



In the Matter of a Minnesota Power/Great River Energy, Application for Certification of a High Voltage Transmission Line and Substation Projects in the vicinity of the cities of Badoura (Crow Wing, Cass and Hubbard Counties) and Tower (St. Louis County)

**CONTENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
COMMISSIONER DECISION**

PUC Docket No. E015/TL-05-867

The above matter has come before the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce (the Department) for a decision on the content of the Environmental Report (ER) to be prepared in consideration of the Application for Certification from MP/GRE on the proposed Badoura and Tower high voltage transmission line (HVTL) projects.

The Routing and Siting Unit of the Department held public meetings on December 7, 2005 and December 8, 2005, in the towns of Backus and Tower, respectively. The purpose of the meetings was to provide the public with information on the two projects and to solicit input into the content of the ER. The public was given until January 10, 2006, to submit written comments.

Having reviewed the matter, and having consulted with staff, I hereby make the following Order on the content of the ER:

MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

The ER will address the following matters for each of the proposed projects:

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Project Description
- 1.2 Project Location
- 1.3 Project Purpose
- 1.4 Sources of Information

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 PUC Certification Requirement
- 2.2 Environmental Report Requirement

3.0 ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROJECT

- 3.1 No-build Alternative
- 3.2 Conservation Alternatives
- 3.3 Existing Line/System Improvements
- 3.4 Generation Alternatives
- 3.5 Alternative Corridor

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 Description of Environmental Setting

- 4.2 Impacts on Human Settlement
 - 4.2.1 Socioeconomic
 - 4.2.2 Displacement
 - 4.2.3 Noise
 - 4.2.4 Aesthetics
 - 4.2.5 Radio and Television Interference
 - 4.2.6 Human Health and Safety
 - 4.2.6.1 Electric/Magnetic Fields
 - 4.2.6.1 Stray Voltage
 - 4.3 Impacts on Land-based Economics
 - 4.3.1 Recreation
 - 4.3.2 Prime Farmland
 - 4.3.3 Transportation
 - 4.3.4 Mining and Forestry
 - 4.3.5 Economic Development
 - 4.3.5 Archeological and Historic Resources
 - 4.4 Impacts on Natural Environment
 - 4.4.1 Air Quality
 - 4.4.2. Water Quality
 - 4.4.2.1 Surface and Groundwater
 - 4.4.2.2 Wetlands
 - 4.4.3 Soils and Geology
 - 4.4.4 Flora and Fauna
 - 4.5 Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- 5.0 PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED**

ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The ER will not consider the impacts or mitigative measures associated with specific alignments within the proposed corridors. Site specific concerns (i.e., along specific alignments) will be addressed in the subsequent HVTL Route Permitting process.

The ER will only identify the general potential impacts from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed HVTL along the broad corridor(s), and the measures generally available to mitigate these potential impacts.

SCHEDULE

The ER shall be completed by March 1, 2006.

Signed this 17 day of Jan, 2006

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE


Glenn Wilson, Commissioner



STATE OF
MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Region II Headquarters
1201 East Highway 2
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744

June 24, 2005

Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Thank you for contacting the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on June 1, 2005 concerning the **Tower 115 kV Transmission Line Project** being considered in St. Louis County. Your letter indicated that Great River Energy & Minnesota Power will be seeking certification for this project and that you are currently gathering data to be used in preparation for several applications and approvals.

This is a reply to your inquiry about permits needed to cross state land. A "License for Utility to Cross State Land" is required for any state land administered by DNR anticipated to be crossed by this transmission line. A separate "License for Utility to Cross Public Waters" is required if public waters are crossed by this project. A separate water crossing license would probably be issued for all the water crossings related to the project. Both the land and water crossing licenses would be subject to Department review and approval. Utility licenses will be not issued until after environmental review is completed.

Future questions regarding land and water license applications can be directed me at 218-999-7894. Prior to submitting your license applications, please contact me to review the license application process.

