Gary & Elizabeth Shaw
15410 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

April 19, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E. Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line, Park Rapids

Dear Commissioners:

We were very grateful to have an audience with you during the March 25 hearing in regard to the proposed transmission line on County 18 in Park Rapids. Thank you for your time and consideration.

As the formation of the Advisory Task Force (a result of your appointment) gets underway, I do have one concern. Please correct me if I'm wrong, but during a point in the hearing the Commission reviewed three alternative routes proposed by Leon and Sandra Stugelmeyer. Commissioner O'Brien asked if these routes would be considered "reasonable."

As I recall, a member of the Office of Energy stated the matter could be (and I am paraphrasing) open to "interpretation." With further direct questioning, Mr. Scott Ek spoke up to say in past experience there have been other groups come forward with routes that were obviously unreasonable. To exaggerate the point and as an example, he stated a party could not request a route that would take a transmission line up to Canada and back. When pushed again and asked if the northern route suggested by the Strugelmeyers was reasonable, I believe Mr. Ek's said it was. His exact words: "It's not Canada."

So, as we prepare for the Advisory Task Force meetings, today I am left wondering why the Order Accepting Application as Complete filed April 16 limits the routes to be discussed. I was very much looking forward to finding a solution for the transmission line that avoids as many homes and developed properties as possible. The northern route proposed by Strugelmeyers and already reviewed by the Commission would cross state and county land, thereby eliminating the need to create hardship for families and disturbing pristine lakes in a resort area that is promoted in your lobby with an illuminated, "Explore Minnesota," marquee. (A photo within that display was taken 15 minutes from our home.) The people here work really hard to take care of this place so that others may enjoy throughout the year. The northern route would not impact Potato Lake, a premiere lake in Hubbard County.

I guess I don’t understand why the Commission’s orders wouldn’t be carried out and allow the task force to review several thoughtful alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration and also consider this an invitation to come to Park Rapids, our home, and see the properties that have been discussed in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary & Elizabeth Shaw
218-732-9835

Elizabeth I. Shaw
15410 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

March 17, 2010

CASE # 53884-TS
DOCKET # TL-10-86

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

Dear Commission Members:

I would like the Commission to note that my husband, Gary, and I plan to attend your meeting with Great River Energy at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 25. Decisions to be made in regard to the proposed Potato Lake transmission line route could greatly affect our family, many neighbors, and wildlife in the area.

I have stated in an earlier letter that we are opposed to this proposed route. There are many circumstances we would like your Commission to know about. For instance, did you know that the river on which we live is open all year? Trumpeter swans, as many as 20 or 30 at a time, have been known to spend their winters here. The river is the swan's flight path to land in this location. If the proposed transmission line were to be built without special mitigation, it could do harm to the trumpeters and eagles that use this flight path to land and hunt. (Yes, eagles hunt ducks and swans from the sky. It's amazing to watch.)

I am asking the Public Utilities Commission to set up an Advisory Task Force so there can be input from local representatives. There is much left to be discussed. Only recently have we gotten the chance to review Great River Energy's application. This is lake country, different from many places in the state. Homes have to be built on certain setbacks from lakes and rivers pushing them closer to the road. These lines, if erected, essentially walk right over peoples' homes. Our home. Our neighbors' homes. A task force would prove beneficial to many.

Thank you.

Liz Shaw
Property owner
218-732-9835 (H)
garyliz@unitelc.com

PC-10-86

Gary Shaw
15410 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

RECEIVED
FEB 22 2010
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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

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

Attention Commission Members:

As a concerned resident, I am opposing the proposed transmission lines on County Rd 18 north of Park Rapids in Hubbard county. 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 has many corners, passes over rivers and by many houses that will be majorly affected by this "Great River" eyesore. Minnesota Public Utilities Commission should insist that Great River Energy should feed from one substation direct to another substation and not be allowed to tap into a mid-span line.

There is a straighter route on county rd 40 (highlighted on map) from the existing substation to where they are proposing the new one, which makes more sense when you drive this route but they will not consider this route stating it's just not an option. Our residence is in the worst location of the proposed route. I know It's hard to visualize from your office what is going on here but this is our real life and future here and we are fighting for what we feel is our rights. I hope you make Great River Energy reconsider the route that I have highlighted on the enclosed proposed project map. We know that progress is important, but this proposed line will not benefit us or our neighbors in any way and could, cause hardship between neighbors depending which side of the road the line is placed. Lake shore property is valued much higher than property not located on the lake, so our retirement investment will be devalued by the proposed line. We have notified a Law firm from St. Cloud, MN to represent a group of residents (who oppose this route) if this permit is approved.

Please contact me if there are any questions.

218-255-0754
shawupnorth@arvig.net

Gary Shaw
15410 County 18
Park Rapids, MN 56470

*Attached you will find the Proposed Project Map that I highlighted for a shorter, more practable route.

10-86

Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N. State
New Ulm, MN 56073

RECEIVED
MAR 04 2010
MINNESOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

March 2, 2010

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

Re: Case 53884-TS, Docket TL-10-86

Dear Commissioners:

I was in Park Rapids again for my parent's 61st wedding anniversary on February 21st. They live on a beautiful piece of land at the south end of Potato Lake next to the dam. Their home is their investment. They have tended it, improved it, and made it beautiful, knowing that they will need the value of that investment to provide support for their future. Now the value of their home is in great jeopardy by the proposed transmission line route on CSAH 18.

We went for a drive around the area to see the possibilities and alternate routes for the transmission line Great River Energy wants to construct north of Park Rapids. Is the purpose of this line to serve the area north of Park Rapids? If so, why is Great River proposing a route that is so close to Park Rapids? Why not go north? Why run their line south, west, and then north? Why disturb improved lakeshore properties when they could go further north and then west through unimproved territory?

Look at map of Hubbard County north of Park Rapids. The northern township lines of Lake Emma and Arago Townships provide a clear shot from County #4 to Highway 71. It is north of the improved areas near Park Rapids. Why not think a little more farsighted and take the new line north far enough to avoid the lakeshore properties around Potato Lake?

We drove north three miles along County #4 to 270th avenue, then west a mile. It is unimproved hunting ground. From there the transmission line could go north a mile to the township line. Then it's a straight shot west to Highway 71. It avoids all those big lakes in the Park Rapids area, yet it will be poised to feed the development to the north.

