DATE: October 10, 2022

TO: Carla Vita, Director, Energy Transition, DEED

FROM: Thu-Mai Ho-Kim, Senior Economic Analyst, Economic Analysis Unit, DEED

## Re: Stakeholder Feedback on Draft ETAC Plan: Survey Results

The Energy Transition Advisory Committee (ETAC) conducted research on Minnesota communities impacted by past and expected power plant closures. The research process was divided into five areas: workforce; community engagement; tax base and financial incentives; re-use of assets and economic diversification. The process included presentations by officials in local communities and discussions and meetings with stakeholders. Based on their findings, ETAC developed a report detailing their recommendations.

ETAC distributed a preliminary draft of their report by email to stakeholders in late September 2021. The stakeholders included school districts, cities and counties; energy companies; Native American communities; and policy makers. As part of the circulation of the report, ETAC conducted a survey of stakeholder communities to gather feedback on the report. The goals of the survey included hearing concerns and ideas directly from stakeholders and local communities; determining how the report can be improved, such as where more clarity or information is needed; identifying missing or underdeveloped content; and identifying other related needs, such as for community engagement or communication. The survey results will generally contribute to improving the strategies developed to assist impacted communities.

The distributed emails included a link to an electronic feedback survey. The emails included a request that ETAC members (and other recipients) forward the email to any interested or impacted parties. There were two rounds of emails distributing the draft report and the survey – an initial email to ETAC members, and a follow-up reminder. The survey was open to receive responses for 10 days.

An initial group of 79 people[[1]](#footnote-1), representing ETAC members and other organizations, was sent the survey. They distributed the email to an unknown number of additional people. As a result of the distribution method, a response rate cannot be calculated. A total of 243 people completed the survey.

# Highlights of Results

* Nearly 70% of respondents identified themselves as interested community members, and about one-quarter of respondents were power plant employees.
* A large majority of responding stakeholders (87%) lived in a community that hosted one or more power plants owned by a public utility. Just over half of respondents were in communities near the Sherco (1,2,3) plants, while about one-quarter were near the Monticello plant.
* Nearly 80% of respondents are facing a closure in the decade between 2025 and 2034.
* While half of respondents thought the overall plan was clear to some degree, half also thought it was not clear. For each of the sections, a larger share of respondents (55% to 65%) rated the content as not clear, rather than clear to some degree. Further, more than 80% of respondents rated the plan and its component sections as needing more work.
* Repeating themes in the extensive open text comments included not closing the plants and keeping them open; extreme concern about their community’s future and the negative impacts of power plant closures on their local economy (particularly for displaced workers, families in the community); concern about the future energy supply and increased energy prices for the state due to future plant closures; lack of clarity and uncertainty regarding future job opportunities for displaced workers and availability of re-training; lack of communications regarding plant closures and the rationale for announced plant closures; and concern about alternatives, such as solar energy.

# Detailed Results

## Demographic Profile

### Q1. Which stakeholder groups do you represent? *Select all that apply.*

* Nearly 70% of respondents identified themselves as interested community members.
* About one-quarter of respondents were power plant employees, and about one-tenth represented schools and school districts.

### Q2. Is your organization/entity (company, school, city etc.) or your home in the following directly impacted communities and counties? *Select all that apply.*

* A selected list of counties and communities were listed among the answer options. The selection was derived from the preliminary ETAC Plan (p. 9). [[2]](#footnote-2)
* Slightly over half (53%) of respondents were in Sherburne County.
* About 31% of respondents selected “Other Minnesota county”. Based on question 3b below, a good number of these respondents are likely in Wright County. (Due to an oversight, Wright County was omitted from the list of selected counties.)

*Note: No respondents selected these answer options: Goodhue County, Not in Minnesota. One respondent selected each of these options: Otter Tail County, Prairie Island Indian Community, Other Native American community in Minnesota.*

### Q3. In your role as a stakeholder, does your community in Minnesota host one or more electric generating power plants powered by coal, nuclear energy, or natural gas; and that are owned by a public utility?

* A large majority of responding stakeholders (87%) lived in a community that hosted one or more power plants owned by a public utility.

### Q3b. In your role as a stakeholder, which power plant is in your community? *Select the closest if more than one applies.*

* Selected power plants were listed as answer options to this question. The list was derived from the preliminary ETAC Plan (p. 9).
* Slightly more than half of respondents (54%) selected the Sherco (1,2,3) plants, while about one-quarter (24%) selected the Monticello plant and about one-eighth (13%) selected the Boswell (1,2,3,4, Common) plants.
* Open-text responses by respondents who selected “Another power plant”:
* Becker, MN. (2)
* Sherco, Monticello, Prairie Island. My 'community' is greater than my county or one plant.

*Note: No respondents selected these answer options: Granite Falls, Hoot Lake, Taconite Harbor.*

### Q3c. What is the status of this power plant (selected in the previous question)?

* A large majority of responding stakeholders (83%) were in communities where plans for closure or retirement of their power plants had been announced. Another 1% of respondents had already experienced a recent closure.
* The remaining respondents (17%) were in communities with no impending or announced plans for closure.

*Note: Total may not add to 100% due to rounding errors.*

### Q3d. In what year is the power plant expected to close or be retired?

* About 14% of respondents are facing an imminent closure planned for between 2022 and 2024.
* Nearly 80% of respondents are facing a closure in the decade between 2025 and 2034 – with about half (52%) being impacted by one planned for between 2030 and 2034 and about one-quarter (27%) being impacted by one planned for between 2025 to 2029.

### Q4. Are you, or is someone in your household, a current or former employee at a power plant in Minnesota? *Select all that apply.*

* About one-quarter of respondents (24%) – or someone in their household – was a current employee of a power plant in Minnesota. About 8% of respondents involved previous employment at a power plant.
* The majority of respondents (or their households, 70%) was not currently or previously employed at a power plant in Minnesota.

## Feedback on the Draft ETAC Plan

### Q5. How clearly written are the draft ETAC Plan overall and each Task Force’s goals, findings and recommendations, on a scale of Clear, Somewhat Clear and Not Clear?

* For the overall plan, about half of respondents (51%) thought the plan was clear to some degree (Clear or Somewhat Clear), while the remainder rated the content as Not Clear.
* For each of the remaining sections, the majority of respondents (55% to 65%) rated the content as Not Clear. The remaining respondents were more likely to rate the content as Somewhat Clear rather than Clear.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Clear** | **Somewhat Clear** | **Not Clear** | **Respondents** |
| Overall plan | 11% | 40% | 49% | 204 |
| Workforce | 12% | 33% | 55% | 206 |
| Community Engagement | 11% | 29% | 60% | 203 |
| Tax Base, Financial Incentives | 15% | 26% | 59% | 203 |
| Re-Use of Assets | 10% | 25% | 65% | 204 |
| Economic Diversification | 11% | 25% | 64% | 202 |

### Q6. Rate the coverage of the goals, findings and recommendations for each Task Force area, on a scale of Good Coverage and Needs More Work. This will help us identify which areas need more work on research, analysis and recommendations.

* More than 80% of respondents rated the plan and its component sections as needing more work.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Good Coverage** | **Needs More Work** | **Respondents** |
| Overall plan | 16% | 84% | 198 |
| Workforce | 16% | 84% | 195 |
| Community Engagement | 14% | 86% | 197 |
| Tax Base, Financial Incentives | 14% | 86% | 191 |
| Re-Use of Assets | 12% | 88% | 192 |
| Economic Diversification | 12% | 88% | 187 |

### Q7. How should we further address these areas? What other ideas do you have for recommendations?

### Q8. What other comments do you have on the draft ETAC Plan, and how could it be improved or clarified?

* The last two questions requested open text comments about the overall plan and each section. The responses are provided *verbatim* in the Appendix. Repeating themes in the extensive open text comments included:
  + Not closing the plants and keeping them open
  + Extreme concern about their community’s future and the negative impacts of power plant closures on their local economy (particularly for displaced workers, families in the community)
  + Concern about the future energy supply for the state due to plant closures and increased energy prices if the state became reliant on wind and solar energy; and discussion of energy alternatives, such as concern about reliability of wind and solar energy, and using nuclear energy.
  + Lack of clarity and uncertainty regarding future job opportunities for displaced workers and availability of re-training
  + Lack of communications regarding plant closures and the rationale for announced plant closures.

