# AGRICULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENT


DATCP File Photo

**DATCP #4694**

## Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project Ozaukee County

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

***PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 25, 2026***

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DATCP #4694

Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project

Ozaukee County

## WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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*PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 25, 2026*

# MISSION STATEMENT

Dear Reader,

Through the Agricultural Impact Statement ("AIS") program, agricultural operations have the opportunity to provide feedback, document impacts, and suggest alternative solutions when their agricultural lands are affected by an entity with the potential powers of eminent domain. The AIS program also provides affected agricultural landowners time to gather information to make well-informed decisions before a project begins. Lastly, the AIS program makes suggestions and recommendations to project initiators to promote project alternatives and management practices that would reduce potential impacts to agricultural lands and operations.

The AIS program also serves the needs of the project initiator by conducting the AIS analysis and publishing the statement within a timely manner as required by Wis. Stat. § 32.035. In addition, the AIS program provides a continuing presence throughout project development and oversight processes in order to support agricultural operations and the statewide priority to preserve prime farmland.

The Agricultural Impact Statement program and the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection are honored to provide this essential state service to the agricultural landowners and operators of the state.

Thank you

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# SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (the Department) has prepared this Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) #4694 for the proposed acquisition of land by the American Transmission Company LLC ("ATC") in Saukville, Ozaukee County, WI. ATC proposes to establish a new 138-kilovolt ("kV") electric substation, rebuilding part of a double and single circuit 138-kV transmission line, as well as construct a new permanent transmission line. Additionally, a shoe-fly transmission line is proposed to be placed, which is a temporary line installed to bypass power from the existing line undergoing construction to the nearby Charter Steel substation so the supply of power is not interrupted.

ATC is a public utility vested with the right of eminent domain but has documented that aspects of the project, including the substation and some parts of the new transmission line, are on property currently optioned by ATC (meaning it has acquired the exclusive or temporary right to buy or use the property later). ATC intends to acquire the property for the substation site through a voluntary sale (fee-simple purchase). ATC's proposed acquisition includes approximately 20 acres of Parcel ID 080231000100, located in the Southwest ¼ of the Northwest ¼ Quarter of Section 4, Township 11 North, Range 21 East in the Town of Saukville. The land associated with the substation is proposed to be permanently converted out of agricultural production (DATCP, 2026).

ATC notified the Department that approximately one acre of one agricultural parcel will be impacted by the 138kV transmission line rebuild portion of the project. The rebuilt transmission line will occur within existing ROW. Refer to Figure 1 for an overview of agricultural impacts that AIS 4694 analyzes.

In accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035, ATC has provided the Department with the necessary information and materials to conduct an AIS. The Department contacted the agricultural landowners and operators whose feedback is documented in Section IV. In accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035(4)(b), the Department has reviewed and analyzed ATC's materials and comments from the affected agricultural property owner to assess the agricultural impacts of ATC's land acquisitions. Through the AIS analysis, the Department offers a set of recommendations and conclusions to ATC and the agricultural landowner to help mitigate impacts on agricultural lands and agricultural operations at the site of the proposed substation and the new transmission line right-of-way (ROW).

The set of recommendations is located within the AIS Recommendation Section beginning on page 5. The AIS analysis begins on page 6 with information on the project located in Section II. Information and conclusions on the agricultural setting of Ozaukee County and impacted areas can be found in Section IIIIII. The agricultural impacts of the project on the land, landowner and operator can be found in Section IV. Appendices for AIS #4694 contain information additional figures and tables (Appendix A), on the appraisal and compensation process (Appendix B), a copy

of Wisconsin's agricultural impact statement statute (Appendix C), various additional sources of related information for agricultural landowners and operators (Appendix D) and project initiator response to recommendations (Appendix E). If ATC deviates from the planned voluntary acquisition, proposed use, or scale of the acquired land, ATC shall re-notify the Department. The Department shall review the re-notification for new potential impacts to agricultural lands and may determine to generate an addendum to this AIS.

