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PUBLIC COMMENTS - PARK RAPIDS - 6:30 - MAY 18, 2010

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the
Potato Lake 115 kV Transmission Line and Substation in
Park Rapids, Minnesota
PUC Docket Number: ET-2/TL-10-86

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

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1 MR. EK: Just come up to the mic. I have
2 the sheets and I'll just go down the sheets. Once
3 we're done with the folks that signed up to speak,
4 I'll go to a show of hands for those who still have
5 questions. And unfortunately, we're going to have
6 to share this one mic. We're having problems with
7 our PA system. I apologize.

8 Let's see, the first people, Del and
9 Alice Holz; is that correct?

10 MS. HOLZ: That's correct. I think we
11 might want to hold off until maybe more questions --
12 or more information is given out.

13 MR. EK: Okay.

14 MS. HOLZ: So go to the next one.

15 MR. EK: Let's see, Ron and Renee Ahmann.

16 MR. AHMANN: Would you like me to come
17 forward?

18 MR. EK: Yes, sir, if you would come up
19 to the mic, please.

20 MR. AHMANN: I'm Ron Ahmann, and I have
21 property on County 18 and along the county road that
22 extends northward as well.

23 I have concern, of course, for what will
24 happen to the property value as this high voltage
25 line is crossing my property. But I even have a

1 greater concern for all those people who have homes
2 that are very close to County 18, either their front
3 or back yard is extremely close to the road, and
4 this power line is going to either bisect that
5 property or possibly go almost over the roof of it.

6 And I have a great concern for not only
7 the property value loss, which is going to be a
8 detriment forever, but also for the health concerns
9 of the events that happen with high voltage going
10 through the wire.

11 My understanding is, of course, there's
12 an energy loss, and I believe that includes
13 electromagnetic energy. So if people are living in
14 those homes and using those yards, I'm concerned
15 about the health of those people.

16 High voltage electricity creates ozone,
17 and we are all aware that ozone is not healthy for
18 breathing any length of time. So although I did not
19 know that the state of Minnesota preferred using
20 right-of-ways, I can understand your choice. But I
21 guess I would really push for an alternate route
22 that would go through undeveloped property, and
23 that's one of my major concerns here.

24 And I guess the last comment I'd like to
25 make is Itasca-Mantrap is a co-op, and so we are

1 members of that co-op. We have property along this
2 route, and so I'm quite sure Itasca-Mantrap -- I
3 can't speak for them, but I would assume that they
4 would prefer whatever route is most popular with
5 their customers.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. EK: Thank you. Thank you.

8 And just, actually, the items you brought
9 up, the corona, which is the effect that creates the
10 ozone from the wires is very minute,
11 indistinguishable, and well, well below the limits.
12 We've studied that on many, many transmission lines.
13 However, we will study it again on this one, as well
14 as the EMF and property values and so forth.

15 So I can't speak about the Mantrap
16 question, that I don't know because I don't speak
17 for them. But thank you.

18 Let's see, Edward Laubach.

19 MR. LAUBACH: My name is Ed Laubach,
20 pretty close. I'm an attorney with Gray Plant
21 Moody, we have offices in St. Cloud and Minneapolis.
22 And I represent a number -- approximately 15
23 property owners along County Road 18 who are here in
24 large part this evening to oppose the route that is
25 being proposed by Great River Energy.

1 However, before getting into the route,
2 it seems like the initial question that should be
3 addressed is that of need. If there is no need,
4 there's no need to talk about route.

5 And so I would really encourage you,
6 Mr. Ek, as part of the scoping document to include
7 the question of need. I understand that it's not a
8 large transmission line so that a certificate of
9 need is not required under the statute. That
10 doesn't mean that need shouldn't be a part of the
11 scoping document, however.

12 And it seems to me that if this process
13 of need -- measurement of need goes all the way back
14 to 2002 and we have members of the Mantrap Co-op
15 here who don't know about it, that there should be
16 questions asked about that. If there was documents
17 developed back in 2002 to document need, if there
18 were public hearings about that determination of
19 need, if the co-op membership was made aware of the
20 co-op's decision about need, it seems to me all of
21 those things should be looked into as part of the
22 scoping and environmental assessment.