Please note that your letter has been forwarded to Tom Balcom and Matt Langan of the Environmental Review section in the Department. Future questions about environmental concerns related to your proposal can be directed to Matt Langan at 651-297-3359.

Sincerely,

Joe Rokala
Northeast Lands & Minerals Regional Supervisor

Cc: Alan Jones, Forestry – St. Paul
Mike Magnuson, Forestry - Tower
Paul Peterson, Forestry – Grand Rapids
Greg Kvale, Forestry - Brainerd
Matt Langan, Ecological Services – St. Paul

Archaeological Site Locations

Site Number	Site Name	Twp.	Range	Sec.	Quarter Sections	Acres	Phase	Site Description	Traditio	Context	Reports	NR	CEF	DOE
County: Saint Louis														
21SL0007	Old Indian Cemetery	62	15	31	NW-SW	0	1	EW	W-1					
21SLal	Height of Land Portage	59	15	7	NE-SW-NW,SW,NE -SE	0	1	TR			SL-03-04			
21SLpo	Height of Land Portage Rivers	59	15	7	C,NW-SE,NE	0	1	TR			SL-03-04			
21SLpp	West Two Rivers	61	15	8	ON RR	0		HD						
		61	15	8		0		HD						

History/Architecture

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS	Twp	Range	Sec	Quarters	USGS	Report	NRHP	CEF	DOE	Inventory Number
COUNTY	Saint Louis										
CITY/TOWNSHIP:	Embarrass Twp.										
bridge	Co. Hwy. 303 over Lehtein River	60	15	17	SW-SE-SW	Biwabik NE	SL-88-2H				SL-EMB-001
August Nikunen Barn	off Co. Rd. 390	60	15	5	SW-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-043
August Nikunen Root Cellar		60	15	5	SW-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-044
August Nikunen Root Garage		60	15	5	SW-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-045
Charles Johnson Building	off Co. Rd. 364	60	15	8	SE-NE-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-046
Charles Johnson Building		60	15	8	SE-NE-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-047
Charles Johnson Building		60	15	8	SE-NE-NE	Embarrass	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-048
Charles Johnson Building		60	15	8	SE-NE-NE	Embarrass	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-049
Nels Johnson Log Building		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-085
Nels Johnson Log Shed		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-086
Nels Johnson House		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-087
Nels Johnson Barn		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-088
Nels Johnson Building		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-089
Nels Johnson Building		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-090
Nels Johnson Summer Kitchen		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-091
Nels Johnson Well		60	15	17	SE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-092
Jacob Pesola Farm Log Building	off Co. Rd. 303	60	15	19	SW-NW-NW	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-094
G.A. Paivarinta House (moved)		60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-095
sauna		60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-096
building		60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-097
building		60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Embarrass	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-098

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS	Twp	Range	Sec	Quarters	USGS	Report	NRHP	CEF	DOE	Inventory Number
COUNTY	Saint Louis										
CITY/TOWNSHIP:	Embarrass Twp.										
building	off Co. Rd. 303	60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-099
building		60	15	19	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-100
log building		60	15	20	NW-NW-N	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-101
building		60	15	20	NW-NW-N	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-102
log sauna		60	15	21	SE-SE-NE	Embarrass	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-103
house		60	15	21	SE-SE-NE	Embarrass	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-104
Aiti Parvianen Sauna	off Co. Rd. 362	60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-130
Aiti Parvianen Farmhouse		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-131
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-132
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-133
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-134
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-135
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-136
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-137
Aiti Parvianen Farm Building		60	15	32	NW-NW-NE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-138
Henry Petrell Barn	off Co. Rd. 558	60	15	32	NE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-139
Henry Petrell House		60	15	32	NE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-140
Henry Petrell Log Shed		60	15	32	NE-NW-SE	Biwabik NE	SL-88-1H				SL-EMB-141
Height of Land Portage	off Co. Rd. 138	60	15	31	SW	Biwabik		Y			SL-EMB-160
CITY/TOWNSHIP:	Kugler Twp.										
house	SW corner Co. Hwy. 135 & Co. Hwy. 411	61	15	17	NW	Tower	SL-88-2H				SL-KUG-001
shed		61	15	17	NW	Tower	SL-88-2H				SL-KUG-002
shed		61	15	17	NW	Tower	SL-88-2H				SL-KUG-003

