

4-22-2010

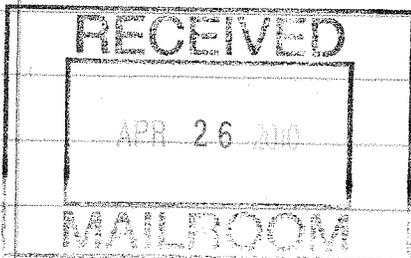
ATT SCOTTEK  
STATE PERMIT MANAGER

I AM STATING OUR OPPOSITION,  
AGAINST USING COUNTY ROAD  
40, FOR THE CORRIDOR, OF  
THE NEW TRANSMISSION LINE,  
WE BELIEVE COUNTY ROAD  
18, WOULD HAVE LESS OF A  
ENVIROMENTAL IMPACT!

PLEASE KEEP ME INFORMED  
OF ANY CHANGES.

THANK YOU

Tom L Rapp  
11418 MINNESOTA RD  
ALEX MN 56308



**Ek, Scott (COMM)**

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**From:** Riley, Michael [mriley@prukc.com]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 01, 2010 4:14 PM**To:** Ek, Scott (COMM)**Cc:** Riley, Michael**Subject:** Proposed 115 kilovolt Potato Lake Substation, Project ID : 023601200

Mr. Scott Ek

State Permit Manager

Office of Energy Security

85 7th Place East. Suite 500

86 St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Mr. Ek,

I own a small vacation home at 22628 Green Day Dr. on the west side of Potato Lake in Park Rapids, Minnesota. Some time in the next couple of years, I plan on building a substantial home on this lot and spending from six to eight months a year in this home. I was recently notified by my neighbors that there is a proposed new transmission line on a route that directly impacts the south end of Potato Lake which is where I access my home from Green Day Drive. The reason I started vacationing yearly in the Park Rapids area in 1971 was based on several factors, including the number of lakes, seclusion, "home town" atmosphere and most of all the...general beauty of the area. My home is not in the 500 ft. "impact area" but, whatever affects the neighborhood also impacts my property value and, more importantly...my lifestyle. Within 3 or 4 hours drive of my home in Overland Park, KS there are literally hundreds of thousands of acres of lakes...including the Lake of the Ozarks that has more shoreline than all of the Great Lakes combined...however, I still chose to drive 10.5 hours each way to Park Rapids three or four times a year to vacation.

I understand that there is an alternative northern route that impacts many fewer homes. Also, I was told that there may not be an immediate (ie. 5-20 years) need for a new power line. Please consider the total cost (financial, emotional, economical, etc.) to the number of people affected, the ecological impact to the community and visitors / vacationers and time frame needed for the improvements before choosing a final route for the power line.

Sincerely,

*Michael J. Riley***Broker Associate****Prudential Kansas City Realty****8101 College Blvd., Suite 100****Overland Park, KS 66210**

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**Office: 913-661-2323 / 800-590-5804****Mobile: 913-707-0006****Efax: 913-981-8408****mriley@prukc.com**

May 14, 2010

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



From: Eunice K. Rothermel  
22170 Green Day Drive  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Re: ET2/TL-10-86

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in regard to the proposed 115kV Transmission line project, TH-10-86, Potato Lake. I own property along County Road 18 as well as on the Potato River and Potato Lake.

At the May 4, 2010 Task Force Hearing, a northern route was proposed by the members of the task force. This route was proposed as an alternative to the route originally proposed by Great River Energy. I would like to encourage the Public Utilities Commission to consider this route also.

This proposed route crosses land that is less than 10% developed. Most of this land is state and county owned land. It does not go near residences, lakes or wetlands.

Safety is a major concern of mine in regards to the transmission lines. While I understand there are still many unanswered questions regarding the effects of electromagnetic fields on people who live under/around transmission lines, I have concerns about health issues that may be a result of this proximity. The recent cases dealing with cell phone usage, the Toyota problems, and my own experience as an oncology nurse where we dealt with "unexplained" clusters of leukemia in children and teens who lived adjacent to these kinds of transmission lines, as well as those of lesser magnitude than these, raise many questions and fears for me. While I understand the jury is still out on this issue, it is an area of concern for me. It only seems logical to me that Great River Energy would attempt to place these huge lines in uninhabited areas whenever possible.

Safety of our lakes and rivers is also a concern. The GRE proposed route would go through, near and over wetlands, a river, and one of the premiere lakes in our county. The poles that would hold the transmission lines are treated with toxic chemicals that would leech into the wetlands, river, lake, and the water table. The effects of which would be harmful to both humans and the animals that live or pass through these sensitive areas. This area is home to many species of wild life.

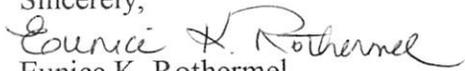
Location was one of the primary reasons for our family purchasing property in Northern Hubbard County. The many trees, the North Country appearance, the home of wildlife such as deer, swans, eagles, egrets that line the area around County 18 influenced our decision. These same considerations also influenced the price of our real estate on one of the premiere lakes in the area, Potato Lake. The cutting down of trees, the

placement of these huge poles and guy wires on our property will negatively affect our property value, forever. It just seems reasonable that Great River Energy would attempt to put these lines in areas where the devaluation would be the least amount, for example on state and county lands that are uninhabited.

As property owners in Hubbard County, we are influenced as to what we can do with and on our property by the standards invoked by the Shoreland Ordinance, a means of protecting the lake and watershed resources for the greater good. I feel that Great River Energy should be held to these standards, also for the greater good. I think that they should choose a route that would adversely affect the lesser amount of people and environs even if it means a route which might be a little longer.

Thank you for establishing the Task Force regarding this matter and for your consideration of the people's concerns.

Sincerely,



Eunice K. Rothermel

Property Owner and Concerned Citizen

218-732-8824

Gordon Ruhnke  
15397 County 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 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 live at a "pinchpoint" on County 18, the proposed route by Great River Energy to construct a 115 kV transmission line. I am against any action that would allow Great River Energy (GRE) to construct a transmission line on County 18. I would experience a tremendous loss if the line were to run in front of my home. My only buffer on County 18 are the trees my wife and I planted together about 50 years ago.

This region is a highly visual sensitive area. Distribution lines are already buried on County 18. If there is a need for "reliable" power, then put the line on state and county land as it stretches from Highway 71 to CSAH 4. If there is a need to travel down CSAH 4, there is already a corridor and distribution lines in place to accommodate I ask the state to also place the substation further north in alignment GRE's plans to expand west.

I have concern that Great River needs to build a nearly outdated mode poles and lines in an age when burying the lines is a desirable option. The need for 115kV of power is not immediate nor have they made the case that it will be needed in 10 to 40 years

The northern 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.

Gordon Ruhnke  
Property owner



Berneva J. Schield  
15338 County Rd 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

5/11/10

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.

Berneva J. Schield

Merwin L. Schield  
15338 County Rd 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

5/11/10

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

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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.

Merwin L. Schield

M.L. and B.J. Schield  
15338 County Rd 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

March 20, 2010

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

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

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to request a Citizen Advisory Task Force for the proposed transmission line project noted above. Many land owners are very concerned about the environmental, financial, aesthetic and potential health impact of this project. We need the opportunity to understand more fully and express our concerns about the impact of this project to our property and our community.

Several land owners are away from Park Rapids for the winter and have not had the opportunity to participate in the discussions regarding this project. Please assign a Citizen Advisory Task Force so all those impacted by this project can have a voice in the process.

Sincerely,  
M.L. and B.J. Schield  
218-732-3356

ML and BJ Schield  
15338 County 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

3/3/2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7<sup>th</sup> 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:

We are writing in reference to the Potato Lake 115 KV Substation and Transmission Line that Great River Energy is proposing along County Road 18 in Hubbard County. We live on County 18 just to the east of the bridge and on the north side of the road. This is our retirement home. After working hard in the underground construction business for 44 years, this is our last stand.

