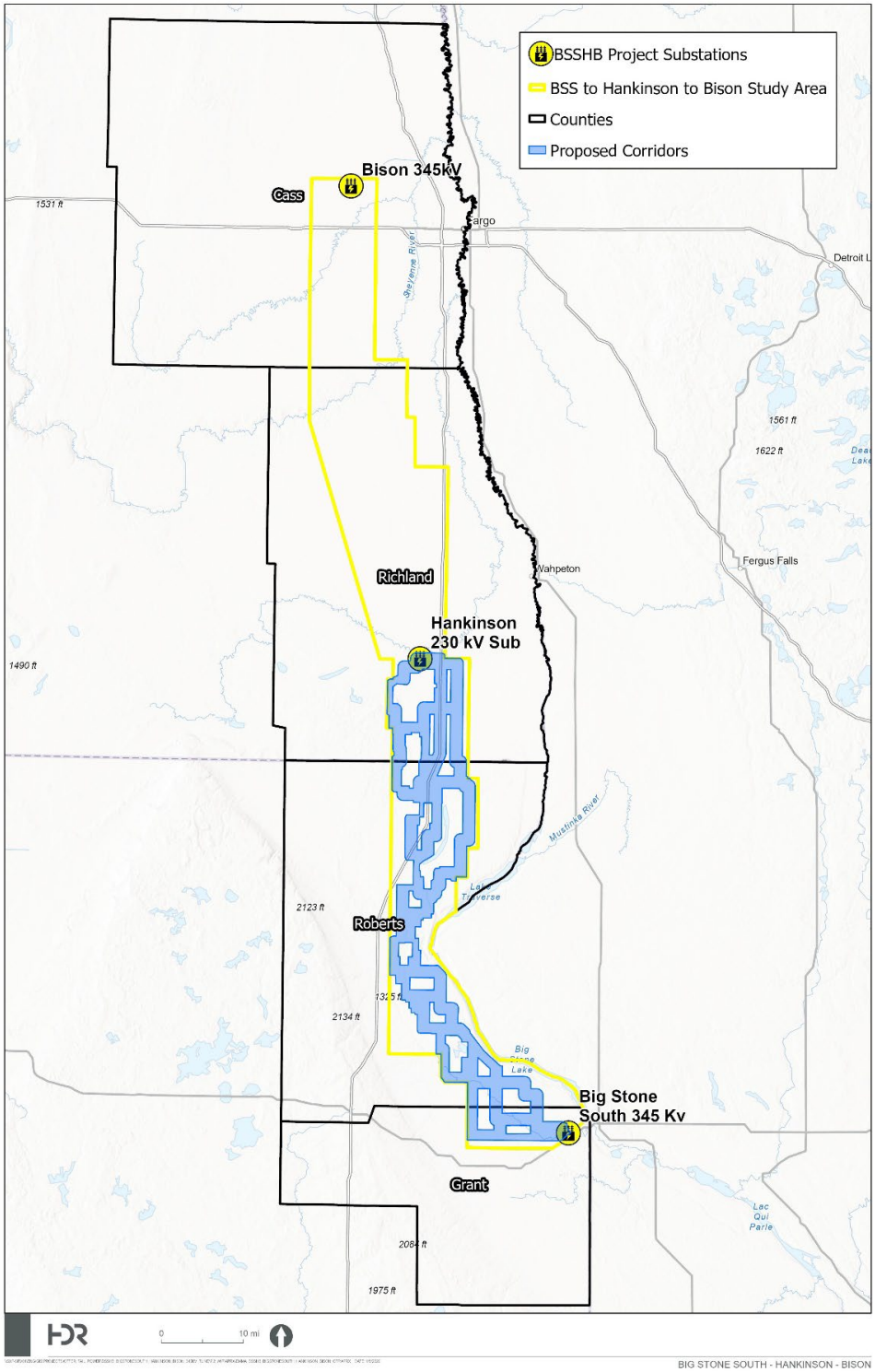
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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Steve Berkner
Grant County Planning and Zoning
210 E. 5th Avenue
Milbank, SD 57252

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Berkner,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

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Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

