

10-86

**Rice, Robin (PUC)**

---

**From:** Renee Ahmann [ahmann14756@q.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 17, 2010 9:19 PM  
**To:** staff, cao (PUC)  
**Subject:** new line proposal

Dear Utility Commission,

I am a property owner and customer of Itasca mantrap living in Hubbard county. I did attend the first meeting called by Great River Energy regarding the new 115kV Potato Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project. I have studied the proposed route that follows county hwy 18, and I wish to voice my concern for those homeowners who would have a major power line passing through their front yard very close to their homes. This will have a very **negative effect** on the value of their property and it will be a major concern for those living there as the **ozone** that will be generated by the high voltage line could cause **health problems for all living in close proximity to the line**. Ozone is a very high energy dangerous gas that needs to be avoided by people of all ages.

Some in attendance suggested that the route for the high voltage line would be better planned if it followed county hwy 40. I agree with their opinion, mostly because this route is not and probably will never be as residential as the county 18 route. It is more rural and not conducive to housing development so it will have a much lower impact on the property value and not be a concern for the health being undeveloped.

I understand the initial cost will be greater but it is a short route of about 7 miles so this is not really a major problem. I don't think Great River Energy has taken into account the impact the county hwy 18 route will have forever on the residents who have built and live in very close proximity to the proposed route.

I hope this letter helps you make your decision about the route. I would appreciate a response from you if possible.

Sincerely,

Ronald Ahmann  
14756 county 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Phone 218-732-4384

April 29, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
1217<sup>th</sup> Place E. Suite 350  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147



Dear Commission Members,

We live at 22690 Green Day Drive, Park Rapids, Mn. 56470, located on a gravel road just off County Road 18, proposed route for an electrical utility project which will require a large easement area along that road for clear-cutting and installation of electrical poles and lines. We walk daily along County Road 18, and over the bridge on that road which crosses the Potato River between Potato Lake and Fish Hook Lake and enjoy the beautiful forested areas along the route including white birch, pine, oak, maple and other indigenous trees as well as wildlife including black bear, deer, bobcat, bald eagles, ducks, geese, swans, grouse and wild turkeys. We believe this utility project, in this area and along this route, will have a serious adverse affect on the beautiful tree cover and wildlife resources mentioned above, and strongly object to this utility project. We have been homeowners at the above address for over twenty years and object to anymore destruction of the pristine beauty along Hubbard County Road 18 and the area surrounding the Potato River.

Very truly yours,

*Richard Bauerly*  
*Judy Bauerly*  
Richard and Judy Bauerly

**Ek, Scott (COMM)**

---

**From:** Chris Behrens [chris@centralofficesolutions.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2010 10:32 AM  
**To:** Ek, Scott (COMM)  
**Subject:** Transmission Line

Chris Behrens  
5120 Algonquin Tr. NW  
Alexandria, MN 56308

5/12/10

Office of Energy Security  
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager  
85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Re: Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr. Ek:

I am in favor of locating Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line along the northern alternative route located west of Emmaville from CSAH 4 to Highway 71. If the substation were to also be located at this vicinity, it would be a preferred site for future growth needs.

This route is made up of primarily county and state land, affecting as few private properties as possible while preserving the aesthetics of our lake sensitive region and tourism industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chris Behrens

5/12/2010

March 2, 2010

Case # 53884-TS  
Docket # TL-10-86



Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121-7<sup>th</sup> Place E. Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed 115 kilovolt Potato Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project.

We own the property ID # 023601100 that was listed on our notification that we received from Great River Energy dated October 7, 2009.

Great River Energy wants to splice into an existing 34.5 kV line (one mile before it reaches a substation) to run a new 115 kV line to a new substation for future customers. We are in the direct path of the route that they are proposing, which is a ½ mile longer route, has many corners, passes over rivers and by many houses that will be affected by this "Great River" eyesore. We strongly feel that the shortest and most efficient route for this line would be from the Mantrap Substation directly West on Co. Rd. 40 which is the shortest and the least residences that would be affected. I feel that with the economy today the shortest distance would be the most cost effective and also the route that would affect the least number of residences.