My husband is now 84 years old and I am 78. We want to spend our last years here and we don't want to look at, drive under and walk beside ugly poles and lines. Most of our retirement is wrapped up in this property. The proposed line will not only ruin the beauty of our property, but also place a significant easement on our land. Both of which will adversely affect our property value which, in turn, will directly affect our financial picture when considering assisted living or nursing home options later on. This has the potential of placing a significant financial burden upon us.

This line will ruin one of the most beautiful roads in the county. We drove all around the county last fall looking at the beautiful colors of the trees. When we turned west on 18 from County 4 we realized that the most beautiful stretch of road was from County 4 to our home. The proposed power line will rip many of those trees out and simply ruin the beauty of our neighborhood.

We are not the only ones who will be affected adversely. The proposed line will devastate our neighbor's property as well. While we do not want the line on our property, we also do not want this hardship to fall to any of our neighbors. Many stand to lose significant property value.

Many folks and children from the area fish off the bridge right at the edge of our property and County 18. Children float down the river from the lake on their rafts and tubes, go back to their cabins or the resort and soon down they go again. People fish the river and fish down at the dam. So many people enjoy the beauty of this spot.

Besides the local folks, the wildlife enjoy it as well. Trumpeter Swans, Eagles, Mallards, Wood Ducks, Loons and Canada Geese all fly up and down the river from Fish Hook Lake to Potato Lake. We can have as many as 35 Trumpeter Swans here at one time in the winter. The local DNR has made our property a stop at times to count the wildlife present here. The proposed lines could cause interference with the flight patterns of the wildlife bringing harm to them and reducing their presence here.

Last Sunday we drove North on County 4 to 270<sup>th</sup> Street. We drove 270<sup>th</sup> as far as we could go. It's almost wide open from Highway 4 to where we had to stop. I'm sure Great River can find a way from Highway 4 to Highway 71 by using 270<sup>th</sup> street or a road farther north. From the substation on highway 4, their proposed starting point, over to highway 71 they will have to go south, west, north, west and northwest to get to their ending point. They could take a northern route on 270<sup>th</sup> street with some zigzagging to get to Highway 71, then come south to their ending point. Highway 40 could also be a better option as it is much more open and most lake property is protected by trees and long drive ways down to the lake.

There are other options than the one being proposed with less adverse affect to the land, the environment, and the wildlife. In addition, the financial hardship to the landowners could be less as well.

Please, keep looking for a better way to go. I wonder how many would like to have this line in their front yard or, as in our case, over their drive way and front yard where their grandchildren play. Please consider another route.

Sincerely,

Muggs and Neva Schield  
[mlsbjs@q.com](mailto:mlsbjs@q.com)  
218-732-3356

cc. Rep. Brita Sailer

Jonathan and Kelly Schupp  
Northern Pines Lodge Family Resort  
14588 230<sup>th</sup> Street  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 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:

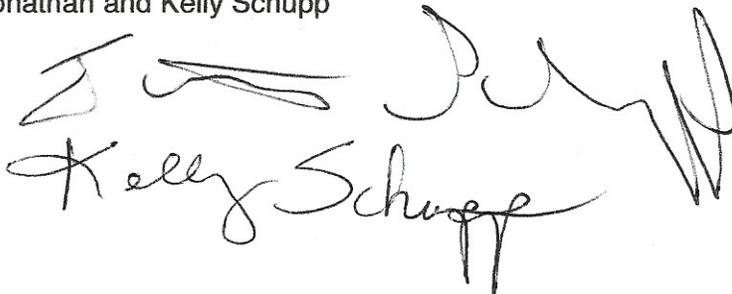
We own and operate Northern Pine Lodge on Potato Lake. Our resort is nestled among 140 acres of pine and birch trees at the end of a private road. This road would be impacted by construction if Great River Energy were to erect a 115 kV transmission line on their proposed or alternate routes. The affect would also impact our business, the people who work here, and the people who come to explore what we have to offer.

Our guests come to enjoy 2,000 feet of shoreline with a safe sandy beach for swimming. Activities were offer include tennis, shuffleboard, ping-pong, basketball, miniature golf, hiking trails, croquet, volleyball, badminton, bicycles, horseshoes, indoor/outdoor play for children, a recreational lodge, and library. We promote our scenic, private drive as a play to get out and jog.

We oppose action that would allow Great River Energy (GRE) to construct a transmission line on County18 and 230<sup>th</sup> Street. We ask the Office of Energy Security and Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to consider other options to mitigate impact to businesses such as ours along GRE's proposed route. People are asking about need and the possibility that lines could be buried as technologies progress. There is also a solution on a citizens' Northern Route that would be a way to mitigate concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jonathan and Kelly Schupp

Handwritten signatures of Jonathan and Kelly Schupp. The signature for Kelly Schupp is written in a cursive script and is positioned below the signature for Jonathan Schupp.

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

February 6, 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 am writing to let you know that we oppose Great River Energy's propose route for transmission lines on County 18 (Potato Lake) in Hubbard County. "Eminent domain" and "greater good" are fair and honorable words when getting products to consumers, but it appears large business seems to increasingly abuse this power and take advantage of property owners. (I understand that this topic will be coming up in this year's legislative session. Our neighborhood group has been asked to give input for what we are going through.)

Great River Energy proposes to run high-voltage transmission lines from CSAH 4 near Park Rapids to a new substation. This proposed route, if passed, will cause tremendous hardship for our family and neighbors. There are several unique situations on this route.

The intent of this letter is:

- 1) To ask Great River to find another route which has less impact on the many homes and people living along the proposed route. **County Road 40 is a clear option for them. It is a shorter route with fewer curves for them to have to make,** and there is more land space to buffer impact directly on homes, or
- 2) To ask that the proposed route be kept to the south side of County 18 and therefore impact as few homes as possible, or
- 3) To ask that Great River's alternative proposed line be used and continued. (See attachment.)
- 4) To ask that consideration be written into the permit for homes that are significantly impacted be treated with fairness and that extra measures be taken to have as little impact on their property as possible.

Ex. Efforts take to run route to the back of their property instead of their front lawns, fewer trees taken down to preserve property value, stagger poles so that they don't directly impact homes, or FAIR buyouts if that is their desire. This situation should NOT pit neighbor against neighbor.

An agency such as yours is the last hope for the common man and for others like us.

Please hear us. This is of great concern to my family and our neighborhood as well. Thank you in advance for giving us due process. There are several points to raise.

We built our home in 1992 once Hubbard County Zoning approved plans. We were not allowed take down one single tree within 1,000 feet of lakeshore or we would have been fined or jailed in extreme instances. So my question is this: Why can a company such as Great River come through and clear cut a corridor? I thought the Shoreland Ordinance (quite a restrictive one at that) would protect the property for which we are stewards. No? This shouldn't be allowed. Environmental damage should be limited if the proposed line were approved. It would be of great help to us if you could curb the damage that would be done to an already sensitive area. Please limit tree cutting if the proposed route is to come through. No swaths. No clear cuts.

By touching Potato Lake (and within the limits of Hubbard's Shoreland Ordinance), the proposed line would affect prime lakeshore properties on the north side of the road; thus turning lifetime investments into unsellable properties. Among them is our home. **We consider Great River to be our Bernie Madoff, only in this instance cloaked as big energy.** We would be devastated by this action, as would others. There is a resort, summer homes, cabins, and million dollar properties along the north side of this proposed route. Ours is modest compared others, but in this instance "progress" and "greater good" comes at our expense. Do you think Great River will give "fair market value" to property owners? If so, why do you think we've been told we'll need to get lawyers?

We stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. The impact will affect how we live in the future and the future of our children's lives as well. A percentage of "fair market value" will in no way begin to compensate us for our loss and future losses. Please keep the lines on the south side of the road if the proposed line were to come through.