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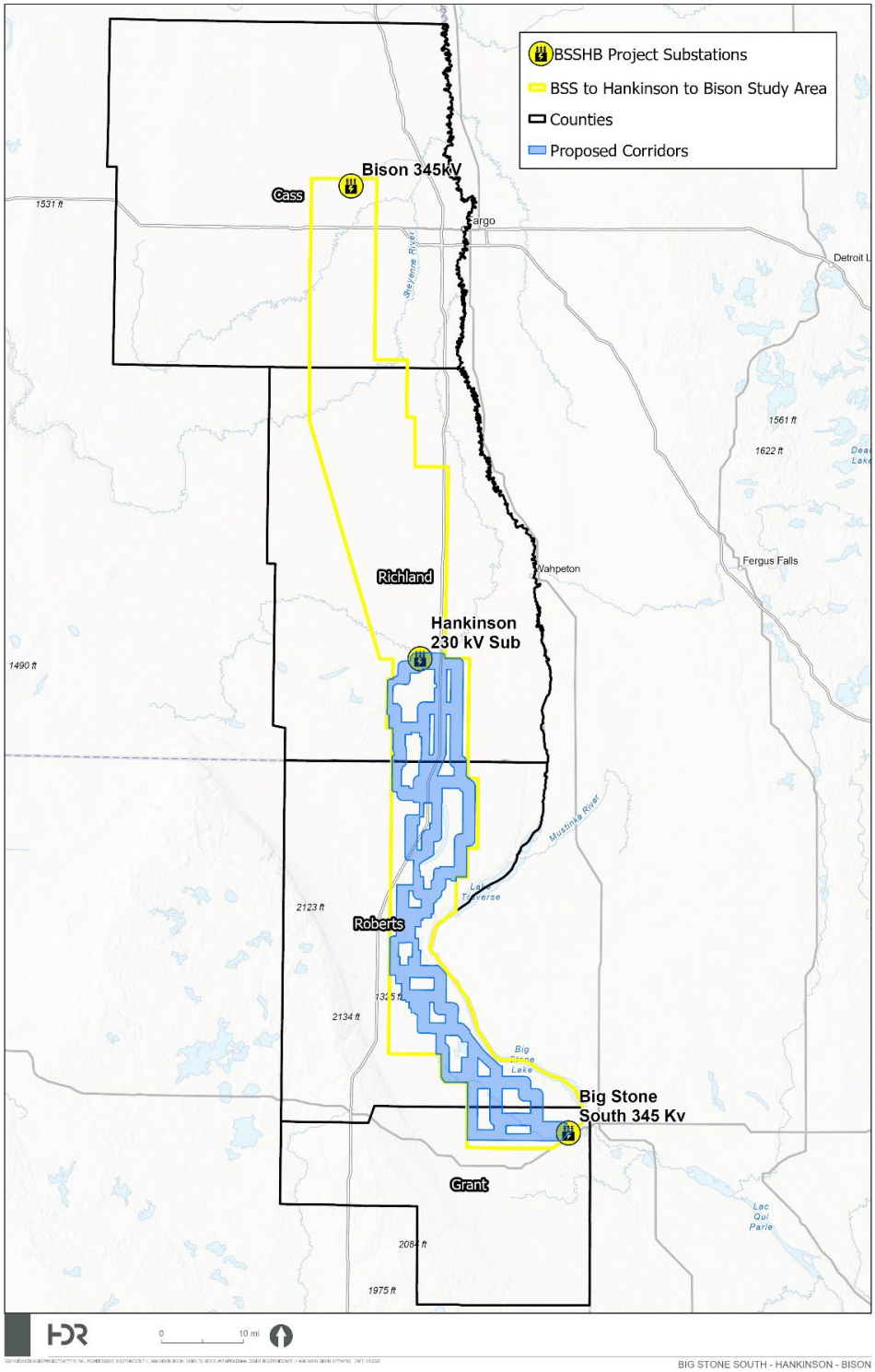
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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Kristi Fritz
Roberts County Auditor
411 2nd Ave. E., Ste. 1B
Sisseton, SD 57262

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Fritz,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
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January 27, 2026

