



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



April 19, 2010

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Potato Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation in Park Rapids, Minnesota

PUC Docket No. ET2/TL-10-86

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Office of Energy Security (OES) will conduct a public information and environmental assessment scoping meeting on the route permit application by Great River Energy (GRE) to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a new 7.25-mile 115 kV single-circuit overhead transmission line and 115 kV substation in Park Rapids, Minnesota. The new transmission line would run between the existing Mantrap Sub Tap 34.5 kV line in Lake Emma Township and a newly proposed Potato Lake substation to be located in Arago Township.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

Tuesday, May 18, 2010 – 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*

Park Rapids High School Commons
301 Huntsinger Avenue
Park Rapids, Minnesota

*Meeting may finish earlier when all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the state's transmission line routing process and the proposed project. Following brief presentations by OES Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff and GRE representatives, members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, provide comments, and propose issues, impacts, and alternatives to be considered in the scope of the environmental assessment. EFP staff and GRE representatives will be available to answer questions during the meeting.

Project Description. GRE proposes to construct a new 7.25-mile 115 kV single circuit overhead transmission line and 115 kV substation (Potato Lake Substation) in Park Rapids, Minnesota. The new 115 kV transmission facility line would initially be operated at 34.5 kV until conversion to 115 kV becomes necessary. The new transmission line would run between the existing Mantrap Sub Tap 34.5 kV line in Lake Emma Township and a newly proposed Potato Lake Substation to be located in Arago Township. As part of the project the new 115 kV transmission structures will be designed to accommodate approximately 2.25 miles of existing Itasca-Mantrap distribution lines and future distribution lines between the Potato Lake Substation and County State Aid Highway 18.

In their application, GRE also identified three additional routes. One of these routes is the alternate route that is still being considered by GRE. The two other routes (Northern Alternative and Southwestern Alternative) were considered and ultimately rejected in GRE's route permit application. These two rejected routes; however, could potentially be considered for further evaluation in the environmental assessment, should public comment warrant and should the director of the OES determine that evaluation of the route(s) would ultimately assist the Commission in its route permit decision. See attached figure.

Review Process. In Minnesota, no person may construct a high-voltage transmission line without a route permit from the Commission (Minnesota Statute 216E.03, subdivision 2). A high-voltage transmission line is defined as a conductor of electric energy designed for and capable of operation at a voltage of 100 kV or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length (Minnesota Statute 216E.01, subdivision 4). The project as proposed would consist of approximately 7.25 miles of new 115 kV transmission line and would therefore require a route permit from the Commission. Because the proposed project transmission line capacity is under 200 kV, less than ten miles in length, and does not cross a state border, a certificate of need is not required (Minnesota Statute 216B.2421, subdivision 2).

A route permit application for the project was filed under the alternative permitting process by GRE on February 26, 2010. The project is eligible for consideration under the alternative permitting process, as the transmission line voltage would be between 100 and 200 kilovolts (Minnesota Rules 7850.2800, subpart 2B). The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on April 16, 2010. The Commission has six months from the time the application is accepted to complete the alternative permitting process and make a decision on a route permit.

Route permit applications for high-voltage transmission lines are subject to environmental review (Minn. Rules 7850). For this project, EFP staff will prepare an environmental assessment. The environmental assessment contains information on the potential human and environmental effects of the proposed project, includes possible alternative routes or route segments, and examines mitigating measures for anticipated effects. EFP staff conducts a public information meeting to gather comments and suggestions on the proposed project in order to focus the content or "scope" of the environmental assessment.

Upon completion of the environmental assessment, the Commission will hold a public hearing. The public will be afforded the opportunity to make oral presentation, provide documentary evidence, and ask questions of the applicants and staff. Notice of the hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list. The public hearing will be held in the county where the proposed project would be located.

Further information on Minnesota statutes and rules governing the routing process are available on the following website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>.

Project Documents. A detailed explanation of the proposed project is provided in GRE's route permit application. Electronic versions of the route permit application and other documents relevant to this project are available for viewing and downloading at:

- Energy Facility Permitting website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=26124>
- eDockets website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>, under Basic Search, Docket Number select Year "10" enter Number "86" and click search.

Copies of the route permit application are also available for public review at:

Hubbard County
Environmental Services Department
301 Court Avenue
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Park Rapids Area Library
201 W. First Street
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Project Mailing List. Persons should contact the state permit manager (below) or register online at <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/#MailingLists> to get their name on the project mailing list. Persons on the mailing list will receive project updates, notices of meetings/hearings, and notices of document availability for this project. **If you do not register to be on the mailing list you will not receive correspondence on the project after this notice.** Registration to the project mailing list is voluntary and may be done so at any time.

Public Comments. In addition to receiving comments at the public information meeting, EFP staff will also accept written comments on the scope of the environmental assessment until **4:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 1, 2010**. Please include Docket Number ET2/TL-10-86 on your comments. Comments should be mailed, faxed, or emailed to the state permit manager (see contact information below).

