



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



Issued: October 24, 2008

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING

**In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the South Bend to Stoney Creek 115 kV
High Voltage Transmission Line and Substations Project**

PUC Docket Number: E-002, ET-2/TL-08-734

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security (OES) will conduct a public information and Environmental Assessment scoping meeting, at the time and location listed below, on the route permit application by Great River Energy and Xcel Energy to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) for the proposed South Bend to Stoney Creek project in Rapidan and Mankato Townships. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the project and to identify issues and route alternatives to study in an Environmental Assessment that will be prepared by the OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING

Wednesday, November 12, 2008 - 6:00 pm*

**Mankato National Guard Armory and Community Center
100 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Mankato, Minnesota**

* An open house will begin at 5:30 p.m.; an information meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The public information meeting will follow an open house format until 6:00 p.m., when EFP staff will give a presentation about the state's high voltage transmission line alternative permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public may be involved. The applicant will have representatives at the public meeting who can answer general questions about the proposed project.

Review copies of the route permit application, a flow chart depicting the alternative permitting process, and comment forms will be available at the public information meeting.

Project Description

The Project includes the following components of a 69-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would be rebuilt within the existing easement to a 115 kV transmission line to loop around Mankato.

- Two new substations: 115-161/69 kV South Bend Substation and 115/69 kV substation and a 69 kV breaker station at Stoney Creek
- Approximately four miles of an existing NSP-Minnesota 69 kV transmission line will be rebuilt to 115 kV from South Bend Substation to Ballard Corner switches.
- Approximately two miles of an existing NSP-Minnesota 69 kV transmission line will be rebuilt to 115/69 kV double-circuits from Ballard Corner switches to Stoney Creek Substation.
- Approximate two miles of an existing NSP-Minnesota and Great River Energy 69 kV transmission line will be rebuilt to 115 kV from the Stoney Creek Substation to the Pohl Substation.

The proposed facilities would require substation and equipment upgrades at the Eastwood and Wilmarth substations to accommodate the upgraded transmission facilities.

Review Process

A route permit application for the project was filed by Great River Energy and Xcel Energy on August 7, 2008. The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on September 15, 2008.

Applications for high voltage transmission line route permits are subject to environmental review, which is conducted by EFP staff. The staff is herein providing notice and will conduct a public information and scoping meeting to solicit public comments on the scope of the environmental assessment. The Director of the OES will ultimately determine the final scope of the environmental assessment. The environmental assessment will address issues related to routing, such as construction impacts, environmental features, use of existing rights-of-way, impacts on homes and businesses, and consideration of public comments.

Applications for high voltage transmission line route permits require a public hearing upon completion of the environmental assessment. Notice of the hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list. At least a portion of the public hearing will be held in Blue Earth County where the proposed project would be located.

Should the Commission issue a route permit, in accordance with its authority under state law, Great River Energy and Xcel Energy may, if necessary, exercise the power of eminent domain in this matter.

Minnesota Statutes and Rules governing the process are available on the following website:

<http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>

Project Documents

A more detailed explanation of the proposed project is contained in the GRE and Xcel Energy route permit application. Electronic versions of the application and other documents relevant to this matter are available on the PUC website at:

<http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=19642>

or on eDockets by entering “08” and “734” at:

<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>

Persons interested in adding their names to the project mailing list should contact the OES project manager or public advisor, or register online at the above PUC site.

Public Comments

Comments on this project will be accepted until **4:30 p.m. on November 26, 2008**. Please include docket number E-002, ET-2/TL-08-734 on your comments.

Project Contacts

To submit comments, ask questions, or seek further information about this project please contact:

David Birkholz, Project Manager
Energy Facility Permitting
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
(651) 296-2878
david.birkholz@state.mn.us

Suzanne Steinhauer, Public Advisor
Energy Facility Permitting
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
(651) 296-2888
suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us

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).

General View of the Proposed Project

