

TOWN OF ROCK

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-04

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE ROUTING AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROPOSED BELL CENTER–COLUMBIA–SUGAR CREEK–ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN STATE LINE (BECI) 765-kV HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE THROUGH THE TOWN OF ROCK, ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

WHEREAS, the Town of Rock, Rock County, Wisconsin, is a predominantly rural and agricultural community characterized by productive farmland, family farms, rural residences, woodlands, wetlands, waterways, open space, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources that contribute substantially to the Town's economy, environment, community character, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, generations of Town of Rock residents and property owners have invested in, maintained, farmed, protected, and preserved these lands and natural resources, which are an important part of the Town's identity, tax base, agricultural economy, and future; and

WHEREAS, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) has approved the Bell Center–Columbia–Sugar Creek–Illinois/Wisconsin State Line 765-kV Competitive Transmission Project ("BECI") as part of its Long Range Transmission Planning portfolio, and Midcontinent Grid Solutions has been selected to develop the project; and

WHEREAS, the BECI Project is proposed to consist of approximately 190 miles of new single-circuit 765-kV transmission facilities extending across Wisconsin to an interconnection at the Illinois/Wisconsin state line, and a final transmission-line route has not yet been selected; and

WHEREAS, BECI is a regional bulk-transmission project and is not being proposed specifically to meet a demonstrated local electric need within the Town of Rock; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board recognizes that regional transmission facilities may provide benefits to the broader electric system, but finds that communities through which such facilities are routed may nevertheless bear significant and disproportionate local land-use, agricultural, environmental, economic, and property impacts; and

WHEREAS, construction of a new 765-kV transmission corridor through the Town of Rock could require substantial rights-of-way and easements, clearing of vegetation, installation of large transmission structures, construction access, and permanent restrictions upon the use and future development of affected property; and

WHEREAS, such a corridor could fragment productive farmland, interfere with farming practices and agricultural operations, affect drainage systems, compact soils, cause crop losses, restrict the use of agricultural property, and reduce the productivity and long-term agricultural value of affected lands; and

WHEREAS, private property owners could be subjected to permanent transmission easements and restrictions affecting land that families have owned, maintained, farmed, improved, and intended to pass to future generations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed corridor could affect wetlands, waterways, woodlands, wildlife habitat, environmental corridors, groundwater and surface-water resources, open space, scenic views, and other natural resources while permanently altering the rural landscape and character of the Town; and

WHEREAS, a new transmission corridor could also affect property values, residential quality of life, future development opportunities, orderly land-use planning, the Town's tax base, local roads and infrastructure, and the use and enjoyment of private property; and

WHEREAS, once a new transmission corridor is established, its impacts do not end when construction is complete, as transmission structures, easements, vegetation management, access requirements, land-use restrictions, and alterations to the landscape may remain for generations; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board finds that the Town of Rock should not be required to bear avoidable losses of private property, productive farmland, agricultural resources, wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, natural resources, open space, community character, and future land-use opportunities when reasonable and less-impactful alternatives may exist; and

WISCONSIN TRANSMISSION SITING POLICY

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has established a specific state policy governing the siting of new electric transmission facilities under **Wisconsin Statute § 1.12(6)**; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6) provides that, to the greatest extent feasible consistent with economic and engineering considerations, reliability of the electric system, and protection of the environment, transmission facilities should utilize corridors in the following order of priority:

(a) Existing utility corridors;

(b) Highway and railroad corridors;

(c) Recreational trails, to the extent provided by Wisconsin law; and

(d) New corridors; and

WHEREAS, the placement of new corridors as the lowest statutory priority demonstrates Wisconsin's policy preference for utilizing existing infrastructure corridors where feasible rather than unnecessarily creating new corridors across previously unaffected private property, farmland, residences, and natural areas; and

WHEREAS, before the Town of Rock is asked to bear the permanent impacts of a new 765-kV transmission corridor, the Town Board believes that existing utility corridors and other higher-priority corridors identified by Wisconsin law should be thoroughly and transparently evaluated; and