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

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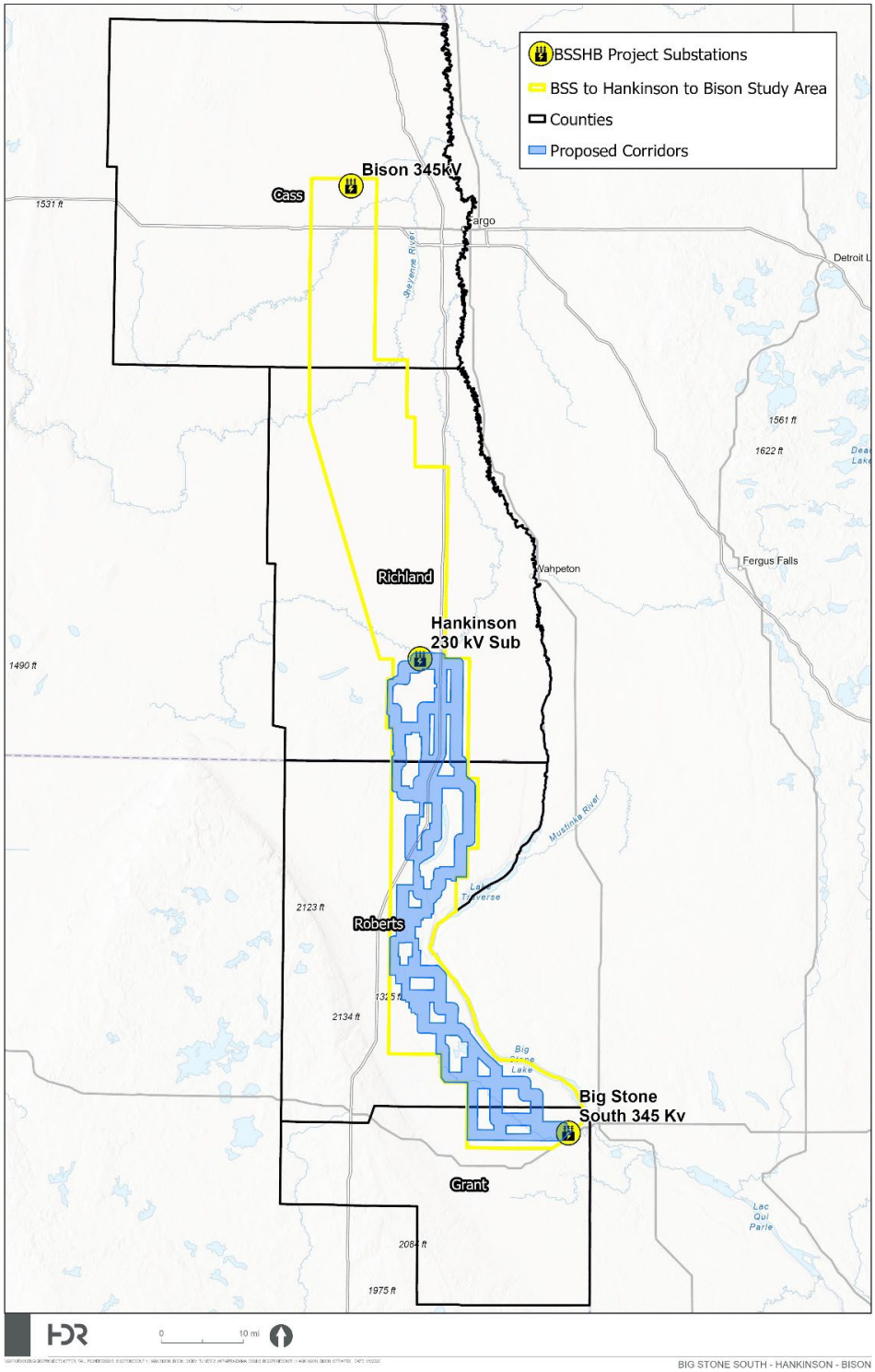
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Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

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BSS-H-B
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January 27, 2026

Chairman Brian Heinecke
Roberts County Commission
411 2nd Ave. E.
Sisseton, SD 57262

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Heinecke,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

