

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

High Voltage Transmission Line Route Tower Transmission Project Proposed by Great River Energy PUC Docket No. E105/TL-06-1624

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) will hold a public informational/Environmental Assessment scoping meeting on the HVTL Route permit application submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) by Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) concerning the proposed Tower Transmission Project.

Public Meeting. DOC will conduct public information/scoping meeting in which details concerning the proposed Tower Transmission Project will be presented and governmental agencies, organizations, and the general public will be afforded an opportunity to ask questions and provide input into the environmental review scoping decision.

The meeting will be held beginning at 7 p.m. at the following location:

Tuesday, February 13, 2007

Embarrass Town Hall,
7503 Levander Road,
Embarrass, Minnesota

The public will also have until Tuesday, February 27, 2007, to submit written comments to the DOC on the scope of the environmental assessment. Written comments should be mailed to Bill Storm (bill.storm@state.mn.us), Minnesota Department of Commerce, 85 7th Place, Suite 500, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198.

Background. On November 1, 2005, Minnesota Power (MP) and Great River Energy (GRE) made a joint application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for Certification of two High-Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) projects pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 216B.2425 and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7848, through the Biennial Transmission Projects Report proceeding. The two projects are referred to as "Tower" and "Badoura." The Tower project would be approximately 15 miles of new transmission lines, a new Embarrass switching station, and a new Tower substation located in Saint Louis County in northeastern Minnesota.

As part of its review of a Biennial Transmission Report requesting certification of a HVTL, the PUC is required to prepare a document called an Environmental Report (ER). Minn. Rules 4410.7030. On behalf of the PUC; the DOC Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff prepared an ER based on its analyses of the information and data supplied in the two Biennial Projects Reports and several other relevant sources. In the ER the DOC evaluated the general potential impacts from construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed HVTL along the broad corridor(s) proposed by the applicant and discussed ways to mitigate these potential impacts. The public is given an opportunity to participate in the development of the environmental report

On December 8, 2005, DOC EFP staff held a public meeting in the Tower area. The purpose of the public meeting was to provide the public with information about the project, afford the public an opportunity to ask questions and present comments, and to solicit input on the content of the ER. The comment period was held open until 5:00 pm January 10, 2006. On January 11, 2006,

after consideration of the public comments, the Commissioner of the DOC issued an Order outlining the content of the environmental report

In conjunction with the Commission's review procedures, the Minnesota Department of Commerce prepared and distributed a joint Environmental Report for the two projects on February 14, 2006.

On March 29, 2006, a Public Hearing was held on this matter. The public hearing was presided over by Administrative Law Judge Richard Luis from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings. The purpose of the hearings was to receive public comment on the need for the proposed projects. Judge Luis provided a summary report of comments received at the public hearing to the Public Utilities Commission to assist the Commission in making a final determination on the need for the proposed transmission lines.

On May 25, 2006, the PUC issued an Order certifying that the Tower Project is needed and designating the project as a priority electric transmission project.

On December 22, 2006, GRE submitted to the PUC a HVTL Route permit application regarding the proposed Tower Transmission Project. On January 11, 2007, the PUC accepted the application as substantially complete and notified the applicant in writing of the decision. Copies of the application can be obtained through the DOC Project Manager and maybe viewed at PUC web site (<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=18926>); persons can also register to be added to the project mailing list at this site.