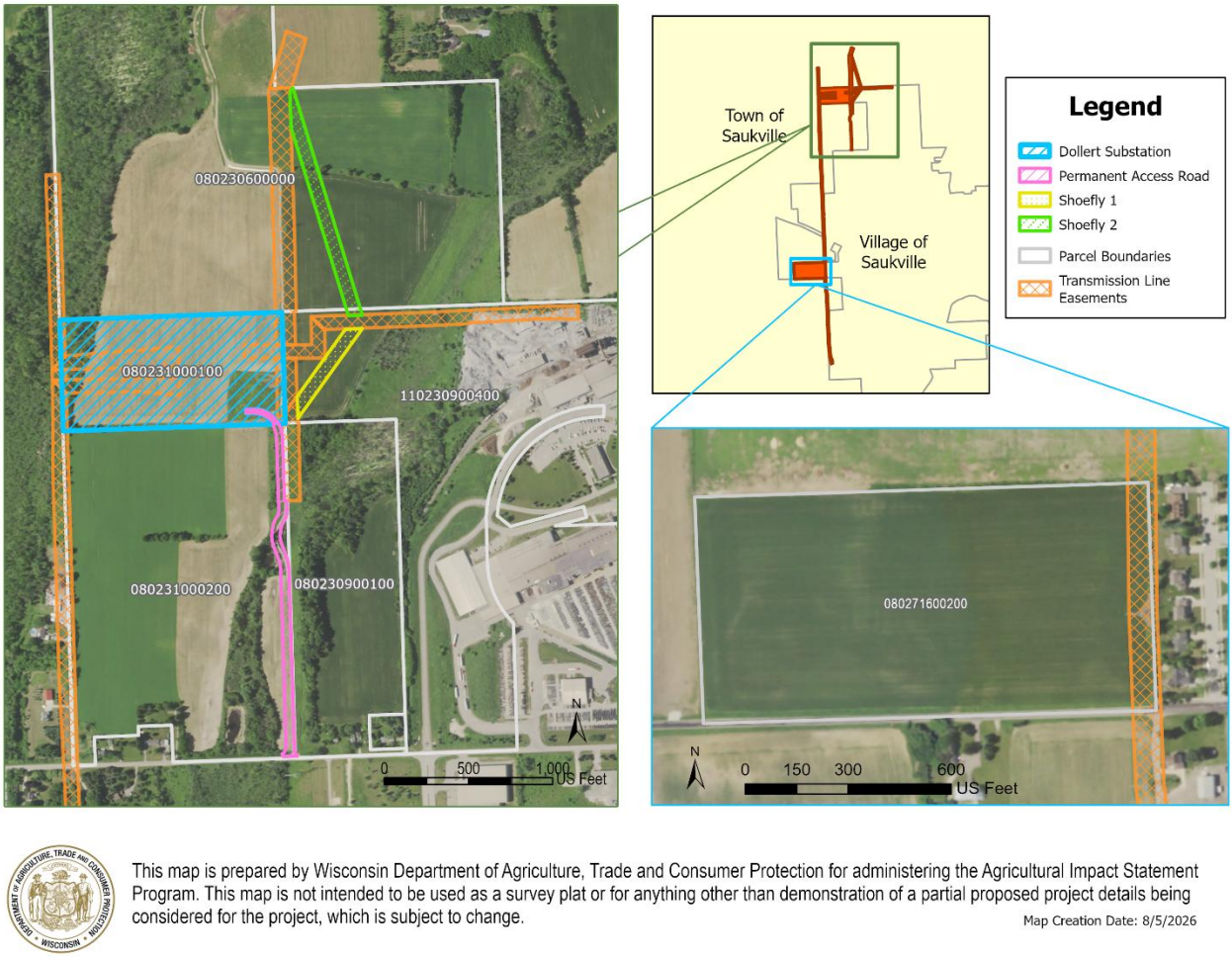


Figure 1: Agricultural Impacts of the Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project reviewed in AIS 4694. Full Project footprint is provided in Appendix A, Figure 1.

# AGRICULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (the Department) has reviewed and analyzed the materials provided by the American Transmission Company LLC ("ATC") and comments from the affected agricultural landowners regarding the proposed Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project. In accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035(4)(b), the Department provides the following recommendations to ATC and agricultural landowner to help mitigate impacts on agricultural lands and agricultural operations. ATC was offered the opportunity to review and comment on this analysis. See Appendix E for a copy of ATC's comments regarding the Department's recommendations.

## Recommendations to the American Transmission Company, LLC

1) The Department recommends ATC follow all the additional recommended mitigation efforts described in Section 5.5.1 through Section 5.1.9 to mitigate Project impacts to or regarding: de-icing and traction control, topsoil mixing, soil compaction, drainage, de-watering, erosion, fencing, weed control.

2) ATC is advised to consult the Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department on the existence of installed SWRM conservation practices within the Project area.

3) ATC should provide appropriate compensation to all landowners with land enrolled in a conservation easement or farm program if the landowner must reimburse the administering agency for the land's removal or alteration.

## Recommendations to Seller and Tenant Operators

1) Landowners should review the recommended mitigation efforts described in Section 5.1.1 through Section 5.1.9 to mitigate Project impacts to or regarding: de-icing and traction control, topsoil mixing, soil compaction, drainage, de-watering, erosion, fencing, weed control and stormwater and erosion control permitting.

2) If the Landowner is aware of any SWRM cost-shared practices on their farm within the proposed Project area, they should consult with the Ozaukee County Land & Water Management Department to determine 1) the compatibility of the proposed substation with the existing conservation practice and 2) if any effects will occur due to alteration of a practice during construction activities.

3) Agricultural landowners and renters should inform ATC about the existence and location of drainage systems or farm infrastructure that could be affected by the Project.

4) Landowners who are concerned about potential impacts to their agricultural land should keep records of the conditions of the ROW before, during, and after construction. Records

could include keeping crop yield records, beginning once the ROW is known, and photographs taken every season. These measures can help a landowner negotiate for compensation, should damages caused by the Project occur.

# AGRICULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (the Department) has prepared Agricultural Impact Statement (AIS) #4694 in accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035 for the proposed Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project by the American Transmission Company LLC ("ATC") in the Town and Village of Saukville, Ozaukee County, WI (Figure 1). ATC reported the proposed substation project ("Project") consists of building the new 138 kilovolt (kV) Wood View Lane Substation, rebuilding 3.3 miles of dual circuit and single-circuit overhead 138-kV transmission line within existing Right-of-Way (ROW) and around 0.9 miles of new permanent and temporary transmission line within the substation site (DATCP, 2026).

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is responsible for regulating the construction of electric public utilities and extensions of electric service in Wisconsin, which may include the construction of or modification to an existing substation. A substation project would either be subject to PSC review or subject to applicable local permitting authorities depending on the cost threshold of the project. The Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project is subject to PSC review and submitted their Certificate of Authority (CA) application to PSC Docket # 137-CE-223 on February 13, 2026 (ATC, 2026).

ATC is a Wisconsin corporation furnishing electric light or power to the public and may be vested with the authority to condemn under Wis. Stat. § 32.02. Vested with the power of condemnation, utility projects that impact agricultural lands are also subject to Wisconsin's AIS statute Wis. Stat. §32.035. On April 22, 2026, the Department determined that an AIS was required for the proposed project in accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035.

According to Wis. Stat. §32.035 , the AIS is designed to be an informational and advisory document that describes and analyzes the potential effects of a proposed project on agricultural operations and agricultural resources, but it cannot stop a project. The Department is required to prepare an AIS when the actual or potential exercise of eminent domain powers involves an acquisition of any interest in more than five acres of land from any agricultural operation. The term "agricultural operation" includes all owned and rented parcels of land, buildings, equipment, livestock, and personnel used by an individual, partnership, or corporation under single management to produce agricultural commodities.

The AIS reflects the general objectives of the Department in its recognition of the importance of conserving vital agricultural resources and maintaining a healthy rural economy. The Department is not involved in determining whether or not eminent domain powers will be used or the amount of compensation to be paid for the acquisition of any property.

As the voluntary contract for the fee-simple acquisition by ATC precedes, or may preclude a jurisdictional offer, the 30-day waiting period for contract negotiations under Wis. Stat. §32.035(4)(d) is not applicable. If ATC deviates from the selected project site as represented in the agricultural impact notification (AIN), the Department shall be re-notified in accordance with Wis. Stat. §32.035(3).

Should ATC ever actualize its powers of condemnation for this acquisition, information on the appraisal and compensation process under eminent domain is provided within Appendix B. The full text of Wis. Stat. §32.035 is included in Appendix C. Additional references to statutes that govern eminent domain and condemnation processes and other sources of information are also included in Appendices C and D.

