

Resolution No. 2026-002

A Resolution Stating the Opposition of the Town of Richwood to the Proposed BECI 765-Kilovolt Electric Transmission Line Project Due to Environmental, Wildlife, Economic, and Community Sensitivity within the Driftless Area

WHEREAS, Transource Energy, LLC and BHE Transmission, through the Midcontinent Grid Solutions (MGS), is proposing the construction of a 765-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line extending from Walworth County, Wisconsin to Crawford County, Wisconsin, commonly referred to as the Bell Center-Columbia-Sugar Creek-Illinois/Wisconsin State Line (BECI) Project; **and**,

WHEREAS, until September 2024, Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) Long-Range Transmission Planning (LRTP), Tranche 2.1 planning maps avoided the Driftless Area option for a more northerly route through the Xcel Energy territory. After years of planning otherwise, in just three months between September and December of 2024, a less direct route through the central Driftless Area was adopted and awarded; **and**,

WHEREAS, the proposed BECI Project proposed route (Study Segment 5) is intended to traverse areas in the Town of Richwood in Richland County, Wisconsin and adjacent municipalities; **and**,

WHEREAS, the Town of Richwood is located within the Driftless Area, a region characterized by steep and fragile topography, cold water streams, karst geology, productive agricultural lands, extensive timber resources, landscapes that are unusually sensitive to disturbance from large-scale linear infrastructure; **and**,

WHEREAS, the proposed project is in proximity to the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, governed by Wisconsin State Statutes Sections 30.40 through 30.49, the longest free-flowing stretch of river in the Midwest, an area of diverse resources with a wide variety of wildlife including threatened and endangered species, fisheries, historical and archaeological sites, and regional aesthetics; **and**

WHEREAS, the Town of Richwood has a high concentration of family-owned farms which have met the criteria for Century or Sesquicentennial Farm recognition by the State of Wisconsin, and have been in the family for 3 to 6 generations with active farming operations; **and**,

WHEREAS, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), jointly authored by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources found that even smaller 345-kv electric transmission lines, “may result in negative impacts to property values, tax credits and heritage tourism.” and mentions studies showing devaluations from 10 to 45% depending on the proximity, visibility, size of parcel and whether sited in an industrial or natural setting; **and**,

WHEREAS, transmission lines of the 765-kilovolt class require wide permanent easements, tall structures, and ongoing vegetation management that result in substantial ground disturbance and may adversely affect wildlife behavior, nesting success, migratory patterns, and the ecological

integrity of protected and sensitive areas; **and,**

WHEREAS, the Town of Richwood's agricultural economy depends on productive farmland, livestock operations, and regenerative farming systems that could adversely affected by land fragmentation, easement restrictions, soil disruption, and concerns regarding electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure to livestock; **and,**

WHEREAS, scientific evidence indicates that such continuous industrial noise an electromagnetic interference disrupts the natural environmental, negatively impacting wildlife reproductive cycles, bird and amphibian communications and avian migratory patterns; **and,**

WHEREAS, the construction and permanent presence of a 765-kilovolt transmission line may result in measurable reductions in property values for affected and adjacent landowners due to visual intrusion, limitations on land use within easements, loss of privacy and rural character, and perceived safety risks; **and,**

WHEREAS, reductions in assessed property values or changes in land classification associated with the proposed transmission corridor may lead to long-term loss of property tax revenue for the Town of Richwood, shifting the tax burden to other residents and constraining the Town's ability to fund essential local services and infrastructure; **and,**

WHEREAS, the proposed BECI Project would require permanent clearing and perpetual maintenance of a broad transmission right-of-way, resulting in the irreversible loss of productive timberland, forest habitat, and associated ecological, economic, and carbon-sequestration benefits, **and,**

WHEREAS, the scenic blufflands, river corridors, forested landscapes, and undeveloped rural character of the Driftless Area are essential to tourism, outdoor recreation, and associated local business activity, and the introduction of large-scale transmission infrastructure may substantially diminish tourism appeal and result in long-term economic losses to the Town of Richwood and surrounding region; **and,**

WHEREAS, the proposed BECI Project would be a regional backbone system intended to transport electricity to distant markets, providing zero local benefits to the residents of the Town of Richwood post-construction while imposing 200-foot structures upon our lands; **and,**

WHEREAS, use of electricity in Wisconsin has been statically flat over the last 20 years; **and,**

WHEREAS, the construction and operation of the proposed BECI Project does not algin with the goals stated for Land Use and Development in the Town of Richwood's Comprehensive Plan; **and,**

WHEREAS, residents, landowners, and the electorate of the Town of Richwood have expressed significant concern regarding the cumulative environmental, agricultural, economic, scenic, and property-related impacts associated with the proposed BECI Project; **and,**

WHEREAS, the Town Board of Richwood has a responsibility to represent the interests, welfare, and expressed concerns of the Town of Richwood's electorate and to communicate those concerns to state regulatory authorities;

**Town of Richwood
Richland County, Wisconsin**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of Richwood, on behalf of the electorate of the Town of Richwood, formally and unequivocally states its opposition to the proposed BECI 765-kV transmission line project as currently proposed, due to the exceptional sensitivity of the Driftless Area and the unacceptable potential impacts on wildlife habitat, natural resources, agricultural, and timber lands, property values, the Town of Richwood's tax base, tourism revenues, and overall community character;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board of Richwood respectfully requests that the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin give careful and deliberate consideration of the Driftless Area, the presence of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, and the formal concerns of affected local governments and residents during its review of the BECI Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be entered into the official records of the Town of Richwood and transmitted to:

- The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
- Midcontinent Grid Solutions
- Transource Energy, LLC
- BHE Transmission
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board
- Any other state or regional agencies involved in the review of the BECI Project

Adopted this 10th day of August 2026, by the Board of the Town of Richwood, Wisconsin.

By:

/s/ David Conner
David Conner, Town Chairman

/s/ Edward Chitwood
Edward Chitwood, Town Supervisor

/s/ James Kratochwill
James Kratochwill, Town Supervisor

/s/ Lyle Williams
Lyle Williams, Town Supervisor

/s/ Ronald Georgeson
Ronald Georgeson, Town Supervisor

Town of Richwood:
Office of the Town Clerk
I, Tara Kent, Town Clerk of the Town of Richwood, in Richland County, Wisconsin DO
HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is a true and correct copy of the action taken by the Town Board of the Town of Richwood at the meeting of August 10, 2026, as indicated in transcription taken personally by me.
/s/ Tara Kent 08/10/2026
Tara Kent, Town Clerk