

216E.04 ALTERNATIVE REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Alternative review.** An applicant who seeks a site permit or route permit for one of the projects identified in this section shall have the option of following the procedures in this section rather than the procedures in section 216E.03. The applicant shall notify the commission at the time the application is submitted which procedure the applicant chooses to follow.

Subd. 2. **Applicable projects.** The requirements and procedures in this section apply to the following projects:

- (1) large electric power generating plants with a capacity of less than 80 megawatts;
- (2) large electric power generating plants that are fueled by natural gas;
- (3) high-voltage transmission lines of between 100 and 200 kilovolts;
- (4) high-voltage transmission lines in excess of 200 kilovolts and less than five miles in length in Minnesota;
- (5) high-voltage transmission lines in excess of 200 kilovolts if at least 80 percent of the distance of the line in Minnesota will be located along existing high-voltage transmission line right-of-way;
- (6) a high-voltage transmission line service extension to a single customer between 200 and 300 kilovolts and less than ten miles in length;
- (7) a high-voltage transmission line rerouting to serve the demand of a single customer when the rerouted line will be located at least 80 percent on property owned or controlled by the customer or the owner of the transmission line; and
- (8) large electric power generating plants that are powered by solar energy.

Subd. 3. **Application.** The applicant for a site or route permit for any of the projects listed in subdivision 2 who chooses to follow these procedures shall submit information as the commission may require, but the applicant shall not be required to propose a second site or route for the project. The applicant shall identify in the application any other sites or routes that were rejected by the applicant and the commission may identify additional sites or routes to consider during the processing of the application. The commission shall determine whether an application is complete and advise the applicant of any deficiencies.

Subd. 4. **Notice of application.** Upon submission of an application under this section, the applicant shall provide the same notice as required by section 216E.03, subdivision 4.

Subd. 5. **Environmental review.** For the projects identified in subdivision 2 and following these procedures, the commissioner of the Department of Commerce shall prepare for the commission an environmental assessment. The environmental assessment shall contain information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and other sites or routes identified by the commission and shall address mitigating measures for all of the sites or routes considered. The environmental assessment shall be the only state environmental review document required to be prepared on the project.

Subd. 6. **Public hearing.** The commission shall hold a public hearing in the area where the facility is proposed to be located. The commission shall give notice of the public hearing in the same manner as notice under section 216E.03, subdivision 6. The commission shall conduct the public hearing under procedures established by the commission. The applicant shall be present at the hearing to present evidence and to answer questions. The commission shall provide opportunity at the public hearing for any person to present

comments and to ask questions of the applicant and commission staff. The commission shall also afford interested persons an opportunity to submit written comments into the record.

Subd. 7. **Timing.** The commission shall make a final decision on an application within 60 days after completion of the public hearing. A final decision on the request for a site permit or route permit under this section shall be made within six months after the commission's determination that an application is complete. The commission may extend this time limit for up to three months for just cause or upon agreement of the applicant.

Subd. 8. **Considerations.** The considerations in section 216E.03, subdivision 7, shall apply to any projects subject to this section.

Subd. 9. **Final decision.** (a) No site permit shall be issued in violation of the site selection standards and criteria established in this section and in rules adopted by the commission. When the commission designates a site, it shall issue a site permit to the applicant with any appropriate conditions. The commission shall publish a notice of its decision in the State Register within 30 days of issuance of the site permit.

(b) No route designation shall be made in violation of the route selection standards and criteria established in this section and in rules adopted by the commission. When the commission designates a route, it shall issue a permit for the construction of a high-voltage transmission line specifying the design, routing, right-of-way preparation, and facility construction it deems necessary and with any other appropriate conditions. The commission may order the construction of high-voltage transmission line facilities that are capable of expansion in transmission capacity through multiple circuiting or design modifications. The commission shall publish a notice of its decision in the State Register within 30 days of issuance of the permit.

History: 2001 c 212 art 7 s 14; 2005 c 97 art 3 s 7,19; 2014 c 254 s 19