



BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
MINNESOTA OFFICE OF ENERGY SECURITY
ENERGY FACILITY PERMITTING STAFF

DOCKET NO. ET2, E015/TL-06-1624

Meeting Date: September 11, 2008.....Agenda Item #

Company: Great River Energy/Minnesota Power

Docket No. PUC Docket Number: ET2, E015/TL-06-1624
In the Matter of Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy's (GRE)
request for a minor alteration of the Tower HVTL Route Permit.

Issue(s): Should the Commission grant the request for a minor alteration of the
existing Tower HVTL Route Permit?

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Relevant Documents (in Commission Packet).

- 1. PUC order and HVTL Route Permit for 06-1624, Dated August 1, 2007
2. GRE's Request for a Minor Alteration, Dated August 14, 2008

The enclosed materials are work papers of the Department of Commerce Office of Energy
Security Energy Facility Permitting Staff. They are intended for use by the Public Utilities
Commission and are based on information already in the record unless otherwise noted.

This document can be made available in alternative formats; i.e. large print or audio tape by
calling (651) 201-2202 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY relay service).

Documents Attached.

1. Route map illustrating desired alteration.

(Note: Relevant documents and additional information can be found on eDockets (ET2/GS-06-1624) or the PUC Facilities Permitting website <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/>)

Statement of the Issue

Should the Commission grant the requested minor alteration to the High-Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) Permit?

If the minor alteration is granted, the Commission needs to notify the applicant in writing of the acceptance and send a copy of the decision to any person who requested notification or filed comments on the filing.

Introduction and Background

On December 22, 2006, Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) made a joint application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a High-Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) route permit for the proposed Tower Transmission Project under the Alternative Permitting Process (Minnesota Rule 7849.5510). The Tower project is approximately 15 miles of new 115 kV transmission lines, a new Embarrass switching station, and a new Tower substation located in Saint Louis County in northeastern Minnesota.

On January 17, 2007, the Commission issued an Order accepting the MP/GRE Tower HVTL Route Permit Application as complete.

The HVTL permit application was reviewed in accordance with the alternative review procedures of the Power Plant Siting Act (Chapter 216E.04).

On August 1, 2007, the Commission issued an Order and Route Permit to MP/GRE for the Tower HVTL Route Project.

Description of Minor Alteration Request

GRE is requesting a slight change in the route of the approved Tower HVTL project that would place the line outside the 300 foot wide permitted route for approximately 172 (and the ROW easement outside the route for approximately 443 feet) in Section 9, T61N, R15W of Kugler Township (see attached figure).

The area in question is a spruce/tamarack swamp; rock was encountered at one foot below grade where a corner structure was to be placed. The corner was redesigned to span the wetland which

resulted in the alignment shift outside of the permitted 300 foot wide route. The landowner along both the original alignment and this modified alignment is the State of Minnesota.

The minor alteration will eliminate impacts to the wetland, remove a planned structure and improve constructability of the line.

On August 18, 2008, the Commission sent a notice to solicit comments on GRE's request for a minor alteration to those persons on the general list and the project contact list for this docket. Persons had until Tuesday, September 2, 2008, to submit comments to the Commission.

No public comments were received.

OES EFP Staff Analysis and Comments

OES EFP staff reviewed the request for a minor alteration and concurs with GRE that the modification to the approved route will not result in significant changes in the human or environmental impacts of the HVTL as contained within the record.

Commission Decision Options

Minor Alteration

1. Grant GRE's request for a minor alteration as detailed in its August 14, 2008, filing.
2. Determine that the requested alteration is not minor and requires a full permitting decision.
3. Make another decision deemed more appropriate.

EFP Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends Option 1.

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