WHEREAS, if a higher-priority corridor is rejected in favor of establishing a new corridor through the Town of Rock, the Town Board believes affected municipalities, residents, and landowners deserve a clear explanation of why that alternative was determined not to be feasible; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's statutory framework for major transmission facilities also requires the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to consider factors including alternative locations or routes, individual hardships, engineering, economic, safety, reliability and environmental considerations, public interest, and interference with orderly land use and development; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that the homes, farms, private property, wetlands, waterways, agricultural lands, environmental resources, and land-use plans of the Town of Rock deserve full consideration during that review; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of a project of this magnitude do not stop at municipal boundaries, and the Town of Rock shares interconnected agricultural lands, waterways, wetlands, environmental resources, transportation systems, and community interests with the neighboring Towns of Beloit, Turtle, and La Prairie; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes cooperation and communication among affected Rock County municipalities and their residents will help ensure that local concerns are meaningfully represented throughout the BECI planning and regulatory process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

that the Town Board of the Town of Rock, Rock County, Wisconsin, **formally and unequivocally opposes the routing and construction of the proposed BECI 765-kV high-voltage transmission line through the Town of Rock**, particularly where such routing would establish a new transmission corridor or cause substantial and avoidable impacts to residents, private property, productive farmland, agricultural operations, wetlands,

waterways, woodlands, wildlife habitat, natural resources, property values, land-use planning, or the rural character and quality of life of the Town.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the Town Board requests that Midcontinent Grid Solutions, MISO, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, and all other agencies and entities involved in the planning, routing, review, or approval of the BECI Project give full consideration and effect to the transmission-line siting priorities established under **Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6)**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that before any BECI route through the Town of Rock is selected or approved, the Town Board requests a clear and documented evaluation addressing:

1. Whether existing utility corridors can feasibly accommodate the proposed transmission facilities;
2. Whether highway or railroad corridors can feasibly accommodate the proposed facilities;
3. What existing and alternative corridors were evaluated and the reasons each was accepted or rejected;
4. Why establishment of a new transmission corridor through the Town of Rock would be necessary if a higher-priority corridor identified under Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6) is reasonably feasible;
5. The anticipated impacts of each proposed route upon residences, private property, productive farmland, agricultural operations, wetlands, waterways, woodlands, wildlife habitat, environmentally sensitive areas, property values, local roads, community development, and existing land-use plans;
6. The individual hardships that may be imposed upon affected residents and property owners;
7. The cumulative impacts of additional large-scale energy and infrastructure development upon the Town of Rock and surrounding Rock County communities; and
8. What measures have been considered to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts.

RELEVANT WISCONSIN STATUTES AND REGULATORY PROVISIONS

WISCONSIN STATUTE § 1.12 — STATE ENERGY POLICY

Section 1.12(6) — Transmission Facility Siting Priorities

Wisconsin law establishes an order of priority for siting new electric transmission facilities. To the greatest extent feasible consistent with economic and engineering considerations, reliability of the electric system, and protection of the environment, transmission facilities are to utilize corridors in the following order:

- (a) Existing utility corridors;**
- (b) Highway and railroad corridors;**
- (c) Recreational trails, to the extent permitted and applicable under the statute;**
- (d) New corridors.**

For purposes of the Town's position regarding BECI, this provision is particularly important because **new corridors are the lowest-priority category identified by the statute.**

The Town therefore requests that higher-priority existing corridors be thoroughly evaluated before any new transmission corridor affecting the Town of Rock is selected.

WISCONSIN STATUTE § 196.491 — CERTIFICATES FOR ELECTRIC GENERATING AND TRANSMISSION FACILITIES

Wis. Stat. § 196.491 establishes Wisconsin's regulatory process for major electric generating and transmission facilities, including the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity process applicable to qualifying high-voltage transmission facilities.

Among the statutory considerations applicable to PSC review are factors concerning the proposed route and location, alternatives, individual hardships, engineering, economics, safety, reliability, environmental impacts, public interest, and interference with orderly land use and development.

The Town requests that these protections and considerations be fully applied to any proposed BECI route affecting the Town of Rock.