23 Because, again, if you don't have a need,
24 we don't have to talk about routes or any of the
25 other questions. I think the statute is pretty

1 clear that you don't need a certificate of need
2 here. But, again, that doesn't prohibit the
3 consideration of that question. So we would request
4 that you very seriously consider the need issue.

5 Only after you get past that need issue
6 and only if you get past that need issue do you look
7 at other questions about the route and finding which
8 route has the minimum impact on the environment and
9 taking into account all of the concerns that are
10 laid out in Minnesota Statutes and Minnesota Rules.
11 Such things -- and I know you're very well aware of
12 them, having gone through this process many, many
13 times, but the wildlife, the flora and the fauna,
14 the culture of the area's people, and minimizing
15 damage to current property owners. I understand
16 what the statute says about using existing
17 right-of-way.

18 However, in this particular case, and
19 perhaps you've done this, I don't know, but if
20 you've gone out to look at County Road 18 you'll see
21 there are no -- or very, very few power poles on 18
22 now. The utilities that exist there are
23 underground, and that makes a huge difference,
24 obviously, for many of the considerations that you
25 need to take into account. It has to do with

1 wildlife, with birds, with dangers for the birds,
2 killing them, going in -- flying into the high
3 wires, and all those kinds of things.

4 So I would strongly suggest to you that
5 the fact that there's a road right-of-way there
6 should not be a controlling factor about where this
7 route is located. There are many other factors that
8 should come into account.

9 As you cross County Road 18, you'll see
10 basically a natural, pristine area. One which has
11 the Potato River, which is the site for trumpeter
12 swans, for bald eagles, golden eagles, those things
13 that were referred to in the GRE application and, to
14 a large extent, were then forgotten about. And I
15 would suggest to you that they shouldn't be
16 forgotten about when we come to the scoping
17 documents and the environmental assessment.

18 But those are things that make this area
19 extremely unique. I drove around the area this
20 afternoon and I was totally astounded at the beauty
21 and the serenity of this area. And a power line,
22 one which isn't needed by everyone's admission for
23 five years minimum, maybe 10 to 20 years, should not
24 be allowed to encroach into that beauty.

25 The clients that I represent also have a

1 serious concern about the use of chemically treated
2 poles for the construction of the line. This is
3 going through very environmentally sensitive wetland
4 areas, it's going over the Potato River, it's going
5 very close to the Potato Lake area and wetlands that
6 would flow naturally into the lake. So we have a
7 very strong concern about the use of poles in that
8 area.

9 The other concern that just kinds of goes
10 without saying is that the road right-of-way is
11 populated by not just scrub trees, we're not talking
12 about poplars or things of that nature, we're
13 talking about huge pine trees, oaks, maple trees.
14 It is truly a unique area and one which should not
15 be disturbed unless there is absolutely no other way
16 to do it.

17 And we're here to suggest to you tonight
18 that there is another way to do it if there is a
19 need, and that is, follow the northern route that, I
20 think, was discussed at your task force this
21 afternoon, is that -- I forgot the county road that
22 it follows, but a direct east/west route west of
23 Emmaville. I'm not sure it's on either of those
24 (indicating).

25 MR. EK: Yeah. It's not on either of the

1 maps and it doesn't actually follow a road. But I
2 believe 280th Street up by Emmaville -- which
3 doesn't go all the way across, I think it stops
4 midway. But it would run straight across to 71
5 through a forest and wetlands up in that area, the
6 northern area.

7 MR. LAUBACH: Perhaps you could stay here
8 and answer another question, then, about that route.
9 I think most of that is county and state land, is it
10 not?

11 MR. EK: Actually, I couldn't answer that
12 question yet because we haven't gotten that far into
13 looking into that yet.

14 MR. LAUBACH: That will be a part of the
15 scoping, though?

16 MR. EK: If indeed the director of the
17 office signs that, signs the scope, and okays that
18 route to be looked at, certainly.

19 MR. LAUBACH: I feel like we're doing a
20 two-step here.

21 We would certainly encourage you to make
22 that recommendation and include that in the scoping
23 document for --

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Can you talk a little
25 louder so we can hear in the back?

1 MR. LAUBACH: I'm sorry. The Emmaville
2 route, we believe, does go through mostly public
3 lands, we believe the route is approximately the
4 same length when you go from Emmaville over to
5 Highway 71.