Their easement request puts them in the middle of our garage and in our front lawn, about seven strides from our front door. The kids' treehouse? Toast, but that is the least of our worries. The EPA states the impact of EMF radiation to be inconclusive. Great River can't say that transmission lines are safe. Not conclusively, they can't. If that's the case, shouldn't we err on the side of caution? Can they really walk right over us? Most importantly (and I am speaking as a mom here) what about our children and families? Our children will be playing right under those lines. They tell us to stand back from our microwaves when in use, what about high-voltage lines? It's questionable. Studies are inconclusive in regard to health hazards. Animals live here, wildlife live here. Also, what about the health risk perception that would run through the minds of potential homebuyers? Who is even going to want to look at our place and those of our neighbors?

Great River won't consider running the lines underground. Too complex and cost-prohibitive, they say. I understand there are newer technologies. Perhaps they could be persuaded to invest in this technology. In the long run it could save them money and ease burdens for property owners. Plus, it's the right thing to do.

We know this is not Great River's only option, but probably the cheapest and most

convenient one for them. **County 40 practically gives them a straight shot from substation to substation.** They can do better than what they are proposing. They have the means. County 18 for now is the path of least resistance. They can rethink the route, but we need some help to get them to work on other options that don't impact lakes or quite as many homeowners.

We would like to fight this action based on the following principals:

- \*The property devaluation will NO WAY be compensated by Great River's "fair market value" percentage. Not now. Especially not now when the economy is struggling.
- \* The visual impact of the lines would be devastating to the lakes region. Great River says you prefer they construct their lines along road routes. I've seen many lines run through forests and swamps. If what they say is true, please consider this route an exception. Please route the lines on former lines with space already created and utilize back roads.
  - With lines of this height, please have them leave what trees they can. Otherwise everyone loses.
- \* Lake property valuations will be hardest hit by this move. It would be most economical for Great River to keep the lines south and give FAIR buyouts for the fewer homes on that side of the road.
  - Many homeowners will face hardship as a result of the energy company's action. Several homes may be unsellable; worthless or worth much less. Please have them utilize former line routes.
- \* The Shoreland Ordinance should protect properties located within 1,000 feet of lakeshore. But will it? Please choose to say yes.
- \* Physical impact is yet to be determined. The effects of EMFs are inconclusive according to the EPA. Effects on people, children, livestock, and wildlife may be harmful. Keep the lines away from homes. Please choose former line routes wherever possible.
- \* There is some suspicion as to the timing of this, when many lake property owners have headed south.

Please call or write any time if you have questions, thoughts, or ideas. Thank you for your time.



Liz Shaw  
Property owner  
218-732-9835 (H)

\*Attached you will find an additional alternative route to the one GRE proposes. This line uses a former line route in combination with back roads.

\* Attached you will find a sample of Great River Entergy's handiwork in Park Rapids. While I don't know the specifics as to how this homeowner was treated, this photo gives visual impact from a property owner's perspective. It's one thing to see it on paper, quite another to see the lines in reality. This is wrong.

Google maps

To see all the details that are visible on the screen, use the "Print" link next to the map.



— Portion of Proposed Project # 53884-TS  
Docket TL-10-86

— Alternative GRE route

--- We suggest GRE continue the  
alternate route using former line route  
and back roads.



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

April 19, 2010

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Strugelmeyer. 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  
121-7<sup>th</sup> 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

Elizabeth Shaw  
15410 County 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 2010

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

**DOCKET #TL-10-86**

Dear Mr. Ek:

I would like to thank the Office of Energy Security (OES) for allowing citizens a voice in regard to Great River Energy's (GRE) proposed transmission line and substation. It is beyond my scope of comprehension to learn most property owners, who have land compromised with the taking of easements and destruction of personal property, don't usually get this luxury. Utility companies can and do hold the power of eminent domain above the heads of many, and, in my opinion, have taken advantage of innocent people when wielding that power for the "greater good."

As a resident on County 18 and a would-be casualty if the line were to be approved as proposed, my thanks also extend to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) who gave us property owners an opportunity to do some scoping of our own in finding the best possible solution to resolve this matter for our region.

The easement GRE is requesting steps over our garage, paces away from our front door. Directly across from us, the easement swallows our neighbor's home and garage completely. He, too, knows how easily big energy can take one's dreams. Because he is quite ill and lost his wife in November, he hasn't been able to represent himself well. I am writing on behalf of him and others who share a unified voice. We want this line to do as little harm to human settlements, our cultural values, an integral tourism industry, threatened species, and the environment as possible while meeting the needs of Itasca-Mantrap (I-M) customers.

At the March 25 meeting with the PUC, several property owners put forth various route options in addition to what GRE proposed as a way to demonstrate a variety of choices to be looked at further. GRE had addressed County 40 in their application. There were thoughts of putting it south of County 18. Another viable solution, one the OES declared to be "reasonable," would run a linear path through a Northern Route on predominately state and county land. The PUC determined there were enough route options with merit to be studied further by local residents with first-hand knowledge of the cultural values and riches in this community.

That task was not taken lightly. People had a lot to say about route options when asked. Over time, some routes began to stand out with clear advantages. The focus of our neighborhood went beyond personal hardships (knowing full-well what it felt like to have a transmission line sent to your doorstep) to doing what was best for the overall scope of the project.

As it turns out a citizens' Northern Route eventually stood out as the optimum solution, one favored by community members and the County 18 group majority. The timing of this line was also weighed knowing technologies and advancements in burying lines should also be considered.

### **Why Counties 18 and 40 are not good options**

Many of the residents on County 18 saw the same negative issues to also be located on County 40. Once fully studied, County 40 made no more sense for a transmission line than County 18.

- Both impact Potato Lake, a premier 2,100-acre, recreational lake.
- Both have distribution lines already buried to create an aesthetically desirable north woods appeal. Having buried distribution lines is great for businesses, property values, housing developments, and overall tourism-industry appeal.
- Both are a part of a recreational lake chain system in the heart of vacationland. It is a prime source of tourism dollars, direct and indirect, to the region.
- Both have lake resorts or mom and pop industries that depend on year-long survival with operations drawing customers three to four months out of the year. Resorts struggle in today's economy. Boulder Beach Resort (Attachment A) and Northern Pines Lodge (Attachment B), located along GRE's route, work hard to make a living and provide employment to area residents. Northern Pines boasts 140 acres of forest and lakeshore, and the route proposed by GRE would directly devastate their livelihood and potential to draw guests. Guests from across the country come here and make it a family tradition to stay at area resorts annually. Because of the resort industry, more people are able to celebrate lake living without having to make major investments in properties. Guests are not likely to want to take their scenic morning walk under towering potential health hazards (EMFs). We can't take livelihoods away from local resort owners. Visitors shop, eat, and play at local establishments and take in special events, so we aren't just talking about two resorts. The impact would create a ripple effect.
- Both have residents with a vested interest in keeping Potato Lake alive. Lakeshore property owners work as stewards to maintain the lake's environmental health. Potato Lake is a delicate and rare state feature that needs protection from clearing, run-off, and hazardous chemicals that would be used to spray the undergrowth of transmission lines.
- Both rely on a tree buffer as a shelter to homes and to mitigate road traffic, noise, and disturbance.
- Both have extreme curves and turns that would take more room for necessary guide wires and extra towers.