# Appendix. Open-Text Comments on Draft of ETAC Plan

### Q7. How should we further address these areas? What other ideas do you have for recommendations?

Respondents were invited to comment on each of the sections, as well as the overall plan. Comments are presented *verbatim* below and may be loosely grouped by common themes. There may be other themes as well. Due to the sheer number of comments, not all comments were grouped by theme. Some respondents repeated their comments identically across the separate sections. There was minor editing of some comments for obvious typos or misspellings.

## Community Engagement (61 comments)

### Communication Needs

* A broader marketing strategy to these locations on the true impact that these power generation facilities have on the local economies. Answering the questions such as: What does this mean to me as a taxpayer?
* Better/more coverage. Make it understandable.
* Broadcast clear intent across multiple platforms and stop doing a disservice.
* How will the entire community be notified of any proposed closure – not just the workforce but those who get energy from the power plant?
* I thought this was the most robust section of the draft plan. Good acknowledgment of the real impacts and the importance of long-term, proactive engagement. One addition: the messages that come out of these really need to be shared with the regulatory bodies who make the final decisions about unit retirement/transitions. Their input processes are often broken and stuck in very formal, old ways of conducting engagement that do not encourage broad participation by people who are not insiders, and they often make no distinction between community residents most affected and outside lobbying groups. Bridging this gap is essential for community members to feel heard. Otherwise they will feel like they are shouting into the void. Don't create false expectations over what these engagement processes can achieve, as that will only increase the eventual alienation. This process has been an absolute disaster in practice so far, with state agencies all on completely different pages and rarely in tune with the communities.
* It was noted under Best Practices: Outreach/Planning/Advocacy that Oak Park Heights has a community task force. I live in Oak Park Heights and read both the local paper and the city newsletter and other city mailing but did not know this. It seems this should be better communicated. It is easy to be in the weeds if you are living this and think everyone should know. This is a big enough opportunity that it should be well publicized. And, definitely, to publicize why people should care now. The note also said 'Oak Park Heights is very limited on land for development. The King Plan site owned by Xcel needs a viable tax-base and high-way job business development option...' Explain what this means. Is this a high-tech venture? Manufacturing? R&D? Office park?
* Need to be truthful about the impacts of shutting down Boswell to the public.
* Open line of communication.
* Open, transparent communication is critical, as is gaining input from all stakeholders.
* Social media posts.
* This information needs to be communicated more widely to more people. I have heard little on this topic, and it sounds like it could impact large numbers of people.
* Xcel's lack of communication over this whole mess is concerning. Many of us have Connexus electric and Xcel gas. Where are the impacts? There needed public input that I may have missed due to a lack of communication in multiple venues. A mailing to public would have been best.

### Little or No Community Input or Involvement to Date?

* Has the communities’ input really been sought out? Sure doesn't feel like it.
* Host community engagement events.
* I don't feel that, overall, the community is informed as well as they should be. The local paper is biased and they slant in favor of the green new deal plans. There needs to be a reporter who is non-biased and will relate articles with facts and not just their opinions.
* Leech Lake like Prairie needs front table representation. Go To the people.
* Listen to the communities. This is affecting a lot of communities locally and throughout the state.
* No vote from the community.
* Since this was the first I had heard of ETAC, I'd say your engagement was not good for me
* Start telling the full truth about the closing and the problems that will happen. The people have a right to know all the pro’s and con’s.
* Telling the community what is going to happen with zero intention of implementing any of the community input is an insult. When the community asks a question of concern just “taking note” is not acceptable…. We deserve answers. IE…. Please provide reference/documentation to the studies the show changing from fossil fuels (coal) will help reduce the impact of climate change. Also show the economic impact of the trickle-down effect of closing coal plants. When the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing, what happens to the cost of the natural gas needed to heat homes when it is needed to fuel natural gas turbines needed to meet electrical demands.
* The community up until this point has had little say.
* The consumers need to be educated on what is the most affordable and reliable power generation and what they think is cheap and reliable might not be due to government subsidies.
* There has been virtually zero community engagement at all in our location. This is the first I am hearing about this on 09/29/2022.
* There is little to no engagement on what, when and how for the closure. The only outreach to households has been from organizations in opposition. Gives the position of sneakiness with higher government in on something.
* There needs to be greater community engagement and open public meetings to gather input from the communities that will be affected.
* There should have been a survey asking the affected communities their ideas.
* Tribal Consultation before the plan is finalized.
* Very little community involvement.
* We are all so uninformed on everything. If it wasn't for Facebook I'd know nothing.
* What role will the community play? Do they have an opinion or say in the matter? All decisions are made outside of their control by Utility company.
* What use is public input if the company and the government have already made up their mind that this is the direction the energy sector is going?
* When or where are the public meetings on this matter and I think you need to tell the public and employees the whole truth about the plan of shutting the coal plants down and where the power will be coming from.
* You aren't listening to the county's citizens in regards to the effects of solar farms on the land. There is no addressing the fact solar panels cannot be recycled or reused. They can only end up in landfills. Why isn't this being addressed?

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* Don’t shut down or shut off for solar.
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep Sherco and Monticello plants open.
* Listen to us and keep it open.
* No one asked if I wanted this closed.
* No shutdown.
* Stop the process of shutting down SherCo!
* This whole idea of closing the base power generation units is one of the most irresponsible ideas ever concocted up by the state and needs to be reversed ASAP. The power company is not being honest with the community. They are not telling the truth on the impact unreliability of the proposed renewables. They are painting a rosy picture using peak generation time 'middle of the day'.
* We don't want to see this Becker plant closed. Solar power is not a viable energy resource, especially in MN. The community needs more info.

### Other Comments

* Much of the report seemed to do a good job of engaging the community and capturing their concerns.
* Before shutting anything down I recommend there are not just recommendation in your plan, but agreements from the State of Minnesota/ Federal Government on how they will support the financial losses for the communities.
* Clear up the future of power plant sites. Be more specific.
* Funding both short-term and long-term is needed for this is a must.
* I sure hope the plan to waste valuable cropland, in favor of solar panels, gets reviewed by more intelligent people! Solar panels belong on rooftops, NOT valuable cropland that is needed to feed the world! Placing solar panels on cropland actually blocks plants from growing well and thriving, thereby preventing or at least restricting the amount of carbon that could be placed back into the soil! Isn't that defeating the purpose of reducing carbon? I have even heard that a lot of farmers now have to buy Sulphur with their crop fertilizer, because by shutting down coal burning Power Plants, less sulphur dioxide (SO2) is being released to the atmosphere! People should also be aware of where, and how, these rare-earth elements are mined that are needed to make foreign solar panels and batteries! Countries in Asia and Africa that use slave, and child labor, sometimes ending in death! I don't want THAT knowledge on my conscience!
* Increased use of electricity, but we decommission the largest power plant in the state before a plant less than one third its size is built. Can't make this up. Who elects these officials? It's not the land of rocks and cows.
* It seems the plan changes from what is presented.
* More surveys.
* Most people in MN do not think like the people and activists in St. Paul do.
* Plants keep the community engaged.
* Present to the County Board.
* Same thing with the community as the workforce you’re killing.
* Solar and wind are garbage to look at and will pollute worse than our clean burning coal.
* The community needs to engage in learning that many clean energy options do not provide 'baseload' energy. The focus needs to be on new nuclear. Small modular reactors are the future and the focus needs to be on investing and planning for deployment of small modular reactors using the infrastructure framework already available at the Sherco and Monticello sites.
* There is absolutely no mention of increased costs regionally due to more expensive generating options being phased in. We are already seeing the power cost adjustments. This survey and ETAC do nothing to address the concerns of average rate payers in the affected areas.
* These towns will die. Their economy is supported by the taxes paid by the plant.
* This report addresses the plants leaving as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETELY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting. Our energy prices will skyrocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
* This should be a focus.