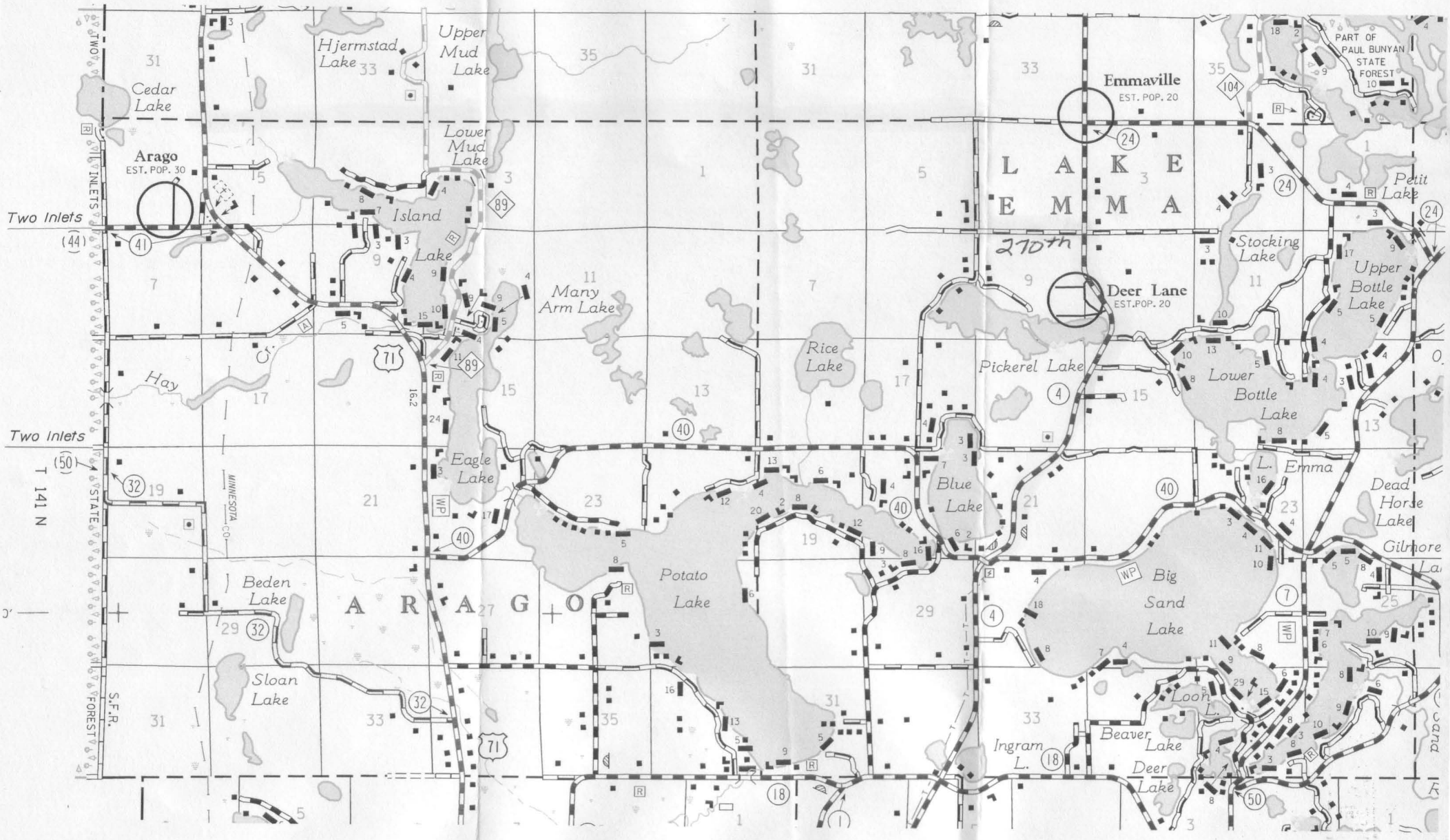
The lakeshore homes along the southern end of Potato Lake, as well as the beauty of CSAH 18, need to be protected from the devastating harm that would come with the proposed transmission line. Please tell Great River Energy to truly go north if they need to expand to the north. Go north of the areas already improved, and put their transmission line in the area they expect to be developing.

Sincerely,

Sandra Stugelmeyer

Sandra Stugelmeyer
504-359-7879
lgssls@newulmtel.net

cc: Representatives Brita Sailer and David Bly


Cedar Lake
Hjermstad Lake
Upper Mud Lake
Lower Mud Lake
Arago
EST. POP. 30
Island Lake
Many Arm Lake
Hay
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TWO INLETS
STATE FOREST
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Eagle Lake
Beden Lake
Sloan Lake
A R A G O
Potato Lake
Rice Lake
Blue Lake
Pickerel Lake
Emmaville
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Deer Lane
EST.POP. 20
Stocking Lake
Lower Bottle Lake
Upper Bottle Lake
Petit Lake
PART OF PAUL BUNYAN STATE FOREST
L. Emma
Dead Horse Lake
Gilmore
Big Sand Lake
Loon L.
Beaver Lake
Deer Lake
Ingram L.
MINNESOTA CO.

Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N State St
New Ulm, MN 56073

February 7, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line by Great River Energy, CSAH 18, Park Rapids

Dear Commission Members:

I write on behalf of my elderly parents living at 15338 County Road 18, Park Rapids, MN. Merwin, known as Muggs, and his bride of 61 years, Berneva, known as Neva, have been faithful stewards of the land and cabin on the outlet of Potato Lake for many years. Because of the intentions of Great River Energy, their security, their home, the land, their neighbors' properties, the beauty of the area, and the wildlife on the river are under assault. I watched these two people work hard for many years in their construction business to build a little nest egg, which is mostly invested in their home, and now, when they need it most, it may be severely damaged and devalued by the proposed high-voltage transmission line. I plead with you to hear the voices of the vulnerable people.

The proposed route along County Road 18 will destroy one of the few beautiful county roads left around Park Rapids. Everywhere one travels there are power lines marring the view. Must they be placed along the roadways? Can they not be buried? Could they be placed in fields rather than in front of homes? There are many alternate routes Great River could take. The most convenient to the power company may also be the most devastating to the landscape and homeowners.

Muggs and Neva Schield are 84 and 78 years old respectively. They took a shabby cabin and turned it into a lovely, inviting home. They are depending upon the value of that home to provide for their future. When they need assisted living or nursing home care, that cabin will provide the resources….or will it? How much of their investment will be lost due to the ugliness of a large transmission line at the entrance to their lot? How many of the trees they have protected will be clear cut to keep branches from the power lines? How much more exposed will their home be to the noise from the traffic when a large portion of their grove is gone? How will the transmission line affect their two young grandsons Josiah, 7, and Jordan, 4, who come to stay with them and play in the grove? How will it affect the dozens of trumpeter swans that make the river their home?

There are many others along CSAH 18 whose homes, lives, and investments will be harmed by the proposed transmission line. Muggs and Neva's neighbors, the Shaws, will lose much of their yard and trees. The easement will include half of their garage. Their children Christopher and Conner will be forced to play under high-voltage transmission wires. Gary and Liz have also been good stewards of the land and have built a beautiful home for their family. They, too, stand to loose much of their investment if the transmission line is built at the entrance to their lot. Many others have invested their lives in their homes along County Road 18. Is it really necessary to destroy these investments or is there not an alternative route that would be much less destructive?

I understand eminent domain but there are just and unjust ways of providing for the common good. It is understood by property owners that Great River has measured the County Road 40 route to be one-half mile shorter. I have heard that some Aragon Township board members have land along #40 and they didn't want it disturbed. Also that some of them had uninhabited land along the proposed route that may cause them to benefit. Is that why they did not protect County Road 18 against Great River Energy's land grab? Are there conflicts of interest that need to be disclosed? I have also wondered, as have other affected property owners, why this all started just as some were preparing to go south for the season. I ask you to consider, too, whether this transmission line is truly even necessary.

I understand through Representative Brita Sailer that the House Energy and Civil Justice committees are interested in reviewing how power companies have been treating private property owners. We, as a people who depend upon the rule of law and profess to love justice for all, must not allow big business or big government to tromp on the vulnerable. My parents have been giving, loving, tax-paying, job-providing, good neighbors and citizens. They and their neighbors were shocked to learn that their land might be seized and they may have to be involved in a legal battle to protect themselves. How just is it to lay that burden on them? The rights of the vulnerable must be upheld. Eminent domain must not become the vehicle for seizing one person's investments in order to enlarge another's investments.

There are alternative routes. Great River could go north to # 40 or further. They could choose to go south of # 18 and west through a field. They could bury the lines. If this transmission line is a 50 year or more investment for Great River Energy, and if thousands of homeowners will help to pay for this investment over those years, then a little more cost up front could be spread over many years and many beneficiaries. Is it not more just to ask the beneficiaries to help fund the "common good" than to destroy the fortunes of a few so that the many can each save a little bit? There are alternatives.

Last fall my parents went for a drive around the area to enjoy the fall colors of the trees. They drove for over an hour and when they returned along County Road 18 they realized that the most beautiful view they had witnessed was along that roadway leading to their drive. There are very few such unmarred scenes left. Why do people leave the cities and go north to the lakes and the woods? Is it to see transmission lines?