- Both have premium lakefront properties that would be significantly impacted by the taking of easements and trees. Waterfront property values account for about 60 percent of the total property value of Hubbard County. When combined, 80 percent of the total property value of Arago, Crow Wing Lake, Lake Emma, Lakeport, Mantrap, and Nevis Townships is waterfront. Lake Emma Township waterfront property values alone exceed the total combined value of all cities in Hubbard including Park Rapids, Nevis, Akeley, and LaPorte. (In our case, our property was an investment for our retirement. The line would turn our property into a non-conforming lot, rendering it impotent for further development within Hubbard County's Shoreland Ordinance guidelines. We already have a 100-foot setback from the lake. GRE's easement eats up the portion of our property from the road and over our garage. That only leaves us with our home, the steps, and short walkway in which we can make home improvements. A transmission line would be a tremendous de-value to our investment.)
- Both have major rivers and a sizeable recreational-lake chain that would be impacted. We only get one shot at protecting these four gems. This is no place for transmission lines. Eagle, Island, Potato, and Blue lakes would all be located in the path of this line. This makes no sense in an area that draws on a pristine north woods and lake country appeal as a draw to vacationers. This line would drive a stake through the heart of lake country.
- Both would connect to the proposed substation that would force the transmission lines to run on Highway 71. Highway 71 is the gateway to Itasca State Park and the Mississippi Headwaters. It is a sterling tourism destination location since the Mississippi River is one of the five major rivers of the world. It is a world-class attraction drawing visitors to the region throughout the year. On this path are businesses (shops), a campground/RV site, mini amusement park, golf course, cross-country ski trail, private airport, restaurant, and more. There is a group lobbying to continue the Heartland Trail, a recreational (bike) trail, north on 71 to Itasca State Park. The Highway 71 corridor also impacts the major lakes chain including Eagle and Island. Why this is so critical to point out is that GRE's field representative spoke to a group of property owners following the March 25 hearing with the PUC. At that time we learned this route is part of a larger picture. That, in fact, GRE plans to continue their "loop" to Pine Point in Becker County. Apparently this proposed route is one big project, but diced into increments of less than 10 miles thereby avoiding having to meet Certificate of Need requirements. I don't think anyone who is capable of connecting dots could say this was a small project. In any event, knowing what GRE did to the entrance of Park Rapids on Highway 34 east in 2009 (Attachment C), there is almost no one I have talked with who thinks this line should go on Highway 71. It would be best for all if lines on 71 could be mitigated as much as possible on this route at every possible instance.

## **More reasons why County 18 is not a good option**

County 18 has additional reasons why it would be one of the least viable options for a transmission line.

- Threatened Species (state and federal) live, fly, and hunt in Potato River and dam site. (Attachments D & E) Yes, the trumpeter swans, bald and golden eagles are also beautiful creatures that we cherish. Onlookers come to photograph wildlife at the river because there is such an abundance of waterfowl here, and the river becomes such a hotbed of activity especially during the winter months when ice covers Potato Lake. You will find other areas in the county with eagles and trumpeters, but I doubt you will find an area with such a hub of activity. Potato River can have dozens of trumpeters at one time. This is another reason it is such a feeding ground for the eagles. The number one recommendation from the Minnesota DNR states that as a way to protect these birds, “avoidance” such as an alternate route or underground lines be used to mitigate harm to them. These threatened species have incredible wing spans that make navigating between lines difficult and result in electrocution. Other mitigation measures such as putting up deflectors, they say, “only serve to minimize impacts and will not be 100 percent effective.” We must do better than that.
  - Potato Lake, Potato River, and the Potato River dam are dynamic and rare feature here. It is unlike any other location in Hubbard County. It is an active hunting ground for eagle species feeding on waterfowl and small game. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act say it is illegal to “take” or bald eagles and further defines “taking as... wound, kill or disturb.” An alternate route would be a solution at this rich site. Yes, there are eagles and swans in other areas of the county, but not this many and not to this degree.
  - Other unique and threatened species on the County 18 proposed route are the heelsplitter mussels, Blanding turtles and colonial ducks.
- “Pinchpoint.” This is a phrase coined by GRE to describe difficult or awkward junctures at which no one wins. We, and our neighbor across the road, live at such a location. (Attachment F) Our neighbor’s home is located 92 feet from the road’s center line. Part of our garage is also within 150 feet. From the scoping we could see, this happens at a couple of locations. Yes, other alternative routes have homes within 100 feet of the center line, but they have room on the opposite of the road to make accommodate an alternative line placement. On County 18, “pinchpoints” are created at several locations. GRE show little attempt to work with property owners in these instances. They told us they take direction from the state. I certainly hope that’s true, but am not convinced.
- Rapid River Logging Camp Restaurant and shop (Attachment G) is located in one of those “pinchpoints” mentioned earlier. In existence for at least 55 years, this restaurant is a destination must-stop. A home hugs the road on the opposite side of the road. It appears GRE would be forced to clearcut the main entrance to this unique attraction that features hungry-man meals in the style

of our logging past. This place has historical, educational value for the generations of people who have eaten there.

- Developers and investors on County 18 will take a substantial hit to say the least if the proposed line were approved. Their developments are located across from a home in a “pinchpoint” situation (Attachment H). Take out the woods and their investment becomes less desirable.
- Because of all of the difficult locations along County 18, the lines will be forced to zigzag and further create a visual mess in a highly visual sensitive area.

### **Substation location**

I continue to struggle with GRE’s proposed location of the substation. Actually, from our conversation with GRE, come to find out it wasn’t their preferred location either. I-M developed, leveled, and seeded the proposed site. (Attachment I) It seems as though an assumption had been made in regard to this project as being a “done deal.” As far as I know the PUC hasn’t permitted the substation project yet.

When looking at a map (Attachment J), the Mantrap substation is located to the east with the proposed Potato Lake substation located to the west. Quite obviously there’s a 2,100-acre lake smack dab between the two. An obvious body of water sits in the way of the substation sites. Why not eliminate the pain of going around all of those lakes, tender watersheds, and premium property value, and avoid them entirely? It makes sense that in finding an alternate route, the substation location should be moved in tangent with a new, alternate route.

Why not go around these land features as best as possible? Why not avoid high-traffic businesses and prime-dollar real estate on Counties 18 and 40? Why not mitigate a route on Highway 71 as much as possible and protect the diverse habitat for high numbers of threatened species on Potato River?

Further, this line won’t simply run from Highway 71 to CSAH 4 as presented by GRE. A transmission line is not an island. Once GRE is through with all of their plans, they will likely have connected the Long Lake Line to the Mantrap Substation. This proposed line on County 18, in fact, is not a small project as GRE would have anyone think. It is a part of bigger picture to complete a loop and line system to Pine Point. To be sure, they would be heading north on Highway 71 if the proposed route is approved.

Many residents saw the lack of regard for our cultural values in a highly visual sensitive area when GRE constructed the Long Lake Line in 2009 past the Lake Country Scenic Byway sign (Attachment C). The aftermath grew negative attention from residents and business owners. To use the words of MNDot’s Mark Anderson, Scenic Byways Coordinator, Transportation Enhancements Coordinator: “The Scenic Byways Program is a recognition program that identifies exceptional highway routes throughout the state that showcase scenic natural recreational, archaeological, historic or cultural intrinsic qualities.” Yet, the Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce executive director and chair of the Lake Country Scenic Byway organization wasn’t contacted when the line came

through Highway 34. She was displeased, but didn't make it an issue at the time because the trees had already been cut.

Why this subject is mentioned here, is because we don't want the same thing to happen on visually-sensitive roads as such as Highway 71 and Counties 18 and 40. In 2009, the work done by GRE's contractors demonstrated a lack of sensitivity.

In summary, to locate the substation further north, in line with expansion west to Pine Point, or at least in that vicinity, would solve all of the above problems. A citizens' Northern Route would be a solution to mitigate all of the above concerns and still meet the desires for reliable electrical service for I-M customers. The Northern Route would run from Highway 71 east to 280<sup>th</sup> Street on a straight path for eight miles. A luxury on this route is that it covers mostly state and county land for five miles. (Attachment J) . This route is located on the southern border of Clay and Clover Townships. From the vantage point of an aerial map, it is almost all compromised of undeveloped land.

### **Citizens' Northern Route (1 & 2)**

The Northern Route runs from Highway 71 east to County 4 connects with 280<sup>th</sup> Street. It morphed from one thought into two during the Advisory Task Force (ATF) meetings for reasons that will be explained.