## Economic Diversification (43 comments)

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* Coal is a much better solution than solar.
* Don’t shut down and shut off for solar.
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep Sherco and Monticello open.
* No shutdown.
* Stop the process of shutting down SherCo!

### Negative Community Impacts

* All I saw here was local government start planning for future help from State dollars.
* Electric rates are going up 55% next 3 years based on your article in the Sauk Rapids Herald. This is a losing proposition for the family.
* Huge negative impact to Becker community and Sherburne County.
* I failed to see how many small businesses could replace the economic impact that a coal plant has on a small community. This sounds great in the planning process, but I failed to see in the report anything beyond a pipe dream.
* It won’t happen, just killing income for families.
* The closure will devastate the community and power prices.
* The jobs created have to be paying a livable wage. Not menial...
* The people in Becker are going to be the worst hit by this! Sherburne next! Then Minnesota! But to give false info about the impact on the residents who count on that energy to heat home and function will be unsuccessful because it cannot keep up. How about the disposable area that will have to be made to dump the panels after 10yrs. This needs to be talked about and known.
* There are no economic benefits. Presently there are hundreds of folks employed at the power plant, whereas if the proposed change were to occur, there would only be employment for maybe a couple of dozen.

### Renewable Energy Alternatives

* By closing down another unit from the Becker power plant, we are creating more of a problem. You cannot rely on solar power to give off as much power as the existing form. The solar panels will end up in our landfills, are extremely expensive and are impractical.
* 'Diversification' would mean not putting all of your eggs in one basket. Xcel is putting all of its eggs in wind and solar; two sources of energy that are unpredictable.
* Include wind and solar power operations.
* Not sure of a solution, but the solar providers have an upper hand. They offer leases to landowners for solar fields. As a result, solar fields can be located where they can severely limit a municipality's ability to grow. Cities, Townships, and Counties do not have the funds to compete with those offers and often land is leased before the city even knows that the property is tied up in a longterm lease.
* They plan on putting a Solar Farm on 3500 acres.
* This report addresses the plants leaving as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETLY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting. Our energy prices will skyrocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
* We have seen what happens to closing coal and nuclear energy in other places in the country like California. Are they confident that going to solar power will be able to meet the current and future needs of Minnesotans? Since Minnesota has considerably less sunlight than California.

### Other Comments

* Again, a lot of info that needs to be dissected.
* Ah yes, Sherco sells their land ($$) to a prospective company that one day will come but the city/county has to give abatement or add additional infrastructure to accommodate the possibility of Xcel selling the land to a company. If it's Xcel land, Xcel is the developer not a government agency. When you’re removing a large taxpayer where would the funds come from to reinvest in your community to offset the loss of funds?
* Before shutting anything down I recommend there are not just recommendation in your plan, but agreements from the State of Minnesota/ Federal Government on how they will support the financial losses for the communities.
* Costs too much to replace the reliability of the plants! We don’t run out of power now!!
* Diversity contributes to a healthy community. An area must work to diversify or face extinction if it relies too heavily on one industry.
* Doing what we can, need federal and state support.
* Economic diversification is not an issue, it's about having power.
* Funding is needed for impacted communities and counties for site prep or development of shovel-ready sites. These are also impacted by the number of wetland acres across rural Minnesota and make it difficult for those areas to develop the needed more extensive pieces of land to attract large businesses that generate even a fraction of the tax revenues and good-paying, family-sustainable jobs. Short-term and long-term funding is needed for this is a must and should be targeted to a 45-minute drive time of the impacted plant.
* Funding that enhances communities’ technical capacity here, without requiring major match, will be essential. Also, state regulatory processes need to be addressed even more directly in this place. Watching the debacle over the Huber process in Cohasset has been a souring experience on economic development in this state, period. Frankly, it has led me to question my career choice in economic development. We can throw all the resources we want at communities to support diversification, but if the state makes the implementation of actual projects miserable, it's all pointless.
* Have not seen that the proposed plan will actually make up more money for the community. Looks like we will pay more.
* How come the community didn't get a say in anything?
* How well thought out has a diversification plan been strategized to be effective?
* Need more details for all of the future plans for their sites.
* So where are the materials using to make these updates coming from? Where are the storage units for the power going to be put when they are shot? Batteries and things like them do not last very long then they are shot. So where are they going to be put? In a land fill? They now go into our food source, water table, and in the air for us to breathe? This is not for the better of people and mother nature like you portray it to be, it’s to line the pocketbooks of the ones behind it. And you guys push it because you get paid to do so. You’re killing the working families, and actually killing people with their health from putting poison in their food source, water table, and air they breathe. This is heavy on the socialist way of life: make a few rich and in power, then step on/ use everyone else to get there. I hope this weighs on your heart every single day, cause you’re going to have to answer to the Big Man upstairs at some point when your race has run.
* This is important.
* This should be a focus.
* We have a great opportunity for jobs and new tax base by having Huber wood products build. Now get that done so they can. Our state MN is terrible at getting new businesses to come in due to the extreme politically driven regulations.
* What are the options? What are other communities doing? What is working for them? How can it work here?
* What does this even mean?
* What is going to happen to the employees at Sherco? Are we going to be able to work here until retirement working on site clean-up? Are we going to be relocated?

## Re-Use of Assets (51 comments)

### Re-use Plan – Need More Details, Discussion

* By the time they get around to reuse redevelopment, the blight of the infrastructure rotting in place will be a firefighter’s nightmare.
* Demand a more clear plan from companies for the future of their sites to keep tax base and allow for community benefit.
* Don’t waste what is there.
* How to market the assets.
* How??? No plan. What do you do with a retired nuke plant?
* No clear path on what this looks like - different options are mentioned, but I do not even know what MP's preference would be.
* Not sure what the real plan for either the Sherco coal plants or the Nuclear plant is after closure. In addition, how reliable will power delivery be after this closure? Looking at California’s situation (rolling blackouts, with a serious increase in power demand on the horizon with the electric vehicle mandate, and no clear solution for them), we really don’t want to follow their example. Sure, the heat of summer can get really uncomfortable, however, the cold of winter is life-threatening without a reliable heat source.
* Nothing has been published about what will happen with assets.
* Power Plants shouldn't be allowed to close and abandon infrastructure for it to then become a burden on the local municipalities. A clear plan for re-use or demolition should be required and a timeline implemented and monitored.
* Priority should be given to projects that use the latest technologies and provide an example of what new energy saving ideas can be instituted.
* Putting a fancy name and wording on something that has no intentions of doing anything better for the workers, the community, or mother nature.
* There are no details on this. What will be used of the facilities and waste?
* This needs to be presented clearly to the taxpayers what the plan is long term.
* This seemed to be touched on very lightly. The biggest obstacle appears to be the government permitting process and regulation, which would be a classic case of the government getting in their own way. Streamline the process, and these solutions become much more viable. However, nothing that replaces the plant will fill the hole that remains in terms of tax base and community impact (positive).
* Told it'll be mothballed or reused. We have even been told it could be transitioned to some other business.
* What are they going to do with the 2000 plus acres of land that will be unused once BEC closes? Are they giving the opportunity for the previous landowners to repurchase OR is it going to be just a big state tax burden and liability for the 'closed' ponds etc.
* Whose assets? Are they owned by the energy company? Again, how are the decisions made to the best for all? How can the community contribute ideas and make an impact?