We would like to seek the help and support of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to oppose this project or have it re-routed another direction. We own 1 and 1/2 miles along the proposed path of the power line. The present proposed route will now border 2 sides of my property. My wife is a nurse and has read numerous articles concerning the health risks of living close to a power line, and would cause us to consider moving. We also feel that the unsightly appearance of the transmission line would completely ruin the property not to mention the serious devaluation that we have worked so hard over the years to maintain. The value of our property is the real and only major asset that a couple has to fall back on, and we don't want to lose that asset. Additionally, this would devalue all the properties along its path in Arago Township costing the Township tens of thousands in lost taxes and revenues.

Please help us to oppose this project. Thank you very much for your help and consideration in this matter.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark and Lori Behrens".

Mark and Lori Behrens  
14936 County Rd. 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

218-732-7934 Home  
612-309-3858 Cell

Regarding Puc docket #  
TL-10-86

Dear Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

I feel a pang of sadness as I start down our driveway with "Mic", our pet lab, on our daily walk. Between the two of us it is hard to know who enjoys it more. We have a small hobby farm on County 18, that means the world to us. To think the farms & fields could soon shrink & be destroyed as Great River energy comes in with their high voltage energy lines is devastating.

Please we are asking you to reconsider the route for these power lines. There is a area that has already been cleared to the mantrap sub-station down county road 40. Also this route is 1/2 mile shorter. With the depleting economy why would anyone spend the money to go 1/2 mile further & destroy an extra 1/2 mile of land.

Preserving our land is our utmost focus as it impacts not only our health & well being but our way of life. Please help us.

Sincerely,  
Lori Behrens

14936 County 18

Park Rapids, Mn

56470

cell # - 612-236-8074

home # 218-732-7934



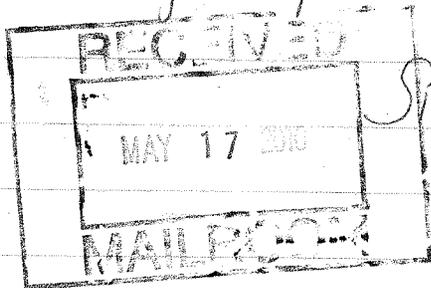
May 11, 2010

Dear Scott,

Please help us save and preserve the beautiful land on County Road 18. My husband Mark and I have a small hobby farm on county road 18 that means the world to us. We are asking you and the OES to recommend to the PUC the northern route which would run from Emmaville straight west to highway 71. This land is county and state owned and does not have homes in its path.

I am a registered nurse and I am extremely concerned the adverse effect the powerlines would have on our health both physically and emotionally.

You have to know Scott your decision affects so many of us. I heard you speak last week at the meeting. Your presentation was very impressive and it is so comforting to know that we aren't just dealing with a major powerful power company but someone with a heart. Again please help us.



Sincerely - Loni Behrens

Potato Lake Association  
Robert Berdahl, President  
23193 GreenPines Rd.  
Park Rapids, MN. 56470

May 13, 2010

Office of Energy Security  
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager  
85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
St Paul, Mn. 55101-2198



Re: Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr Ek,

The Potato Lake Association exists to protect and preserve the aesthetic, environmental and economic value of our lakes and associated shoreline areas.

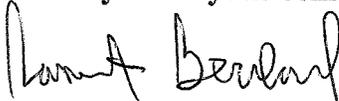
We have major concerns about the proposed Potato Lake Substation/Transmission line project because:

1. Both the primary (CSAH 18) and alternate (CSAH 40) routes pass through areas adjacent to Potato Lake and well within the shore impact zone. The county's shoreline ordinance states that "intensive vegetation clearing within the shore and bluff impact zones is not allowed. In both cases, the elevation of the open, cleared, right of way will enable runoff into the lake and river.
2. If chemicals are used to treat the power poles and/or used in the maintenance of right of ways, runoff into the lake and river will include those chemicals and become a serious threat to water quality and the fishery.
3. The river that flows into Potato Lake from the north and out under CSAH 18 is sensitive environmental area and subject to runoff from the transmission line right of way.
4. Both routes pass through the heart of our lake country and will destroy the scenic roadway that is part of the lake country experience.
5. Both routes will have an adverse impact on wildlife, that in some cases are protected, including trumpeter swans, eagles, geese, and waterfowl.
6. Great River Energy in its application admits that there will be impact on surface water quality in the wetlands, but say that it will not be "significant". Any adverse impact on water quality in the wetlands, lakes, and rivers is too much and unacceptable.
7. Great River Energy has not provided complete information about the overall environmental impacts of the proposed project.