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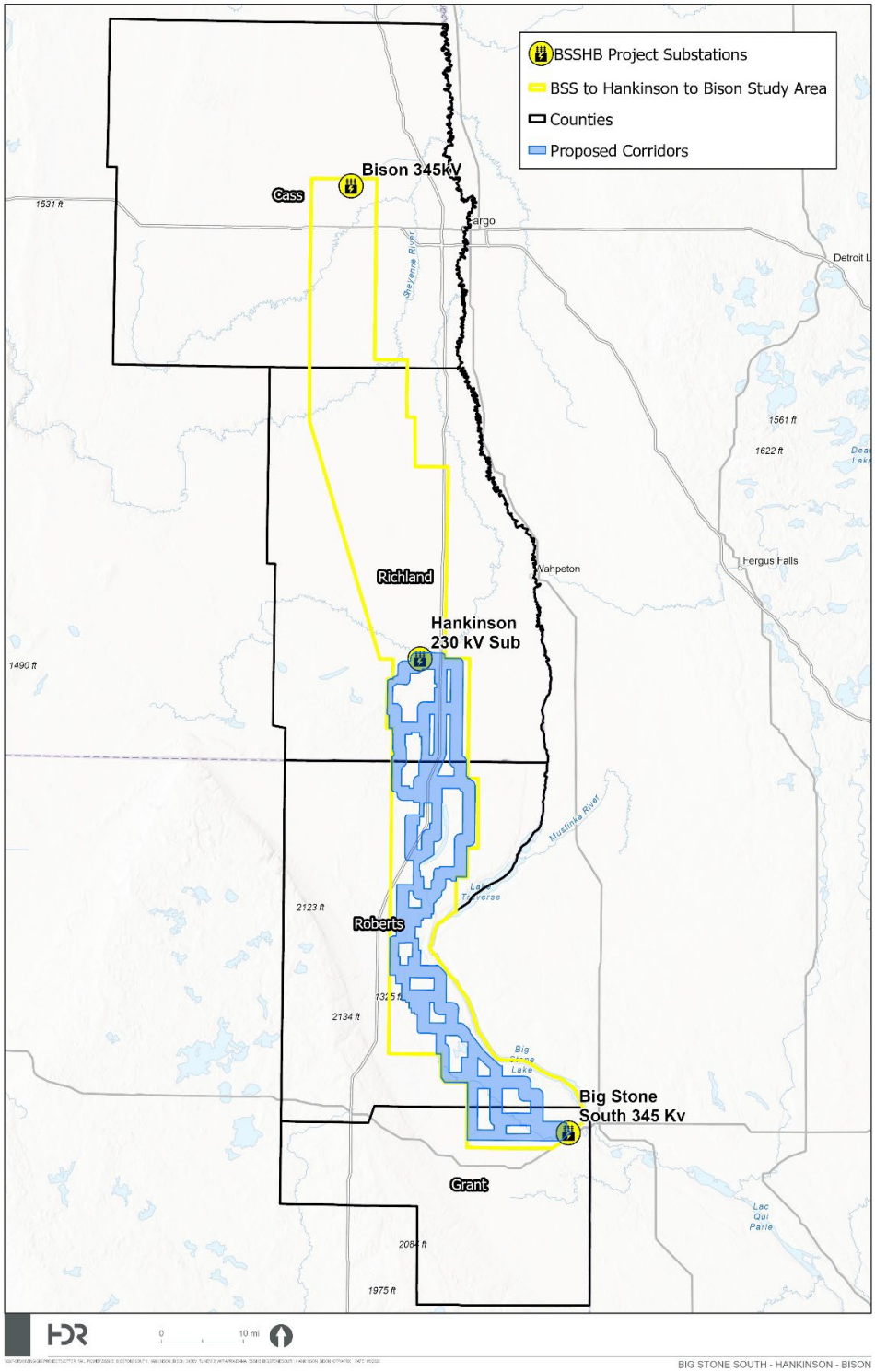
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George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
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BSS•H•B
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January 27, 2026

Joey Anderson
Roberts County Highway Department
11901 BIA Hwy 700
Sisseton, SD 57262

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

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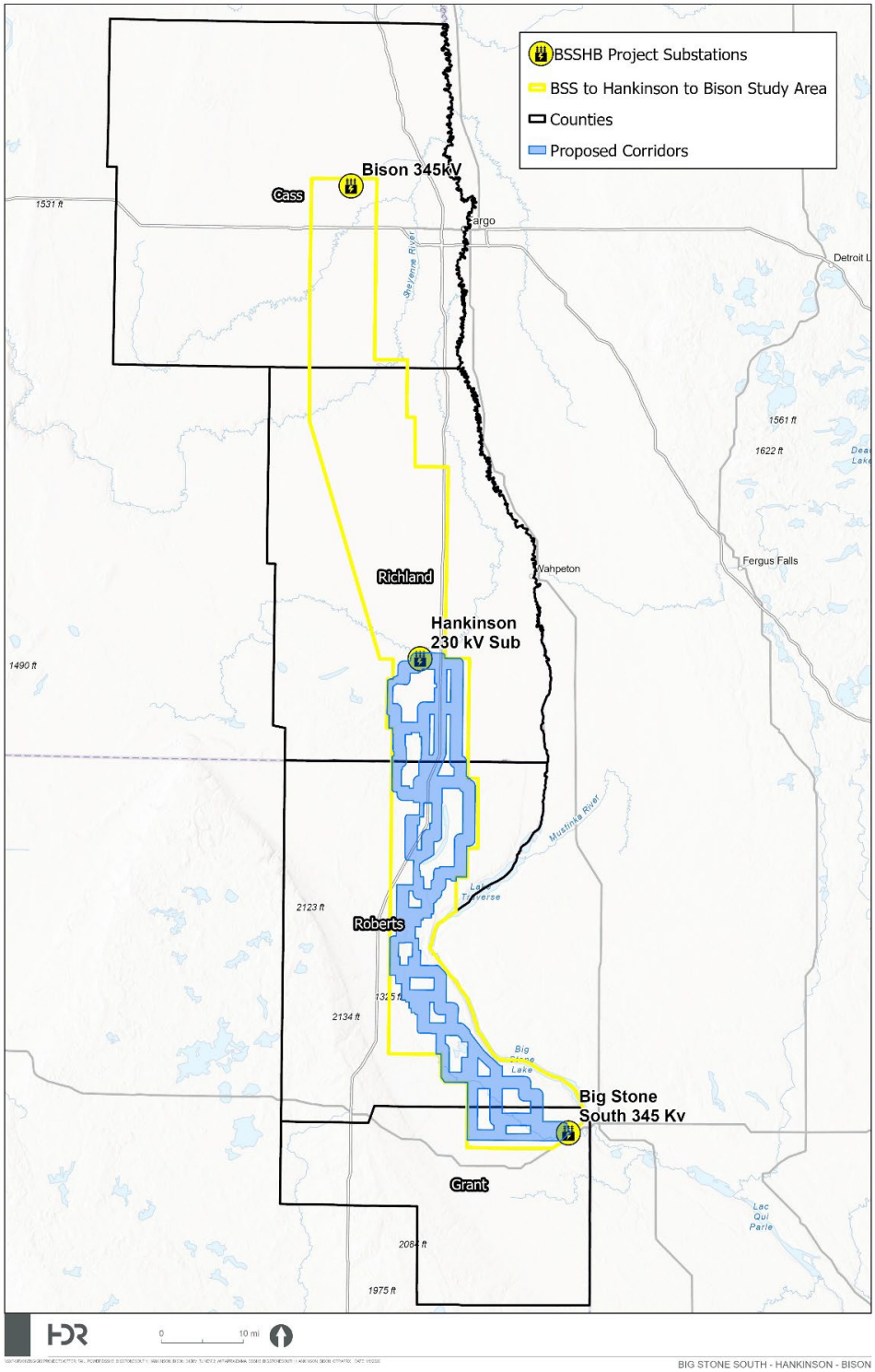
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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