### Alternative Energy Options – Solar, Nuclear

* Address the use of wind and solar power on the vacated land.
* Build a new nuclear power plant at Laskin. It is isolated away from any large community and has ample space to build. Consider re-converting plant to coal.
* Has anyone who is promoting the solar panel farm, proposed how and where these hundreds of acres that presently raise food, will be replaced? Maybe in what was once the Brazilian Rain Forest? Experts say that the world population will certainly increase, so we will need to produce more food!
* Should be commissioned into Natural Gas or even Nuclear. People just don't like the word 'Nuclear' because it's associated with bombs & waste. Yet it is a good option.
* I did not see a lot about R & D in renewable energy. Solar panel manufacturing. Old ore pit renewable storage and hydro generation. THINK out of the box solutions were lacking.
* The infrastructure is there to take advantage of the recent DOE study suggesting utilizing closing power plant sites to build, house and run small modular reactors.
* The solar field will take up too much room and the materials used are not easy to dispose of at the end of life.
* Use small nuclear reactors. BEST alternative.

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* DO NOT CLOSE.
* Don’t shut down and shut off for solar.
* How about not shutting down.
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep it open and this question is irrelevant.
* Keep plants open.
* Keep the assets running at full base load with local contractors providing quality, LOCAL labor, creating further stability in the region specifically when extreme variables are coming.
* No shutdown.
* Sherco should be sold to northern States and continue to operate.
* Stop the process of shutting down SherCo!
* The best use of the assets is to continue using the facilities as intended and designed.

### Other Comments

* Again uninformed.
* Again, a lot of info that needs to be dissected.
* Are these employees or the location and landfill areas at Sherco?
* Funding both short-term and long-term is needed for this is a must.
* Have a 2050 and 2070 energy impact plan, not just a narrow minded 2030 plan.
* If the State is going to dictate what industries can't be in the community, then they should also put in writing what industries are going to be allowed.
* Lies.
* National scenic waterway.... Good luck building anything.
* Power plants may have other licenses or permits from the state that could continue to be used after the plant is decommissioned. For example, Sherco is permitted to draw water from the Mississippi River and discharge it back after use (likely other plants have similar permits.) These permits provide a potential asset for development and redevelopment of power plant property. If the permit limits can continue to be met, consideration should be given to allowing those permits to continue to be in force - either by the current licensee or transferred to another entity (new entity or a local government unit) so they can continue to utilize that asset in their economic development efforts.
* Additionally, the city, in partnership with Xcel and MNDOT, has created a BEAUTIFUL trail system. Any thought to extending trails to this area when possible? People who may not care about other topics may be interested in this.
* Shovel ready certification will be a very challenging designation for legacy sites such as those of power plants; perhaps more useful on adjoining greenfield property (if it exists) or elsewhere in the community. Don't create false expectations there. Brownfields funding may be more appropriate. Intrigued by the playbooks from other states, would value sharing some of these examples with affected communities. Appreciate the discussion of an incentive package specific to affected locations, though would encourage thinking broadly about where these projects can go and ensuring the host community enjoys the benefits of funding equalization if they go down the road.
* Since this is the heavy hand of Government, this will be another large budget item for the taxpayers.
* The closest Tribes should have the 1st right of refusal to get plant property put in to trust according to the 1825 treaty boundaries between Dakota and Ojibway tribes.
* This report addresses the plants leaving as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETELY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting. Our energy prices will skyrocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
* This should be a focus.

## Tax Base, Financial Incentives (61 comments)

### Impacts on Taxes, Tax Base: Lack of Clarity, Need More Information

* By closing our Becker power plant our taxes will increase substantially for every homeowner and business owner. People will move elsewhere and this will hurt our economy in Becker.
* Families are already leaving the area due to high taxes! I can't wait to see what they are once Boswell closes.
* How does Wright County/ Monticello plan to make up for the loss of a $9 million tax base?
* How will the community be impacted? Are plans realistic? I believe this will have a tremendous tax impact on the community and families that has not been addressed or thought through.
* How will this affect our property taxes?
* Need to show the financial impacts to the people of Itasca County so they understand the tax burden that they will have to pay out of their pocket.
* Not sure how we will be taxed on this project or how much it will cost taxpayers.
* Obviously, the tax base will be hurt substantially. This was a selling point for bringing the plants in the first place.
* Only see tax information during tax time and annual property tax time.
* Same as above... No feasible alternative to replace tax base.
* Share the actual numbers. Stop the smoke and mirrors.
* Show how tax losses for the communities can be recovered. Areas have worked with these power plants in the past when others didn't want them.
* Taxes and energy costs will go up. Just say it.
* The negative economic impact on the surrounding communities is going to be catastrophic.
* The phased plan should be over many years, as a majority of the communities depend heavily on the tax base the plants pay.
* There has been no distinguished process in the past on how a community can plan accordingly. When estimates arrive they ALWAYS change from the Dept Rev based upon the ability to appeal. When does a host city get to appeal?
* Truth about how much are taxes are going to increase!

### About Tax Incentives, Examining Alternatives

* A solution I found missing was investment in cleaner emissions from coal plants or investments in nuclear SMR technology (converting coal plants to Small Modular Reactors), which would keep the tax base that is so vital to the community while still achieving many of the environmental goals. The coal plants touch so many parts of the community and are woven into its very fabric. To rip it out is going to leave a huge hole that likely will never be filled. It will be a hole existing long after politicians are out of office.
* Appreciate the emphasis on all funding jurisdictions, not just the city or county. Funding equalization/fiscal disparities efforts are great tools and I support pushing them as far as we can go at the state legislature. That is the level at which meaningful change can happen.
* Before shutting anything down I recommend there are not just recommendation in your plan, but agreements from the State of Minnesota/ Federal Government on how they will support the financial losses for the communities.
* Better bring in other large businesses to support the tax base lost by Sherco.
* Business 1st Stop is a great program but is hindered by a lack of transparency in the process and timeline. When attracting or expanding a business, time is money, and speed to being operational is critical. Funding both short-term and long-term is needed for this is a must.
* How can the financial incentives help to assure that solar/alternative power generation equipment is sourced in ways and from places that do not cause significant environment damage from extraction of materials and manufacturing processes, especially overseas, etc.?
* If the big push is to stop coal-burning to generate electricity, then other electric utilities in Minnesota should be ASKING Xcel Energy to build MORE Nuclear Plants for THEM! Xcel has the expertise and an impressive track record running Nuclear Plants! For example, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency based in Rochester, MN, owns 41% of Sherco Unit 3, so why shouldn't other utilities commit to owning, or at least buying electricity from a new Nuclear Plant? Many other countries are building new Nuclear Plants, why not America? There are even new Reactor technologies that we need to develop to maintain our technological lead!
* Increase the minimum wage to make sure the replacement jobs are not crumby.
* Perhaps a legislative moratorium to give time for local governments to put zoning regulations in place that allows for well-thought out development to occur - both solar as well as a community. Right now the process seems to be governed primarily by the PUC and some local control needs to be provided. nb
* Press legislation to assist these communities with dollars allocated to promoting economic development that will offset the closures of these facilities.
* Reduce solar panel footprint to allow for more industrial land for increased tax base for Becker.
* Subsidies are nothing more than corporate WELFARE to the already subsidized farmers.
* The choice to close down economically viable plants will set our state economy back significantly and cannot realistically be replaced with more state spending as tax revenues will drop as well. Please stop picking winners and losers through state incentives that is not the job of government
* What exactly will replace the power plants to shut down? What tax incentive will taking away $9 million dollars from our counties do?
* Work with city and county to provide tax incentives.