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS	Twp	Range	Sec	Quarters	USGS	Report	NRHP	CEF	DOE	Inventory Number
COUNTY	Saint Louis										
CITY/TOWNSHIP:	Kugler Twp.										
garage	SW corner Co. Hwy. 135 & Co. Hwy. 411	61	15	17	NW	Tower	SL-88-2H				SL-KUG-004
Kugler Town Hall	off Co. Hwy. 135	61	15	17	SW-NE-NW	Tower	SL-88-2H				SL-KUG-005

RECEIVED SEP 16 2005

Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
Utility Contact: Eric Olson
Email Address: eolson@allete.com
Phone: 218-723-3947
www.mnpower.com

Great River Energy
17845 East Highway 10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330-0800
Utility Contact: Kandace Olsen
Email Address: kolsen@grenergy.com
Phone: 763-241-2293
www.greatriverenergy.com

The Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa Indians have no interest in

Project #: St. Louis County

Mat
giwegiizhigookway Martin/THPO/NAGPRA

Date

9/17/2005



BOIS FORTE

Reservation Tribal Council

5344 Lakeshore Dr. • Box 16 • Nett Lake, MN 55772 • 218-757-3261 • FAX 218-757-3312

September 15, 2005

RECEIVED SEP 19 2005

Carol L. Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
P.O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Projects

Dear Ms. Schmidt;

This letter is in response to notification of the proposed Tower 115kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The Bois Forte Band appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project.

The Bois Forte Band is unaware of any cultural resources within the proposed right-of-way. The area through which the proposed trail is routed was inhabited by members of the Bois Forte Band prior to Euro-American settlement. Band members continued to use the area for hunting, gathering plants, sugaring and fishing sporadically through the latter half of the 19th century. Therefore, the proposed Transmission project has the potential to impact cultural resources affiliated with the Bois Forte Band and an archaeological inventory is recommended within the right-of-way.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 218-753-6017 or rozeberens@yahoo.com.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary Berens".

Rosemary Berens
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

cc Barbara Brodeen
Bill Latady

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe



George Gogleye, Chairman
Arthur "Archie" LaRose, Secretary/Treasurer

District I Representative
Burton "Luke" Wilson

District II Representative
Lyman L. Losh

District III Representative
Donald "Mick" Finn

September 12, 2005

RECEIVED SEP 19 2005

Great River Energy
Attn: Carole Schmidt
17845 E. Highway 10
P. O. Box 800
Elk River, MN 55330

RE: **Proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project**
St. Louis County, Minnesota
LL-THPO Number: 05-199-NCRI

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (38CFR800).

I have reviewed the documentation; after careful consideration of our records, I have determined that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe does not have any concerns regarding sites of religious or cultural importance in this area.

Should any human remains or suspected human remains be encountered, all work shall cease and the following personnel should be notified immediately in this order: County Sheriff's Office and Office of the State Archaeologist.

You may contact me at (218) 335-2940 if you have questions regarding our review of this project. Please refer to the LL-THPO Number as stated above in all correspondence with this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina M. Papasodora
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

KEWEENAW BAY INDIAN COMMUNITY

Keweenaw Bay Tribal Center
107 Beartown Road
Baraga, Michigan 49908
Phone (906) 353-6623
Fax (906) 353-7540

2005 TRIBAL COUNCIL

SUSAN J. LAFERNIER, President
WARREN C. SWARTZ, JR., Vice-President
LARRY J. DENOMIE III, Secretary
GARY F. LOONSFOOT, SR., Asst. Secretary
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WILLIAM E. EMERY
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TONI J. MINTON
SHAWANUNG

September 6, 2005

Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

Re: Tower 115kV Transmission Project

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) received your requests for comments or interest on the above-mentioned projects. KBIC has no interests documented at this time in the proposed project areas. If the scope of work changes in any way or if artifacts or human remains are discovered, please notify KBIC immediately so we can assist in making an appropriate determination.