I plead with you members of the public utilities commission to protect this little piece of beauty along County Road 18. Make Great River Energy come up with a better plan. Wherever they place that line, if they truly need to place it, be sure that they treat the property owners with justice. Let Minnesota be a place where projects for the "common good" are funded by the "common people" and not by the devastation of a few.

I also ask that you think long range. What are we giving our children and grandchildren when we place cell phone towers and telephone wires and electric transmission lines along our roadways? There are other alternatives that must be explored if we are to have any beauty left for future generations.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the people of Minnesota,

Sandra Stugelmeyer
507-359-7879
lgssls@newulmtel.net

cc Rep. Brita Sailer

Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N. State St.
New Ulm, MN 56073

April 19, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E. Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line, Park Rapids

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for assigning an Advisory Task Force for this project so that the public in Park Rapids, MN, will have better opportunities to understand the project and to voice their concerns. Thank you, also, for allowing Leon Stugelmeyer, Liz Shaw, and myself to address the Commission at the March 25th application hearing. On behalf of the property owners along CSAH 18 north of Park Rapids, I express appreciation for the time you allowed for our statements and for the discussion that ensued.

It was at that hearing that we presented two maps showing three routes within the nearby area which could serve as alternatives to GRE's proposed route along the CSAH 18 roadway. Commissioner O'Brien asked for clarification from the OES as to whether any of these routes would fall under the "unreasonable or unpractical" category in the 3rd bullet point of the revised OES recommendation. Mr. Ek advised that they would not. Thus, we left the meeting with high hopes that the routes and route segments offered as possible alternatives in our presentation would be considered by the Advisory Task Force. To my recollection, this conversation was not limited to just considering the CSAH 40 route. I hope that a recording of the meeting was made and that my recollection is accurate.

However, as I read the Order Accepting Application as Complete filed on April 16, by Mr. Haar, it looks like the Task Force may be limited to only discussing the CSAH 40 alternative. Yes, we do believe CSAH 40 is a shorter and more direct route than CSAH 18, however, we would much prefer a route along the north line of Arago and Lake Emma Townships and thus, avoid the developed properties along the two county roads and the lakeshores. We also presented alternative route segments south of CSAH 18 going through land behind the property owners' homes rather than in front of them. On behalf of the CSAH 18 property owners I ask that the Advisory Task Force will not be precluded from discussing all the routes presented at the PUC hearing on March 25th.

Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandra Stugelmeyer
507-359-7879
On behalf of my parents, Muggs and Neva Schield

Leon and Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N. State
New Ulm, MN 56073

March 19, 2010

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

Re: Case 53884-TS, Docket TL-10-86, your meeting on March 25th

Dear Commissioners:

You will be meeting March 25th at 9:30 a.m. to decide whether or not Great River Energy's Application is complete. We think it may not be complete for the following reasons:

1) Great River Energy has not adequately addressed the damage the High Voltage Transmission Line will cause to the property owners most adversely affected – those along the south end of Potato Lake on CSAH 18. Although these owners' concerns were expressed at the informational meeting in October, GRE has not offered an alternate route to avoid the front yards of these families. (See Maps 5 & 6 on pages 5-9 and 5-10 of the application). On page 11-5 under "Adverse human and natural environmental effects which cannot be avoided," the application fails to even mention the effect on the human beings living along the route and they recognize no environmental effects other than those during construction. We assure you, there are human beings whose lives will be greatly impacted by the proposed project and there will be permanent environmental effects that need to be mitigated. To state otherwise is simply ignoring those effects. They need to recognize these effects and offer mitigation strategies such as an alternate route.

2) The application says that the project "will not result in displacement of existing residences." While that may be true currently, what they have not considered are the dreams and plans of the property owners and their families. We have been helping Sandy's parents, Muggs and Neva Schield, care for their home at 15338 CSAH 18 for the 15 years they have lived there. Three years ago we contacted a surveyor, and more recently, the county zoning office regarding the possibility of building on that land and being able to care for my parents as they age. Both sources have stated that it appears likely that such a project would be feasible. If the HVTL goes through that land, it will take away that possibility because we would need the land closest to the road for the building site.

   The Krautkremers have also written to you explaining the dreams and plans they have to build on their property; plans that will not be possible with the HVTL taking buildable land away from them. (See letter from the Krautkremers, 3/3/10.) I have spoken with others who have not yet voiced their concerns, but who also have plans to build. So technically, the HVTL may not displace current structures but it will preclude current plans for structures and displace the dreams of these families. Great River needs to complete their application by recognizing these concerns and looking for a way to mitigate these human settlement effects.

3) The application says that the proposed project "will have minimal aesthetic effects" on the land. (See page 11-1). This is certainly not true in the area along CSAH 18. This stretch of country driving is lovely, especially in the fall when all those deciduous trees are in full color. Behind the deciduous groves close to the road are towering Norway and White Pines. These trees are one of the aesthetic

effects so enjoyed by people who have chosen to live there and by others who vacation near Park Rapids. The application says that the 60-85 foot poles would be 2-5 feet into the private property and would necessitate clearing at least 50 linear feet of forestation and possibly more if the trees beyond that point are tall enough to affect the HVTL. (See pages 8-1 through 8-3.) There are some tall pines in this area. To lose them would not be minimal to those who have invested in the good stewardship of their properties. Nor is it minimal to the general public who are finding it increasingly more difficult to drive the country roads and find aesthetically pleasing views. Please envision one of the 85 foot poles in your front yard next to your driveway. (See the picture Liz Shaw sent to you on 2-6-10).

To mitigate the damage to the aesthetic beauty of this stretch of the project, Great River Energy needs to consider an alternate route. GRE needs encouragement from you to work on such alternatives.

4) The application does not address the issue of cultural values adequately. On page 6-12 the application names the major values within the region as "individualism and appreciation of natural resources." Then on the very same page GRE states: "No negative impacts to cultural values are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation is necessary or proposed." In other words, the individualism and appreciation of natural resources expressed by the property owners along CSAH 18 are not being considered by GRE. We know that there will be negative impacts to the cultural values of those property owners. There already have been. To say otherwise is failing to recognize the stewardship of the very people who have cared for that land for years. By claiming "no negative impacts" GRE is merely saying that they are not recognizing the negative impacts and, thus, do not need to mitigate them. In October, 2009, several property owners expressed that they felt their cultural values were in being assaulted by the proposed transmission line project.

   Again, to reduce the negative impacts to the cultural values of the people most affected by this HVTL, we ask you to tell GRE that this application is not complete until they have considered all of the alternative routes away from CSAH 18.

5) The GRE application is not complete regarding the environmental impact the HVTL will have on the Potato River area. You have letters from the property owners describing the trumpeter swans and other wildlife and water fowl that make their homes in the area or frequent it daily. We have counted as many as 34 swans at one time on the Potato River in front of the Schield cabin near the dam. (See the attached pictures of the Potato River in the Winter). These swans fly north from the south end of the river near Fish Hook Lake, and as they near the dam they reduce their altitude. Neva Schield has spoken with a DNR representative about the impact of the high voltage lines strung across the river on one side of the dam or the other. His response was that there'd probably be some dead swans. He has seen these swans and done winter counting at the Schield cabin. The river runs swiftly there and stays open all winter so the swans, geese, and ducks are frequent visitors there, not to mention beaver, otter, Pileated woodpeckers, and many other species. The eagles fly the river quite frequently as well.

   The application says on page 6-29 that "avian collisions are a possibility after the completion of the transmission line and could potentially increase as a result of the proposed line. Waterfowl are typically more susceptible to transmission line collision…" If the proposed HVTL is allowed to cross the Potato River at the dam site, the lines will be right in their flight pattern as they descend to feed north of the dam. We don't believe flight diverters will sufficiently protect the large population of swans, geese, ducks and raptors that fly the river daily and descend in area of the dam.

