

UTILITIES COMMISSION[199]

Notice of Intended Action

Proposing rulemaking related to electric transmission line franchise process and providing an opportunity for public comment

The Utilities Commission hereby proposes to amend Chapter 11, “Electric Lines,” and Chapter 25, “Iowa Electrical Safety Code,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 478.19.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapter 478.

Purpose and Summary

In December 2024, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) approved long-range transmission planning projects, referred to as Tranche 2.1. To serve as the backbone to the project and to better address anticipated generation and electric demand, MISO selected 765 kV transmission lines.

In anticipation of the new projects, the Iowa Utilities Commission (Commission) has evaluated potential impacts of this scale of transmission and seeks to minimize impacts to agricultural producers, landowners, and communities. The Commission is proposing rules governing the electric transmission franchise process (Chapter 11) and the Iowa Electrical Safety Code (Chapter 25), which will establish new requirements for the electric franchise process and set safety standards governing the projects.

Written comments and Commission orders regarding this matter are available on the Commission’s electronic filing system, efs.iowa.gov, under Docket No. RMU-2025-1125.

Regulatory Analysis

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on December 10, 2025. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- January 12, 2026

Prior to submission of the Notice of Intended Action and as part of the Regulatory Analysis, the Commission held an oral presentation, which was attended by the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA), a division of the Iowa Department of Justice; the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities (IAMU); Midcontinent Grid Solutions; the Iowa Environmental Council (IEC); MidAmerican Energy Company (MidAmerican); ITC Midwest LLC; the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (Farm Bureau); the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC); and the Clean Grid Alliance. The Commission also received written comments from Midcontinent Grid Solutions, MidAmerican, ITC Midwest LLC, Farm Bureau, OCA, the Clean Grid Alliance, and the IAEC and received a joint comment from the IEC and the Environmental Law and Policy Center. Based on the written and oral comments received, the Commission modified the proposed amendments to Chapters 11 and 25 to produce the amendments proposed herein.

Fiscal Impact

The agency does not anticipate that the rulemaking will have a fiscal impact to the agency or to the State. The agency’s obligation to conduct electric transmission line franchise proceedings is imposed by Iowa Code chapter 478 and not these proposed amendments. Further, the agency does not anticipate the amendments will result in a meaningful increase of agency costs to conduct electric transmission line franchise proceedings. However, the proposed amendments are expected to result in an increase of electric transmission line construction costs (i.e., guyed towers are generally less expensive than

non-guy-wired towers, costs associated with compliance with noise and field strength restrictions), although the extent of the cost increase is dependent on numerous factors that would be unique to specific transmission projects (e.g., proposed operating voltage of proposed transmission line, length of proposed line, whether landowners consent to guyed towers). Further, the portions of the amendments that may increase construction costs only apply to electric transmission lines with a maximum operating voltage of 170,000 volts or more, which represent a portion of transmission projects that come before the Commission. Conversely, certain amendments are anticipated to lessen the impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on agricultural land. Therefore, the agency anticipates that the amendments will mitigate the decline in revenue due to the loss of agricultural land that would likely occur without the amendments. For these reasons, the agency is unable to determine the fiscal impact of the proposed amendments.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

No waiver provision is included in the proposed amendments because the Commission has a general waiver provision in rule 199—1.3(17A,474,476) that provides procedures for requesting a waiver.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Commission no later than 4:30 p.m. on April 21, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

IT Support
Iowa Utilities Board
Phone: 515.725.7300
Email: ITSupport@iuc.iowa.gov

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

April 27, 2026 9 to 11 a.m.	Commission Hearing Room 1375 East Court Avenue Des Moines, Iowa Also via Zoom
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Persons who wish to make oral comments at the public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Commission and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

- ITEM 1. Reletter paragraph **11.5(1)“i”** as **11.5(1)“k”**.
- ITEM 2. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **11.5(1)“i”**:

i. Exhibit I. This exhibit is required only for electric transmission lines with a maximum operating voltage of 170,000 volts or more. This exhibit shall contain an explanation for the electric company's plan to comply with the noise limit set by 199—subrule 25.6(1). The explanation shall include the assessment at the minimum conductor height and the maximum rms voltage.

ITEM 3. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **11.5(1)“j”**:

j. Exhibit J. This exhibit is required only for electric transmission lines with a maximum operating voltage of 170,000 volts or more. This exhibit shall contain an explanation for the electric company's plan to comply with the maximum electric field strength limit set by 199—subrule 25.6(2). The explanation shall include the assessment at the minimum conductor height and the maximum rms voltage.

ITEM 4. Adopt the following **new** subrule 25.1(4):

25.1(4) Definition of crop and pasture land. For the purpose of this chapter, “crop and pasture land” means any land devoted to agricultural use, including but not limited to land used for crop production, cleared land capable of being cultivated, hay land, pasture land, truck gardens, farmsteads, commercial agricultural-related facilities, feedlots, rangeland, livestock confinement systems, land on which farm buildings are located, and land used to implement management practices and structures for the improvement or conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

ITEM 5. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **25.2(5)“c”**:

c. “ANSI S12.9-2013/Part 1” as published February 27, 2013; “ANSI S12.9-2013/Part 3” as published February 13, 2015; “ANSI S1.4-2014/Part 1” as published July 21, 2014; and “Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standard 656-2018” as published February 15, 2018, are adopted as standards for determining noise from electric transmission lines.

ITEM 6. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **25.2(5)“d”**:

d. The “Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Standard 644-2019” as published November 7, 2019, is adopted as the standard for measuring the electric field strength from electric transmission lines.

ITEM 7. Adopt the following **new** rule 199—25.6(476,478):

199—25.6(476,478) Additional requirements for higher voltage transmission lines. This rule applies to overhead electric transmission lines with a maximum operation voltage of 170,000 volts or greater for which petitions have been filed pursuant to rule 199—11.5(478) or 199—11.6(478) after January 1, 2027.

25.6(1) Noise restriction. The audible noise from an overhead electric transmission line during a measurement period shall not exceed 55 dBA for more than 50 percent of the measured time. The measurement shall be one hour in length, adjusted for ambient noise, A-weighted, fast-time averaged, and be taken at the edge of the total combined transmission line right-of-way.

25.6(2) Electric field strength restriction. The electric field strength from an overhead electric transmission line shall not be greater than 6,000 volts per meter when measured one meter above the ground anywhere within the transmission line right-of-way.

25.6(3) Guy restriction. Overhead electric transmission line structures primarily reliant on guys for support shall not be constructed on crop and pasture land except by agreement with the landowner.