**Running a transmission line through the heart of this beautiful country needs to be done in a manner that does not impact the water quality or fisheries of the area and minimizes to the maximum extent possible the impact to the rest of the area.**

**We request that you delay the project and select an alternative route, such as running west from Emmaville or the possibility of underground power line if it could be done with less impact to the environment. We understand that the energy demand projections for the area to be served have declined in the past few years from what was originally projected and we assume this would allow for a project delay.**

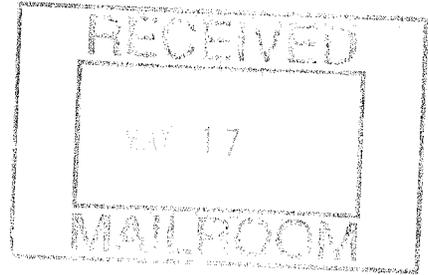
**Thank you for your consideration,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Berdahl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

**Robert Berdahl  
President, Potato Lake Association**

(Your name) Deborah Bratloff  
(Your address) 14870 E Fish Hawk Drive  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
(Date) May 6, 2010

Office of Energy Security  
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager  
85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198



Re: Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr. Ek:

I am in favor of locating Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line along the northern alternative route located west of Emmaville from CSAH 4 to Highway 71. If the substation were to also be located at this vicinity, it would be a preferred site for future growth needs.

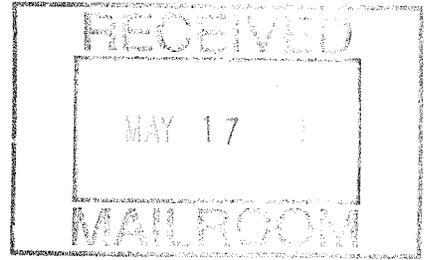
This route is made up of primarily county and state land, affecting as few private properties as possible while preserving the aesthetics of our lake sensitive region and tourism industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

(Name/signature)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah G. Bratloff".

James & Joe Conway  
22682 Gr. Day Drive  
Park Rapids Mn 56470



May 15, 2010

RE Docket TL-10-86

Dear Mr. EP,

We are in favor of locating Great River Energy's 115 KV transmission line along the Northern Alternative Route located W. of Emmaville from CSAH 4 to Highway 71. If the substation were to also be located at this vicinity, it would be a preferred site for future growth needs.

This route is made up of primarily county & state land, affecting as few private properties as possible while preserving the aesthetics of our lake sensitive region & tourism industry.

James & Joe Conway

Rich and Mary Frahm  
13792 220<sup>th</sup> Street  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 10, 2010

Office of Energy Security  
Scott Ek, State Permit Manager  
85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198



Re: Docket TL-10-86

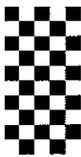
Dear Mr. Ek:

We are in favor of locating Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line along the northern alternative route located west of Emmaville from CSAH 4 to Highway 71. If the substation were to also be located at this vicinity, it would be a preferred site for future growth needs.

This route is made up of primarily county and state land, affecting as few private properties as possible while preserving the aesthetics of our lake sensitive region and tourism industry.

Thank you for your consideration,

*Rich Frahm*  
*Mary Ellen Frahm*



1010 WEST ST. GERMAIN STREET  
SUITE 500  
ST. CLOUD, MN 56301-3406  
MAIN: (320) 252-4414  
FAX: (320) 252-4482

EDWARD J. LAUBACH, JR.  
ATTORNEY  
EDWARD.LAUBACH@GPMLAW.COM

Date: March 24, 2010

Fax Number: 651-297-7073

Please deliver to: Commissioners

Firm: Minnesota Public Utilities Comm. Location: St. Paul, MN

From: Edward J. Laubach, Jr. Main Office: 320-252-4414

No. of pages including cover: 9 Matter:

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL OF THE PAGES, PLEASE CALL (320) 252-4414.

Original Document WILL be sent by overnight UPS delivery.

COMMENTS: Please note this matter is scheduled for hearing tomorrow.