   In addition to the loss of wildlife, stringing those electric lines across the river at the dam will certainly affect the recreational value of that site. People fish from that dam. Are we going to see lures hanging from the wires? People bring their boats down the river to the dam and enjoy the scenery. Do we

really need to ruin that? Again, Great River Energy needs to consider an alternative route that would mitigate the environmental impact of their project on humans and wildlife that enjoy the Potato River.

6) For those property owners whose homes are close to CSAH 18, the loss of 50 to 100 feet of trees and shrubs not only changes their view and damages the curb appeal of their homes, but it also reduces the noise buffer between their homes and the road. GRE's application does not address the increased noise the property owners will endure due to the clear cutting of their groves. Page 6-3, Table 6-1 of the application shows the sound level in units of decibels A-weighted dB(A). The GRE information indicates that even "a 10 dB(A) change in noise level is perceived as a doubling of noise loudness." How much more highway noise will be heard in the homes and yards along Potato Lake once 55 to 100 feet of forest is razed?

   And yet GRE states on page 6-6 that "no [noise] impacts are anticipated." We disagree. There are noise impacts. Great River Energy should recognize that fact and tell how they plan to mitigate it in their application. They need to find a better route for the transmission line than the one along CSAH 18 that tears up the front yards of their fellow citizens, removing visual and auditory buffers between their homes and the roadway.

7) Another reason we believe this application is incomplete is because of the timing of the permit process. GRE says on page 11-1 that "the role of the Commission is to determine the best route to follow…. and to determine what mitigation efforts Great River Energy should employ to reduce any human settlement or environmental consequences." The timing is a "human settlement" issue. Thus far, many of the property owners have been at winter homes and unavailable to protect their interests and those of their neighbors. They have had no opportunity to discuss their concerns at a public meeting or to hear how GRE intends to mitigate the damages to their properties. (See the letter from Tony and Dorothy Platz dated 3-1-10). I hope that the Commission will not allow GRE to rush acceptance of this project before the snowbirds have a chance to defend their nests.

   We also hope that the Commissioners will appoint a Citizen Advisory Task Force to meet with the property owners who have had no opportunity to be heard in a public meeting.

8) Has the application truly set forth the need for this project? On page 1-1 the application states that "the existing electrical system is approaching its physical limit to reliably deliver electricity to the area consumers." Also, that Great River Energy is planning for future load growth with a 115kV system for satisfying the long-term needs of the area. Are these *need* statements or *want* statements? We ask that the Commission request a thorough search into the need for this project. We understand that the length of the transmission line is 2.75 miles short of triggering an automatic requirement of a Certificate of Need. However, the proposed system will not be whole until the current 34.5 kV line along CSAH 4 is converted to 115 kV. So, in truth, the whole project is a much longer system, only split into two phases. From the Mantrap Substation to the Long Lake Substation is about 5.5 miles. So now we have a project that will actually be closer to 13 miles long if that entire existing line must be changed. Does that warrant a Certificate of Need?

   Is there truly a need so pressing that GRE must build an oversized line on monster poles so that in five, or maybe more, years they can develop areas further to the north? On page 2-3 they state that the line would be run at 34.5 kV for 4-5 years before converting to 115 kV. Will it even be that soon? And then the 115 kV loop wouldn't be developed for 10 – 15 years. If this project is basically about preparing for future development north of the currently developed Park Rapids area, as several residents have said it is, then why not build the project north? Why not build the line ahead of the development in the area to be developed? And, perhaps something on a smaller scale would meet the actual needs of the

existing customers and be less intrusive. Perhaps additional capacity for the developed area around Potato Lake could be obtained in a less damaging and less costly manner.

In these hard economic times should the energy company be spending $4,421,492 if it is not imminently necessary? (See page 3-4). They say it will help bring more reliable energy to 821 customers. That's $5,385.50 per customer. On page 2-4 GRE gives the historical and projected peak winter demand in MW measure for the Mantrap and Long Lake Substations. In the historical numbers are two years of significant growth – the last two years of the infamous housing bubble. Now that the bubble has burst, we wonder if Park Rapids will experience even the 3% projected growth built into GRE's projections of need.

According to the permit department at the Hubbard County Offices, the building permits for all new and remodel projects in 2009 were 30.5% fewer than in 2005. There has been a steady decline of building for the last five years. Perhaps it will level out in 2010, and perhaps it will continue to decline. The point is, if people can't maintain mortgages on their first home, they certainly won't be building or buying a cabin near Park Rapids.

9) Finally, is the application complete if GRE has not offered alternate routes that would spare the currently developed areas and the homes of its current customers? We urge that consideration be given to placing the transmission line along the north side of Emma Lake and Arago townships through unsettled land. Now that would be a truly long range idea and it would place those monster poles out in unsettled land before development starts. Why not lead the development rather than tear it up after people have invested their lives in making it beautiful?

   We urge GRE to reconsider the County Road 40 option. It is a shorter, more direct route, and it would run directly from substation to substation. We think there would be fewer homes affected by the lines on County Road 40 than on CSAH 18.

   Or go south. There is unsettled land just south of CSAH 18 parallel to the proposed route. Liz Shaw has submitted a map to you showing the possible alternative that could be used to save the front yards of the Potato Lake property owners. See her letter and map dated 2/6/10. She has also sent this map to Michelle Lommel of Great River Energy. The property owners may not be opposed to the HVTL running behind their homes because it would save their front yards. GRE would rather use roadways because of convenience for construction and repair, however, there are transmission lines through many forests and fields all over the state. Better to deal with a little inconvenience now than to ruin the aesthetic value of the roadway, the river, the dam, and the properties forever.

   There are alternatives that need to be considered more seriously.

For all these reasons we believe there is a lot more homework to do on this application.

Sincerely,

Leon and Sandra Stugelmeyer
507-359-7879
lgssls@newulmtel.net

cc: Representatives Brita Sailer and David Bly

The Potato River in the winter, just north of the dam on CSAH 18.

Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N. State St.
New Ulm, MN 56073

March 17, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E. Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line, Park Rapids

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to request that you assign an Advisory Task Force for this project so that the public in Park Rapids, MN, will have better opportunities to understand the project and to voice their concerns. You have already received filings from several land owners along the route. Many other owners are interested in participating in public comment, however, they are wintering away from their Park Rapids homes at the present time. I believe this project is controversial enough to warrant the inclusion of a means for property owners to take part in the conversation.

Sincerely,

Sandra Stugelmeyer
507-359-7879
On behalf of my parents, Muggs and Neva Schield

Levi Stugelmeyer
1911 Grant Rd
Saint Paul, MN, 55112

3/11/2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: PUC Docket TL-10-86, proposed transmission line by Great River Energy, CSAH 18, Park Rapids

Dear Commission Members:

I am writing in regard to the Great River Energy proposed Potato Lake 115 KV Substation and Transmission Line along County Rd 18 in Hubbard County. My grandparents have lived on County Rd 18 just on the east side of the bridge over the Potato River for 15 years. Over the course of those 15 years I have watched them slave away to turn what was once a broken down and decaying old cabin into one the most beautiful and welcoming homes I have ever seen. For 15 years I have seen the ducks and geese and swans fly down and land in river as my grandfather yells "Hey Bucko!" whilst throwing out their daily meal of corn. For 15 years this has been a venue for neighborhood parties, holiday get-togethers and family reunions. For 15 years this has been our family's favorite place to vacation.

I am 23 years old and I currently live in the twin cities. I am no stranger to, nor am I opposed to power lines. I do believe however, that certain situations call for a strict and thorough examination as to who will be affected both positively and negatively by a proposal such as this. I do not know what positive affects this power line will have, but I do know that this will put an extreme burden not only on my grandparents, but everyone who lives along the proposed route.

Most of my grandparents' retirement has been invested into this property. They are getting old. Within the next couple years, decisions will need to be made concerning their overall well-being. There is a very good possibility that they will need to sell this property in order to afford to move into a retirement community. If this proposal goes through, it will not only ruin one of the most beautiful roads in the county, it will have a considerably negative affect on the value of my grandparents' property putting them under extreme financial duress.