Please forward a copy of any request for future opportunities to review and comment to Summer Sky Cohen, Coordinator, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, at the address listed below. Please keep us informed of future projects as KBIC plans to increase our efforts to identify and document sites in the area.

Thank you for this opportunity to review and comment.

Respectfully,



Summer Sky Cohen, Officer
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
107 Beartown Road
Baraga, Michigan 49908
906.353.6272
906.353.6869 fax

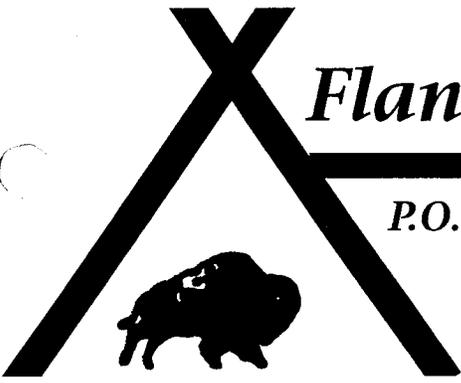
RECEIVED AUG 25 2005

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

P.O. Box 283 Flandreau, SD 57028

Ph. 605-997-3891

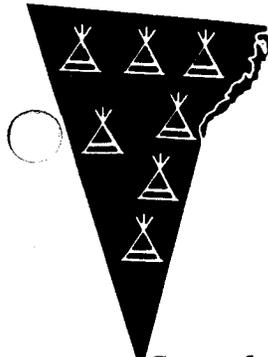
Fax 605-997-3878



Date: August 23, 2005
To: Minnesota Power
From: Cultural Preservation Officers-Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

No objections, however, if human skeletal remains and/or any objects falling under NAGPRA are uncovered during construction, please stop immediately and notify the appropriate persons from our Tribe. Sam Allen and Ray Redwing of our staff are our Cultural Preservation Officers, and NAGPRA Representatives. They can be contacted at the above address and phone number. Thank you.

Signature: Sam Allen Date: Aug 23, 2005
Sam Allen-Cultural Preservation
Officer-Flandreau Santee Sioux
Tribe



Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION
P.O. Box 509
100 Veterans Memorial Drive
Agency Village, South Dakota 57262-0509
Phone: (605) 698-3911

September 16, 2005

**Carole L. Schmidt
Great River Energy
Environmental Scientist**

Dear Carole,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new transmission line in St. Louis County. At this time in the planning process the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe has no objections or concerns as to the location of the proposed project.

However we would like to be involved in discussions pertaining to specific locations for the transmission facility and lines as such activities may have the potential to affect historical or cultural sites within the project area.

Thank you again and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Franky Jackson
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
Agency Village, SD 57262
605-698-4972

giijwegijzhigookway Martin/THPO/NAGPRA
 Lac Vieux Desert Band
 P.O. Box 249
 Watersmeet, MI 49969

RECEIVED AUG 30 2005



GREAT RIVER
 ENERGY®

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



minnesota power

AN ALLETE COMPANY

Date

8/25/05

17 August 2005

Mr. James Williams, Jr., Chairperson
 Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior
 Chippewa Indians
 P.O. Box 249, Choate Road
 Watersmeet, MI 49969

giijwegijzhigookway Martin/THPO/NAGPRA
 [Signature]

Project #: Tower 115kV-

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Williams:

The Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior
 Chippewa Indians have no interest in

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to assist in obtaining the necessary approvals and permits for the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County, Minnesota. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

The proposed project would consist of a new 115 kV transmission line that would connect a new 115/46 kV substation near Tower and a new 115 kV switching station near Embarrass (see attached map). At this point Minnesota Power and Great River Energy have not identified a route for the project, but are evaluating transmission alternatives within identified study corridors. Potentially affected sections within the proposed study corridors are provided below.