From: Steingaard, Craig L.
To: Zoning
Subject: BSSHB Transmission Line Project - Roberts County Permit Confirmation Request
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 9:16:53 AM
Attachments: [redacted]

> You don't often get email from csteingaard@otpco.com. Learn why this is important

Hello,

We are reaching out to confirm our understanding of the permits required under Roberts County ordinances for future project activities for the BSSHB Transmission Project.

Based on our review, we have identified the following permits that may be applicable:

- **Conditional Use Permit – Transmission Line**
  Public utility and public service structures, including transmission lines, are listed as Conditional Uses in the Agricultural District. To be obtained prior to construction.
- **Conditional Use Permit – Substation**
  Required for substations associated with the transmission project. To be obtained prior to construction.
- **Floodplain Development Permit**
  Required for development within a Special Flood Hazard Area. To be obtained prior to work in the floodplain.
- **Road Approach Permit(s)**
  County approval required for approaches accessing public roads. To be obtained prior to construction of the approach.
- **Temporary Approach Permit(s) / Road or Right-of-Way Modification / Improvement / Utility Crossing Permit(s)**
  May be required for temporary construction access roads and for temporary facilities or modifications affecting roads under Roberts County jurisdiction. To be obtained prior to construction use.
- **Haul Road Agreement**
  May be required where construction traffic impacts county roads. To be obtained prior to hauling activities.
- **Highway Use Permit / Oversize-Overweight Permit**
  May be required for oversized loads on county roads. To be obtained prior to hauling activities.

Can the county review this list and confirm whether these permits are accurate? Additionally, please let us know if there are any other permits, approvals, or requirements that OTP should be aware of for work within Roberts County.

We were unable to locate all permit applications online. Could the county provide copies of the application materials for each of the permits listed above?

Any assistance on this is appreciated and we look forward to your guidance.

Craig Steingaard
Senior Transmission
Project Developer
Desk – 218-739-8335
Cell – 218-790-9022
otpco.com

***My working hours may not be your working hours. Please do not feel obligated to read or respond outside of your normal work schedule.**

From: Zoning <rc-zoning@robertscoad.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 9:15 AM
To: Steingaard, Craig L. <csteingaard@otpco.com>
Subject: RE: BSSHB Transmission Line Project - Roberts County Permit Confirmation Request

This Message Is From an External Sender
This message came from outside your organization.

Mr. Steingaard,

Thank you for your patience; I had to consult with several people about your questions and dig through some forms.

Regarding Conditional Use Permits, the county will address this project by issuing a single, very detailed CUP for the entire transmission line project. It will include the route of the transmission line, define locations of all substations, and describe all components of the project. This should hopefully simplify the process for both Otter Tail and the county. I will require a map of the lines/substations/etc. as part of the CUP application. The CUP will need to list the legal description of every property affected by the project. I have attached the application form that the county uses for CUPs and Variances. Please feel free to use additional pages, as the area provided for describing the reason for seeking a CUP is small.

Regarding Floodplain Development Permits, I believe that the best way to address the floodplain construction areas of the project will likely be to use a single, very detailed permit that describes all areas within the floodplain where construction will take place. I have attached the most recent version of the county's floodplain application that I could find. I am still waiting to hear back from my legal advisor at 1stDistrict about a possibly updated floodplain permit application and to ensure that it is federally compliant to use a single floodplain permit for the project.