This line will have an extremely negative affect on the environment as well. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, County 18 is an exceptionally beautiful road. You can often see bald eagles and other wildlife that are increasingly rare on other roads.

I urge you to look elsewhere for your route. There are other options that will have significantly less adverse affects not only on the value of people's property, but on the land and the wildlife as well. Please consider an alternative to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Levi Stugelmeyer

levitebatter@gmail.com

Sandra Stugelmeyer
604 N. State
New Ulm, MN 56073

April 21, 2010

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

Re: Docket TL-10-86, Questions of need, size, type, timing, etc.

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the work you do for the citizens of Minnesota. I appreciate the volume of material you must absorb in order to do the work as a Commissioner. Therefore, I do not wish to burden you unnecessarily with something that has already been discussed and decided. However, in studying the Statutes and Rules pertaining to this issue, I have become convinced that an interpretation given to a Statute during the March 25, 2010, PUC meeting may not have been applicable to the Park Rapids project TL-10-86.

At that meeting, and in a letter from attorney Edward Laubach on behalf of property owners living on CSAH 18 near Park Rapids, the request was made to eliminate the three bullet points suggested by OES as things which could not be addressed in the scope of environmental review. As stated in the April 16, 2010, Order Accepting Application as Complete, page 6:

"At the hearing on this matter, the OES stated that the first two bullet points identify subjects which may not be examined in an environmental review of the project. The OES cited Minn. Stat. 216E.02, subd. 2 which states in relevant part:

Questions of need, including size, type, and timing; alternative system configurations; and voltage must not be included in the scope of environmental review conducted under this chapter."

You may recall that some of us at the hearing were surprised that, according to the interpretation of the Statute, no one was permitted to question a utility company's need for a project: not the public, not the OES, and not the PUC. In other words a private monopolistic company could receive a permit for a project and not have the need for that project even discussed by those affected or by those given the responsibility to represent the public. I was wondering why the Legislature would write such a law.

However, in studying the statute, I do not see the same interpretation. The chapter cited is referring to "large" projects where a "Certificate of Need" has been required and therefore, any further discussion of need, etc., would be unnecessary, redundant and inefficient. So, the one sentence quoted at the meeting was out of context when looking at the whole Statute. I include the entire paragraph in which the quoted sentence appears:

Statute 216E.02 Subd. 2.Jurisdiction. The commission is hereby given the authority to provide for site and route selection for large electric power facilities. The commission shall issue permits for large electric power facilities in a timely fashion and in a manner consistent with the overall determination of need for the project under section 216B.243 or 216B.2425. Questions of need, including size, type, and timing; alternative system configurations; and voltage must not be included in the scope of environmental review conducted under this chapter.

Since TL-10-86 is not considered a “large” electrical facility, this Statute does not apply. Looking further into applicable laws regarding projects seeking a permit under the “Alternative Permitting Process” pursuant to Minn. Rules, Parts 7850.2800 to 7850.3900, we find the following:

Rule 7850.3700 Subp. 7. Matters excluded.

When the Public Utilities Commission has issued a Certificate of Need for a large electric power generating plant or high voltage transmission line or placed a high voltage transmission line on the certified HVTL list maintained by the commission, the environmental assessment shall not address questions of need, including size, type, and timing; questions of alternative system configurations; or questions of voltage.

It appears to me that the Statute quoted by the EOS to rule out talking about need, size, type, and timing, etc, only applies to "large" facilities for which a certificate of need was required. Looking at rule 7850.3700 further confirms that interpretation. "When" is the key word. In other words, those items can be addressed in the environmental assessment when the PUC has not issued a Certificate of Need. This makes perfect sense to me that such items should not be discussed once they have been established as worthy through the Certificate of Need process. But in cases where such a certificate has not been required, precluding the PUC, the OES, or the public from discussing such items is not supported by these laws. It appears to me that the public and the agencies representing the public have every right to question the need, size, type, etc., for a proposed project unless a Certificate of Need has already weighed those basic issues.

If my interpretation is accurate, then the Legislature did not allow for autonomy on the part of private utility companies, no matter the size of a project. The need for the project must stand the test of review. It does not make sense that a ten mile long 115 Kv HVTL would have to pass a Certificate of Need review, but a 9.99 mile long 115 Kv HVTL could be permitted with no opportunity for the permitting authority to find out if it was even needed. I hope my interpretation is accurate and that these items will be opened for discussion and review and environmental assessment on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota in regard to the Park Rapids TL-10-86 project. Perhaps the Commissioners would consider assigning a Scientific Advisory Task Force to consider them. (Stat. 216E.08)

Sincerely,

Sandra Stugelmeyer

March 25, 2010

RECEIVED
MAY 12 2010
MINNESOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Address to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: TL-10-86, Proposed HVTL, Park Rapids, MN

By Leon Stugelmeyer
Son-in-law to Merwin and Berneva Schield of 15338 CSAH 18, Park Rapids, MN 56470

My name is Leon Stugelmeyer and I am speaking on behalf of the Potato Lake Group of property owners who live along CSAH 18 north of Park Rapids, MN. I would like to thank the Commissioners and the rest of the staff of the Public Utilities Commission for your time and for the opportunity to present the concerns of the Potato Lake Group in reference to the proposed Great River Energy high voltage transmission line, Docket TL-10-86, along CSAH 18 on the south end of Potato Lake. (Exhibit 1) My in-laws, Merwin and Berneva Schield, live at the outlet of Potato Lake next to the dam.

My experience with the utility construction industry spans over 30 years. For 25 of those years I was a utility construction supervisor. I am currently employed with an engineering firm in southern Minnesota working in the area of engineering design, redesign, and inspection, and I am a utility reconstruction specialist. I am also a certified construction technician with the state of Minnesota. But I am not the only one with this kind of experience in our group. We who are representing the Potato Lake and CSAH 18 property owners, have, collectively, over 140 years of experience in the utility construction industry.

In my career, I have rarely been on a project where things have gone according to the plans. There are always unforeseen circumstances and changed conditions that we have to deal with. We are constantly in a mode of redesign to make the project fit. This is a daily occurrence and a way of life in the utility construction industry. This is the exact reason why we are here today. This is a case of another design problem in a utility construction project. My role in this process throughout my career has been to find a solution to make all parties involved – contractor, project owner, utility companies, property owners, and engineer - come together and agree on a positive end result.

Thank you for listening to our hearts through our letters efiled or mailed to you. Thank you for listening today. We who love the land which would be encumbered by the proposed transmission line, urge you to reject the application before you based on the lack of effort by Great River Energy to adequately consider the environmental impacts of the route they have requested. We believe they have chosen the easy road and have not recognized the impact their project would have on the aesthetic and cultural values of the people who live and vacation in the area. They state that there is no impact and, therefore, they do not need to mitigate it. But they have failed to recognize the harm their clearing and grubbing of our forests would have on the environment and the property values of our lake area homes. They have not addressed the environmental issues regarding the great population of Trumpeter Swans, Canadian Geese, ducks, and the Bald Eagles that live and feed on the Potato River. (See exhibits 1-A and 1-B.) As explained in a letter you received from Edward Laubach,Attorney, on behalf of seventeen concerned families, little information is given in the application that would show forth GRE's concern with these issues or any real attempt to mitigate them.

We know from our experience that there is a better way than what is being proposed on the south end of Potato Lake and along CSAH 18. The potential destruction to these lake area properties is absolutely

unnecessary. We know from our experience that a different and better route can be found for this transmission line.

As you can see from the information that you have received from the property owners along CSAH 18, we are organized. But we are also experienced in utility construction. From our experience working with the earth, the elements, the heavy equipment that's available, and the modern technical advancements in the placement of utilities, we know that there is another way to route the proposed transmission line that will accomplish the stated purpose of this project and protect the property owners along the south end of Potato Lake and CSAH 18. I am also confident that by now you may be well aware of the fact that we might even be just a little bit tenacious!