# II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## Project Design and Purpose

ATC reported the Woodview Lane Distribution Interconnection Project ("Project") consists of building the new 138 kilovolt (kV) Woodview Lane Substation, which includes acquisition of 20 acres of agricultural land from parcel ID 1790481105 which is currently owned by Daniel L. Dollert as shown in Figure 1, by a fee-simple acquisition (i.e. to purchase full ownership and exclusive rights to the property). ATC determined the need for the project's resulting upgrades based on a review of a load interconnection request from We Energies for the Charter Steel Substation (DATCP, 2026a; ATC, 2026). The resulting Woodview Lane Substation would be 100% owned by ATC.

The Woodview Lane Substation is designed as a five-position breaker-and-a-half substation with space allocated for up to three additional positions (refer to the CA application, Appendix I, Figure 1 "General Arrangement", PSC Docket ID 577914 for a proposed substation blueprint). The following 138kV equipment will be included, but not limited to: eight gas circuit breakers, two point-on-wave gas circuit breakers, twenty-three disconnect switches, two capacitor banks, nineteen voltage transformers, and two station service voltage transformers (DATCP, 2026). There will be one permanent access road put in place to access the substation from Cold Springs Road, which would impact 2.2 acres of agricultural land owned by Charter Manufacturing Company Inc and farmed by Dollert (Figure 1). Approximately 0.5 miles of new transmission line built in new ROW located within the proposed 20-acre substation site. There will also be 0.4 miles of temporary line, a shoe-fly, installed on new ROW. A shoe-fly is used to bypass the construction area in order to maintain service to the local customer that is fed from existing ATC lines.

The Project also consists of approximately 2.8 miles of dual circuit and 0.3 miles of rebuilt single circuit overhead transmission line will be rebuilt and upgraded to 138 kV within existing ROW. Structures on one double-circuit transmission line will be replaced to accommodate the new Charter Steel lead line. The rebuilt portion of the Project will 1 to 1 replace existing lattice

structures with the same number of smaller, monopole structures with a smaller foundation footprint, from 700-1024 square feet to 113 to 160 square feet (David Hastings, ATWELL, Personal Communications, August 2026). ATC notified the Department that there is one acre of one agricultural parcel (parcel ID 0802716002100) within the rebuild portion of the project. The current transmission line is routed along the edge of the field and the new structures will remain within the existing ROW, with no expansion of ROW anticipated. Refer to Figure 1 for the agricultural properties impacted by the project and Appendix A, Figure 1 for a map of the entire project that is being reviewed by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) in Docket 137-CE-223. The CA narrative was submitted as PSC Docket Ref # 580415.

## Staging Areas and Workspaces

Within the CA application, ATC documented that there is one potential laydown yard, S-LY-18. This laydown yard is also shared by the Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection Project. Laydown yards for the Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection project are reviewed in AIS 4675 which was published on June 16, 2026.

The Project also has 10 temporary workspaces (TWS) where wire stringing, storage and access between substation components will occur. A majority of the temporary workspaces (TWS-01 through TWS-09) will occur on agricultural land surrounding the planned substation and shoe-fly structures. These temporary workspaces as well as project environmental details in general can be found in PSC Docket Ref # 586446. Refer to Appendix A, Figure 2 for aerial images of the proposed workspaces and potential laydown yard associated with the Project.

## Project Schedule

ATC is anticipating starting land acquisitions and construction in October 2026, with a projected in-service date of December 2028 (DATCP, 2026a).

Within the CA application materials, ATC noted there could be a schedule impact depending on the route outcome of a separate project under review by the PSC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) at the time of this AIS analysis, the Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection project (ATC, 2026). If the Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection project's alternate route is chosen by the PSC, this would require one of the 138-kV lines involved with the Woodview Lane Transmission project to be converted into 345-kV line, and dictate a new in-service date of April 2027. The Ozaukee County Distribution Interconnection project routes were reviewed for agricultural impacts by the Department within AIS 4675 published on June 16, 2026.

# III. AGRICULTURAL SETTING

## Farmland Preservation

Wisconsin's farmland preservation (FP) program provides local governments and landowners with tools to aid in protecting agricultural land for continued agricultural use and to promote activities that support the larger agricultural economy. Lands that are planned for farmland preservation by the county and included in a certified zoning district or located within an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) are afforded land use protections intended to support agriculture and are eligible for the farmland preservation tax credit.

### *Farmland Preservation Planning*

Ozaukee County contains lands planned for Farmland Preservation, but ATC's proposed project area does not intersect with any such lands.

### *Farmland Preservation Zoning*

Establishing FP zoning strengthens farmland protections beyond what an FP plan affords. Under Wis. Stat. §91.46(4), farmland preservation zoning districts may authorize electric transmission uses with a conditional use permit for uses that do not comply with Wis. Stat. §91.44(1)(f).

There are no certified FP zoning jurisdictions located within the Project's proposed area.

## Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs)

AEAs are community-led efforts to establish designated areas important to Wisconsin's agricultural future. This designation highlights the importance of the area for local agriculture and further supports local farmland preservation and agricultural development goals. Designation as an AEA also enables eligible landowners to enter into FP agreements. Through an FP agreement, a landowner agrees to voluntarily restrict the use of his/her land to agriculture for fifteen years in exchange for eligibility for the farmland preservation tax credit.

A review of the Department's AEA program shows Ozaukee County does not contain an AEA (DATCP, 2026b).

Prior to 2009, owners of eligible farmland could sign 10- to 25-year FP agreements outside of AEA boundaries. There are no effective pre-2009 FP agreements located in Ozaukee County.

## Drainage Districts

Drainage districts are local governmental entities governed under Wis. Stat. Ch. 88 and organized under a county drainage board for the primary purpose of draining of lands for agricultural use (DATCP, 2021). Landowners who benefit from drainage pay assessments to cover the cost to construct, maintain, and repairing the district's drains. According to the Department, approximately 190 active districts exist within 27 of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

A review of the Department's Drainage Program database indicates that no drainage districts will be directly impacted by the Project.

## Conservation Programs

Voluntary conservation programs such as the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are financial incentive programs to help agricultural landowners meet their conservation goals. The USDA and the Department jointly administer the CREP program in Wisconsin.

### *Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)*

CREP pays eligible agricultural landowners enrolled within the program to install filter strips along waterways or to return continually flooded fields to wetlands while leaving the remainder of the adjacent land in agricultural production. To be eligible for CREP payments, a recipient must have agricultural lands in crop production that are within 150 ft of a stream or water body or 1,000 ft from a grassland project area (DATCP, 2019).

