

UTILITIES COMMISSION[199]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to electric transmission line franchise process

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

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted 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. The Iowa Utilities Commission (Commission) anticipates additional buildout of other high voltage transmission lines in the years to come due to growing demand for electricity.

In anticipation of the new projects, the Commission has evaluated potential impacts of this scale of transmission and seeks to minimize impacts to agricultural producers, landowners, and communities. The Commission is adopting rules governing the electric transmission line 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.

The Commission issued an order adopting amendments on May 19, 2026. The order is available on the Commission’s electronic filing system under Docket No. RMU-2025-1125.

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on April 1, 2026, as **ARC 0172D**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- April 27, 2026

On April 27, 2026, the Commission held a public hearing, which was attended by Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA), a division of the Iowa Department of Justice; Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (Farm Bureau); ITC Midwest LLC (ITC Midwest); MidAmerican Energy Company (MidAmerican); and Midcontinent Grid Solutions. Stakeholders choosing to speak stood by the content of their written comments.

The Commission received written comments from OCA, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), Farm Bureau, ITC Midwest, and MidAmerican. OCA expressed support for the amendments published in the Notice. IAEC expressed appreciation for the changes the Commission included within amendments contained in the Notice. Farm Bureau requested the addition of language in the guy restriction contained in subrule 25.6(3)—a change the Commission made in the Adopted and Filed. Finally, both ITC Midwest and MidAmerican proposed changes to limit the electric field strength restriction to row crop land increase of land included in the broader definition of crop and pasture land—changes that Farm Bureau opposed and that were not included in the adopted amendments.

At Farm Bureau’s request, the Commission added language to the guy restriction contained in subrule 25.6(3). Specifically, if a landowner chooses to consent to the placement of a guyed structure on agricultural land, the additional language requires the agreement “to specifically allow the use of such structures.”

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the Commission on May 19, 2026.

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 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 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 represents only 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 production. Therefore, the agency anticipates that the amendments will mitigate against the decline in revenue due to the loss of agricultural production that would likely occur without the amendments. For these reasons, the agency is unable to determine the fiscal impact of the 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.

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).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on July 29, 2026.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

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 to specifically allow the use of such structures.

[Filed 5/29/26, effective 7/29/26]

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EDITOR’S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 6/24/26.