6 It doesn't come close to environmentally
7 sensitive lakes, and the number of property --
8 homeowners in the area is much, much less than the
9 route being proposed by GRE. It also doesn't have
10 the issues relating to endangered wildlife, the
11 trumpeter swans. I'm not sure about the eagles, but
12 trumpeter swans are unique to the Potato River,
13 which is crossed by the route being proposed by GRE.

14 It seems that -- I'm not sure why that
15 route isn't more favored other than the road
16 right-of-way issue. And road right-of-way, when
17 you're going through county and state properties,
18 may be a much easier issue to deal with. It's not
19 parkland, it's not DNR recreational area, to my
20 understanding, but obviously that would be something
21 you'd need to confirm in your assessment studies.

22 But assuming that it's not, it would seem
23 that would be a much more palatable route, a much
24 less disruptive route to people, animals, flora,
25 fauna, environment, and the culture of the people in

1 this area.

2 I think that's all I have right now.
3 Thank you very much.

4 MR. EK: Thank you.

5 And I just want to make it clear that the
6 statutes do indeed state there is not a need for --
7 we do not need to determine need for a transmission
8 line that is less than ten miles in length. It's
9 very clear in the statute.

10 The Commission -- if it was above ten
11 miles in length, the Commission would require what
12 is called a -- it's a whole 'nother process that is
13 a sister process -- actually it precedes the routing
14 process should a certificate of need be required for
15 a transmission line.

16 In this case, it's not. The transmission
17 line is 7.25 miles. It's clearly stated in the
18 statutes. If there was a certificate of need
19 needed, if it was over ten miles, we'd be going
20 through this whole process very similar -- very
21 similar to this process.

22 There would be an environmental report,
23 there would be public meetings, hearings, a bunch of
24 different types of data that the Public Utilities
25 Commission would like to see when it comes to need.

1 However, for a project of this size, need is not
2 something that we consider in the routing process,
3 and it is very clear.

4 The items you do bring up, the avian, the
5 potential of avian collisions, avian electrocutions,
6 those are items that are looked at. Those are items
7 that are addressed in the environmental assessment,
8 mitigation is provided. We look at all the routes
9 and we apply that to all the routes.

10 And in looking at the other routes, we're
11 bound to look at the applicant's route. We can't
12 just say no, we're not looking at County 18 and the
13 141st alternate. We have to look at those routes.
14 However, as I said, as folks comment, as the ATF may
15 suggest, we may put those -- and it's up to the
16 director of the Office of Energy Security who signs
17 the scoping decision document to put those routes,
18 alternate routes, in the environmental assessment so
19 they can be looked at.

20 And there's been many, many times in
21 these dockets where a route that's been proposed by
22 an applicant has been changed drastically throughout
23 the process because of alternatives that are
24 suggested by folks.

25 So just to couch those statements, we're

1 at the very beginning of the process. Just remember
2 we're going until August on this thing, so there's a
3 lot of work and research that needs to be done
4 before a decision is made.

5 And that's why we count on you to give us
6 ideas. You folks have lived up here, you live up
7 here, you know the area, you may know alternative
8 routes, you may know areas that are sensitive, and
9 so on and so forth.

10 Right-of-ways, highway road
11 rights-of-way, transmission line right-of-ways, just
12 one of the criteria that the Public Utilities
13 Commission looks at.

14 The sheet back there (indicating), it's a
15 sheet that explains the items we look at in an
16 environmental assessment, and on the back of that
17 sheet are a number of criteria that the Public
18 Utilities Commission looks at when siting a
19 transmission line. So road right-of-way is just one
20 of them. There's, I believe, probably 20 more on
21 there that they look at, and, you know, you have to
22 weigh each one.

23 MR. LAUBACH: Can I respond real quick?
24 I appreciate your comments, just a couple responses.
25 Number one, I think the reason that I and perhaps

1 others here are so focused on right-of-way is
2 because that appears to be the consideration which
3 was driving GRE's application, it was road
4 right-of-way. That was the only one that was
5 mentioned in the brief comments that were made by
6 Michelle just a few minutes ago.

7 I completely agree with you, I think
8 there are other concerns, considerations which are
9 just as important as right-of-way, existing
10 right-of-way, and we certainly encourage you to
11 consider all of those things.

12 With regard to the need, I don't disagree
13 with what you said about the statutory basis for
14 needing a certificate of need process in this case.
15 I'm not suggesting that a certificate of need as
16 that term is defined in the statute has to be
17 obtained here.