Regarding various permits for roads, my office does not issue those types of permits, and I have not been able to find any application forms on file. You will need to contact

Joey Anderson, Roberts County's Highway Administrator, to discuss what road permits the county will require. He can be reached at highway@robertscosd.gov or 605-698-3905. Any agreements made between the Highway Administrator and Otter Tail as part of obtaining various road permits will be rolled into the CUP as required conditions that must be abided by.

Regarding a haul road agreement, I will need to speak with the Commissioners to confirm how they would like to proceed. However, it is my assumption that the county will require a haul road agreement due to the scale of the project. If the Commissioners agree to require a haul road agreement, it will be issued as a condition of the CUP. Again, I will need to consult with the Commissioners, but the county will likely provide you with its minimum road standards, and these standards will be applied to all of the involved county and township roads. This will hopefully create consistency in maintenance and restoration expectations across all jurisdictions within the county.

I hope this helps to clarify some things. Please feel free to reach out with additional questions, and I will keep you apprised of any additional permitting information as I speak to 1stDistrict and my Commissioners.

Thanks,

Roberts County Office of Equalization
Samuel Fredericksen
Deputy Director of Equalization
Zoning Administrator
605-698-3205
rcassessor2@robertscosd.gov
rc-zoning@robertscosd.gov

South Dakota Cities and Townships

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	South Dakota Cities & Townships	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter
03/26/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Bryant Township		Facility Status Update
03/26/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Harmon Township		Facility Status Update
03/26/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Hart Township		Facility Status Update
03/26/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Lien Township		Facility Status Update
03/26/2026	Meeting	Otter Tail Power Company and Victor Township		Facility Status Update

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Chair Larry Pelzel
Becker Township
12954 468th Ave
Browns Valley, MN 56219

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Chair Pelzel,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

The Project will require permits and approvals from multiple state and federal agencies, including the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission, North Dakota Public Service Commission, and potentially the U.S. Department of Energy due to partial federal funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership grant program. At this preliminary stage, a general study area has been defined, and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your office to gather further information and comment.

We request your review of the Project study area to help identify potential opportunities and constraints as we move toward selecting a preferred corridor. We would also appreciate being informed of any planned or reasonably foreseeable developments your office may be considering within the corridor. In addition, we welcome any information that would assist with our siting analyses and environmental studies, including relevant regulations, permitting considerations, or compliance requirements.

Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026. Your input will help inform a comprehensive environmental and permitting strategy that minimizes impacts and ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.

BSS•H•B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

Future opportunities for input will also be available. As the Project progresses, we are planning to have additional consultations with agencies, other jurisdictions, and landowners as we develop and refine a preferred route. We will also be hosting public meetings at three locations along the Project in February. The meetings will be held February 11-12 at the times and locations listed below. If you are interested in an individual meeting outside of our public meetings, please feel free to contact us and we would welcome the opportunity to share more information about the Project, answer your questions and take your feedback. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your collaboration as we advance this important regional infrastructure project.

Milbank, SD
February 11, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
City Hall
1001 E 4th Ave
Milbank, SD