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* Closing the plant is a huge mistake.
* Don’t shut down and shut off for solar.
* Keep it open.
* Keep plants open. (2)
* No shutdown.
* Sherco has been a great asset for many years.
* Sherco is the largest taxpayer in Sherburne County.
* Stop the process of shutting down SherCo!

### Other Comments

* How will 72% be replaced exactly?
* How will probable waste left after plant closures and possible environmental affects be funded into the future. I assume ratepayers will be on the hook to pay for these liabilities if needed in the future. What will happen to funding of response personnel for Prairie Island and surrounding communities after a nuclear plant closes and the waste stays? What will happen to ash ponds to ensure there is not disturbances and possible environmental releases from these ponds. If there is an increase in energy costs due to the energy transition, how will people that can least afford energy price increases be made equitable for these individuals.
* I know nothing on this sadly.
* I need to absorb all the details and talk to Becker officials to really understand.
* It will negatively affect my community
* It's not about tax base
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep the taxes coming in
* Not useful
* Power plants generate an incredible amount of taxes, but again this should not trump stewardship of our environment.
* See publicizing note in Community Engagement
* Stick with industry. Alway put infrastructure first.
* The closure of Boswell will affect the entire county drastically. They tell us BEC provides the lions share of tax base in Itasca county and even more so in Cohasset.
* This pain point is well known, not much else we can elaborate.
* This report addresses the plants leaving as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETLY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting. Our energy prices will sky rocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
* This should be a focus.
* This will cost everyone involved to make a few rich at the top. The ones behind this steel money from the working class, and put a 'friendly/ green' name on it to justify it to themselves and to paint a good picture to the public. Darn disappointing in what people will do for richness and power.
* What does this mean for us?
* When the tax incentives for wind and solar expire, coal is and will certainly be the most economical way of providing power to customers. Why doesn't Xcel Energy educate the public on this? Why is Sherco putting price ladders on their coal units to artificially inflate coal prices?
* Who pays for the reclamation of the farmland when the 20-year lease is up? Is the farmer required to pay? Are the taxpayers required to pay this? This is even IF the farmland can be re-claimed after all the chemicals and broken panels have leached into the soil. It will be at least $1,700 per acre to reclaim just ONE acre after the solar panels and its components have been removed. WHY isn't this being addressed?? Or are you just ignoring this fact?

## Workforce (75 comments)

### Uncertainty about the Future, Plan for Replacing Jobs Lost

* A more solid plan for workers future when plant closes. If workers are only told 'you'll have a job' there is no reason to stay until the affected plant shuts down. Experienced workers have a great effect on both plant efficiency and the safe operation of the plant.
* All current employees should be guaranteed jobs with new solar plant at or above current pay grade due to the stress this caused.
* Before shutting anything down, I recommend there are not just recommendations in your plan, but agreements from the State of Minnesota/ Federal Government on how they will support the financial losses for the communities.
* Destroys our family income.
* I would like to know what is going to happen to us workers at the plant when they decide to shut the place down. It claims we will still have a job but where or what will it be?
* I would like to see actual jobs that pay the same, not hypothetical jobs.
* If the idea is to 'transition' to green energy, where will the jobs be for current power plant employees? Also, if the idea is to transition the current employees to the so-called green energy side, where will those jobs be if the construction is already done to afford the transition? And then there's the wages too.
* If the plan to close our Becker plant happens? There will be hundreds of jobs lost.
* It remains unclear what will be done with the employees at Sherco. Many of them will more than likely be able to find other jobs in the company, but for an overwhelming majority, there is a lot of uncertainty as to what will happen with them. Many are looking or at least entertaining the idea of finding new jobs.
* It’s not feasible to replace the good jobs that will be lost in the community/
* Jobs will be lost.
* Keep them employed.
* No explanation from Xcel on future workforce plans for remaining employees. Also, a lack of resources to maintain and operate the existing units is leading to a risk of reliability and operating efficiency.
* Need high skill/high paying jobs in Itasca County!
* NEW JOBS.
* No clear plan on dislocated workers at this point - partly because we do not have a clear plan on the re-use of assets.
* Realistic discussion about replacing 100% of the income base that this work group has earned in order to continue being a contributing group towards economic vitality in the community and state.
* Support for the workforce seemed to focus on government aid and mental health resources, which misses the mark on what the workforce really needs. They want good-paying jobs to provide for their families, not a handout to just get by. A lot of these communities frown on the prospects of 'the government will take care of me'. It's not a sustainable solution.
* Temporary job creation should not be used as justification to the loss of any full time jobs. Also there is no way the workforce requirements create jobs for “local” residents. Also no definition for “local” has been provided…
* The vast amount of families depending on these jobs, would they be transferred to another industry? Who will take their skills? What trainings will be provided? What alternatives would replace current energy production?
* There needs to be a lot more businesses in the northern part of MN to keep it healthy economically.
* This plant closing will take thousand jobs away from the community.
* We need to continue to provide opportunities for the loss of workforce due to shutting down of the plants, loss of jobs, loss of wages.
* What are plans beyond attrition of workforce?
* What are you going to do about the mass job loss?
* What is the plan upon closure of the plant? We haven't heard any plan. What incentive does any employee have to stay working at a plant that is shutting down?
* What is the realistic long range plan and sustainability? Is it realistic based on what we are seeing in other countries around the world?
* Where is the plan to provide job security for us hundreds to thousands of affected power plant employees?
* Where will the workers get jobs?
* Where will these employees go?
* Where would lot of workers go when this place get shutdown? I mean there are well over 150 people working here and a lot of us do not want to travel, so do you have enough work in the local area? In other word, I think you will lose a lot of good hard working bunch of guys and gals.
* Without adding additional industry in the area, it does you no good to identify the skills of the workforce available. This plan pays lip service to the workforce, not a real plan.
* You will be eliminating many jobs.
* You’re killing all kinds of family lives to push something that is purely political. Mother Nature has nothing to do about this and you have to know about this. And all these families’ blood is on your hands.

### Training for New Jobs

* How are the skillsets of the existing workforce going to carry over into the new facilities?
* How are workers being re-trained and for what job types? What new jobs will be brought into the community?
* In a time of critical workforce shortages, workforce work/life balance. How can an affected worker find the time and financial means to gain the upskilling or retaining needed?
* Offer Plant employee's opportunity to learn new skills through company sponsored apprenticeships just like we used to learn our current skills.
* In Itasca County, we know we have a significant shortage of workers in Health care. There are many diverse jobs in this field. Pair the soon to be unemployed with the shortages in work force. Win Win.
* More specific information needs to be provided on what vocational training will be offered. These are skilled trades people with specific skillsets, we need to know what the path forward is.

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* Closing Sherco will eliminate hundreds of jobs.
* Do not close the power plant.
* Do not close. Keep operating the most reliable energy from the cleanest burning coal plant.
* Don’t shut down shut off for solar.
* Don't close the plant.
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep it open.
* Keep plants open.
* No shutdown.
* Stop the process of shutting down SherCo!
* Stop this nonsense and leave our power plants alone. Wind and solar are not a viable solution in extreme weather conditions. This survey is all about your process not about whether it is a good idea to get rid of the reliable power supply.
* This whole idea of closing the base power generation units is one of the most irresponsible ideas ever concocted up by the state and needs to be reversed ASAP.

### Safety

* Company says they have our back. They barely have our back now while in operation, why would they care once we shut down? They say they will help with job placement, but we hear absolutely zero about it. Just continue to work way more with way less resources and degrading safety of our work environment. Got to continue to save money until someone gets hurt!!!!!!!
* Make Xcel Energy provide a safe work environment. The Plant is not being maintained because they don't want to spend any money on the Plant. Schedule weekly OSHA visits to ensure compliance to combustible dust regulations. There is coal dust many places there shouldn't be and employees are exposed to large amounts of dust and explosive hazards. External Boiler steam leaks are regularly ignored. Schedule State Boiler inspectors to ensure compliance so employees don't have to damage their hearing or get burned just trying to do their job. The only concern from the company or state is shutting down coal Plants, not operating them safely.