A review of the Department's CREP records indicates that as of August 2026, the Project area reviewed in this AIS will not encroach upon any effective CREP agreements, nor any perpetual easements.

### *Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)*

The CRP program is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency of the USDA. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, eligible agricultural landowners enrolled in the program agree to remove highly erodible land from agricultural production and plant resource-conserving plant species such as grasses or trees that will improve environmental health and quality (USDA, 2022). Eligible agricultural landowners must possess lands with the potential for long-term improvements to water quality, prevent soil erosion or establish beneficial wildlife habitats according to the USDA Environmental Benefits Index (USDA, 2022). CRP enrollment information is privileged to the USDA and CRP program participants. The Department is therefore unable to determine if any of the impacted agricultural parcels are enrolled within the CRP program.

Landowners surveyed by the Department for the project did not indicate having lands enrolled within the CRP program. Refer to Section IV "Agricultural Impacts" for more information regarding the landowner survey.

The Department advises ATC to:

- Work with landowners to identify effective CRP agreements prior to any construction or site disturbance activities
- Coordinate with the appropriate Wisconsin CRP contact regarding effective CRP contracts within the project area and coordinate with FSA regarding impact mitigation to CREP enrolled lands and/or potential contract (CRP-1) releases within 12 months of expected construction or site disturbance activities.

### *Managed Forest Law*

The MFL program is a voluntary sustainable forestry program administered by DNR under subch. III of ch. NR 46. In exchange for reduced property taxes, eligible landowners commit to a 25-50 year sustainable forest management plan on their privately owned woodlands. Sustainable forestry practices such as harvesting mature timber according to sound forest management practices, reforestation and afforestation of the land, are required in enrolled landowner's management plans. Potential enrollees must also show their parcel complies with size and density requirements under Wis. Stat. § 77.82(1)(a)2, which states that at least 80% of the parcel must be producing or capable of producing a minimum of 20 cubic feet of merchantable timber per acre per year. Land with buildings or improvements associated with buildings are not eligible for MFL. Exceptions such as utility ROWs are permitted such that the project and its ROW will not interfere with future or current MFL eligibility (DNR, 2022).

In order to analyze potential project impacts on MFL enrollments, the Department conducted a spatial analysis of impacted parcels. This analysis indicated that the Project area reviewed in this AIS will not affect any lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Law Program.

### *Soil and Water Resource Management Grant Program (SWRM)*

The state has a SWRM program with goals including: enhancing surface and groundwater protections, providing financial and technical assistance for locally led conservation and addressing soil and water resource concerns. Through the SWRM Program, the Department allocates funds to County Conservation Departments to facilitate landowner cost-share for installation of conservation practices. When a cost-share contract is issued under Wis. Stat. §92.14, a landowner and or grant recipient agrees to install and maintain the conservation practice according to an operation and maintenance plan.

Landowners who are aware of any SWRM cost-shared practices on their farm within the proposed Project area should consult with the County Land Conservation Department to determine 1) the

compatibility of the proposed ROW easement with the existing conservation practice and 2) if any effects will occur due to alteration of a practice during construction activities.

ATC is advised to consult the applicable County Land Conservation Department on the existence of installed SWRM conservation practices within the Project area. Practices that are not maintained in accordance with the terms of the contract operation and maintenance plan may be subject to repayment of cost-shared funds. If a landowner is required to repay any cost-share funds because a construction impact resulted in a violation of the SWRM contract, the landowners should contact the ATC staff member, as designated by ATC, responsible for handling compensation for release of lands from conservation programs. The landowner should be compensated for any termination of SWRM grant contract resulting from a construction impact.

# IV. AGRICULTURAL IMPACTS

In addition to being a key component of Wis. Stat. §32.035, documenting the agricultural impacts of a project provides the project initiator and the agricultural landowner the opportunity to better understand the project in its own right as well as learn how the project will impact agriculture. Furthermore, the documentation of agricultural impacts by agricultural landowners and operators creates the opportunity for them to support alternatives that may reduce impacts to agricultural lands. The Department has used information provided by ATC for this AIS to analyze the potential agricultural impacts of the Project. The analysis of agricultural impacts and conclusions drawn from the analysis form the basis of the Department's recommendations within the Agricultural Impact Statement Recommendation Section above. Subsequent discussion includes agricultural acquisitions and recommendations for additional agricultural mitigation practices beyond what ATC cites within their CPCN application.

## Landowner Rights

Wisconsin Statute § 182.017, also referred to as the "Landowner Bill of Rights", describes the rights of landowners and the requirements the utility must adhere to, when a transmission line will be constructed on private property. The transmission line applicant and contractor operating on the applicant's behalf must comply with all aspects of this statute, which covers the range of topics described below:

- Compensation
- Infrastructure Repair
- Soil Conservation & Erosion
- Debris Removal
- Landowner and Utility Liabilities
- Tree Harvesting and Tree Ownership
- Interference with television & radio reception
- Right-of-way Restriction

- Consent for Weed & Brush Control

The applicant may request landowners to waive some rights during the negotiation process, but landowners are not required to do so. The Landowner Bill of Rights is still applicable to condemned land. The Department recommends that each affected landowner review the Landowners Bill of Rights (refer to Appendix D Section V) in its entirety prior to the start of easement negotiations.

## Farmland Acquisitions and Landowner Concerns

The substation portion of the Project will involve acquiring a total of approximately 26 acres of land and two landowners, Daniel L. Dollert and Charter Manufacturing Company Inc.. The resulting project will involve approximately 3.5 acres of temporary easements involving the shoe-fly structures during construction and permanently remove 22.4 acres out of agricultural production. ATC stated that none of the land that is proposed to be acquired by fee-simple acquisition is anticipated to be leased back for agricultural production in the future (DATCP, 2026a). The Department reached out to the impacted agricultural landowners to discuss feedback about potential agricultural impacts and received one response from Charter Manufacturing Company. Inc. A representative from Charter Manufacturing Company, Inc. stated its 7 acres of agricultural land within the project area is rented to Daniel Dollert. They state that the proposed project will incur only nominal effects on their agricultural land and will not affect any agricultural structures.

The Project proposes utilizing existing ROW to rebuild the current transmission line along the eastern boundary line of agricultural parcel ID 80271600200, owned by MDJD LLC. The Department attempted to reach out to this impacted farm operation by mail and phone for comment. The land agent associated with MDJD LLC informed the Department that there is a Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District farmland conservation easement on the property that acknowledged the existing transmission line easement as an existing land use documented within the conservation easement. ATC should provide appropriate compensation to all landowners with land enrolled in a conservation easement or farm program if the landowner must reimburse the administering agency for the land's removal or alteration.