**1) Northern Route 1** (Attachment J) is the solution referred to above. It is eight miles long. Ideally, the substation would be located one-half mile east of Highway 71 on public land. This route is preferred because it:

- Would tuck the substation away from the Highway 71 viewshed and protect the integrity of the Park Rapids region as the gateway to the Mississippi Headwaters for visitors driving from the south. Since a line on Highway 71 would also have to carry a distribution line, the poles would need to be designed closer together and on higher towers which would greatly stand out in the setting that is already there.
- Is still less than 10 miles in length so GRE would not have to secure a Certificate of Need.
- Would be located on state (1 mile) and county (4 miles) land, impacting as few property owners as possible.
- Impacts NO major lakes or major recreational lakes.
- Impacts NO major river formations.
- Crosses private property that is mostly undeveloped.
- Is in the vicinity of an existing pipeline. If these two utility companies would like to share easements, then that would spare property owners and users of Highway 71 as well. At the ATF meeting the point of whether or not that would happen was debated. Still an unknown at this time.
- Would impact fewer threatened species than the County 18 route, just because of the numbers of waterfowl in Potato River at the dam site.
- Would cost GRE less than the prime lakeshore properties located on Counties 18 and 40 and on Highway 71.

- Would avoid major businesses, attractions, shops, lake resorts, a golf course, campground, private airstrip and more.
- Would open snowmobile and ATV trails for multi-purpose use. I guess I see that as a good thing. There are some exiting snowmobile trails in that vicinity. It could connect users to other trails.
- Would create a natural firebreak as a safety precaution.
- It would run in a straight line for efficiency in pole placement.

As per which side of the township line this line would run, the ATF asked that public land be used. As per properties, the ATF indicated they would like whichever side impacts as few private owners in a negative way as possible.

I believe this proposed route is the most ideal for this GRE project. The one unknown at this time is the voltage of the present distribution line on CSAH 4. If it is a 34.5kV line, then GRE's line need go no further at this time, just as they proposed to do from the proposed Potato Lake substation to CSAH 4. It's important to remember that at this time GRE would not be connecting substation to substation on their proposed route anyway. They are saving that project for later. At the ATF meeting May 18, GRE's representative didn't know the voltage of the line on CSAH 4 north of the Mantrap substation, so this question has not been answered.

*On a side note: I have to re-state that this really is a two-phase project. The lines GRE proposes to erect are built for 115kV of power, but they will only be used as 34.5 kV to help Itasca-Mantrap with their "reliability" service in the short term. Here is where everyone tends to get on edge with the entire project. GRE's long-range plans are to boost the system to 115 kV in the future. Just when that future will happen is an unknown at this time. Using the figures GRE put in their original application, that need was five to 10 years in the future. They are still using those numbers in their presentations.*

*However, on March 25 the PUC granted a request to include 2009 usage in their Yearly Adjusted Net Demand/Capability Chart that altered the projections significantly. Like everywhere else, the economy here took a downward turn and building and new construction has slowed. Only one new home was built in Park Rapids last year. There were 14 built the previous year and as many as 35 the year before that. Building permits issued by Hubbard County Environmental Services office last year were at their lowest since 2002 (I didn't investigate beyond 2002). This is my opinion, but I anticipate the new building projects to level off for some time to come.*

*Given the new figures and when speaking to a GRE engineer, she clearly stated that they may not plan to boost power to 115kV for another THIRTY TO FOURTY YEARS. I asked her again to make sure I heard correctly. This is why so many people are asking, "Why now?" Why build these enormous and, quite frankly, ugly towers that will be obsolete in the near future? Why do this to us property owners and businesses? It will be on our backs that these lines are built. Everyone knows we will not be compensated adequately for the disturbance to our homes. New technologies to bury lines will be available. Europe and parts of Asia have already made strides to bury 500 kV lines, 230 kV lines*

*are even more predominant. The Coalition for an Underground Alternative says that in San Diego “all new projects will be underground, and by the year 2020, all existing overhead lines will be buried.” This is only a 115 kV line. I believe it is time to expect more from utility companies.*

I would propose that if the line on CSAH 4 were not 34.5 kV that at this time that:

1) 34.5 kV lines be put in on the existing distribution lines and hold off building outdated transmission towers until new technologies to bury lines becomes available, or

2) GRE completes the transmission line when they do decide to connect the Long Lake line to the Mantrap substation. **When they put in that line, it would run from Highway 34 to 280<sup>th</sup> Street and still meet the under 10-mile mark. This would allow private property owners on CSAH 4 to have some public input in this process. They should at least be allowed that much.**

**2) Northern Route 2** would extend from Highway 71 to CSAH 4 and run south on CSAH 4 to the Mantrap substation. The route exceeds the 10 miles GRE would prefer because they would have to show need.

I have heard many say that is not a bad thing. Residents want them to have to show need. I could go either way and look to the PUC for guidance. I have seen numbers that GRE has come up with and question their transparency and ability to be forthright. I have seen what they can do with numbers to get them to work for them.

The route would be approximately 12.3 miles long, according to my calculations. GRE projected the route would be 13.2 miles. It could stop at the Mantrap substation and not continue on as shown in the ATV route. (For some reason there is an extra little tail there.)

This route would mitigate the problems that occur on Counties 18 and 40 and Highway 71, and would be preferred for the following reasons:

- It would force GRE to get a certificate of need and demonstrate as such to the private properties they would encounter.
- It impacts one recreational lake. (Blue Lake on the eastern edge).
- It impacts NO major river crossing. There are a few small river features, however.
- There is already an existing corridor in place. In the 1990s, CSAH 4 underwent road improvements, and federal dollars were used at that time. With the federal monies came safety mandates to be put in place. They included easements/clearing and taking out major curves in the road. As a result, CSAH went from a visually pleasing drive to one of efficiency and safety for motorists. The charm was lost. In any case, the route already has distribution lines in place and is set up to handle the utility upgrade; both physically and visually.

- Distribution lines are already in place. On Counties 18 and 40 they are not. If GRE could work with what is there, all that would need to be done is replacing the poles. Perhaps this could be included in the permit and GRE would not have to push their lines back into private properties.
- There are three homes within 100 feet from the center line compared with two both on Counties 18 and 40. The point I would like to make is that they don't appear to be at "pinchpoint" locations as on County 18. If one home were to be impacted, the line could cross the road to mitigate hardship.
- It would have fewer homes within 500 feet of the center line.
- Five fewer acres of wetlands would be impacted.
- The east tip of Pickerel Lake would be impacted, but because of past construction on CSAH 4 in the 1990s, there is clearing on the opposing side and work was done at that time build up that land. Pickerel Lake is not a recreational lake that I am aware.
- No lake resorts would be impacted.
- CSAH 4 doesn't have the business presence and tourism interests one finds on Highway 71.
- Would cost GRE less than the prime lakeshore properties located on Counties 18 and 40 and on Highway 71.
- Given the fact that this extended line is 12.3 miles, it is actually not impacting private property owners for five miles that belongs to the state and county. That leaves 7.3 miles. Of that, 7.3 miles, much of it is undeveloped land and would not impact homes, garages, businesses and children playing. Then, when looking at the larger picture, the Northern Route is better situated for expansion to the west and sparing another 3 miles of businesses and homes from future transmission line burden when connecting to the "loop." The Northern Route actually impacts fewer people and businesses in the scope of the larger picture when GRE plans its expansion.

I believe the Northern Route option 1 or 2 to be the best solution overall.

### **Worst-case scenario, if County 18 route approved Requests to be written into permit**

In the event the PUC decides to grant GRE a permit to build a substation at the Potato Lake Substation site and run transmission lines along County 18, I have a few requests I would hope the commission takes into consideration.

GRE has indicated they would only need 100 feet in which to build their lines along County 18. I am asking commission members to restrict that route width to the least amount that could be taken and still be safe. I would go so far as to request 70 to 100 feet only be allowed.

On Memorial Weekend, several of us traveled up GRE's transmission line from Osage to the Pine Point substation. I have to say I thought this line was far more discreet than the workmanship that went into constructing the line on Highway 34. It was tastefully done with obvious consideration built in regard to the farm fields and personal property. At

some points, the poles were placed only 35 from the center of the road. I would request that lines similarly be placed within a 35-foot right of way or as close as possible especially in the “pinchpoint” segments. We property owners would prefer to have that in writing, if we may ask that of the PUC. We have heard stories from property owners on the Long Lake route in 2009. More was taken than was promised.

