

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

**High Voltage Transmission Line Route
Badoura Transmission Project
Proposed by Minnesota Power & Great River Energy
PUC Docket No. ET2, E015/TL-07-76**

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 Badoura Transmission Project.

Public Meeting. DOC will conduct public information/scoping meeting in which details concerning the proposed Badoura 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, April 17, 2007

Backus City Hall,
131 King Street,
Backus, Minnesota

The public will also have until Tuesday, May 1, 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 process of reviewing a Biennial Transmission Report requesting certification of a HVTL involves both the DOC and PUC. The proceedings included: public meetings, development of an environmental review document (i.e., Environmental Report), public hearings and a hearing before the PUC.

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

On March 16, 2007, MP/GRE submitted to the PUC a HVTL Route Permit Application regarding the proposed Badoura Transmission Project. On March 29, 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=19051>); 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. MP will construct and own the new Pine River 115 kilovolt (kV) Substation and the new 115 kV transmission line between the Pequot Lakes, Pine River and Badoura substations (approximately 30 miles). GRE will construct and own the new 115 kV transmission line between the Badoura Substation and the Birch Lake Substation, and between the Badoura Substation and the Long Lake Substation (approximately 33 miles). Equipment modifications will be made at the Pequot Lakes, Badoura, Birch Lake and Long Lake substations to accommodate the new 115 kV transmission line.

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) 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone 651.296.7502, facsimile 651.297.7891 (TTY relay service 800.627.3529).