We have before you three other routes to consider. Please see the map and satellite photos enclosed in your handout. (Exhibits 2, 3, and 4.) The northern route would go from CSAH 4 and 24 through undeveloped land straight west to Highway 71. The CSAH 40 route is a direct connection between the two substations and is shorter than the CSAH 18 route. The southern route would go through the woods behind the homes of property owners along CSAH 18. It would require some additional clearing and grubbing, but the savings on easement costs would be significant. We favor the most northern route because it does not tear up developed lake properties.

While general practice for a new line is to follow existing corridors, given the significant impact to the river wildlife and the significant devaluation of lake area properties, we believe this is the time to reconsider general practices and discern in light of specific circumstances. While GRE would argue it will cost more for them to take alternate routes, we argue that GRE has more time and more capabilities of recouping their cost than do the handful of property owners who have planned on their property value as a significant part of their future and retirement funds. In fact, there are some who simply do not have the time or ability in their lifetime to recoup their loss at all.

GRE would argue that the impact of other routes is too great. However, we believe that they have not sufficiently considered the environmental impact of the route they have chosen. The wildlife on Potato River at the south end of Potato Lake alone should give us pause to reconsider the proposed route. We also believe that GRE has simply not made the effort to thoroughly analyze all the other possible routes.

In addition to considering other routes, we also ask you to instruct GRE to correct the application by adding the currently available data for the winter of 2009, to their chart on page 2-4 showing Peak Winter Electrical Demand at the Mantrap and Long Lake Substations. (See Exhibit 5.) The most recent data, according to GRE's Michelle Lommel, shows the Mantrap Substation peak demand at 9.6 megawatts and the Long Lake Substation at 9.5. That totals 19.1, which is a 5.9% drop from the previous year and it is 8.6% lower than the projection given in the chart on page 2-5. We believe it is in the public interest to have the most current data included in the application. We also ask that GRE be advised to recalculate their forecasted demand using more realistic expectations based on the current data and current economic conditions, not on the speculative housing market which no longer exists. The Hubbard County fact sheet from the US Census Bureau shows that the population growth from 2000 to 2008 was only 2.4%, or 3/10ths of a percent per year. Based on the most current data, the charts on 2-4 and 2-5 need to be adjusted for accurate assessment. (See Exhibit 6.) This should be done following the rules of statistical analysis. We believe the result of this recalculation will show a less urgent need for more capacity. This will also affect the projected number of years before the transmission line would need to be converted to 115 kV. The PUC, the public and the potentially affected property owners deserve more accurate information than what is currently in the application.

Finally, I'd like to quote from the March 23, 2010, letter sent to you by Attorney Edward Laubach on behalf of the property owners along CSAH 18. Reading from page 4, the final paragraph:

"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." (quoting Edward J. Laubach, Jr., Attorney with Gray, Plant, Mooty, Mooty, and Bennett, P.A.)

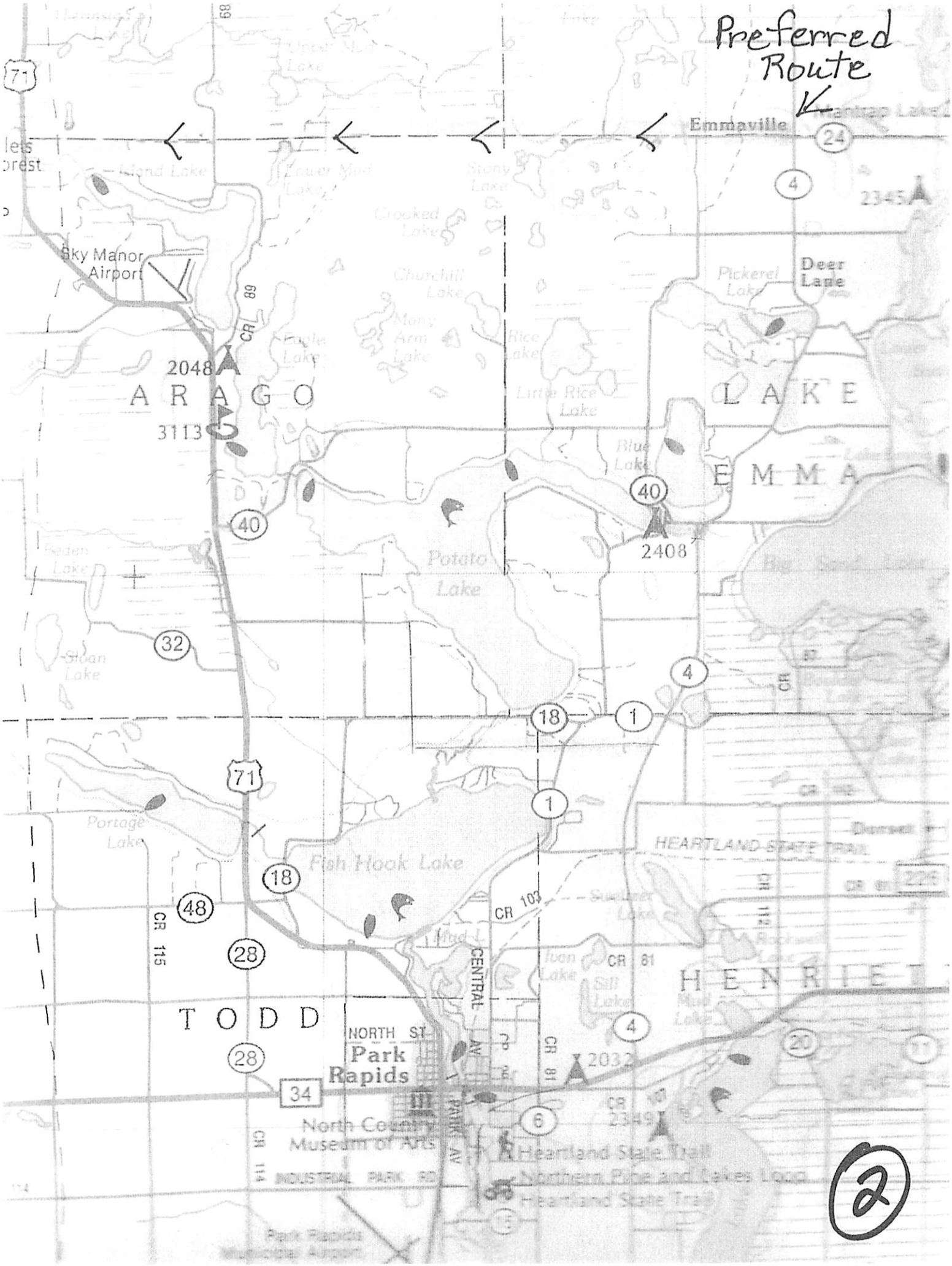
We are grateful for this opportunity to be heard. We have confidence that the right decision will be made to keep this transmission line away from the Potato Lake properties. We thank you in advance for treating us with fairness and integrity.

