

General information

Public comment period begins: April 14, 2025

Public comment period ends: April 28, 2025

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Commissioner has made a preliminary determination to certify the referenced project, with conditions, and has preliminarily determined that the project will satisfy the antidegradation standards in Minn. R. 7050.0265.

Name and address of Applicant:

Aneesh Bethi
Project Engineer
Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad
17641 S. Ashland Avenue
Homewood, IL 60430

Project name and location (county):

Canadian National Railroad Rainy River
Bridge Replacement Project
Koochiching County

MPCA contact person:

Bill Wilde, Project Manager
Resource Management and Assistance Division
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
Phone: 651-757-2825
Email: William.wilde@state.mn.us

Federal Permitting Agency:

Daryl W. Wierzbinski
USACE Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Duluth Office
600 South Lake Avenue, Suite 211
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

A draft Section 401 Water Quality Certification with antidegradation determination is available for review on the MPCA Public Notices webpage at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publicnotices> or at the MPCA office address listed under the MPCA contact person. The MPCA will mail or email a copy of the draft certification upon request. Comments, petitions, and other requests must be received at the MPCA in writing on or before the public comment period end date and time identified above.

Major Watershed: Rainy Lake and Rainy River

Description of Issuance for 401 Water Quality Certification for Canadian National Railroad Rainy River Bridge Replacement Project #2022-01117-DWW

The proposed project is to replace the moveable bridge span in-line with existing right-of-way and widen the movable span. This alternative will reduce service disruption, minimize project area impacts, and prepare for future rail demand. Replacing the moveable span in-line requires new piers and a shift of pier placement to minimize service disruption to Canadian National Railroad's vital rail corridor over the Rainy River. The footprint of the proposed piers are approximately 300 square feet (sf) at the confluence of Rainy Lake and the Rainy River. The proposed piers are less than that of the existing piers. The existing piers will be removed to the mudline. The project will result in no net loss of surface waters of Rainy River and Rainy Lake. No wetland mitigation is required, and no project monitoring is proposed.

Procedure for public participation

As stated in Minn. R. chs. 7000 and 7001, there are three formal procedures for public participation in the MPCA's consideration of this matter. Interested persons may:

- (1) Submit written comments on the draft certification and antidegradation determination.
- (2) Petition the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting.
- (3) Petition the MPCA to hold a contested case hearing.

Submitting written comments

To submit comments or petitions to the MPCA through the mail or online you must state:

- (1) Your interest in the request for 401 water quality certification or the draft 401 water quality certification.
- (2) The action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to the section of the draft 401 water quality certification you believe should be changed.
- (3) The reasons supporting your position, stated with sufficient specificity as to allow the MPCA to investigate the merits of the position.

Public informational meeting

A public informational meeting is an informal meeting during which interested persons can ask questions concerning the proposed facility. MPCA staff will be present to provide information. If an interested person would like the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting, the person should include all information identified above and in addition include a statement of the reasons the person desires the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting and the issues that the person would like the agency to address at the public informational meeting.

Contested case hearing

A contested case hearing is a formal proceeding before an administrative law judge empowered to advise the MPCA regarding issues of fact. As described in Minn. R. 7000.1800, persons who submit petitions for a contested case hearing must also state the issues they propose to address in a contested case hearing, the specific relief requested or resolution of the matter, and the reasons (which may be in the form of proposed findings) supporting an MPCA decision to hold a contested case hearing. Failure to comply with these rules exactly may result in a denial of the request. To the extent known, the petitioner may also submit a list of prospective witnesses to be called at a hearing, a proposed list of publications, references, or studies to be introduced at a hearing and the approximate time required for the petitioner to present the matter at a hearing. The decision whether to hold a contested case hearing will be made under Minn. R. 7000.1900.