### Other Comments

* Allow easement access Xcel properties for another bridge crossing connecting I-94 to county road 11.
* At least keep all 3 units at Sherco operational, if not online, so they can generate when needed during the winter! Remember what happened in Texas! Letting people freeze to death in their homes is CRIMINAL! If our politicians in power are so determined to bow to the New World Order elites, and mandate electric utilities stop burning coal, and force Minnesotans to rely on undependable wind & solar, then they should be building dispersed generation with adequate fuel supply, and large energy storage FIRST, like batteries! Because emergencies will eventually happen! The hard-working and over-taxed Public Citizens do not want to be political pawns!
* Be honest when hiring new people as well as the temps so they know the future of Sherco.
* Change never stops but when leaders fail to make good decisions, it’s the community and working people that feel the pain of the change, with higher rates and less reliability in service. The workers and surrounding job loss crushes town all along the range for proof of concept that it will happen.
* Companies that are benefitting from renewable energy tax incentives and new construction/construction costs should have a better guarantee for their employees.
* Cool. Going into an economic recession period and let’s cut out jobs..... Makes sense. The government agenda of us being reliant on them is sure working out.
* Do I understand we are going to use the force of Government and taxpayer money to force people out of work and then use this same money to somehow find a new job for them? This is so silly and sad.
* Get the state EPA to realize that clean energy is COAL powered for reliability. Green isn't that clean in the big picture, just because it’s not in your backyard.
* Hire more employees.
* It's incomprehensible that you would be considering closing power plants in this day and age where they are being more needed all the time. It is plain stupid.
* Jobs are always of concern and of course are extremely important to the economic viability of our community. However, jobs should not trump stewardship of our environment.
* Just because the generating facility is planning on closing doesn't justify staffing shortages, budget cuts & failure to fix critical equipment. This plant is falling apart because the company is letting it, if they don't give us the resources to maintain said plant how are we to run efficiently.
* Key Findings from the August pre-draft Stakeholder survey:
  + Michael Child’s communication to the ETAC on the concerns was parroted with a strong response from Prairie Isanti Prairie Island Native American Community.
  + There was a lack of participation from power plant workers. However, it is possible that power plant workers are receiving such good information that they did not feel the need to complete the survey.
  + To date, there was very little to no response from some counties that are impacted. As a current power plant worker, I take exception to the lack of participation statement above. We were never informed of or invited to take that survey. Xcel management has done very little to make workers feel informed and comfortable able their individual future at/with Xcel Energy. I believe all parties would benefit and feel more at ease if job placement guarantees were put in writing for affected workers.
* Never have seen any information on how many jobs now versus how many in future
* The aging coal plants need to hire people to keep them running safe and reliable until their retirement dates, which may be extended due to MISO.
* There are many good things here, but it's a ton of stuff and starts to feel like a wish list. For example, while I support CTE and the youth-related programs in general, they seem somewhat beyond the purview of a plan whose primary concern should be existing workers who will be displaced. How do we prioritize the things that this office can most affect and partner where appropriate to make sure other valuable workforce initiatives aren't lost?
* There should be multiple sources of information including: videos, townhall meetings, and community leader meetings.
* These plants provide jobs directly at the facilities and indirectly for employees living nearby.
* This report addresses the plants leaving as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETELY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting. Our energy prices will skyrocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
* This should be a focus.
* Too much information to read in short time frame. High level intentions sound ok but in reality how will it really work. No job change is easy and takes more time and energy than people think. Especially training. I do not know how or what training is feasible changing from a coal plant job to solar panels. Do not see people around any existing solar places.
* Work with local contractors in those communities. It is paramount to get expert advice from specialists in the industry, and specifically turbine services.

## Overall Plan (93 comments)

### Don’t Close Plants, Keep Plants Open

* Do not close Sherco!! We need the energy!
* DO NOT CLOSE THE PLANT! Solar will never make up for the wattage lost when all Sherco units are closed.
* Do not close these plants. Minnesota and all of the people who benefit from these electrical services are not ready for any grid changes. We are not upset with the current electric power providers, and do not seek to have it changed. And most people in our communities feel the same. It would be nice if somebody would ask all the people here.
* Do not turn me off.
* Don’t close the plant. (2)
* Don’t shut down these power plants.
* Don’t shut them down
* Don't close any coal or nuclear plant. Solar and wind and energy are NOT going to supply our grid!!!!!
* Don't do it for the Sherco plant!!
* I think it is too soon to talk about shutting these facilities down. People need reliable, dependable energy 24/7 hours a day and 365 days a year. There is no way green energy options have reached the solid reliability of coal and natural gas. Replacing the jobs at our local plant is not in any way a guarantee our economy is struggling as it and our tax base for locally owned businesses is quite small. A move like this in our area right now would be devastating financially to everyone.
* Keep Boswell units 3 and 4 running until at least 2030. There will be power shortages in the near future.
* Keep the nuclear plant open - it’s clean energy.
* Leave our coal plant and nuclear plants open!!!
* Keep Sherco operating as is. Reliable, cleanest burning coal plant. We do not want to be like Texas and not be able to supply energy during extreme weather.
* Keep the plants OPEN!
* Not shut down the plants.
* Please do not close our Becker power plant and replace it with solar energy. This is a terrible decision.
* Please DO NOT close this plant. It would be extremely foolish on your part at this time. Our current state of the world NEEDS this plant open.
* Stop this nonsense and leave our power plants alone. Wind and solar are not a viable solution in extreme weather conditions. This survey is all about your process not about whether it is a good idea to get rid of the reliable power supply.
* This plant should NOT be reduced, eliminated or taken off line. MN needs more than wind or solar which are expensive and cannot meet demand nor is it dependable. Look at Texas last winter. That’s what will happen here. Now factor in the push for EVs and their charging stations, and we are in real trouble. I am not in favor of this at all. We need this plant as well many more!
* We need to try to save our power plants!
* You need to reevaluate closing Sherco and the Monticello nuclear plant.