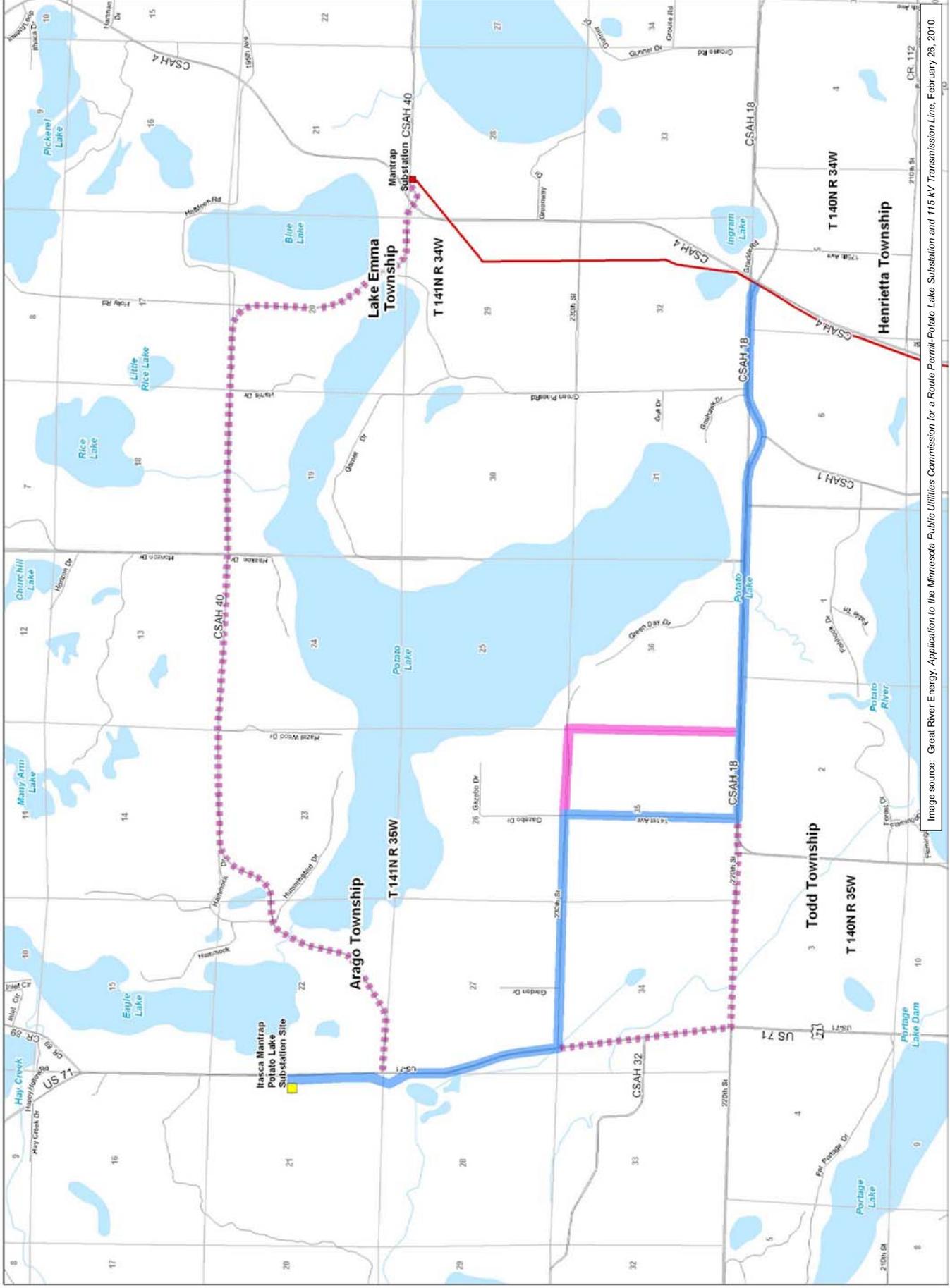
Comments may also be submitted via the Commission's Energy Facility Permitting website:
<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/publicComments.html>.

Project Contacts. To submit comments, ask questions or seek further information about the route permit process and the proposed project please contact:

Scott Ek, State Permit Manager
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- Proposed Itasca-Mantrap (IM) Distribution Substation
- Existing Itasca-Mantrap Distribution Substation
- Proposed Great River Energy (GRE) Distribution Substation
- Proposed 115 kV Transmission Line Route
- Rejected Alternative Routes
- Existing Great River Energy 34.5 kV Transmission Line
- Existing Minnesota Power (MP) 34.5 kV Transmission Line
- Land Base Features
- Road Centrelines
- Lakes and Rivers
- PLS Section Lines

Updated Feb 18, 2010

Scale: 0, 2000, 4000 Feet

Map Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone15, Meters

Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGCO and Great River Energy

FIGURE 1
PROPOSED PROJECT
 Potato Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation Project
 ET2/TL-10-86

Image source: Great River Energy, Application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for a Route Permit-Potato Lake Substation and 115 kV Transmission Line, February 26, 2010.