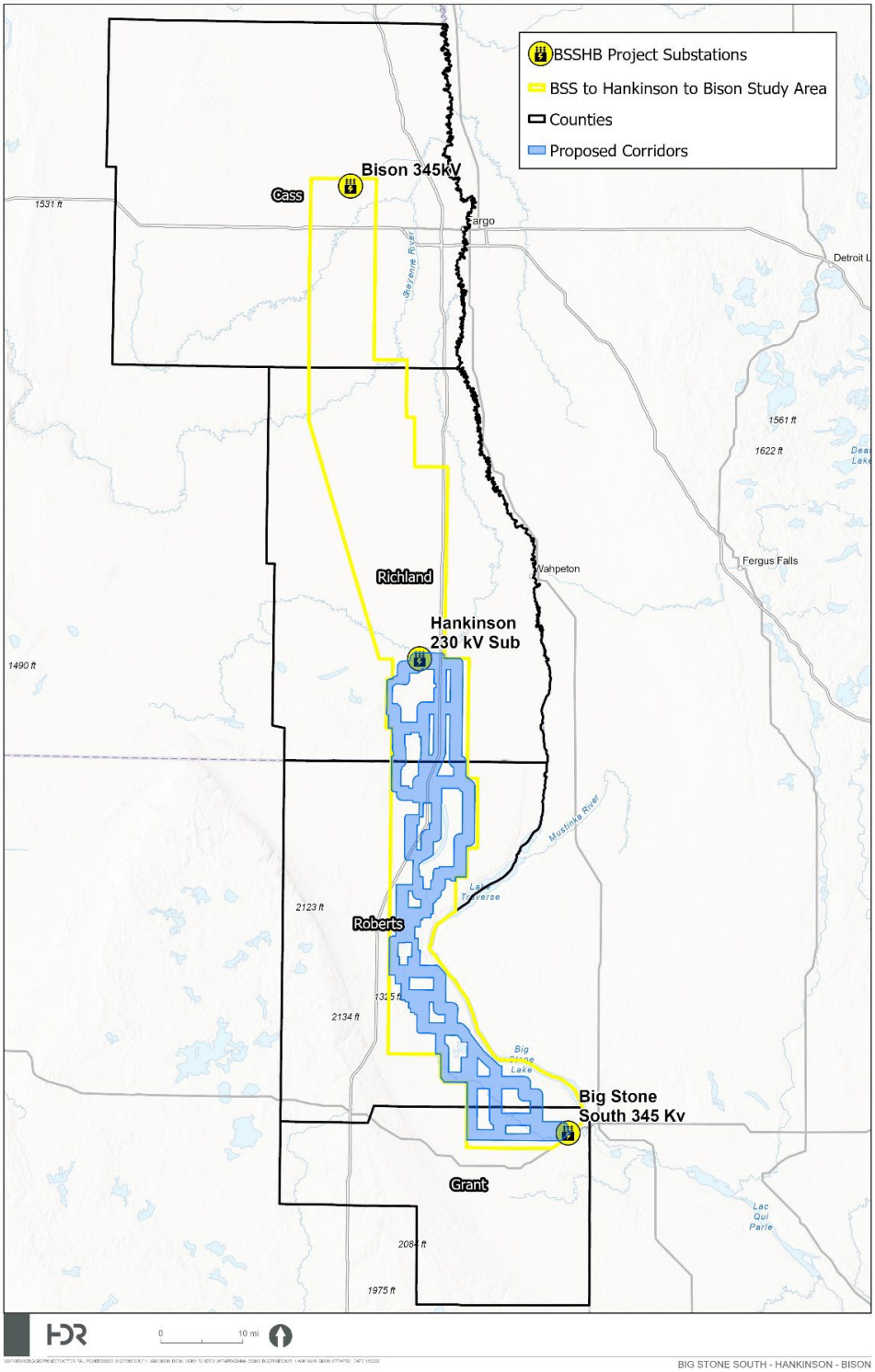
Wilmot, SD
February 12, 2026
11:00am – 1:00pm
Wilmot Community Center
516 Main St
Wilmot, SD

Hankinson, ND
February 12, 2026
Hankinson Community Center
112 Main Ave S.
Hankinson, ND

Sincerely,

George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
Counties
Proposed Corridors
Bison 345kV
Cass
Fargo
Detroit L
1531 ft
1561 ft
1622 ft
Fergus Falls
Wahpeton
Richland
Hankinson
230 kV Sub
1490 ft
Roberts
2123 ft
2134 ft
Big Stone
South 345 Kv
Grant
2084 ft
1975 ft
Lac
Qui
Parle
0
10 mi
BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON

Other LGUs

DATE	TYPE	FROM	TO	SUBJECT
01/27/2026	Letter	Otter Tail Power Company	East Dakota Water Development District	Request for Input – Facility Notification Letter

BSS-H-B
Big Stone South
to Hankinson to Bison

January 27, 2026

Jay Gilbertson
Manager
East Dakota Water Development District
132B Airport Avenue
Brookings, SD 57006

Re: Request for Input – Big Stone South to Hankinson to Bison 345 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Gilbertson,

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Xcel Energy are proposing to develop, construct, and operate a new 345-kilovolt (kV) high voltage transmission line extending from the existing Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, through the Hankinson Substation near Hankinson, North Dakota, terminating at the Bison Substation near Mapleton, North Dakota. This Project is part of the Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue (JTIQ) initiated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) which aims to build transmission network upgrades along the MISO-SPP shared borders to enable new generator interconnections.

The Project consists of approximately 150 miles of new 345 kV transmission line located in South Dakota and North Dakota. The portion of the line in South Dakota would be approximately 60 miles long and would extend through Roberts County and Grant County. The North Dakota portion would be approximately 90 miles long and would extend through Richland County and Cass County. Structures would primarily consist of steel monopoles with concrete foundations. Associated upgrades and expansions at the Big Stone South, Hankinson, and Bison substations are also planned. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2030, with the line expected to be energized by 2034.

At this preliminary stage a general study area has been defined and several prospective routing corridors have been identified for the Big Stone to Hankinson segment. Corridors will be selected based on public, agency, and stakeholder input, engineering and constructability best practices, environmental considerations, and regulatory rules and guidelines. Once prospective routing corridors for the Hankinson to Bison segment have been identified, we will re-coordinate with your agency to gather further information and comment.

