



Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

July 31, 2006

In the Matter of the Otter Tail Corporation, dba Otter Tail Power Company, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Great River Energy, Heartland Consumers Power District, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (as represented by Missouri River Energy Services) Applications for a Route Permit and a Certificate of Need for the Big Stone Transmission Project in Southwestern Minnesota.

Otter Tail Power Company, et al., applied to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on January 9, 2006 for a Route Permit for the Big Stone 230 kV and 345 kV transmission lines project in Southwestern Minnesota. The companies applied to the PUC on September 30, 2005 for a Certificate of Need (CN) for these transmission lines. The lines are proposed to provide Minnesota customers with the output of the Big Stone II large electric power generating plant. The lines are also proposed to improve the reliability of the regional system, given the addition of approximately 600 MW of power to the grid.

An Environmental Report (ER) is required for the CN and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for the Route Application. On November 29, 2005, the PUC issued an Order combining the ER and EIS, determining that the EIS would be prepared in lieu of the ER for the CN application. The Draft EIS is now available from the Department of Commerce.

Formal comments on the accuracy and completeness of the Draft EIS will be accepted until October 31, 2006. Please refer to PUC Docket No. E017/CN-05-619 or E017/TR-05-1275 in all correspondence. Comments should be sent by e-mail or U.S. mail to:

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See the permitting web site at <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=18215> or "eDockets" at <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> to download an electronic copy of the DEIS. Contact David Birkholz at (651) 296-2878 if you prefer to receive a copy on CD-ROM.