Our neighbor, Gordon Ruhnke and we live at the worst possible “pinchpoint” on the route. He is quite ill and lost his wife in November. We have spoken with him and asked for his input. He is not in favor of the route and does not want the line to run over his home. Further, he doesn’t want to see the red pines he and his late wife planted 50 years ago to be disturbed. That is his request, and my husband and I will honor his requests. That, of course, would mean the line would run to our property. If that is to occur, we would ask that special wording be written into the permit. **Would it be possible for the transmission tower to be placed as close to the road as possible? Would 35-feet be doable?** In a meeting with GRE’s field representative and engineer, we understood the pole would be placed on the Shield/Shaw property line. Our garage is within 150 feet of the center line.

Since we are not pushing the line on our unfortunate neighbor, we are asking for the best possible solution to this matter. Please have GRE place the line as close to the center line as possible at our location. This is quite a difficult “pinchpoint” location. (Arago: Section 36, SE/Todd: Sec. 1, N) (Attachment F)

**GRE also said tower placements would be kept at 400-foot increments since distribution lines are already buried. Could that be written into the permit as well?** The lines from Osage to the Pine Point substation looked to be about 400 feet.

**As for transmission pole height, could this also be kept to a minimum size such as on the Osage/Pine Point line?** Again, could this also be written into the permit? I believe the GRE engineer said they don’t have to be as tall when they aren’t carrying the distribution line. She was always straightforward and candid with us. We understood the poles on County 18 could be in the range of 60 feet or so. We would take whatever recommendation you would have that would still be considered safe. We are further requesting that the clearing be limited and reasonable by the OES.

As I said, we would request these issues be written into the permit ONLY if County 18 were chosen as a preferred route. Hopefully, I have given you insight to our cultural values and environmental concerns that will help you to see that there are solutions elsewhere.

You do not have an easy task in front of you, but I thank you for taking the time to minimize destruction to our homes, businesses, and the lakes area that is so dear to our hearts, and giving us the opportunity to be heard.

I hope you and your families are able to come to Park Rapids and enjoy what this region has to share.

Thank you again for your time and talents.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Shaw  
Property Owner  
Advisory Task Force member

Attachment A



Boulder Beach Resort- County 18

Attachment B



Northern Pines Lodge Family Resort – The road into this resort would be wiped out by transmission lines and the resort experience diminished for guests. This is located on GRE’s pink alternate route as it runs north of County 18.

## Attachment C

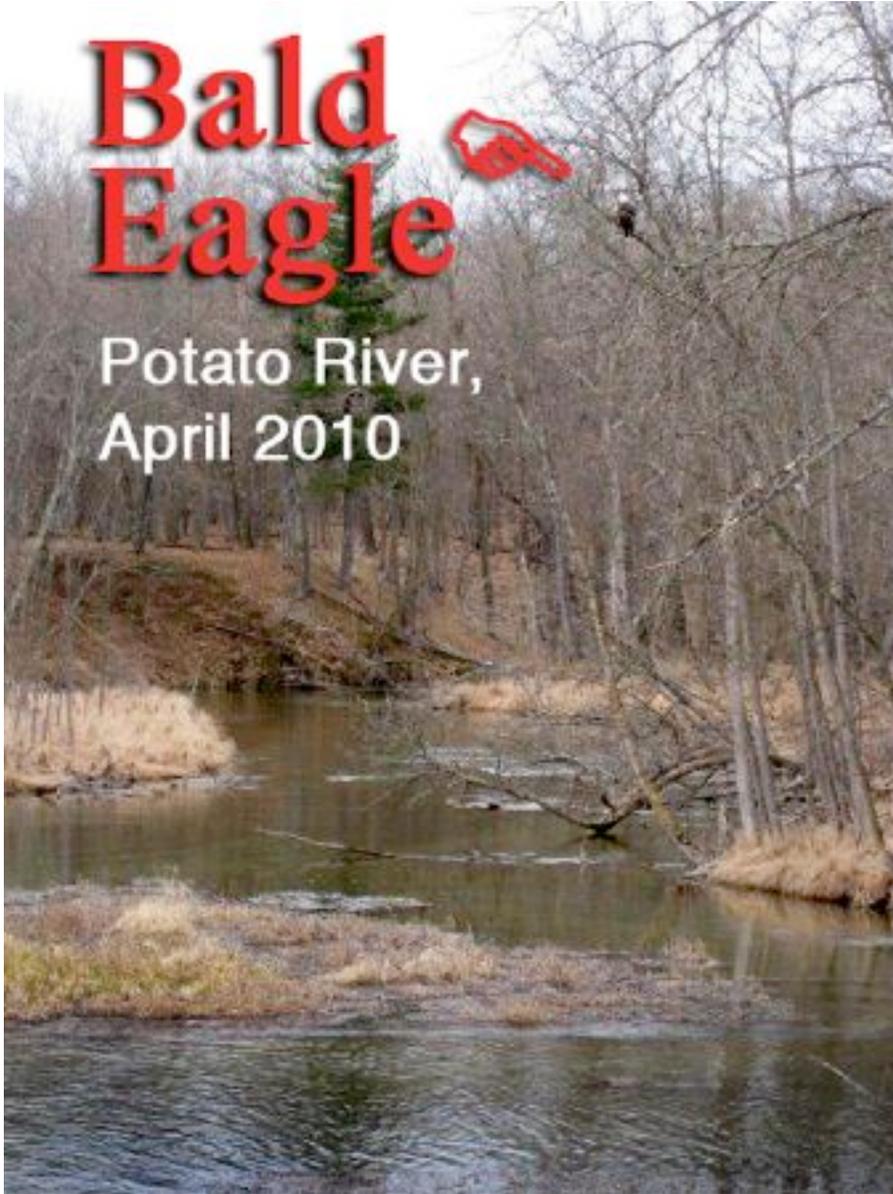


Great River Energy set a precedent when they constructed their “Long Lake” transmission line in 2009. Park Rapids’ welcome and Lake Country Scenic Byway sign, once nestled in a red pine stand, was stripped of its warmth with a clearcut, and a transmission tower was placed in its very vicinity. Park Rapids’ Chamber President and Lake Country Scenic Byway chair had not been notified. Residents and business owners were unhappy with the manner in which this was handled. Other stories such as this played out along the 2009 route, leaving a sense of distrust for Great River Energy’s sensitivities to our cultural and environmental values. A field of Showy Ladyslippers was wiped out. Some homeowners were unhappy with their treatments. One property owner in 2009 discovered more trees were cleared than were promised. Another drove past her drive because she didn’t recognize her own home. A possible lack of transparency in regard to the proposed Potato Lake line and substation made many question the trust issue.

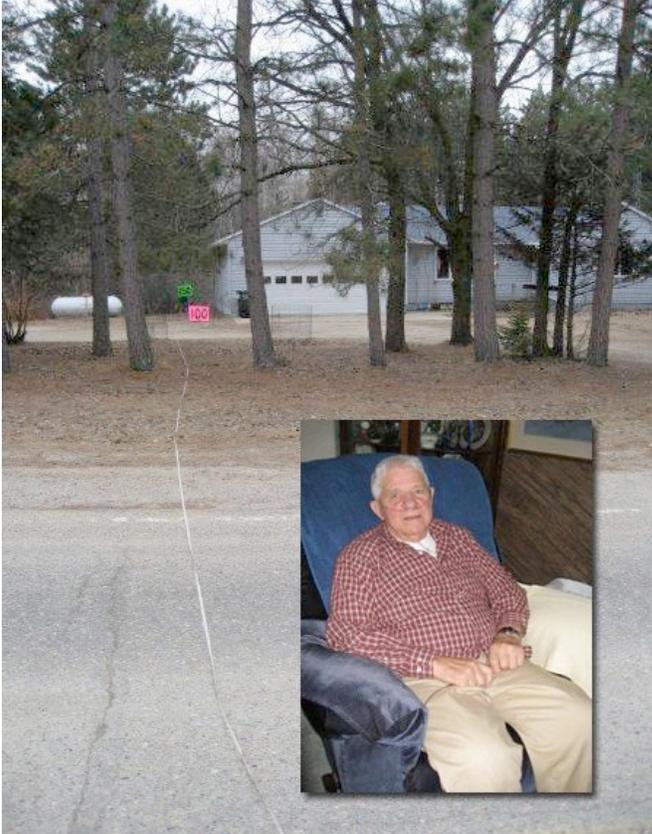
Attachment D



Attachment E



Attachment F – Gordon Ruhnke residence (Arago, Section 36, SE & Todd, Section 1, NE)



Shaw residence



Attachment G (Todd, Section 1, N & Arago, Section 36, S)



Attachment H & I – Another pinchpoint between home within 150 feet of center line and Logging Camp Restaurant which would lose its buffered entrance to a one-of-a-kind destination attraction for residents, summer residents and vacationers.

