



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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## **PSC Approves Rockdale to West Middleton Power Line** *The New 345 kV Line will Utilize Existing Corridor along the Beltline*

MADISON – In an oral decision today, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) approved American Transmission Company's (ATC) request to construct a new \$214 million 345 Kilovolt (kV) transmission line and substation in Dane County.

In 2007, ATC filed an application with the PSC for permission to build between 32 and 55 miles of new 345 kV transmission line from eastern Dane County to the west side of Middleton to meet increasing electric demands of commercial, industrial and residential customers. The application also included proposed substations and related facilities along four different overhead route options, including one along the Beltline in the City of Madison and three other routes south of Madison before turning towards the Town of Middleton at varying points.

The Commission concluded that the route along the Beltline was the shortest and most cost effective option, with roughly 85% of its 32 miles being within existing transmission and transportation corridor. The route of the new line will run primarily along Interstate 39 and then head northwest to the Beltline Highway interchange. The route will continue west, and then veer north along the beltline to U.S. Highway 14 in the city of Middleton, where it will continue west to the Cardinal Substation in the town of Middleton.

The route along the Beltline was also selected because of its comparatively lower environmental impact when viewed against other route options. The Beltline largely avoids existing farmland and has the least amount of impact on wetlands. The Commission also approved the use of low-profile poles along the University of Wisconsin Arboretum and alternate structures adjacent to the Odana Hills Golf Course that minimize golf course impact.

Although building portions of the line underground was not a part of ATC's application, the Commission did consider undergrounding options along the Beltline. The Commission ultimately decided that the high construction costs, maintenance costs and reliability issues associated with undergrounding the line for aesthetic reasons did not justify the added cost and reliability concerns.

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“Dane County is one of Wisconsin’s fastest growing counties and the record in this case supports the need for this line,” said Chairperson Eric Callisto. “The route chosen along the Beltline is the best choice of those proposed. It is the cheapest, shortest and carries the fewest environmental impacts.”

“I was very impressed with the quality of public comments, and the input of intervenors and interested parties of this very important case,” said Commissioner Mark Meyer. “This was a difficult decision and the public will bear the burden of the cost of this project, however residents can be assured that this decision was made based on the considerations of many well-informed interested parties.”

“While the record demonstrates a need for this line now, I believe that a continued and increased focus on energy efficiency and conservation will mitigate the need for future infrastructure investments,” said Commissioner Lauren Azar. “Everyone can take actions to further optimize energy efficiency and conservation, including commissioners, commission staff, utilities and utility customers.”

The in-service date of the new line is expected to be by 2013. The Commission will issue a written order to finalize today’s decision at a later date.

Documents associated with ATC’s applications can be viewed on our Electronic Regulatory Filing System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Enter case number 137-CE-147 in the boxes provided on the PSC homepage, or click on the Electronic Regulatory Filing System button.

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