OK FOR PAPER COPY  
TRANSMITTAL  
*Burl Haar* 3/24/10  
Burl Haar, Executive Secretary/Date



*The information contained in this facsimile message may contain attorney privileged and confidential information intended for the use of the individual or entity named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible to deliver it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this fax in error, please immediately notify us by telephone, and return the original message to us at the above address via the U.S. postal service.*



1010 WEST ST. GERMAIN STREET  
SUITE 500  
ST. CLOUD, MN 56301-3406  
MAIN: (320) 252-4414  
FAX: (320) 252-4482

EDWARD J. LAUBACH, JR.  
ATTORNEY  
DIRECT DIAL: 320.202.5327  
FAX: 320.252.4482  
EDWARD.LAUBACH@GPMLAW.COM

**VIA FACSIMILE AND UPS OVERNIGHT MAIL**

651-297-7073

March 24, 2010

MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
121 -- 7<sup>TH</sup> PLACE EAST  
SUITE 350  
ST PAUL MN 55101-2147

Re: Great River Energy – In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Potato Lake  
115kV Transmission Line and Substation in Park Rapids, Minnesota  
Docket No. ET2/TL-10-86

Dear Commissioners:

**INTRODUCTION**

This office represents certain property owners in the Potato Lake area whose properties will be detrimentally impacted by the construction of the proposed transmission line and substation in Park Rapids, Minnesota. A complete list of the property owners this office represents is attached as Exhibit A (hereinafter collectively "Property Owners").

On February 26, 2010, Great River Energy (hereinafter "GRE") filed a route permit application pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216E.04, the alternative permitting process. The application is for the construction of 7.25 miles of 115 KV Transmission Line and a proposed substation. Pursuant to Minnesota Administrative Rule 7850.3100 the application is to include the same information as required by Minnesota Rule 7850.1900, except the applicant need not propose any alternative sites or routes to the preferred sites or route. However, if the applicant has rejected alternative sites or routes, the applicant shall include in the application the identity of the rejected sites or routes and an explanation of the reasons for rejecting them.

The Commission may accept an application as complete, reject an application and require additional information to be submitted, or accept an application as complete upon filing of supplemental information. The Property Owners assert that the application is not complete in that the applicant has not submitted sufficient relevant information regarding the route description, environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Therefore, the Property Owners request the Commission reject the application in its entirety. In the event the Commission determines to accept the application, the Property Owners request that an Advisory Task Force (hereinafter "ATF") be appointed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216E.08, Subd. 1 and Minn. Rules 7850.3600.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
March 24, 2010  
Page 2

### DISCUSSION

Pursuant to Minn. Rules 7850.1900, Subp. 3, the application for site or route permit shall include the following environmental information for each proposed site or route to aid in the preparation of an environmental impact statement:

- description of the environmental setting for each site or route;
- description of the effects of construction and operation of the facility on human settlement, including, but not limited to, public health and safety, displacement, noise, aesthetics, social economic impacts, cultural values, recreation, and public services;
- description of the effects of the facility on land based economies, including but not limited to, agricultural, forestry, tourism, and mining;
- description of the effects of the facility on archeological and historic resources; a description of the effects of the facility on the natural environment, including effects on air and water quality resources and flora and fauna;
- description of the effects of the facility on rare and unique natural resources;
- identification of human and natural environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the facility is approved at a specific site or route;
- and a description of measures that might be implemented to mitigate the potential human and environmental impacts identified above as well as the estimated costs of such imitative measures.

GRE's February 26, 2010, permit application attempts to address these concerns in Section 6. However, very little substantive information regarding these critical issues is presented. For example, in Section 6.1 of the application, GRE acknowledges that the project area is dominated by lakes, forest, grasslands, and wetlands. Notwithstanding these admissions, GRE intends to construct wood pole structures, 60 to 85 feet in height, with an average span of 300 to 400 feet. Such an expanse shall cause an indelible mark upon the environment. Further, and as is admitted at Table 6-4 of the application, the proposed route would be constructed so as to impact 51 residences and businesses within 500 feet of road centerline. And while GRE states that it will locate structures along right-of-way and other disturbed areas, "by considering input from landowners" (see Section 6.2.4), to date there has been little opportunity for input and no consideration.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
March 24, 2010  
Page 3

Again, in Section 6.2.4, GRE states that care will be used to preserve the natural landscape and construction and operation will be conducted to prevent any unnecessary destruction of the natural surroundings. However, many mature, old growth trees will be destroyed, waterways crossed, and feeding, nesting and resting areas of waterfowl and other birds and animals, including the Trumpeter Swan, will be disturbed or damaged.