A map of the Project area, including the prospective routing corridors for the Big Stone South to Hankinson segment, is enclosed. Please provide any available data, concerns, or recommendations by February 27, 2026.

Please direct your responses or requests for additional information to:
Michael Mayer
Project Manager, HDR Engineering, Inc.
1601 Utica Ave South, Suite 600
Saint Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 763-591-5463
Email: Michael.Mayer@hdrinc.com

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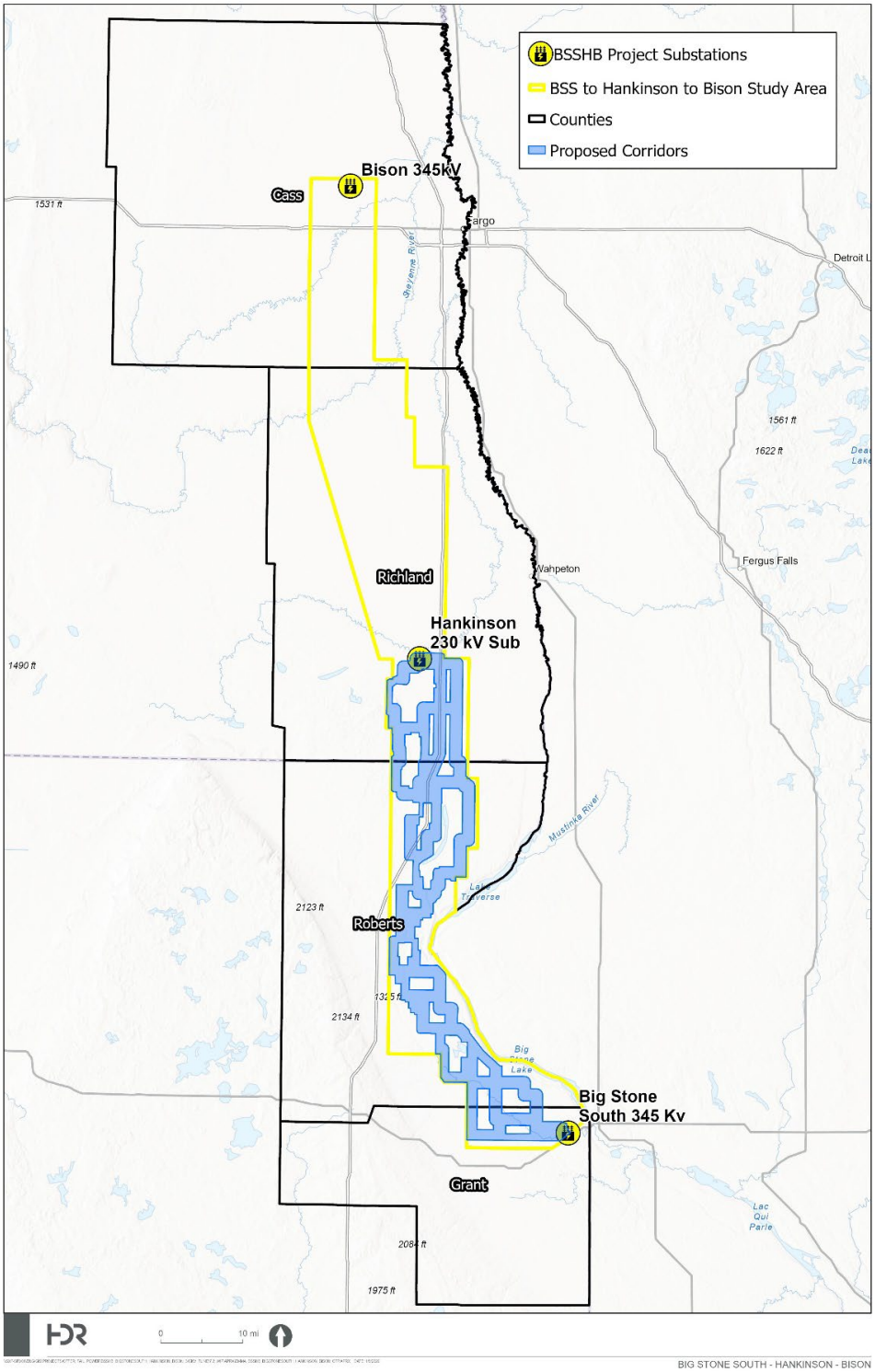
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February 12, 2026
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112 Main Ave S.
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Sincerely,



George Vinson
Senior Transmission Project Developer
Otter Tail Power Company

Enclosure:
Preliminary Project Map


BSSHB Project Substations
BSS to Hankinson to Bison Study Area
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BIG STONE SOUTH - HANKINSON - BISON