

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-11

A RESOLUTION STATING THE CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER'S CONCERNS REGARDING THE PROPOSED BECI 765 kV TRANSMISSION LINE AND REQUESTING ACTION BY THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

WHEREAS, Midcontinent Grid Solutions (MGS), a joint venture of Transource Energy, LLC and BHE Transmission, was selected by MISO in January 2026 to develop the Bell Center to Columbia to Sugar Creek to Illinois/Wisconsin State Line 765 kV transmission project (BECI), roughly 190 miles of new 765 kV line across a nine county study area that includes Richland County and the City of Richland Center; and

WHEREAS, the BECI project would connect at Bell Center with the MariBell Transmission Project, a separate 765 kV project being developed by Dairyland Power Cooperative and GridLiance Heartland, LLC, so that two 765 kV projects would converge in this region; and

WHEREAS, MGS has published route study segments and is accepting public comment through September 7, 2026, and expects to file a CPCN application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in early 2027; and

WHEREAS, the proposed line is a high-voltage transmission line that requires a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin under Wis. Stat. sec. 196.491(3) before it may be constructed; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council has the management and control of city property and the power to act for the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and the Council finds that the proposed project may affect both city property and the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the proposed corridor may directly affect homes, farms, and businesses in and around the City, including the potential displacement of residences and disruption to local businesses; and

WHEREAS, the scenic, agricultural, and tourism value of the Driftless Area is central to the regional economy, and the proposed line may reduce that value; and

WHEREAS, the proposed line may affect migratory and resident bird populations, waterways, and wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, 765 kV infrastructure is associated with audible noise and visible corona discharge, particularly under humid conditions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Center owns Richland Airport (FAA identifier 93C), also known as the Richland Center Municipal Airport, a public use airport about four nautical miles southeast of the City with a 3,200 foot primary runway and a 1,500 foot turf runway, and the airport is city property that the Council is charged with managing; and

WHEREAS, project materials describe support structures of roughly 175 feet above ground level, and other published estimates are higher, so the project may require notice to the Federal

Aviation Administration under 14 C.F.R. sec. 77.9 and may require a permit from the Secretary of Transportation under Wis. Stat. sec. 114.135, depending on the final structure heights, their distance from the airport, and any applicable zoning; and

WHEREAS, given the scale and permanence of this infrastructure and timeline the developers have proposed, the Council questions whether the public information and consultation process to date has been adequate; and

WHEREAS, alternative routes, co-location with existing transmission corridors, undergrounding, or other design modifications may materially reduce the impacts of the project; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to place its concerns on the record early in the public input process and to be recognized as a participant as the CPCN proceeding moves forward; and

WHEREAS, the City intends to remain engaged throughout this process and may petition to formally intervene once the CPCN application is filed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Richland Center, Richland County, Wisconsin, as follows:

1. **Findings adopted.** The recitals set forth above are adopted as findings of the Common Council and are incorporated into this resolution.
2. **Statement of concern.** The City of Richland Center has concerns about the proposed BECI 765 kV transmission line, including the direct impacts on homes, farms, and businesses along the proposed corridor; the loss of scenic, agricultural, and tourism value in the Driftless Area; the environmental impacts to birds, waterways, and wildlife habitat; the noise and corona discharge effects associated with 765 kV infrastructure; the effects on the Richland Center Municipal Airport, its approaches, and low altitude agricultural aviation in the area; the adequacy of the public information and consultation process to date; and whether alternative routes, co-location, or design modifications could materially reduce these impacts.
3. **Requests to the Commission.** The City respectfully requests that the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin:
 - a. Ensure that the City of Richland Center and Richland County receive timely, complete notice of all filings, hearings, and deadlines in this docket;
 - b. Give full consideration to alternative routes and design modifications, including undergrounding or co-location with existing corridors, that would reduce impacts on the City and its residents;
 - c. Require a thorough Environmental Impact Statement under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act, Wis. Stat. sec. 1.11, that addresses the cumulative effects of the BECI and MariBell projects on this region;
 - d. Require a completed federal aviation review before any certificate is issued, including notice to the Federal Aviation Administration on FAA Form 7460-1 under

14 C.F.R. sec. 77.9, a completed FAA aeronautical study, and a determination of no hazard to air navigation under 14 C.F.R. sec. 77.31 for every structure that affects Richland Center Municipal Airport (93C) or its approaches; require coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Bureau of Aeronautics on any permit required under Wis. Stat. sec. 114.135; and require that the environmental review evaluate the project's effects on low altitude agricultural aviation in the area; and

- e. Allow adequate time and opportunity for the City, Richland County, and affected residents to be heard before any decision is made.
4. **Notice and participation.** Because no CPCN application has yet been filed and no docket has yet been opened, the City requests that the Commission add the City of Richland Center to its notice and service list for this project, that this resolution be placed in the Commission's file for the project and entered into the docket record once a docket is opened, and that the City be recognized as a participant in the proceeding.
5. **Authorization to intervene.** The Mayor and the City Administrator, with the advice of the City Attorney, are authorized to petition the Commission for formal intervenor status on behalf of the City once the CPCN application is filed, and to take any further action consistent with this resolution.
6. **Transmittal.** The City Clerk is directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Attn: Environmental Review Coordinator, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, WI 53707-7854, with a request that it be placed in the Commission's file for this project and entered into the docket record once a docket is opened.
7. **Effective date.** This resolution takes effect upon adoption and publication or posting as required by law.

ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Richland Center, Wisconsin, this 1st day of September, 2026, by the following vote: AYES: _____, NOS: _____, Abstain/Absent: _____.

**CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER
RICHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

ATTEST:

Karin Tepley, Mayor

Amanda Keller, City Clerk

Date: _____

Date: _____