



DEPARTMENT of GAME, FISH, AND PARKS

Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

August 7, 2012

Darrin Lahr
Excel Energy
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

RE: Big Stone South to Brookings County project, support for recertification

Dear Darrin,

I have conducted a search of the South Dakota Natural Heritage Database (SDNHD) for records or rare, threatened, or endangered species within 1 mile of the SDPUC certified route indicated on the enclosed maps in your letter dated July 6, 2012.

This search resulted in a similar list of rare and state listed species records to Doug Backlund's search of the SDNHD on May 18, 2005, with the exception of five terrestrial species. I will also send you the updated database with the documented species and coordinates via email.

Please note that many places in South Dakota have not been surveyed for rare or protected species and the absences of a species from the SDNHD does not preclude its presence from your project area. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions on these comments or need additional information, feel free to contact me at (605) 773-4345 or Casey.Mehls@state.sd.us

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey Mehls".

Casey Mehls
Wildlife Biologist / Database Manager