

**VILLAGE OF MERRIMAC
SAUK COUNTY, WISCONSIN
RESOLUTION NO. 2026-9-1**

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE BELL CENTER-COLUMBIA-SUGAR CREEK
ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN STATE LINE (BECI) 765 kV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Village of Merrimac is a municipal government located in Sauk County, Wisconsin, with responsibility to protect the health, safety, welfare, rural character, natural resources, agricultural lands, local infrastructure, and orderly land use of the Village; and

WHEREAS, Midcontinent Grid Solutions, a joint venture of Transource Energy and BHE Transmission, is developing the Bell Center-Columbia-Sugar Creek-Illinois/Wisconsin State Line (BECI) Project, described by the developers as approximately 190 miles of new single-circuit 765 kilovolt transmission infrastructure in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, publicly released preliminary corridor information indicates that the BECI Project is being evaluated through Sauk County, and no final route has been selected; and

WHEREAS, the proposed facilities would introduce extra-high-voltage transmission infrastructure on a scale materially larger than customary rural distribution and transmission facilities, together with towers, conductors, access routes, easements, vegetation management, construction traffic, and long-term maintenance obligations; and

WHEREAS, potential routes through or near the Village could burden productive farmland, forestland, residences, viewsheds, wildlife habitat, water resources, cultural and historic resources, and the Village's rural landscape, and could create uncompensated or inadequately compensated effects for affected landowners and neighboring properties; and

WHEREAS, the Village sits on the shore of beautiful Lake Wisconsin within the Driftless Area, a unique unglaciated region characterized by steep and fragile topography, karst geology, cold-water streams, productive agricultural lands, extensive timber resources, and landscapes that are unusually sensitive to disturbances from large-scale linear infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the scenic bluff lands, 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 loss to the Village and surrounding region and;

WHEREAS, the Village Board is concerned that the asserted regional benefits, cost allocation, need, load-growth assumptions, reliability justification, and reasonable alternatives have not yet been demonstrated in a complete evidentiary record accessible to the Village and its residents; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Stat. sec. 196.491 establishes the state certificate process for high voltage transmission lines and requires the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to evaluate need, public interest, alternatives, economic factors, reliability, safety, individual hardships,

environmental factors, and land-use impacts before approving a project; and

WHEREAS, local governments and residents must receive timely, meaningful opportunities to examine route alternatives, underlying studies, property and agricultural impacts, environmental information, construction plans, and ratepayer consequences before decisions become irreversible; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board finds that avoidance of the Village and adjacent lands is the most effective means of preventing the identified local harms and preserving the Village's land-use priorities and community character; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board, after consideration of the interests of the Village and its residents, determines that it is in the public interest to state its opposition clearly and at the earliest practicable stage of project development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Village Board of the Village of Merrimac, Sauk County, Wisconsin, as follows:

- 1. Formal opposition.** The Village Board formally opposes the BECI 765 kV Transmission Line Project as presently proposed and opposes the location of any BECI transmission line, tower, access road, staging area, or related facility within or near the Village of Merrimac.
- 2. Request for denial.** The Village Board respectfully requests that the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin deny any application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the BECI Project unless the applicant proves, on a complete and transparent record, every requirement of Wisconsin law, including that the project is needed, is in the public interest, and is superior to reasonable lower impact alternatives. The Village's present position is that those showings have not been made.
- 3. Avoidance if review proceeds.** If state or regional review of the BECI Project proceeds notwithstanding this opposition, the Village requests that all proposed routes and associated facilities avoid the Village and that applicants prioritize existing utility and transportation corridors, co-location, system upgrades, demand-side measures, storage, generation alternatives, and other options that reduce new land disturbance and community impacts.
- 4. Full disclosure and consultation.** The Village requests prompt disclosure of detailed route maps, structure designs and heights, right-of-way widths, access and construction plans, need and cost-benefit studies, Wisconsin ratepayer impacts, agricultural and property-impact analyses, environmental studies, and all reasonably available alternatives. The Village further requests direct consultation before any route is advanced through or on lands adjacent to the Village.
- 5. Protection of participation rights.** The Village Administrator and Village President are authorized to monitor project notices and regulatory filings, submit this Resolution to the project developers and reviewing agencies, request placement on all applicable notice and stakeholder lists, and take reasonable administrative steps to preserve the Village's opportunity to comment, intervene, or otherwise participate.

Any expenditure, retention of professional services, or substantive filing beyond transmittal of this Resolution remains subject to separate Village Board authorization.

6. Distribution. The Village Administrator shall transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to Midcontinent Grid Solutions, Transource Energy, BHE Transmission, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, MISO, the Sauk County Board Chair and County Clerk, and the Village's state legislators, and may transmit it to other affected local governments and interested agencies.

7. Effective date. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Adopted by the Village Board of the Village of Merrimac, Sauk County, Wisconsin, at a duly noticed public meeting held on September 8, 2026.

Vote Ayes: 5 Noes: 0 Abstentions: 0 Total 5

BY:



Andrew Gallus, Village President

ATTEST:



Jennie Klecker, Village Administrator