County	Township Name	Township	Range	Sections
St Louis	White (NE)	59N	15W	5-7
St Louis	Embarrass	60N	15W	5-8,16-21, 28-32
St. Louis	Kugler	61N	15W	4,5,8,9,16-18,19,20, 29-32
St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33



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AN ALLETE COMPANY

1 June 2005

Mr. Robert Whiting, Branch Chief
St. Paul District
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Whiting:

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to be used in preparation of several regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

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St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33

Mr. Robert Whiting

1 June 2005

Page 2

MP and GRE request that the Corps comment on the possible effects of the proposed project on floodplains, wetlands, and other important natural resources that occur in the proposed study area. This request is made pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Your input on the project will assist MP, GRE, our environmental consultant (SEH) and the Commission in their review of the project.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 1, 2005. Written responses may be directed to:

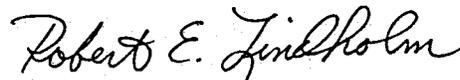
Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

We will be seeking ongoing feedback from you and your agency as this project proceeds through review and permitting. If you require further information or have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call us at the numbers provided below. Thank you for your attention to this important project.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MINNESOTA POWER



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
763-241-2272

Robert E. Lindholm
Manager, Environmental Services
218-722-5642, ext. 3342

Attachment: Project Location Map

cc: Kelly Bettendorf, SEH
Larry Bubacz – Minnesota Power
Blake Francis – Minnesota Power

h:\cshmidt\Tower-Embarrass\TowerCOE\tr



1 June 2005

Mr. Alan Jones
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
 State Forest Management
 500 Lafayette Road
 St. Paul, MN 55155-4044

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Jones:

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to be used in preparation of several regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

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St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33

Mr. Alan Jones
1 June 2005
Page 2

MP and GRE request that the Minnesota DNR provide information on any permits that the proposed 115 kV transmission project would require to cross a state forest and also identify potential impacts from the project that the DNR would consider when reviewing the proposed project. Your input on the project will assist MP, GRE, our environmental consultant (SEH) and the Commission in their review of the project

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 1, 2005. Written responses may be directed to:

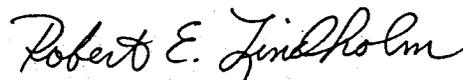
Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

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Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MINNESOTA POWER



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
763-241-2272

Robert E. Lindholm
Manager, Environmental Services
218-722-5642, ext. 3342

Attachment: Project Location Map

cc: Kelly Bettendorf, SEH
Larry Bubacz – Minnesota Power
Blake Francis – Minnesota Power

h:\cschmidt\Tower-Embarrass\TowerDNRfortr



1 June 2005

Ms. Sarah Hoffmann
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
 Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program
 500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
 St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Ms. Hoffmann:

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to be used in preparation of several regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

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St. Louis	Kugler	61N	15W	4,5,8,9,16-18,19,20, 29-32
St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33

Ms. Sarah Hoffmann
1 June 2005
Page 2

MP and GRE would like the Minnesota DNR to comment on potential effects of the proposed 115 kV transmission project and to identify federally- and state-listed threatened or endangered species and rare natural features. Your input on the project will assist MP, GRE, our environmental consultant (SEH) and the Commission in their review of the project

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 1, 2005. Written responses may be directed to:

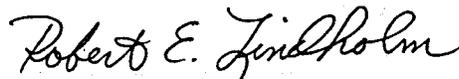
Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

We will be seeking ongoing feedback from you and your agency as this project proceeds through review and permitting. If you require further information or have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call us at the numbers provided below. Thank you for your attention to this important project.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MINNESOTA POWER