Siltalas residence



Attachment H (Arago, Section 36, S & Todd, Section 1, N)



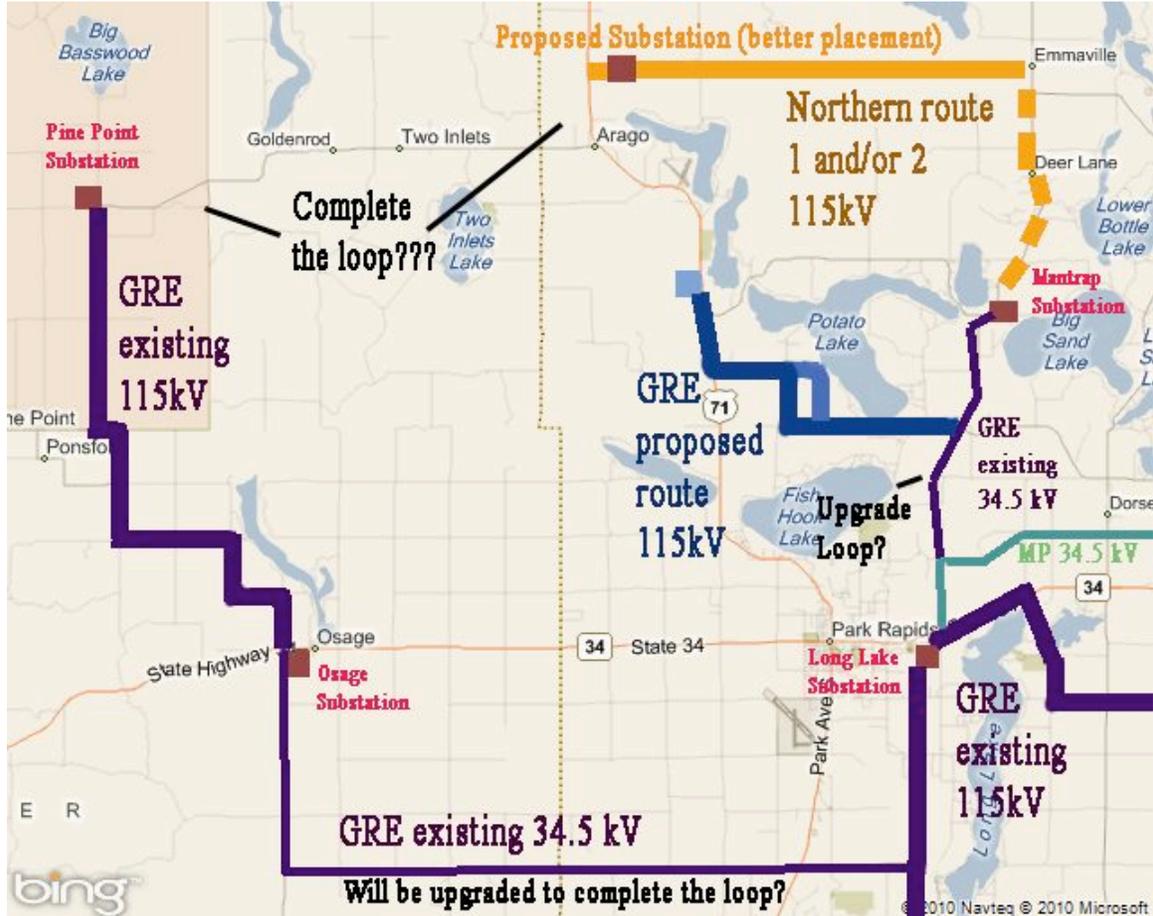
Pinchpoint – Home within 100 feet across from home development on river lot for sale.  
Rothermel

## Attachment I



The proposed site for the Potato Lake Substation has already been developed, leveled and seeded. Yet, as I understand, the substation is a part of Great River Energy's route application. Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative Services put out a newsletter to customers the weekend prior to the first Minnesota Public Utilities-appointed task force meeting on May 4. The newsletter featured the route and substation location. The word "proposed" was never used to explain their efforts to upgrade their system. This has created a lot of confusion for those directly and indirectly involved in our own scoping efforts.

Attachment J



Following the March 25 meeting with the Public Utilities Commission, a GRE representative informally stated to Sandy Struggelmeyer, Tay Odor, Gary and Liz Shaw GRE’s intention to complete “the loop” as they make upgrades for customers in Itasca-Mantrap’s service area. As we were trying to understand Great River’s intentions, this is where we heard the “115kV loop development” proposal. “Looping” is also noted in GRE’s application (Page 2-3). At this time we first understood the “loop” to be to Pine Point. GRE has at time backed away from the “Point Point loop” concept, but it was something we took to heart when studying the issue for the people in our service region. We wanted to understand what concerns were being looked at to help us in our scoping and finding a solution that works for the sensitivities in our region and at the same time making sure energy customers’ needs are being met, To build the Potato Lake line as proposed as presented makes it a 115 kV island in a sea of distribution and 34.5 kV lines. GRE is working in their under 10 mile limits so as avoid documentation requirements. Looking at a map makes it more obvious to what is being done. When you pull back and see the larger picture, locating the substation further north makes more sense. There is a great big lake and premium property standing between the Mantrap Substation and the proposed Potato Lake substation. A substation in line with the Northern route makes the most sense when all factors are weighed in this case. There will be a 115 kV line connecting the Long Lake Substation to Mantrap’s. They will be heading up CSAH 4 in any event. Why not keep the line off of such an obvious tourism industry route (Highway 71) as much as possible and protect about a dozen businesses and tourism interests on the yellow brick road, so to speak, to Itasca State Park.

Gary Shaw  
15410 County 18  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

May 31, 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 kind of get the feeling that when Great River Energy (GRE) submitted their application fee for a transmission route and substation permit, they might have thought they were buying one.

The reason I think that is because here in Park Rapids, the “proposed” substation site had already been staked and developed. It was a though the cart were placed before the horse. That Saturday before the first Advisory Task Force meeting, we got a newsletter from Itasca-Mantrap (I-M) announcing the upgrade and explaining how GRE was going to permit, route and build this line and where it was going to be placed.

Apparently assumptions were made. “It’s a done deal,” we heard time after time. These statements have proven to be intimidating and misleading and created plenty of confusion for property owners along the proposed route. I-M purchased and develop the site in preparation of the substation even though a permit has not been issued. Purchasing could be seen as wise on their part, yet to develop it to such an extent could be misconstrued as something entirely different.

Why this has become an issue, when a citizens’ Northern Route started to become an option after the March 25 hearing with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, it made only good sense to locate the substation approximately three or more miles north and in good proximity of GRE future plans to head west to the Pine Point Substation located west of Two Inlets.

The Northern Route comes with two options, and links the Highway 71 34.5 kV distribution line with the line near 280<sup>th</sup> Street near CSAH 4. This is a favorable route made up of five miles of county and state land. It is largely undeveloped and could also be utilized as a site for a substation. This gets both the line and substation out of eye’s view and protect homes and businesses along Highway 71, and Counties 18 and 40. It would protect a major lake chain from impact and mitigate danger to a hotbed of threatened species in Potato River.

