Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 199—Chapters 11 and 25
"Review of 199—Chapters 11 and 25"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 478
State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code chapter 478

Public Hearing

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

January 12, 2026 2 p.m.	Commission Hearing Room 1375 East Court Avenue Des Moines, Iowa

Persons who wish to make oral comments at the 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 hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Utilities Commission and advise of specific needs.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Commission no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

IT Support
Iowa Utilities Commission
Phone: 515.725.7300
Email: ITsupport@iuc.iowa.gov

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 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 Electric Safety Code (Chapter 25), which will establish new requirements for the electric franchise process and set safety standards governing the projects.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Primarily, these proposed amendments apply to all persons requesting a Commission-issued electric transmission line franchise for lines with a maximum operating voltage of 170,000 volts or more and to all persons constructing such lines. While such persons may incur costs in the course

of those franchise proceedings, the significant majority of the costs are primarily caused by the underlying nature and course of the franchise proceeding rather than the proposed amendments.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

The proposed amendments benefit electric transmission line companies by setting forth the requirements and procedures for requesting a Commission-issued franchise. Persons applying for an electric transmission franchise will benefit from a more predictable set of expectations established via rule for these lines. Agricultural producers will benefit from the proposed rulemaking with a reduced footprint needed for the lines due to taking less land out of production than otherwise may be taken through certain types of structures. There will be safety benefits from reduced risks with the electric field or induced current, which otherwise could adversely impact individuals operating large farm equipment. Residents and communities near future high-voltage transmission lines will benefit from reduced noise. These proposed rules further benefit all Iowans and landowners through setting appropriate transmission line safety standards. When implemented through project designs and proposed siting in the franchise process, these proposed amendments are expected to increase voluntary participation and reduce the likelihood of eminent domain.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

These proposed rules are intended to assist persons seeking a Commission-issued electric transmission line franchise and to improve the safety and service of such lines. Additionally, these proposed rules are intended to lessen the negative impacts such lines, particularly the 765 kV lines, may have on affected agricultural producers, landowners, and communities. While there may be additional costs incurred by persons seeking an electric transmission franchise and by persons constructing, operating, and maintaining such transmission lines, those costs are more directly caused by the nature of owning and operating such transmission lines.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

These proposed rules ensure that all persons are aware of the requirements associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of electric transmission lines, especially the newer 765 kV lines. Further, the additional safety standards ensure adequate service of electricity throughout Iowa, while attempting to minimize adverse impacts that such lines may cause on affected agricultural producers, landowners, and communities.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

The Commission incurs costs in conducting electric transmission line franchise contested cases and in enforcing the Iowa Electric Safety Code. However, the requirements that the Commission conduct franchise proceedings and enforce the safety standards are not imposed by these amendments but instead are required by Iowa Code chapter 478.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

There is no anticipated effect on State revenues.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

Because the proposed amendments in Chapter 11 should not impose a meaningful increase in electric transmission line franchise proceeding costs and because the public would benefit from the Chapter 11 amendments as described above, the benefits appear to outweigh the costs.

Similarly, the proposed amendments to Chapter 25 are intended to minimize the adverse impacts of high-voltage transmission lines on landowners and tenants. For agricultural producers and transmission owners, inaction would result in land taken out of production and additional compensation needed for landowners to account for the loss of income. Consequently, inaction would appear inappropriate.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

The Commission does not believe there are any less costly methods of securing the public benefits associated with this proposed rulemaking.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

The Commission considered inaction and considered whole-scale adoption of nationally recognized safety standards.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Inaction was rejected because of the anticipated benefits achieved, including mitigation of adverse impacts, through the proposed amendments. Whole-scale adoption of nationally recognized safety standards was rejected because there is value in the adoption of more specific rules to properly protect Iowans and property within this State.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

There is no anticipated impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

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).

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).

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

25.1(4) *Definition of agricultural land.* For the purpose of this chapter, "agricultural 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, managed woodlands and woodlands of commercial value, 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, constructed or reconstructed after July 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 should be one hour in length, adjusted for ambient noise, A-weighted, fast-time averaged, and be taken at the edge of the 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 agricultural land.