The MDJD LLC land agent additionally noted there would be relatively few impacts if the existing pole in the field is directly replaced with another but is concerned that the project could introduce multiple new transmission structures, which would cause new disruptions to current farming practices. When the Department reached out to ATC regarding this concerned, the company noted that the lattice towers would be replaced 1:1 with the new monopole structures, so the same number of transmission poles would occur in relatively the same location where the current structures are situated (David Hastings, ATWELL, Personal Communications, August 2026).

## Severance, Access and Wasteland

The acquisition of agricultural property can result in agricultural parcel severance, removal of existing field access points and the potential creation of wastelands and uneconomic remnant parcels. The circumstances (i.e. loss of access, severance, wasteland etc.) surrounding the impacts to each impacted remnant agricultural parcel are unique, thus some agricultural parcels may remain economically viable while others may not. The following analysis will document the potential for severance, loss of access and potential creation of wastelands and uneconomic remnant parcels for the agricultural parcel impacted by the project.

### *Severance*

Severing an agricultural parcel to accommodate a project effectively splits the existing parcel into two or more smaller parcels. Severing an agricultural parcel may remove existing access points, create agricultural wastelands or uneconomic remnant parcels, and at times divide the operation of a farm.

The proposed project is not anticipated to permanently sever or bisect any agricultural parcels.

### *Access*

As proposed, the project has the potential to temporarily limit access to the agricultural lands of Daniel Dollert and Charter Steel Manufacturing Inc through the temporary shoe-fly lines that will be installed. The temporary presence of these lines has the potential to reduce maneuverability of farming equipment. Landowners and farm operators with concerns related to access on their farm operation should discuss them with ATC during easement negotiations and in subsequent communications.

The proposed project is not anticipated to permanently change existing access to agricultural parcels.

### *Wasteland*

Acquisitions that sever farmland frequently create small remnant fields that may be difficult to access or are irregularly shaped. Small remnant fields that are irregularly shaped can make it difficult for agricultural equipment to navigate and reduce the amount of tillable acres, thus creating undeveloped land (Wis. Stat. § 70.32(2)(a)(5)) or what is commonly referred to as wasteland. This in turn reduces agricultural productivity and decreases the economic viability of the land. Furthermore, as remnant fields decrease in size the proportion of wasteland (a result of narrow fields and sharp corners) increases, which further influences the fields overall productivity and economic viability.

At the time of this analysis, the Project is not expected to create significant wastelands.

## Prime Farmland and Soils

The proposed acquisition and construction of the project will impact approximately 26 acres of agricultural lands and soils. The soils impacted by the proposed project were cataloged by soil map unit and soil texture using the Department's prime farmland soils GIS layer. These soils were analyzed for impacts to soils designated as prime farmland, prime farmland if drained or farmland of statewide importance (Table 1). Table 1 reflects adjusted total GIS acres for the selected parcel rather than assessed acres or total acreage reported in ATC's AIN. Prime farmland is designated by the USDA according to section 622.3 of the National Soil Survey Handbook (USDA, 2021) and is based on the ability of the land and soil to produce crops. Definitions of prime farmland, prime farmland if drained and farmlands of statewide importance are provided under Table 1.

Approximately 98% of the agricultural lands impacted by the proposed project hold some level of State priority designation. Specifically, 75.9% of the soils are designated as prime farmland, 1.5% are designated as prime farmland if drained, and 20.7% are designated as farmland of statewide importance (Table 1). Across the impacted agricultural parcels, the primary soil texture is silt loam of various soil series, which are medium-textured soils (Cornell, 2017) with good structure and capability to hold onto water without becoming excessively wet and are usually best suited for crop production (UW-Extension, 2005). Additional impacted soils are loam and peat.

| **Soil Texture** | **Prime Farmland*** (acre) | **Prime Farmland if Drained◊** (acre) | **Farmland of Statewide Importance₸** (acre) | **Not Prime Farmland⌽** (acre) | **Total** (acre) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Substation** | | | | | |
| Silt Loam | 15.4 | 0.0 | 3.7 | 0.0 | 19.1 |
| Peat | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.8 |
| | | | | *Substation Total* | 20.0 |
| **Permanent Access Road** | | | | | |
| Loam | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Silt Loam | 0.6 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 2.0 |
| Peat | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| | | | *Permanent Access Road Total* | | 2.4 |
| **Temporary "Shoe-Fly" Transmission Lines** | | | | | |
| Silt Loam | 3.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 3.5 |
| | | *Temporary "Shoe-Fly" Transmission Line Total* | | | 3.5 |
| **Agricultural Parcel 080271600200** | | | | | |
| Loam | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| | | | | *Agricultural Parcel Total* | 1.0 |

*__Prime farmland__ is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and may be utilized for cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other lands excluding urban built-up land or water. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management.
◊__Prime farmland if drained__, indicates that if farmland is drained it would meet prime farmland criteria.
ŦFarmlands of statewide importance are set by state agency(s). Generally, these farmlands are nearly prime farmland and economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce yields high as prime farmlands under proper conditions.
ϕ__Not Prime farmland__, indicates farmland is neither prime farmland nor of designated importance.

Table 1: Soils impacted by the proposed ATC project for new electric substation, permanent access road and temporary shoe-fly lines, and transmission line rebuild. Adjusted total acres reflect measured GIS acres for the parcel rather than assessed acres or total acreage reported in ATC's AIN.

This soils analysis shows that ATC's proposed acquisition has the potential to remove approximately 22.4 acres of high-quality soils from production for construction of the substation and associated access road. The project will incur temporary impacts on approximately 3.5 acres of high-quality soils in order to place the shoe-fly structures during construction of the substation. For the transmission line rebuild portion, the project proposes to temporarily impact an acre of high-quality agricultural land within an existing ROW during transmission line construction.

## Drainage and Soil Health

Maintaining proper field drainage and preserving soil health is vital to the success of an agricultural operation. If drainage is impaired, water can settle in fields and cause substantial damage, such as reducing soil health, harming or killing crops and other vegetation, concentrating mineral salts, flooding farm buildings, or causing hoof rot and other diseases that affect livestock. Soil structure, texture, organic matter and microorganisms are all important factors that influence soil health (Wolkowski and Lowery, 2008).