WISCONSIN STATUTE § 1.11 — WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Wis. Stat. § 1.11 establishes Wisconsin's state environmental policy and provides the framework for environmental review of qualifying major governmental actions.

To the extent applicable to the BECI approval process, the Town requests full evaluation of potential impacts upon wetlands, waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, woodlands, natural resources, communities, and other environmental resources potentially affected by the project.

WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE — PSC CHAPTER 111

Wisconsin's Public Service Commission rules governing applications for major utility projects require transmission applicants to provide substantial information concerning proposed transmission routes and their impacts.

For high-voltage transmission projects, relevant routing information may include existing and proposed land uses, residential areas, agricultural lands, water resources, wetlands, wildlife habitat, natural areas, environmental resources, existing infrastructure corridors, and opportunities for corridor sharing.

The Town specifically requests that the applicant demonstrate how the transmission-facility siting priorities contained in **Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6)** were considered when identifying and evaluating BECI routes.

WISCONSIN STATUTE § 85.02 — DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

To the extent applicable to transportation corridors and agency decisions concerning transmission siting, Wisconsin law directs the Department of Transportation to implement the transmission-facility siting policy established under **Wis. Stat. § 1.12(6)** in applicable decisions affecting the siting of new electric transmission facilities.

STATEMENT REGARDING THESE AUTHORITIES

The statutes and regulatory provisions identified above are included to identify Wisconsin policies, review standards, siting priorities, and protections relevant to the proposed BECI transmission project.

Nothing in this Resolution is intended to claim that the Town of Rock possesses final transmission-siting authority reserved by Wisconsin law to the Public Service Commission or another governmental body.

The Town's position is that before a new 765-kV corridor is established through our community, Wisconsin's existing-corridor priorities must receive meaningful consideration, reasonable alternatives must be thoroughly evaluated, and the impacts upon the people, property, farmland, waterways, environment, and natural resources of the Town of Rock must be fully considered.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the Town Board urges the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to carefully evaluate whether any proposed BECI route through the Town of Rock satisfies all applicable requirements of **Wis. Stat. § 196.491**, including applicable considerations relating to alternative routes, individual hardships, public interest, engineering, economics, safety, reliability, environmental impacts, and orderly land use and development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the Town Board urges the project developer and reviewing agencies to avoid establishing a new transmission corridor through the Town of Rock when a higher-priority existing utility, highway, railroad, or other legally preferred corridor can feasibly be utilized consistent with Wisconsin law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the Town Board supports cooperation and communication with the **Towns of Beloit, Turtle, and La Prairie, Rock County, affected residents, landowners, and other neighboring municipalities** regarding the BECI Project and encourages a coordinated effort to protect the homes, property, agricultural lands, waterways, environment, and natural resources of our communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the Town of Rock reserves its right to participate in proceedings before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, submit comments, resolutions and evidence, identify and advocate for alternative routes, raise concerns regarding impacts upon the Town and its residents, and exercise any other rights available to the Town under Wisconsin law.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,

that nothing in this Resolution is intended to conflict with or supersede applicable state or federal law or the lawful jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin or any other governmental agency.

Rather, this Resolution constitutes the formal position of the Town of Rock regarding the proposed BECI Project and requests full consideration of Wisconsin's transmission siting priorities, alternative corridors, individual hardships, land-use considerations, environmental impacts, agricultural impacts, natural-resource protections, and the interests of affected local communities.

The Town Clerk is authorized to transmit this Resolution, at the direction of the Town Board and at the appropriate time, to the **Public Service Commission of Wisconsin**,

Midcontinent Grid Solutions, MISO, Rock County, neighboring affected municipalities, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Governor of Wisconsin, the Town's state and federal representatives, and other appropriate agencies and officials.

Submitted to the Town Board for consideration this 5th day of October, 2026.

Adopted this 5th day of October, 2026.

Town Chairperson Detara Bennett

Supervisor 1 Pete Paul

Supervisor 2 Imy Dubanowich

Supervisor 3 _____

Town Clerk Kristina Bennett