18 Having said that, I do think need, the
19 issue of need, is an appropriate topic for you to
20 consider in the scoping and the assessment that you
21 prepare as we go through this summer.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. EK: Thank you. And just to followup
24 on that, as I said, we will touch on purpose and
25 need in the environmental assessment. It's not

1 going to be as robust as a certificate of need
2 process, of course, but we do touch on need and
3 purpose in all the environmental assessments or an
4 EIS for that. So that is something we look at.

5 We have your comment in the record now,
6 so thank you very much.

7 Let's see, Larry Jones.

8 MR. JONES: Thank you. I'm Larry Jones.
9 I live at 15482 County 18, actually it's -- I don't
10 believe -- that's not our permanent residence, but
11 we purchased that property last year, in 2009.

12 We are in favor of locating the Great
13 River Energy's 115 volt (sic) transmission line
14 along the alternative route located west of
15 Emmaville from CASH -- CSH -- oh, boy, CSAH 4 to
16 Highway 71. And by extension, placing the
17 substation and its terminus at Highway 71.

18 I'd like to discuss in some detail the
19 reasons for this. Impact on people: The northern
20 route requires an upgrade of existing right-of-way
21 and line which is now distribution to carry both
22 distribution and transmission lines along CSAH 4 to
23 Emmaville. Actually, there's existing right-of-way
24 so it fits very nicely into the state's request that
25 that be seriously considered for a prospective

1 route.

2 However, since much of the right-of-way
3 already exists, the impact on the property owners
4 and nearby rivers and lakes is likely to be much
5 less than creating new right-of-way along CSAH 18 or
6 40 routes.

7 That said, we have counted only five
8 property owners along the proposed northern route.
9 Most owners have large tracts, 80 to 100-plus acres.
10 Large tracts are owned by the DNR and Hubbard
11 County, probably over 50 percent.

12 Along the proposed 18 or 40 routes, many
13 more property owners will be impacted. We have
14 counted 52 property owners along the 18 route. This
15 is a factor of ten times more, or one order of
16 magnitude, a huge increase by anyone's estimation.

17 Several homes are directly within the
18 proposed right-of-way on 18. There are 13 Potato
19 Lake permanent and seasonal homes or cabins and two
20 resorts, all will be seriously impacted.

21 We believe there will be a reduction in
22 property values and loss of income and tax revenue
23 to the county. The home and cabin owners along the
24 18 or 40 routes are likely to suffer a severe loss
25 in property values upon completion of the project.

1 These properties will be less desirable for resale
2 because of loss of their trees, scenic beauty, and
3 buffer from sounds and sights of highway traffic.

4 Personally we would lose about
5 20 percent, or 80 feet, of our lot length. Resort
6 owners are likely to lose revenue because of reduced
7 privacy and the attractiveness of their
8 accommodations. The result will be a loss of tax
9 revenue to Hubbard County. The amount of loss is
10 hard to estimate exactly.

11 Let's look at two cases. 52 owners
12 averaging 300,000, an estimated ten percent
13 reduction in value, that's 1.5 million in lost tax
14 base. Another case: Take 13 lake owners at 500,000
15 average property value, estimate 20 to 25 percent in
16 loss of sale value, 1.3 to 1.6 million in lost tax
17 base.

18 It appears the proposed 18 route could
19 easily reduce the tax base for Hubbard by over
20 \$1 million, easily. By comparison, with only five
21 property owners -- or personal property owners on
22 the northern route with no apparent developments or
23 lakes to be impacted, the burden on people and loss
24 of tax revenue will be reduced for the northern
25 route. We do not know of any home sites that will

1 be directly impacted.

2 A comment on the environment. The CSAH
3 18 proposed route crosses the outlet stream between
4 Potato and Fish Hook. The situation is similar for
5 the proposed 40 route. Runoff into the streams and
6 lakes will be increased because of the loss of trees
7 and cover.

8 We believe the potential environmental
9 impact will be less for the proposed northern route
10 because there are no lakes nearby. Similarly for
11 the extension north from Mantrap to Emmaville, much
12 of that right-of-way already exists and so the
13 incremental impact on increasing the right-of-way
14 for the increased transmission power would be
15 incremental.