### Other Energy Alternatives

* Do not support shutting down any current energy producing plants. Especially if solar is substitute source of power.
* Gotta work, don't have time to look through all this stuff. I just want people to do the math.
  + MNGP puts out 670 MW of energy on a 200 acre site. 40 acres of solar puts out 1 MW (at least my understanding is that the current solar operator, US Solar, is contractually obligated to provide that much). 40 \* 670 = 26,800 acres of land needed for the same output as MNGP. That's a little over 6% all land in the county. This isn't a problem for counties in the American Southwest, which have hectares upon hectares of non-arable, unused land, but things are different in this county. All land is arable, and if it's not being used for agriculture then it's being used for mining, manufacturing, retail, etc. Couple this with the rising demand for residential plots as the TC metro continues to plow its way westward into the county, and it raises one simple question: is this the best land-use strategy for our county?
  + As for the economic side of things, that raises one other question: will the tax revenues from 26,800 acres of solar (or 670 MW worth of solar output) be able to cover the financial losses incurred by the closure of MNGP? My understanding is that US Solar is not paying the same amount in taxes per MW as Xcel Energy. This county doesn't need a welfare package from the state to make up for revenue loss. What it needs is for whoever replaces Xcel to pony up and pay the bills that Xcel was paying. And let's not forget about the high paying jobs at MNGP. 400+ Xcel employees with an additional 200+ contractors all making $100,000+ per year. How does all that get replaced?
  + And the environmental questions need to be answered too. What happens in 30 years to those solar panels when they're end-of-life? The waste generated by MNGP is heavily regulated and perfectly safe the way it's being handled on-site (though it will hopefully end up in Yucca Mountain one day). What regulations are there for solar waste? Who’s going to pay for their removal? Where are they going to go? These questions need to be answered before we litter 26,800 acres of land with these panels.
* How can we be certain that we will not experience a degradation in reliability and overall power capacity before switching to new sources and eliminating the traditional ones? What is the global ecological impact of ramping up solar panel production, etc, to meet the new demands? How do those impacts compare in terms of a carbon footprint to that if existing fossil fuel plants?
* I think that clean coal is a great way to power the future.
* Immediately desist the plan to shut down the SherCo Plant. The idea of going 0% carbon is foolish and reckless. Solar and wind can't do the job. Someday, we’ll be freezing and it will be on your head. Also, the covering of beautiful cropland with solar panels is ludicrous! It is about the farthest thing from 'green' and 'clean' I've ever seen.
* It seems not to make sense that we would go away from reliable coal to non-reliable solar to try to generate power on the scale that we have now. It doesn't make any sense to me logically for you to close down power plants. Especially for an area that doesn't have a lot of solar capability. And because the costs to us consumers would be far too high which you obviously know.
* Potential catastrophic plan to decommission the Sherco 1,2,3 power plant when our power grid is too stressed already!! Especially “replacing” it with unreliable solar. We DO NOT want to become the Midwest’s version of California with rolling blackouts, overly stressed grid, etc. Xcel still has time to reconsider this decision and DO THE RIGHT THING by continuing to operate Sherco as a coal (worst case scenario change over to natural gas)!!
* Stop toxic unreliable solar panels from polluting our farmland.
* Switch to natural gas rather than closing the coal plant.
* Minnesota is the 41st state in terms of sunshine, which makes solar very unreliable. Is that really the only solution for replacing power generation? It would seem unwise to abandon the transmission equipment and convert the power plant to something that doesn't generate power (or into something that unreliably generates power, like solar and wind).
* This is insane Wind and solar will put us all in danger.
* Unclear why you would take away something that works to put in a source of energy that isn't reliable.
* We should not be going to solar. It too expensive and unreliable. We need to stay with what we have invested in to be clean available and cost effective.
* Where will our energy come from? We will be like California with rolling blackouts? How will we charge our electric cars? You need to explain how you are replacing the energy that is generated from the plant. Wind and solar won’t do it!!!
* Please! Take a close honest look at the impact of closing coal plants and what is going on in Poland today. 2. 'Green energy' including solar and wind are very electrically dirty and fragile. 3. Build tall water towers as part of the electrical storage system, which can help solve the weakness of 'Green Energy' 4. Please! Make an effort to understand Miro-grids and how to protect small community water systems.

### Nuclear as an Alternative

* Solar and wing cannot supply our current demands, let alone demands of the future. We are also losing valuable farmland which only increases our food cost along with the increase cost of energy. More nuclear power is the only real solution.
* In a time when we are looking to electrify everything in our world it seems like a very poor time to be taking down any power plants much less the cleanest source Nuclear. I hate to be the bearer of bad news but solar and bird killing windmills are not the answer. You all need to take a step back and rethink what the best path for homeowners and business owners. We need safe, reliable and clean energy, please look into what is happing to Germany after they decided to shut down plants.
* It's unfortunate we are forced to cut down power supplies with such an unstable power sources left to rely on. Natural gas prices are rising, electric is rising. Nuclear is the one true GREEN power option and yet we're forced to look at Solar for Sherco? It is NOT green to manufacture solar panels. What will happen to the panels once their useful life is done? -- Landfill.
* Looks like a well-written plan. There are no easy answers on how to take care of the workforce. Developing Laskin as a nuclear power plant would resolve future demands on energy and worries about the workforce.
* Natural gas or new nuclear plants.
* Nuclear and coal need to be included in future plans.
* Nuclear energy is safer and more reliable than any other option. It is a HUGE mistake to shut down the plants.
* Nuclear Power has one of the lowest death rates per kilowatt hour and 0 carbon emissions. Stop with the “green energy” bullshit!
* Nuclear power is safe reliable and efficient. Seems like a no-brainer to keep it and coal operating.
* Scrap it and keep coal and nuclear.
* The whole plan MUST be scrapped... Also, the moratorium on nuclear power generation needs to be lifted.
* This plan is not in service of the community. It’s in spite of the communities affected by the unsustainable movement towards “reusable” energy. The goal here should be to provide adequate power transition to the area by using nuclear power. Instead, we will be using wind and solar which are unreliable.
* We need to consider building a new nuclear plant to replace the coal and other places that are shutting down. It takes years to get a plant up and running. If we wait too long we will have black outs like California.