The substation's site plan will dictate where grading and/or filling may be required to establish a stable and level surface for the new substation as well as any practices that may be required to capture or mitigate runoff from gravel pads, concrete foundations and access roads. The practice of grading may require the removal of topsoil, which will affect organic matter, nutrient and water holding capacity of the land. Grading soils to prepare a construction site may increase soil compaction which can lower the holding capacity for water, resulting in runoff and/or other drainage issues if unmanaged (USDA-NRCS, 2000).

ATC is subject to permitting requirements to ensure that construction proceeds in a manner to minimize drainage issues and soil erosion. Proximal farmland owners should also consider

consulting the Ozaukee County Community Development Department for applicable site erosion control and storm water management practices, such as planting cover crops, in anticipation of potential increased storm water runoff or soil erosion originating from the Project site.

# V. AGRICULTURAL IMPACT MITIGATION

ATC has indicated within its CA application and AIN that it will coordinate and consult with each agricultural landowner to obtain detailed information about each agricultural operation including but not limited to: locations of farm infrastructure, animals and crops, current farm biological security practices, locations of drainage tiles, use of off-ROW access roads, and landowner concerns. Within these documents, ATC shared that it utilizes agricultural landowner feedback to identify potential project impacts to each agricultural operation along the Project route and to the extent practicable, implement measures to mitigate impacts (DATCP, 2026a; ATC, 2026). ATC describes these potential mitigation measures to include compensation to producers for loss in productivity and restoring agricultural lands to the extent practicable through decompaction and drain tile repair if necessary (ATC, 2026). ATC plans to hire an experienced Agricultural Specialist to work with farmers through negotiations, construction, and restoration. The Agricultural Specialist will assist and coordinate with agricultural landowners to settle damage claims (DATCP, 2026a).

Within AIN materials, ATC stated that at this time it has not identified any farm operations with livestock, land enrolled within MFL or FCL programs, or any organic farm operations along the project corridor (ATC, 2026), which aligns with the Department's analysis for the Project area subject to DATCP review (refer to Section 3 "Agricultural Setting"). Additionally, ATC had not identified any farm residences, buildings or structures that would need to be acquired or relocated as a result of the Project. Given that DATCP did not receive feedback noting concerns related to the elements noted, the Department will not include recommendations to mitigating impacts associated with those potential concerns. The Department recommends that landowners who are concerned about potential impacts to their agricultural land should keep records of the conditions of the ROW before, during, and after construction. Records could include keeping crop yield records, beginning once the ROW is known, and photographs taken every season. These measures can help a landowner negotiate for compensation, should damages caused by the Project occur.

### *5.1.1. De-icing & Traction Control*

Construction crews commonly apply various products to improve vehicle traction across temporary road matting within the construction ROW to control for wet, slippery, or icy conditions. The application of sodium chloride (e.g. rock salt), as a de-icing agent, to temporary road matting within the construction ROW can lead to sodium chloride rich runoff that has potentially detrimental

impacts to the health of nearby soils, ecosystems and surface waters (Richburg, 2001; Kelly et al., 2008; Corsi et al., 2010). Alternative de-icing products, which are less damaging to the health of soil, vegetation and ecosystems as compared to sodium chloride, do exist. For example, county highway departments commonly apply sand or small lime chips (1/8" to 3/16" diameter), or a combination of the two as an alternative to sodium chloride, especially when surface temperatures are colder than 15°F when sodium chloride is less effective. University of Wisconsin Madison – Extension publication A3877 provides a list of alternative de-icing products ATC may wish to consider when selecting an alternative(s) to sodium chloride-based products (Jull, 2009). However, sodium chloride may still be required to mitigate situations that pose elevated safety risks.

The Department did not find mention of mitigation practices related to de-icing and traction control within ATC's AIN or CPCN application. As construction is anticipated to occur during winter in or next to fields in agricultural production, the Department recommends ATC consider the following BMPs to address impacts related to salt applications on temporary road matting over agricultural soils:

1) ATC should use alternatives to sodium chloride, when safety conditions allow, for de-icing and traction control on temporary road matting when crossing agricultural soils.
2) When the application of sodium chloride is necessary to resolve a matter of safety an alternative method cannot, ATC should limit the sodium chloride application rate to the lowest level required to maintain a safe working environment.
3) ATC should prepare a spill response plan in the event sodium chloride or an alternative product is over applied or spilled onto agricultural soils.

ATC shared the following feedback on the recommendations that the Department provided (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> ATC's general practice is to utilize a sand-salt mixture, with the salt content not exceeding 5 percent, for application on mat roads and work pads. This mixture is not applied directly on the ground surface under normal operating practices. On properties with organic or other certifications, ATC's contractor coordinates with the landowner or agricultural specialist to select an acceptable product. Lime chips or other organic mineral alternatives may be used, subject to prior approval and consistency with past accepted practices. Additionally, any spills of excessive de-icing or traction material is removed under ATC's existing spill response program.

### *5.1.2. Topsoil Mixing*

Agricultural topsoil is an invaluable resource that should be preserved. Excavation activities required to create the structural foundations for electric transmission line poles have the potential to mix highly productive topsoil with underlying less productive and potentially rocky subsoils. Deep rutting also has the potential to intermix topsoil. If intermixing of topsoil occurs, the resulting soils are generally known to be less productive and in-turn reduce the agricultural productivity of the impacted area. When excavation is required, ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(c) to segregate and stockpile topsoil from subsoil.

Within its CA application, ATC states that they will restore agricultural lands to an extent practicable and will use mitigation techniques such as topsoil replacement as appropriate (ATC, 2026).

The Department recommends that ATC take the following steps to prevent the mixing of topsoil with subsoil layers within the Project ROW:

1) Do not spread mixed soils or segregated subsoils over cropland, pastures or other agricultural fields.
2) Prevent and monitor for erosion to keep topsoil segregated and within the ROW.
3) Avoid working in areas with recently saturated soils to the degree practicable.
4) If topsoil mixing occurs, remove the intermixed soil and replace with new topsoil.

ATC shared the following feedback on the recommendations that the Department provided (refer to Appendix G: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> Soil will be allowed to dry before being repaired, if practicable. Examples of when it would not be practicable include when safety is an issue or if there is a risk of erosion getting worse.

