

Village of Walworth Resolution 2026-03

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PROPOSED BELL CENTER-COLUMBIA-SUGAR CREEK-ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN STATE LINE (BECI) 765-kV HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE THROUGH WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN

WHEREAS, the Village of Walworth, Walworth County, Wisconsin, is a small rural community characterized by families, retirees, small businesses and manufacturing businesses and is surrounded by productive farmland, family farms, woodlands, wetlands, open space, rural residences, and natural resources that contribute substantially to the Villages economy, environment, and quality of life; 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, the proposed BECI 765-kV transmission project is intended to serve regional transmission needs and would provide little or no direct benefit to the residents, farms, businesses, or taxpayers of the Village of Walworth while imposing significant burdens on Walworth County; and

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

WHEREAS, such a corridor could reduce property values, limit the use and enjoyment of public property, fragment productive farmland, interfere with farming practices and drainage systems, compact soils, cause crop losses, and reduce the productivity and long-term agricultural value of farmland; and

WHEREAS, Walworth County's rural scenery, agricultural landscape, natural resources, and community character contribute to tourism, recreation, local businesses, and the overall attractiveness of the area, and large-scale transmission infrastructure could discourage tourism and negatively affect these economic activities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed corridor could affect wetlands, woodlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, environmental corridors, and other natural resources, while permanently altering the rural landscape, agricultural heritage, scenic character, open space, and residential quality of the County; and

WHEREAS, the Walworth Village Board finds that the potential loss of property value, agricultural productivity, tourism activity, local economic opportunity, tax-base stability, and use of local land and natural resources would result in an overall negative impact on the Village's and County's economy, revenues, residents, and resources; and

WHEREAS, the Village Board believes transmission planning and routing decisions should fully evaluate alternatives that avoid or minimize impacts on established rural communities, productive agricultural lands, state and county recreational areas, residences, environmentally sensitive areas, and private property, with meaningful participation by affected municipalities and landowners.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Walworth, Walworth County, Wisconsin, formally and unequivocally opposes the routing and construction of the proposed BECI 765-kV high-voltage transmission line through the Walworth County, finding that the project would provide little or no direct benefit to Walworth County residents while placing disproportionate burdens upon the County through potential reductions in property values, loss of productive farmland, impacts upon agricultural operations, deterrence of tourism and recreation, disruption of the rural landscape, and negative effects upon the County's local economy, revenues, natural resources, and quality of life.

The Village Board further urges Midcontinent Grid Solutions, MISO, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, and all other agencies and entities involved in the planning and approval of the project to select a route that minimizes impacts upon agricultural lands, rural residences, private property, tourism, environmentally sensitive areas, and local economic resources.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that nothing in this Resolution is intended to conflict with or supersede any applicable state or federal law or the lawful jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin or any other governmental agency. The Village Clerk is authorized to transmit this Resolution to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Midcontinent Grid Solutions, MISO, Walworth County, the Village's state and federal representatives, the Governor of Wisconsin, and other appropriate officials.

Submitted to the Village Board for consideration this 14 day of September 2026.

Village President Louise Gzaja

Trustee 1 Steve Hovelton

Trustee 2 Brooke Yunker

Trustee 3 Peg Hubertz

Trustee 4 Ken Elertn

Trustee 5 Mehik Fell

Trustee 6 Bob Ball

Village Clerk

Kellie Thelen

Adopted: October 12, 2016