### Comments about Content of Draft ETAC Plan

* A more well-defined employee placement plan would help from Xcel to help alleviate the low morale and uncertainty at the Sherco facility.
* As usual, these plans gloss over the real outcome and objectives. ie: Squeeze out coal, an infinite resource, for other energy sources that don't have a good track record and end up being more costly.
* Be truthful on the end game and do you truly believe they are going to have reliable power for the future without coal plants? Where is the power going to be coming from?
* Details - who does what and when.
* A lot of 'maybe', 'we could', 'possibly', 'might', 'could consider', etc. I appreciate the effort, but honestly lots of people are looking at a suddenly very uncertain future now thanks to the heavy hand of government. All this document really amounts to is a list of empty promises.
* Everything listed above needs to be addressed and reviews by not only board members but citizens.
* Have more open community meeting to discuss and be able to ask questions with the Xcel executives.
* I appreciate all the time and energy put into this plan. The impact this is going to have on a local community isn’t going to be great and I can only ask, “Is this really the direction we want to go?” We may find ourselves literally in the dark.
* I would like to see the future plans for power replacement and not just we are getting away from coal and that's it. I would like to see the plan laid out year to year and the impacts associated with the reduction of these plants.
* I would probably add something that questions the benefit of closing assets that are being scrutinized for emissions yet are some of the cleanest units in the country.
  + It seems as though closure would further fester polar vortex events which also have a cost to the consumers which isn’t being taken into account in this plan. It feels as though closure plans are a politically targeted motivation vs what makes sense for everyone as a whole. The people who push this closure crap only have the political motivation and it really doesn’t make sense to me why they’re allowed to be so loudly heard. If I can make an analogy it’d be like Hawaii telling Minnesota they don’t need to many snowplows as shovels are much better for the environment. Just doesn’t make sense to me.
* Include Wright County as the emissions fly over and through Wright County and affect its citizens.
* Provide more factual impacts in the executive summary to stakeholders to answer the 'So what does this mean to me' questions.
* Pull all pertinent info for each of groups together rather than having to scroll around. Summarize each at the end. I got overwhelmed.
* Quit allowing the presentation of opinion as fact. Start required the documentation and facts to be required and hold accountable those who are preparing and presenting the facts.
* This report addresses the plants leaving, as just a plant, just a factory type of setting. It COMPLETELY ignores the fact that the closing down of these energy producing sites will have far greater economic impacts than just closing down a factory setting.
  + Our energy prices will skyrocket as there is ZERO plan to replace the energy these sites produce. How is that being addressed? Wind and solar will NOT be able to meet the same output, especially as energy use continues to increase. What is the recommendation to address that?
  + You have asked about directly impacted communities, clearly ignoring that many of us use the energy produced from these locations, we are DIRECLTY impacted but to you we are not. The future without these sites shows us having greatly increased base monthly costs, again it's ignored completely. This is not acceptable.
* The plan seemed to leave a lot left to do, and many options were not explored. It seems like the only road is removal of a power plant with the only plan to replace the electrical generation being something unsustainable. Specific solutions for replacing the power generation, rather than broad strokes of 'we'll examine the workforce and re-train them with government funds', would be beneficial.
* This “draft plan” does not address the pertinent issues. These issues are for the continued generation of sufficient, dependable, economical electrical power so that in the dead of winter and the heat of the summer, power is available. This “draft plan”, is written to distract from this main issue by talking about what to do with displaced workers, lost tax revenue, etc.
  + Any “transition” should be placed on HOLD until there is sufficient, adequate, dependable and economical replacement power available, and we don’t have that now, nor will we in the foreseeable future. (Plus, you don’t need a 51 page document to relay what is in this plan. That was the first red flag I saw when I downloaded this draft.
  + Solar and Wind cannot replace Coal, Natural Gas and Nuclear. It is impossible. I can give you thousands of words, examples and studies that show that, but apparently the majority of the contributors in this draft effort are kneeling at the altar of Climate Change/Global Warming and believe that changes in the weather are being caused by humans, so to save the planet, drastic/inefficient/unpractical methods must be employed. But not all of the contributors to this effort “drank climate change the Koolaid”. Some are in it simply for the short-term money. “As long as I can make my stockholders a profit, and increase my own net worth, which I can then use before I die, I will ride the climate change band wagon.”
  + So no. . . I do not support the premise behind this draft. We don’t need solutions as to what to do following the closure of various generating site, we need to STOP the closure of these site and build more, preferably nuclear generating base load sites, to replace aging fossil fuel plants.
* The report doesn’t really say were power will come from following the closings. That should be included. Also include a section on emergency management. How will the closures impact the resiliency of the communities they provide power for? How will they affect the resiliency of the power grid throughout MN?
* There is a lot of good content here, but there is also A LOT of stuff and I'm concerned about the capacity to implement all of it well. I would recommend homing in on a few key areas instead of trying to touch on every comment that came out of an extensive engagement process and thinking about what can be worked on in partnership with other state or local agencies. On another note, it is troubling to see that the state legislator who has done the most to undermine just transitions in this state is a committee member. I appreciate DEED's commitment here and can only hope it can wrangle other state partners and clueless legislators into a supportive role. That is what will make or break this process.
* Who is making the decisions on these plant closures and where are all of the realists in power positions that understand that shuttering all of our baseload power production facilities puts our families and all of the general public at extreme risk? Future polar vortex situations as we have seen in recent years will most definitely cause monumental human suffering.
  + We need to take a step back and look at the horrendous planning of these fast tracked closures that is being pushed on our communities. Brown outs are guaranteed to occur and if power blackouts happen in times of extreme heat or cold human suffering is sure to happen. Rate payers do not fork over hundreds of dollars a month to be put in these nightmarish conditions.
  + In no way, shape, or form is shutting down our nuclear facilities helping the environment. They have proven their safety and reliability for the entire life of their existence.
  + Shutting down the coal burners may put a dent in our greenhouse gas contributions very minimally while destroying our ability to provide safe, reliable power to our communities. Closing all of these plants within two decades is putting the wagon in front of the horse and I would like to see some higher ups, WHO KNOW THIS IS TRUE, step up to the plate and go to bat for our families and our communities. Thank you for taking the time to listen to these facts.
* You seem to be missing a golden opportunity to develop a 'laboratory' of micro-grids in affected communities. Some could be community-based, others utility owned or privately owned. Just as the ETAC Plan is needed because society is phasing out old paradigm central station facilities, the new paradigm will eventually be centered on multiple vast arrays of inter-connected micro-grids powered by solar, wind, hydrogen, bio-mass, and perhaps other renewable energy resources that align beautifully with micro-grid infrastructure. It is not likely that either state or utility leadership has the intelligence or the motivation to take advantage of this opportunity, but you never know. If the ETAC Team actually does get interested in this type of development, check in with Michael Childs Jr.

### Other Comments

* As a consumer, I want the cheapest and most reliable power I can buy. From what I am seeing in the power generation industry the renewable power is not the cheapest or reliable.
* Broadcast all details across multiple platforms.
* Don't shutdown coal plants. How is it going to be possible to sustain our communities in Minnesota with no base load? Instead of completely shutting down coal plants, why don't we try producing the same energy we make with other sources first, so that if we do fail, we didn't ruin the lives of plant workers and have to start using coal again anyways. I'm all for clean energy, but I feel like were going about it in the wrong way.
* I am concerned with the closing of the MN power facilities. I understand the push for greener energy but looking at the states at the forefront of this transition, has me concerned. I do not want to see the rolling blackouts hit Minnesota. When they happen in California, they are uncomfortable for the citizens. In Minnesota it could easily cause death in our low temperature climate.
  + I would caution a rush to shutdown and decommission facilities. I would like to see the efficient facilities that have been converted to natural gas stay operational until renewable energy is proven and better technology exist in energy storage. Preserving these facilities would provide a backup energy solution during a harsh winter.
* I don't even know what it is
* I have only heard about this through my community who are speaking up on issues. I have not read the draft but will now ask someone where a copy resides. More people need to be aware of these proposed changes.
* It is a hope that the energy transition will reduce environmental effects of energy production. How will past, present and future effects and environmental justice on American Indians for power production for the dominant society be addressed.
* It is ridiculous to shelve power plants with no real plan for reliably having power in place if the wind does not blow or the sun is not shining. Complete lack of understanding supply and demand dynamics.
* Make an honest plan.
* More public information. Sorry to say that. A ceremony to remember and grieve sounds like we are working with children not grownups. It's time to attract new industry and move forward and not look back.
* No plan of theirs has gone accordingly to what they have planned. Every time they announce a plan they switch it.
* See comment above about worker and wage guarantees.
* Seems to me that they only want customers to foot the bill for all this shutdown crap. They know that we need electricity and they do not care how much it will cost us.
* So where are the materials using to make these updates coming from? Where are the storage units for the power going to be put when they are shot? Batteries and things like them do not last very long then they are shot....So where are they going to be put? In a land fill? They now go into our food source, water table, and in the air for us to breathe.....? This is not for the better of people and mother nature like you portray it to be, it’s to line the pocketbooks of the ones behind it. And you guys push it because you get paid to do so. You’re killing the working families, and actually killing people with their health from putting poison in their food source, water table, and air they breathe. This is heavy on the socialist way of life..... make a few rich and in power, then step on/ use everyone else to get there. I hope this weighs on your heart every single day, cause your going to have to answer to the Big Man upstairs at some point when your race has run.
* This in my opinion. This is as dumb as the Governor telling auto sales companies that they must sell a certain percentage of battery powered cars by a certain date.
* Transparency.
* Truly hope that this committee is not just an already decided group of Greenies. We need manufacturing jobs in MN.
* Use common sense. We do not have the technology to do this switch right now. They thought they were geniuses putting all these gas plants up now our home heating source is expensive and electric as well. You are going to start hurting the middle class even more. But I think this is all part of the plan and the powers that be don't care one bit because they are not going to be affected. If only common sense was as common as greedy and power hungry people we would be in a better place. I don't know why I waste my time on these surveys. Nobody cares. What do I know I only look at system load everyday while I am at work. Good luck with your plans and take care.
* Very impressed with the lack of representation from the Sherco plant that will have the biggest impact on the state.
* We are getting told a couple of different thing like the plant is supposed to be shut down by 2030 but then we get told that it might get held up because the grid is not ready yet for that kind of change.
* We have NO say, because you don't allow us to vote on anything. This survey is useless because no one will answer my concerns. XXXXX, taxpayer (320-339-XXXX).
* What is the total cost and how is it being paid?
* Worker security.

1. The emails failed to deliver to three email addresses (all at the City of Monticello) for unknown technical reasons. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. * A few counties on that list (Cook, Chippewa, Wright) were omitted in error from the answer options. However, the option “Other Minnesota county” was included among the answer options.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)