Also, the proposed line would run a 115 kV line (for use as a 34.5 kV line) from the proposed Potato Lake substation to a tap point located on the CSAH 4 existing 34.5 kV

line. This tapping doesn't improve reliability; rather it reduces current voltage for users on the Mantrap substation. Tapping into lines doesn't strengthen service for anyone: rather, it weakens reliability for customers beyond the tap point.

GRE showed a level of disrespect to the people of this area when they put in their 2009 line along Highway 34 as you enter Park Rapids. We don't want more damage done to the beauty of Counties 18 and 40 where distribution lines are already buried. Further, Highway 71 is a vital artery to the tourism industry as the gateway to Itasca State Park.

For these reasons I would propose the line run on the Northern Route as the PUC deems fit. It could run only from Highway 71 to Emmaville at this time. If the PUC sees the line needing to continue to the Mantrap substation, then let GRE get a certificate of need. Of course, another solution would be to have GRE put that line in when they are ready to complete a line from the Long Lake substation to Mantrap. The line could be extended to under 10 miles at that time and private property owners on CSAH 4 would have a chance to be heard. It's only fair.

Another option, as a unified voice is calling to let new technologies in burying the lines. It is time to press utility companies into stop their practice of "business as usual." They should be driven to do better as an act of good will to do what's best for the state of Minnesota. They have enough talent with their engineering staff to come up with innovative just as they are doing in other parts of the country. I understand a 115 kV is small compared to the 500 kV lines that are going underground in Tokyo, Denmark and other sites. Even 230 kV-lines being buried is becoming a new standard. I'm not saying it would be easy to transition to a new standard of thinking, but I'm sure they have the brainpower to get it done if urged to do so.

It's interesting to note in Michael Monsrud's CEO Report to I-M customers this month:

*"The slow economy and reduction I use of electricity due to energy conservation leaves Great River Energy with excess electricity. The record low market price for electricity combined with the higher prices paid by Great River Energy for wind power through binding contract, is causing our wholesale cost of power to increase."*

So where is the need? Can someone explain to me why we are being asked to carry the burden for I-M and GRE? The economy slowed in the Park Rapids region as well. New construction is down. One new home was built in Park Rapids last year. County building permits were down last year.

If there needs to be a line, put that line and substation along the Northern Route.

If there is no other way to construct a line other than put one on County 18, I would kindly ask the PUC to put some mandate in writing into the permit, but please understand we are only requesting this if there is no better solution available:

1) Keep the poles on County 18 at 400-foot increments where possible. A GRE engineer told us that is what is likely to happen on 18 since the lines wouldn't have to carry distribution lines. We would like that in writing.

2) We also understand pole height won't have to be as tall since there is no distributions lines to carry. We would request the poles be at minimum height and still be in safety guidelines: 60 or 65 feet would be better than 70 or 80 feet.

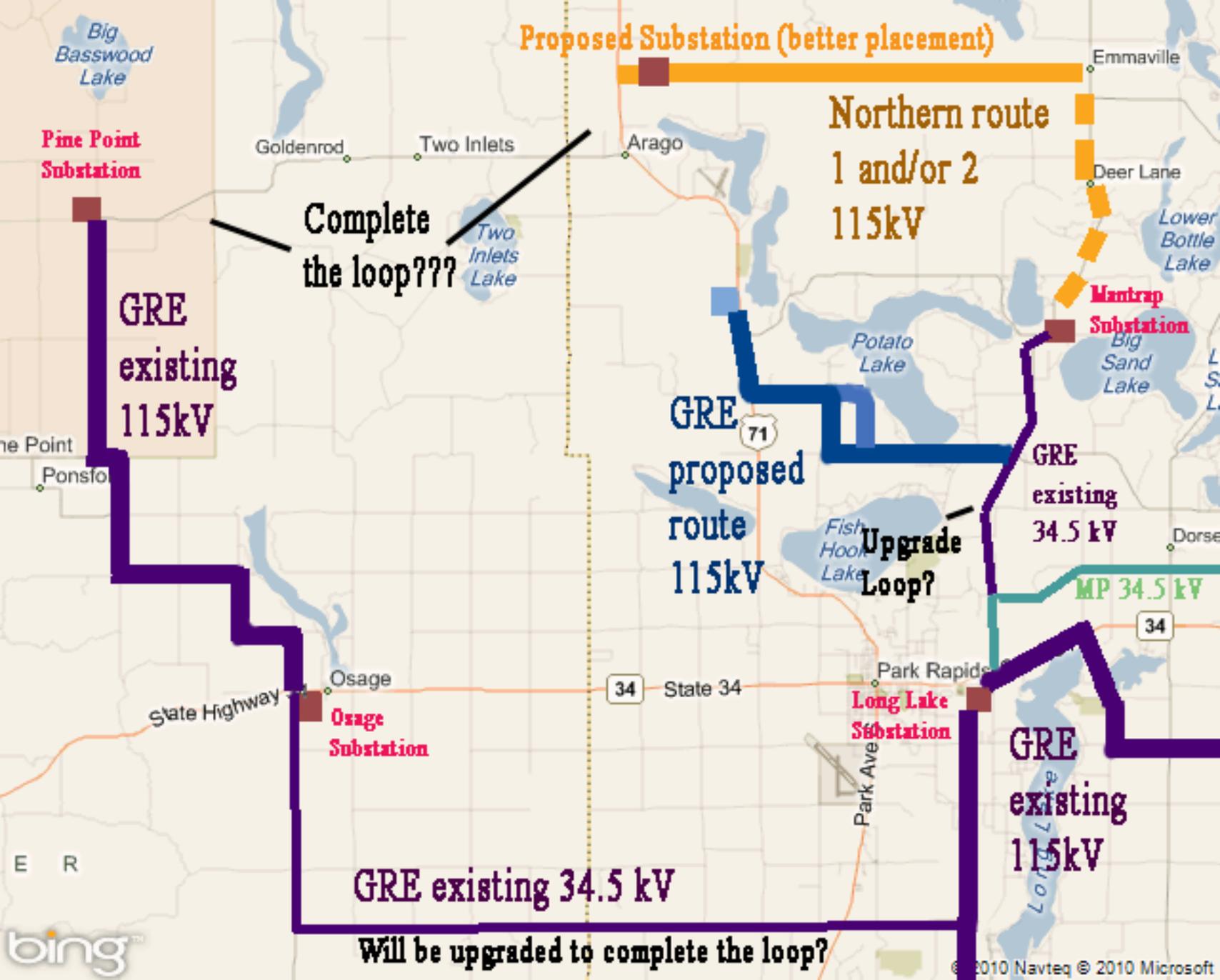
3) Limit clearcut to only what is necessary. This would have to be written into the permit based on past practices by GRE's line in 2009.

4) To place lines a minimum distance from the center line, especially at difficult locations along the route. GRE is asking for 50 feet. Could it be closer to 40 or 35 feet. On Sunday we measured a pole they have on the line that stretches from the Osage substation to the Pine Point substation. It was only 35 feet from the road and nicely spared a farmer from having it placed on his farmland. Also, keep easement requests of GRE to the bare minimum.

5) Place poles located in "poinchpoint" sites at 35 feet from the center line and put it in writing in the permit if this is possible. One example would be on County 18 at our home. Our neighbor across the road is 92-feet from the center line. Our garage is within 150 feet of the center line. We understand that we and the Schields next door may have to put a pole at our property line if the proposed route would be located on County 18. Please spare us anything you could give if this were to be the case. It's a tight spot.

Thank you for the job you are doing. Thank you for hearing our concerns.

Gary Shaw  
County 18 property owner



Proposed Substation (better placement)

Pine Point Substation

Complete the loop???

Northern route  
1 and/or 2  
115kV

Mantrap Substation

GRE proposed route  
115kV

Upgrade Loop?

GRE existing  
34.5 kV

MP 34.5 kV

Osage Substation

Long Lake Substation

GRE existing  
115kV

GRE existing 34.5 kV

Will be upgraded to complete the loop?