### *5.1.3. Soil Compaction*

Equipment used to construct electric transmission lines has the potential to compact soil and reduce soil productivity on the farmland traversed during construction. Soil compaction is widely known to have a range of potential negative impacts to the productivity of soil, including reduced crop productivity, reduce crop uptake of water and nutrients, restriction of plant rooting depth, decreased water infiltration and increased surface runoff.

Several factors influence whether soil becomes compacted. An important influence is soil moisture: the wetter the soil, the more likely it is to be compacted from traffic. The potential for compaction

also depends on the soil texture. Coarser textured soils, like sand or sandy loam, are less likely to become compacted than are clay or silty clay loams. Finally, the axle weight of the construction equipment affects compaction. UW-Extension report A3367 states that heavy equipment with axle loads that exceed 10 tons increase the risk of soil compaction into subsoil layers that cannot be removed by conventional tillage (Wolkowski and Lowery, 2008). The expected compaction depth increases as the axle load and soil moisture content increases.

If development activities must occur on moist, non-frozen soil, potential soil compaction mitigation practices such as access mats can be used to redistribute the weight of heavy equipment over a large surface area. Access matting can aid in mitigating soil compaction, rutting and water infiltration issues (Thompson et al., 2023), though some scientific field studies document a potential imbalance in soil microbial communities in grasslands or pastures by altering soil moisture levels and increasing nutrient availability due to plant die-off under matting with prolonged use (Thompson et al. 2020; Thompson et al. 2023). Overall, access matting aids mitigation of soil compaction and rutting. These mats should be used as needed with thought to avoid prolonged impact, especially on grasslands/pastures.

After construction is complete, the ROW will be compacted to some degree. The Department recommends measuring for soil compaction post-construction within the Project ROW and outside of the Project ROW with a penetrometer throughout the soil horizon and comparing the measurements. If soil measurements within the Project ROW are comparatively higher, this is an indication that compaction has occurred. Landowners with concerns of possible soil compaction should file an inquiry with ATC's land agents or the Agricultural Specialist. In areas where soil compaction occurred, the Department recommends ATC take steps to de-compact the soils by conducting a sufficient amount of deep tillage (V-ripper, chisel plow, para plow or other depth appropriate tillage implement) within the ROW to help restore the soil structure to pre-construction productivity. Following decompaction, the soil should be measured again for signs of compaction to ensure proper decompaction has occurred throughout the topsoil and subsoil profile. The Department also recommends ATC monitor soil moisture conditions post-construction throughout the Project ROW for signs of standing water. Areas with standing water may also have experienced soil compaction and should be measure for compaction.

ATC shared within the AIN materials that soil compaction issues associated with construction activities would be mitigated to the degree possible using the following practices as necessary (DATCP, 2026a):

- completing construction during dry or frozen conditions to the extent practicable
- the use of equipment with low-ground pressure tires or tracks
- placement of construction matting to help minimize soil and vegetation disturbances
- distribute axle loads over a larger surface area thereby reducing the bearing pressure on agricultural soils

- the use of ice roads.

The Department recommends ATC consider taking the following measures to prevent soil compaction within the Project ROW:

1) Avoid working in areas with recently saturated soils to the extent practicable.
2) When soil compaction is suspected or when a landowner has filed an inquiry with ATC, use a penetrometer to sample soil horizons within the Project ROW and outside of the Project ROW and compare the samples to determine if soil compaction has occurred.
3) If soil compaction is found, decompact the soils by conducting a sufficient amount of deep tillage within the ROW to help restore the soil structure to pre-construction productivity.

ATC shared the following feedback on the recommendations that the Department provided (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> Soil will be allowed to dry before being repaired, if practicable. Examples of when it would not be practicable include when safety is an issue or if there is a risk of erosion getting worse.

### *5.1.4. Drainage*

Proper field drainage is vital to a successful farm operation. Construction of an electric transmission line can disrupt improvements such as drainage tiles, grassed waterways, and drainage ditches, which regulate the flow of water on farm fields. If drainage is impaired, water can settle in fields and cause substantial damage, such as killing crops and other vegetation, concentrating mineral salts, flooding farm buildings, or causing hoof rot and other diseases that affect livestock. Construction-caused soil compaction or damage drain tiles leading to ponded water where none existed prior to construction. If drain tiles are damaged, ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(c) to repair or replace the damage drain tile.

Within the AIN materials, ATC stated that it will work with landowners to identify drainage, irrigation systems and other agricultural infrastructure to minimize construction impacts and will maintain their ability to irrigate their fields, should any transmission line structures be placed in conflict with an existing irrigation system (DATCP, 2026a). ATC additionally noted it will restore agricultural lands to an extent practicable and prior to the start of any land disturbing activity, temporary sediment and erosion control best management practices (BMPs) will be installed along the boundaries of the construction workspace and sensitive resources (ATC, 2026; DATCP, 2026a)

To help mitigate the potential for drainage impacts, the Department recommends the following to agricultural landowners:

1) Agricultural landowners should inform ATC about the existence and location of drainage systems or planned drainage systems that could be affected by the Project.

2) Agricultural landowners should document field moisture conditions and the historic presence/absence of ponded water prior to the start of construction for post-construction comparisons.

To help mitigate the potential for drainage impacts, the Department recommends the following to ATC:

1) ATC should consider using the techniques outlined in Section 5.1.2 "Soil Compaction" when crossing a known drain tile.

### *5.1.5. De-watering*

During excavation/auguring of the structure foundation for a transmission line pole, dewatering may be necessary. Improper dewatering can result in soil erosion, sedimentation and deposition of gravel, sand, or silt onto adjacent agricultural lands, and the inundation of crops. The discharge of these construction waters must be in compliance with current drainage laws, local ordinances, WisDNR permit conditions, and the provisions of the Clean Water Act. ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(c) to compensate the landowner for any damage to agricultural fields caused by construction de-watering activities.

The Department recommends the following to ATC in order to mitigate the impacts of construction water discharge on agricultural lands:

1) ATC should identify prior to construction 1) excavation sites with low areas and/or hydric soils where de-watering is likely and 2) suitable upland areas for discharge.

2) Discharge locations should be well-vegetated areas with topography that will prevent the water from returning to the ROW, resist soil erosion, and allow for infiltration and settling of gravel and other unwanted sediments prior to entering a field, pasture, or waterbody.

3) ATC should consider using pre-filter bags or other filter devices, prior to discharge, in order to capture sediments, gravel and rocks.