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
763-241-2272

Robert E. Lindholm
Manager, Environmental Services
218-722-5642, ext. 3342

Attachment: Project Location Map

cc: Kelly Bettendorf, SEH
Larry Bubacz – Minnesota Power
Blake Francis – Minnesota Power

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1 June 2005

Mr. Dan Stinnett
 MN Threatened and Endangered Species Review
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 4101 East 80th Street
 Bloomington, MN 55425-1665

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Stinnett:

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to be used in preparation of several regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

The proposed project would consist of a new 115 kV transmission line that would connect a new 115/46 kV substation near Tower and a new 115 kV switching station near Embarrass (see attached map). At this point Minnesota Power and Great River Energy have not identified a route for the project, but are evaluating transmission alternatives within identified study corridors. Potentially affected sections within the proposed study corridors are provided below.

County	Township Name	Township	Range	Sections
St Louis	White (NE)	59N	15W	5-7
St Louis	Embarrass	60N	15W	5-8,16-21, 28-32
St. Louis	Kugler	61N	15W	4,5,8,9,16-18,19,20, 29-32
St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33

Mr. Dan Stinnett
1 June 2005
Page 2

MP and GRE request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comment on potential effects to known federally-listed threatened or endangered species in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, for the proposed 115 kV transmission project. Your input on the project will assist MP, GRE, our environmental consultant (SEH) and the Commission in their review of the project.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 1, 2005. Written responses may be directed to:

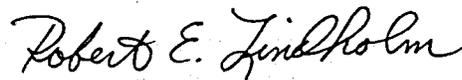
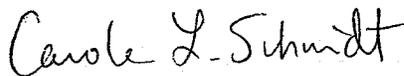
Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

We will be seeking ongoing feedback from you and your agency as this project proceeds through review and permitting. If you require further information or have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call us at the numbers provided below. Thank you for your attention to this important project.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MINNESOTA POWER



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
763-241-2272

Robert E. Lindholm
Manager, Environmental Services
218-722-5642, ext. 3342

Attachment: Project Location Map

cc: Kelly Bettendorf, SEH
Larry Bubacz – Minnesota Power
Blake Francis – Minnesota Power



1 June 2005

Mr. Dennis Gimmestad
 Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
 345 Kellogg Boulevard West
 St. Paul, MN 55102-1906

RE: Tower 115 kV Transmission Project

Dear Mr. Gimmestad:

Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) are currently gathering data to be used in preparation of several regulatory applications necessary to obtain approvals and permits for the construction of the proposed Tower 115 kV Transmission Project in St. Louis County. The project is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area. MP and GRE intend to seek certification of the proposed project under the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) biennial transmission planning process outlined in Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848.

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St. Louis	Kugler	61N	15W	4,5,8,9,16-18,19,20, 29-32
St. Louis	Breitung	62N	15W	31,33

Mr. Dennis Gimmestd
1 June 2005
Page 2

MP and GRE request your review of this project to identify potential impacts to cultural and archaeological resources from the project and any permits that the project might require. At this point it is unknown whether the project will require federal permits or use federal funding. Your input on the project will assist MP, GRE, our environmental consultant (SEH) and the Commission in their review of the project.

We would appreciate a response to this request by Friday, July 1, 2005. Written responses may be directed to:

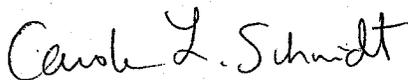
Carole Schmidt
Great River Energy
17845 E. Highway 10
PO Box 800
Elk River, Minnesota 55330

We will be seeking ongoing feedback from you and your agency as this project proceeds through review and permitting. If you require further information or have questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call us at the numbers provided below. Thank you for your attention to this important project.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MINNESOTA POWER



Carole L. Schmidt
Environmental Scientist
763-241-2272

Robert E. Lindholm
Manager, Environmental Services
218-722-5642, ext. 3342

Attachment: Project Location Map

cc: Kelly Bettendorf, SEH
Larry Bubacz – Minnesota Power
Blake Francis – Minnesota Power

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