Legislative Council
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSMISSION COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 6, 2025
Coal Creek Station, 2875 Third Street SW
Underwood, North Dakota

Representative Anna S. Novak, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Anna S. Novak, Dick Anderson, Mike Brandenburg, Austin Foss, Pat D. Heinert, Dustin McNally, Alisa Mitskog; Senators Brad Bekkedahl*, Keith Boehm, Ryan Braunberger, Mark Enget, Kathy Hogan, Greg Kessel, Desiree van Oosting, Kent Weston

Member absent: Representative Todd Porter

Others present: Mark Doyle, McLean Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Ladd Erickson, McLean County; Peter Koegel, Power System Engineering, Inc.; Justin Kringstad, North Dakota Pipeline Authority; Ron Ness, North Dakota Petroleum Council; Sunny Raheem, Southwest Power Pool; Daisy F. Selvaraj, Energy and Environmental Research Center
See Appendix A for additional persons present.
**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Senator Hogan, seconded by Representative Anderson, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the August 27, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.

Mr. Austin Gunderson, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented a memorandum entitled *Comprehensive Energy Policy Study - Background Memorandum*.

IMPACT OF LARGE ENERGY CONSUMERS ON THE ELECTRIC GRID

Ms. Jessica Bell, Vice President, External Affairs, Rainbow Energy Center, presented information (Appendix B) regarding an overview of Rainbow Energy Center and Coal Creek Station. She noted:

- Rainbow Energy Center purchased Coal Creek Station in 2022.
- Coal Creek Station is the world's most efficient lignite-fired power plant, generating 1,200 megawatts of electric generation.
- The Coal Creek Station has several benefits as an independent power producer, including off-grid data mining and carbon management projects.
- The station connects natural gas generation, data, and transmission into one integrated system.
- Rainbow Energy Center plans to work with partners to develop a 136-mile pipeline to serve North Dakota with natural gas.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Bell noted various levels of federal and state agencies are providing guidance regarding the integration of large energy loads.

Mr. Ron Ness, President, North Dakota Petroleum Council, presented information (Appendix C) regarding the development of petroleum and natural gas production in the state. He noted:

- Natural gas production in North Dakota averages roughly 3.55 billion cubic feet per day. North Dakota's rich natural gas could become the next economic driver for the state.

- The use of CO_2 from North Dakota's industrial sources is necessary for enhanced oil recovery in the Bakken Formation.

Mr. Mark Anderson, Vice President, Business Development and Marketing, WBI Energy Transmission, Inc., presented information (Appendix D) regarding the Bakken East Pipeline Project. He noted:

- WBI Energy Transmission, Inc., (WBI) is a subsidiary of MDU Resources Group, Inc., and an interstate operator that transports and stores natural gas in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, and Wyoming.
- WBI uses 3,800 miles of transmission pipeline to transport 60 percent of Bakken residue gas and 70 percent of the state's residential natural gas consumption.
- The Bakken East Project is needed to provide additional takeaway capacity from the Bakken Formation to continue gas flow and the production of crude oil.
- The project would include approximately 423 miles of natural gas pipeline starting near Watford City and connecting to an existing WBI compressor station near Mapleton.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Anderson noted pipelines throughout the state, new easements, and adjacent facilities are part of their future work at WBI.

Mr. Justin Kringstad, Director, North Dakota Pipeline Authority, presented information (Appendix E) regarding an update on the North Dakota Pipeline Authority. He noted:

- 33 oil and gas drilling rigs are operating.
- Hydraulic fracking teams frack an average of five wells per month.
- Future gas transmission projects include the Minot Industrial Pipeline, Line Section 32 expansion, and the proposed Bakken East Pipeline Project.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Kringstad noted he was not aware of an increase in rates or energy disruptions from Canada.

Mr. Claire Vigesaa, Executive Director, North Dakota Transmission Authority, Dr. Daisy F. Selvaraj, Senior Research Engineer, Energy and Environmental Research Center, University of North Dakota, and Mr. Peter Koegel, Professional Engineer and Director, Transmission Planning and Interconnection, Power System Engineering, Inc., presented information (Appendix F) regarding transmission capacity and impacts of large energy loads in the state. They noted:

- The United States transmission grid was built during the 1960s and 1970s and is in need of updates and replacements.
- The load and generation modeling conducted during the study noted the average annual demand growth rates are 1.39 percent during the summer and 1.35 percent during the winter. The 2029 winter base transmission results show more issues in western North Dakota than other base models due in part to the Pioneer Generation Station being offline.
- Large load additions including network upgrades in North Dakota may add new economic opportunities for energy sale within the state; however, the introduction of large loads without matching generation will increase congestion and locational marginal pricings.
- Future study considerations include refined load forecasting, transmission reinforcement planning, large-load electrical characteristics, and integration with resource expansion studies.

Mr. Sunny Raheem, Director, System Planning, Southwest Power Pool, presented information (Appendix G) regarding an update on the Southwest Power Pool. He noted that demand for power is high and rapidly rising across the country. The most up-to-date load projections show a 33 to 99 percent increase in power demand from today.

Mr. Brian Tulloh, Executive Director, External Affairs, North Region, Midcontinent Independent System Operator, presented information (Appendix H) regarding an update on the Midcontinent Independent System Operator. He noted that North Dakota has 27 Midcontinent Independent System Operator-approved transmission projects totaling $645 million in investments. These projects include Jamestown-Ellendale, Beulah-Mandan Rebuild, Nelson Lake Substation, Wishek Rebuild, and Montana-Dakota Utilities network and interconnection upgrades.

Mr. Mark Doyle, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer, McLean Electric Cooperative, Inc., presented information regarding large-load programs.

Mr. Ladd Erickson, McLean County State's Attorney, presented information regarding local challenges with developing energy infrastructure.

No further business appearing, Chairman Novak adjourned the meeting at 3:59 p.m.

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Austin Gunderson
Counsel

ATTACH:8