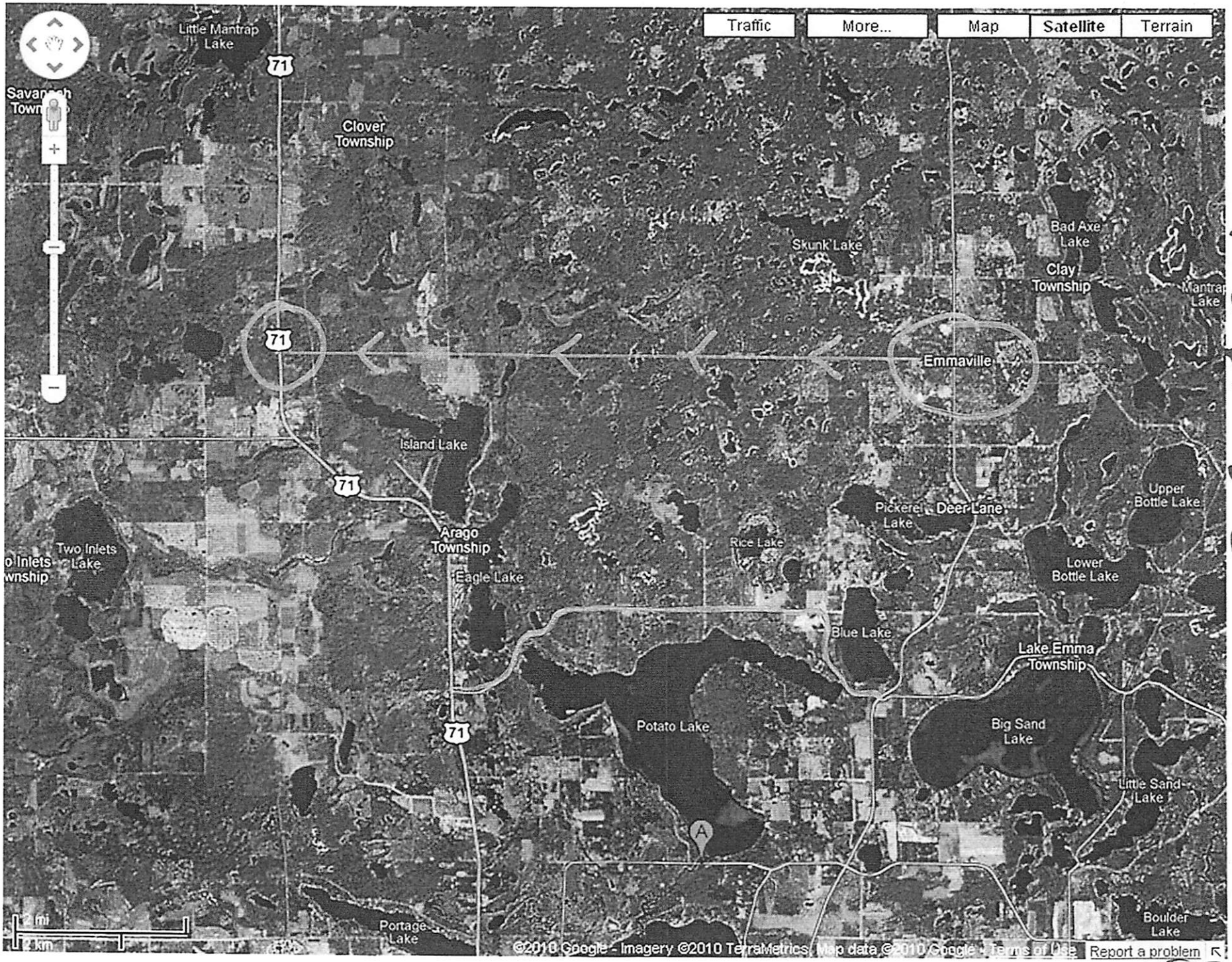
Leon G. Stugelmeyer

#1

1-A CSAH 18 Potato River Crossing

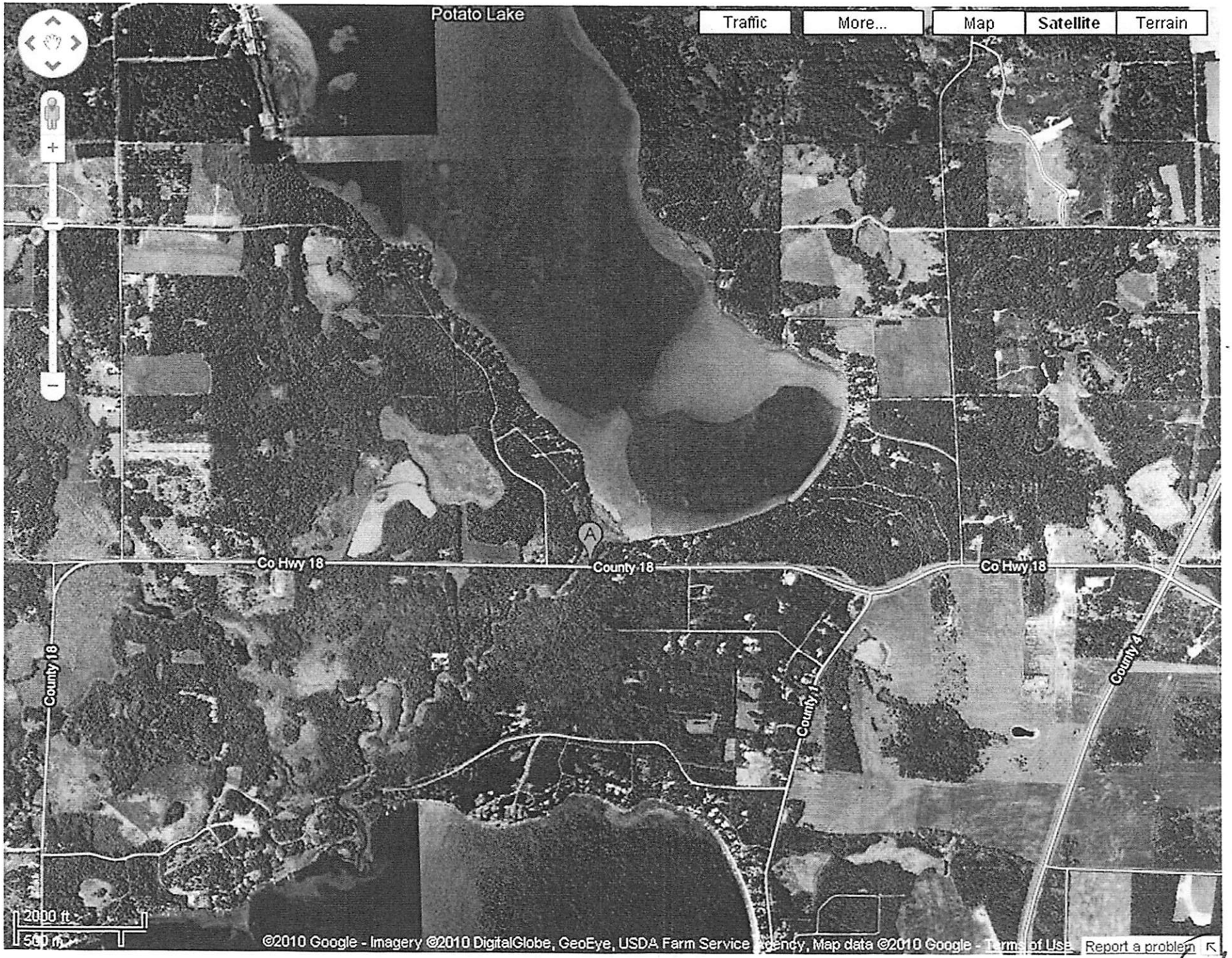
Potato River at CSDW 18 L.B.