4) Cropland, pasture lands and other agricultural areas selected for discharge should not be inundated for more than 24 hours, as longer durations could result in crop damage.

5) ATC should not directly discharge or allow construction waters from non-organic farms to enter an organic farming operation.

ATC shared the following feedback on the recommendations that the Department provided (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> DATCP Recommendations 1) though 4) are permitted practices through WDNR WPDES General Permit WI-S067831-6 which includes Dewatering. ATC's practices generally align with 5) to not directly discharge or allow construction waters from non-organic farms to enter an organic farming operation and will follow this recommendation if ordered by the PSC.

### *5.1.6. Erosion and Conservation Practices*

Electric transmission line construction activities and the placement of transmission line poles can destabilize existing erosion control practices such as diversion terraces, grassed or lined waterways, outlet ditches, water and sediment control basins, vegetated filter strips, etc. The destabilization of these erosion control practices have the potential to cause soil erosion within the ROW, but also from upland fields. During wet conditions the risk of soil erosion is increased, as exposed soils, especially areas with increased slope, may more easily erode and move downslope. Wind erosion may also be of concern if existing windbreaks are removed from the ROW, especially when soil are dry. If left unchecked, significant erosion can have an adverse effect on the long-term productivity of agricultural lands. ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(c) to restore existing erosion control practices such as diversion terraces, grassed or lined waterways, outlet ditches, water and sediment control basins, vegetated filter strips, etc. that are damaged by construction activities to pre-construction condition and function.

The Department recommends to ATC the following measures to mitigate soil erosion within the Project ROW:

1) Once construction is complete, pending soil decompaction, impacted agricultural lands within the ROW should be returned to cropland or seeded with the appropriate seed mix.

2) ATC should inspect all temporary erosion controls structures on a daily basis throughout construction and restoration phases and undertake erosion control structure maintenance as required to prevent soil erosion within the ROW.

3) ATC should avoid impacting any existing permanent erosion control structure (e.g. diversion terraces, grassed or lined waterways, outlet ditches, water and sediment control basins, vegetated filter strips, etc.) that's intended to prevent soil erosion from an upland agricultural area.

4) Should ATC disrupt an existing permanent erosion control structure, a temporary structure should be installed until the permanent erosion control is restored.

ATC shared the following feedback on the recommendations that the Department provided (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> ATC is required to follow DNR WPDES General Permit WI-S067831-6 plus standard ATC Practices regarding soil erosion mitigation practices (also detailed in project specific Restoration Plan).

The Project's Restoration Plan can be found in ATC's CA Application within PSC Docket #137-CE-223, Appendix F, Exhibit 1 (REF# 586445; ATC, 2025b).

### *5.1.7. Construction Debris*

After construction is complete, there may be construction debris remaining on the field. If large pieces of debris or rocks are left in the field, agricultural machinery may be damaged when the landowner first works the land. ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(c) to clear all debris and remove all stones and rocks resulting from construction activity upon completion of construction. To that end, ATC shall also clear the ROW of signage, construction mat debris, litter, and spoil piles etc.

ATC addresses cleanup and restoration of ROW in Section 5.5.2 *Construction Impacts by Phase* of the PSC CPCN application (ATC, 2026).

To mitigate the potential impact of construction debris, the Department recommends the following for ATC:

1) Should a landowner find construction debris remaining in the field after ATC has cleared the field, the landowner should contact the Agricultural Specialist, or equivalent contact, to report the debris prior to operating agricultural equipment in the field.
2) When removing an existing power line pole from within or immediately adjacent to cropland, ATC should remove the old structure at a minimum of four feet below the ground surface where practicable.
3) Should the ATC create a hole within croplands during the removal of any part of the existing transmission structure, the Department recommends that ATC preserve each layer and then backfill in soil sequence to keep it to the original soil to the degree possible, dressing with topsoil as needed. If backfilling with gravel is determined to be necessary and if it is within or immediately adjacent to cropland, then the Department suggests backfilling with gravel to a minimum of four feet from the ground surface to ensure tillage equipment would not be impacted or spread gravel throughout the soil horizons, or ATC should consult the agricultural operator for an appropriate depth depending on how deep their tillage equipment runs.

ATC shared the following feedback on recommendation three that the Department suggested (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

> For structure removals, ATC places existing soil back into the hole and the surface is restored with existing topsoil.

### *5.1.8. Weed Control*

The Project may introduce noxious weeds or other invasive plants species into the Project ROW that compete with agricultural crops. Noxious weeds may also spread from parcel to parcel by construction equipment and project activities. Once weeds establish, they can interfere with agricultural harvesting equipment, attract unwanted insects, and require physical removal or chemical applications to remove.

Post construction and restoration, agricultural operations may resume normal agricultural cropping activities within the ROW so long as the crop or agricultural equipment do not interfere with transmission line facilities. After construction and during the operation of the line, ATC is required by Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(d) to control weeds and brush around the transmission line facilities. However, ATC shall not use herbicide for weed and brush control without the express written consent of the landowner (Wis. Stat. § 182.017(7)(d)).

The Department recommends the following to agricultural landowners and operators to mitigate the spread of noxious weeds within the project ROW:

1) Agricultural landowners should state whether they do or do not give ATC their express written consent for herbicide to be applied within the ROW they own.

2) Agricultural landowners and beekeepers should consider using the free online DriftWatch™ and BeeCheck™ registries, operated by FieldWatch™ to communicate areas containing specialty crops or beehives with pesticide applicators, in order to minimize the risk of accidental exposure. For more information on DriftWatch, please visit the WDATCP DriftWatch website at the provided link or at https://wi.driftwatch.org/.

The Department recommends the following to ATC to mitigate the spread of noxious weeds within the project ROW:

1) ATC should clean construction equipment and materials prior to entering an area of certification.

2) ATC should clean all roadways (private, county, state etc.) of construction debris, dirt and rocks.

3) ATC should use tracking pads at frequently used access points

4) ATC and its contractors that are applying herbicide or pesticides should utilize the Departments DriftWatch™ online mapping tool to locate agricultural lands and operations that are susceptible to herbicide or pesticides. If the online mapping tool locates an agricultural operation on or near areas that will receive herbicide or pesticide applications, ATC should contact the operation to discuss the appropriate methods required to minimize the risk of accidental exposure.

ATC shared the following feedback on recommendation one that the Department provided (refer to Appendix E: "Project Initiator Feedback Form"):

ATC cleans equipment and materials as part of its standard BMPs.

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ATWELL, LLC

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