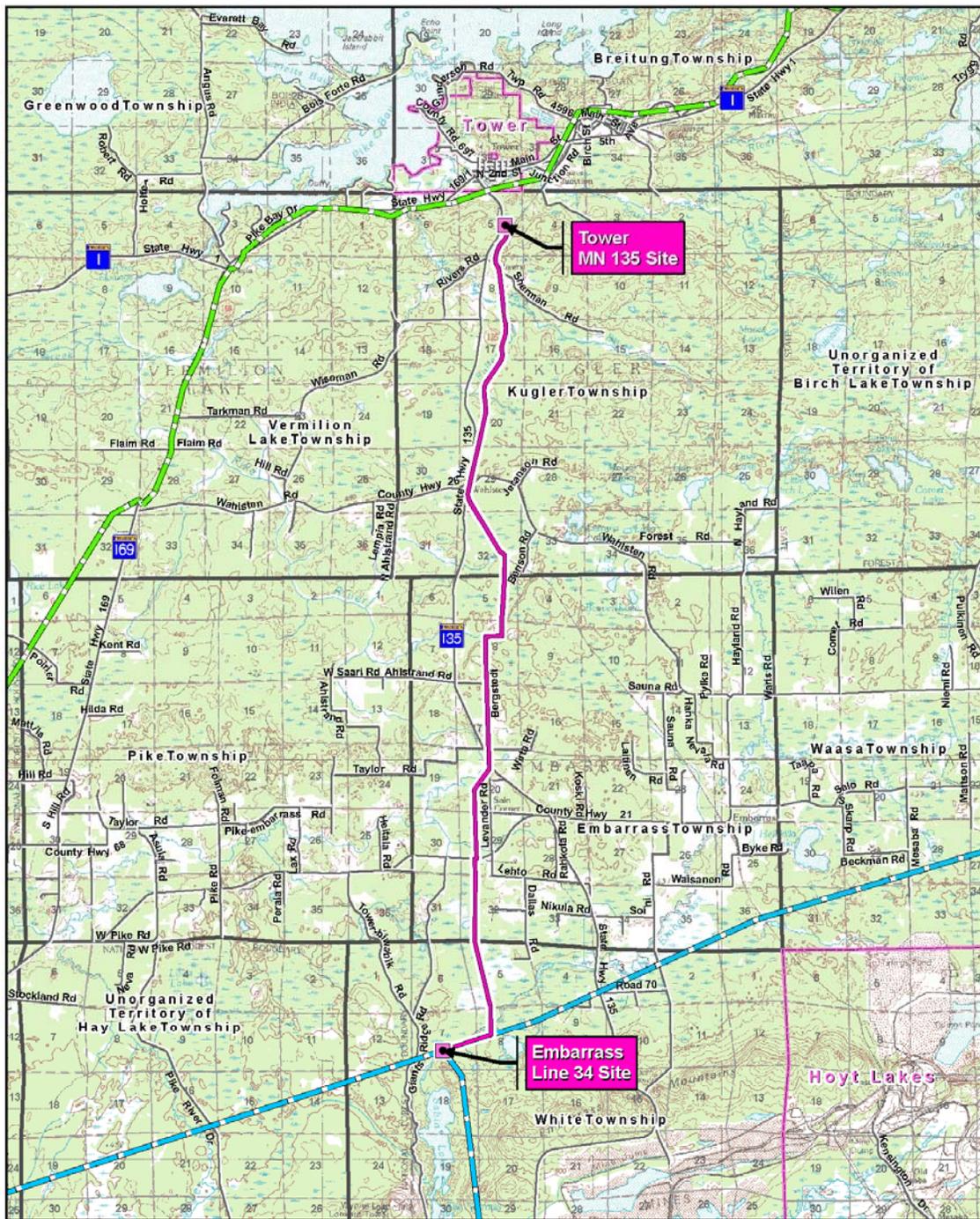
Regulatory Review Process. In accordance with the Power Plant Siting Act a route permit is required before a high voltage transmission line (HVTL) can be constructed. The power plant siting act requirement became law in 1973 in Minnesota Statutes, 116C.51 through 116C.69. The rules to implement the permitting requirement for LEPGP are in Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400.

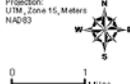
A HVTL is defined as a conductor of electric energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operating at a nominal voltage of 100 kilovolts or more either immediately or without significant modification.

The application will be reviewed under the Alternative Review Process (Minnesota Rules 4400.2010) of the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes 116C.51 to 116C.69). Under the Alternative Review Process, an applicant is not required to propose any alternative sites or routes. The Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting Staff prepares a document called an Environmental Assessment, and a public hearing is required but it need not be a contested case hearing. The PUC has six months to reach a decision under the Alternative Process from the time the application is accepted.

Project Description. The facility (i.e., Tower Transmission Project) for which the permit is requested is approximately 15 miles of new transmission lines, a new Embarrass switching station, and a new Tower substation located in Saint Louis County in northeastern Minnesota.

Inquiries about this project should be directed to the DOC project manager, Bill Storm (bill.storm@state.mn.us) or the public adviser, Deb Pile (Deborah.Pile@State.mn.us) 85th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone 651.296.7502, facsimile 651.297.7891 (TTY relay service 800.627.3529).



 <p>300 VERNON CENTER DR. ST. PAUL, MN 55113 PHONE: 651.450.0300 FAX: 651.450.0300 WWW.SEH.COM</p>	<p>Project Number AMNPOW650701</p>	<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Substation Sites HVTL Proposed Route (300ft width) Existing MP 48kV Transmission Line Existing MP 115kV Transmission Line Roads PLS Section Lines (+/- 50' to 200') Civil Township Boundaries Municipal Boundaries 	<p>Projection: UTM, Zone 15, Meters NAD83</p>  <p>0 1 Miles</p>	<p>Minnesota Power Great River Energy</p> <p>Figure 1-3</p> <p>Proposed Route</p>
	<p>November 2006</p> <p>Map Document: (S:\O\W\New\0657001\SI\AMNPO\0657001\Figure 6-1 Proposed Route 6_5\11 P.mxd) 11/22/2006 - 4:00:32 PM</p> <p>Source: USGS, MNDNR, LMCC, EQB, MNDOT, and SEH. ©SEH 2006</p>			