GRE acknowledges at Section 6.2.6 that the major cultural values within the impacted region include individualism and appreciation of natural resources. However, GRE, without any support, alleges that the project will cause no negative impacts to cultural values and that therefore no mitigation is necessary or proposed.

It is critically important for the Commission to recognize that the proposed route along County State Aid Highway 18 comes within viewing distance of the southwest corner of Potato Lake. At this point, the proposed route crosses over Potato River, a site for numerous Trumpeter Swans, geese, ducks, and other wildlife. (See, attached photographs).

The proposed route includes over 23 acres of wetlands and yet GRE states, "Once the project is completed, there would be no significant impact on surface water quality." See page 6-23. Further, and notwithstanding the Department of Natural Resources identifying five occurrences of rare species, including mussels, Blanding's turtles, Trumpeter Swans, Bald Eagles, and colonial water birds, GRE has proposed minimal mitigation efforts. See route permit application, page 6-30.

The PUC docket is replete with the Property Owners' concerns regarding environmental, cultural, aesthetic, and economic impacts of the GRE project. In particular, the additional right-of-way to be taken by GRE will dramatically impact the Property Owners and their property values along County State Aid Highway 18. GRE intends to clear cut a wide swath along County State Aid Highway 18 when there are other alternative routes available, which would not have the dramatic, direct, and immediate negative effects of the proposed route. Alternate routes south of the proposed route as well as north of Potato Lake may both have less impact on the environment and Property Owners than the proposed route. In fact, further investigation is needed to determine whether existing easements already are in place to the south of County State Aid Highway 18, which may meet GRE's needs and require there to be no additional taking of land. Further, the north route, along County Road 40 should also be studied to determine its relative environmental and economic impacts.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it is the Property Owners' position that the application should be rejected in its entirety. At the very least, the application should be rejected until additional information about routes, and their impact on the environmental and economic wellbeing of the area and its residents is presented.

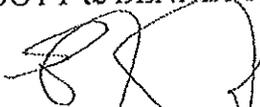
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
March 23, 2010  
Page 4

In the event the Commission determines to accept the application as complete, the Property Owners respectfully request that an Advisory Task Force be appointed. While the Property Owners generally agree with the Office of Energy Security draft ATF Authorization, the Property Owners request that the suggested language following paragraph number 2 be deleted. In other words, the Property Owners request that the language, "the following issues will not be addressed in the scope of environmental review;" and the three bullet points following be deleted from the draft ATF Authorization. Further, the Property Owners request that the number of private citizens on the ATF include four individual property owners.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

GRAY, PLANT, MOOTY,  
MOOTY & BENNETT, P.A.



Edward J. Laubach, Jr.  
Attorney

EJL/smm

Enclosures

## PROPERTY OWNERS

## Exhibit A

Merwin & Berneva Schield	15338 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-3356	mlsbjs@q.com
Gary & Elizabeth Shaw	15410 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-9835	garyliz@unitelc.com
Gordon Ruhne	15397 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-3773	jms8942@arvig.net
Mark & Lori Behrens	14936 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	866-924-3835	markbel6@msn.com
Tony & Dorothy Platz	15576 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	352-753-5029	tdplatz@wcta.net
Bill & Lynn Persinger	16302 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	605-232-3616	bill.persinger@wilsontrailer.com
Richard & Eunice Rothermel	22170 Green Day Dr.	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-8824	ekrothermel@msn.com
Brent & Shawna Hagen	14814 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-1826	brent_shawna@q.com
Stanley & Evelyn Hagen	14812 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-4369	brent_shawna@q.com
Henry & Ellen Dubinsky	22396 Groshawk Dr.	Park Rapids	MN 56470	314-432-4384	henry@waterway.com
Tim & Cathy Pearson	17007 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-5355	cathrynmarie@hotmail.com
Richard & Florence Witkop	14758 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-7478	fwitkop_2000@yahoo.com
Larry & Tay Odor	15694 Explorer Cr.	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-237-3605	tayandlarry@unitelc.com
Leon & Sandy Stugelmeyer	604 N. State St.	New Ulm	MN 56073	507-359-7879	lgssls@newulmtel.net
John & Lois Firehammer	16365 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-5612	jandlfire@q.com
Jamie & Holly Krautkremer	15003 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-237-1980	catrule97@yahoo.com
Ron & Renee Ahmann	14756 CSAH 18	Park Rapids	MN 56470	218-732-4384	ahmann14756@q.com