Preferred Route
Emmaville
Sky Manor Airport
Deer Lake
ARAGO
LAKE
EMMA
Potato Lake
Fish Hook Lake
HEARTLAND STATE TRAIL
TODD
HENRIET
NORTH ST
Park Rapids
North Country Museum of Arts
Heartland State Trail
Northern Pine and Lakes Loop
2



Preferred Route

2


Potato Lake
Traffic
More...
Map
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©2010 Google - Imagery ©2010 DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, USDA Farm Service Agency, Map data ©2010 Google - Terms of Use
Report a problem

(4)

This includes the housing boom years speculative housing bubble

Peaks

Table 2-1 Historic and Expected Winter Electrical Demand (MW) by Substation

Distribution Substation	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Historical Annual Average Growth	2013 Projection	2018 Projection	Projected Annual Average Growth
Mantrap	6.8	6.6	7.0	8.2	9.5	9.8	10.2	6.92%	11.8	13.7	3.0%
Long Lake	7.4	7.5	7.5	9.3	10.0	10.0	10.1	5.41%	11.8	13.6	3.0%
Totals	14.2	14.1	14.5	17.5	19.5	19.8	20.3	6.15%	23.6	27.3	3.0%
% Yearly Growth	-	-0.70%	2.84%	20.69%	11.43%	1.54%	2.58%				

from GRE
9.6
9.5
19.1
-5.9%

Population growth data in Hubbard County confirm this development trend and ongoing increase in demand, as shown below in Table 2-2. Population increased 11 percent in Hubbard County from 1995 to 2008. These data also make it clear that increased electric demand is virtually guaranteed even if individual customers consume no more than average historical levels of energy. The reality, however, is that the projected electric demand growth will require increased levels of transmission and distribution capacity.

The avera is not norm or probabl

Look at the last 20 years, not in the abnormal, the norma

Table 2-2 Population Growth in Hubbard County

Year	Hubbard County
1995	16,569
2008	18,810

2000 = 18,373 pop

437 in 8 years = 2.4% or .3% /yr

2.1.3 Proposed Project

The proposed Potato Lake 115 kV Project would increase the Project area's capacity for serving additional system load by providing three area distribution sources (Mantrap, Long Lake and Potato Lake) instead of two. These facilities represent 30 megavolt-amperes (MVA) of power delivery capability based on both system intact and contingent scenarios. This capacity addition is projected to meet the local distribution capacity needs for a minimum of 10 years if present load growth patterns are maintained. The projected capability of the system is based on the Itasca-Mantrap substation transformation capacity and on 2008 load modeling that is interpolated for the area load growth projection. With these assumptions, the capacity of the system is approximately 30 MVA, which is 7.5 MVA greater than the existing capacity of 22.5 MVA (see Figure 2-2).

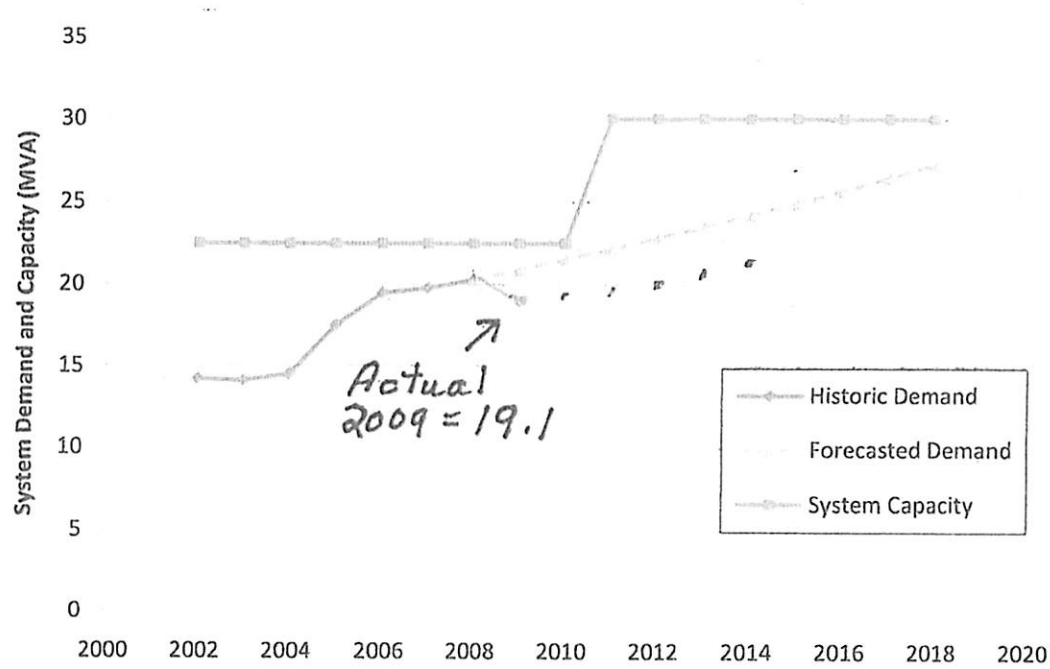
Does the decline in [illegible] decline

Also look at [illegible] data and permits for new homes in project area

See [illegible]

5

Figure 2-2 Yearly Adjusted Net Demand/Capability



2009
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2.2 Certificate of Need Not Required

Minn. Stat. § 216B.243, Subd. 2 (2007), states that "[n]o large energy facility shall be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a certificate of need by the Public Utilities Commission..." A large energy facility is defined as "any high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 100 kilovolts or more with more than ten miles of its length in Minnesota or that crosses a state line."[1] The proposed Potato Lake Project is less than ten miles in length; therefore a certificate of need is not required.

2.3 Eligibility for the Alternative Permitting Process

The Potato Lake Project involves construction of a new 115 kV transmission line and associated facilities. Because the proposed transmission line project is between 100 kV and 200 kV, it is eligible for review under the alternative permitting process authorized by Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.04, subd. 2(3) and Minnesota Rules 7850.2800, subp. 1(c). Great River Energy requests that the Project be considered for review under the alternate permitting process.

The permit application requirements are listed in Table 2-3. This table includes cross-references indicating the location of required information contained within the Potato Lake Project Route Permit Application.

[1] Minn. Stat. § 216B.2421, subdiv. 2(3) (2006).

6

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Peaks

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% Yearly Growth	-	-0.70%	2.84%	20.69%	11.43%	1.54%	2.58%					-5.9%

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5

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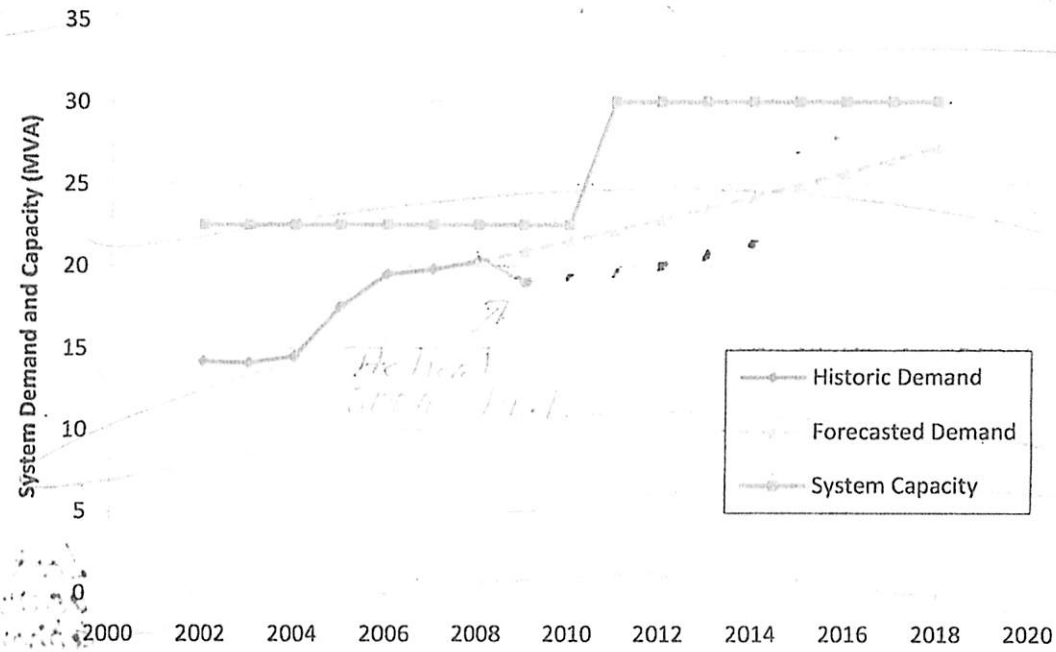

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