16 Aesthetics have value. Minnesotans are
17 justly proud of their state's beauty. CSAH 18 and
18 40 are known for their scenic qualities, have a mix
19 of tree species that provide shades of green in the
20 spring and summer and a blaze of color in the fall.

21 They are major routes carrying traffic
22 between lakes and resorts for both the residents and
23 tourists alike. We biked from Park Rapids to Dundas
24 (phonetic) on Monday and met a Dundas business
25 owner. His comment on hearing the plan to clear

1 right-of-way on 18 was, oh, what a pretty route.
2 That seems to be the general opinion for residents
3 of the area.

4 The proposed southern routes will destroy
5 much of the existing beauty, so much prized by local
6 residents, and will reduce the enjoyment of both
7 locals and tourists as they travel about the area.

8 And consequently there will be an adverse
9 impact on many more people than just the property
10 owners along the route. As stated before,
11 aesthetics have value. Treasures such as the scenic
12 qualities of 18 and 40 are worth preserving.

13 Potato Lake is known statewide for its
14 beauty and its fishery. Why risk a reduction of
15 property values and aesthetic values for this
16 premier lake and a major tourist draw for the area?

17 Finally, I'd like to comment on corporate
18 responsibility. Any corporation, and as a public
19 utility, Great Northern (sic) Energy in particular,
20 has a responsibility to its customers, the people it
21 serves, and to its neighbors. By its nature, Great
22 Northern becomes a neighbor to the people it serves
23 through transmission lines and infrastructure.

24 This means that Great Northern Energy can
25 be a good neighbor and choose to minimize the

1 adverse impacts of infrastructure on its neighbors
2 to the extent possible and reasonable. As a good
3 neighbor, Great Northern Energy can and should go
4 the biblical extra mile, in this case, several extra
5 miles.

6 By choosing a route with a minimum impact
7 on people, the environment, and the visual beauty of
8 their service area, Great Northern Energy can
9 actually be a positive factor for promoting the
10 growth in the area they seek to serve.

11 In summary, we believe that the northern
12 route and the substation reduces the impact and
13 hardship on the people of Hubbard County and it
14 reduces the destruction of scenic beauty. It
15 reduces environmental impact and improves the
16 desirability and prospect for economic growth
17 compared to the proposed 18 or 40 routes. Thus, we
18 are very much in favor of the northern alternative
19 route.

20 Thank you for listening. This Larry and
21 Elsie (phonetic) Jones.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: For the record, it's Great
23 River Energy.

24 MR. JONES: What did I say?

25 UNIDENTIFIED: Great Northern.

1 MR. JONES: Oh, okay. For the record,
2 Great River Energy.

3 MR. EK: Thank you. Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Next up, we have Tony Platz.

6 MR. PLATZ: Thank you, Scott.

7 I speak in opposition to the Potato Lake
8 County 18 transmission line. I own a beautiful home
9 and lake property on Potato Lake bordering County
10 Road 18.

11 The proposed transmission line is a
12 corporation cooperative proposal that is not
13 sensitive to premier lakes, wetlands, landowners,
14 wildlife, fisheries, and the complete Mississippi
15 watershed that starts north of Park Rapids.

16 For over 30 years, I have worked with the
17 Potato Lake Association to protect this major
18 watershed area and continue to fight for it. This
19 proposed route affects over 50 property owners, many
20 having a significant investment in their property.

21 Great River has not been able to answer
22 some of the questions that I've asked them. Such
23 as, how much of my property will be clearcut, what
24 trees will you take, will the cost be assessed to
25 all 28 cooperatives that Great River Energy serves

1 or will it just be Itasca-Mantrap?

2 I personally believe ongoing research
3 points us to a revolution in how our energy is
4 generated, transmitted, and distributed. Clean
5 technological companies are spending millions of
6 dollars to solve our energy issues and cutting the
7 capital costs of solar power -- by using solar
8 power.

9 We see what happens when our U.S. auto
10 industry and our banking and financial industry did
11 business as usual. I feel Great River Energy is
12 doing business as usual. Why not try to set forth
13 in a different direction and do what is right.

14 Developing new power, new transmission,
15 and new distribution of power is in the near future,
16 the real near future. I question and I believe that
17 the demand has not necessarily increased in the last
18 year or so. I believe this project can be delayed
19 until new technologies are developed and our economy
20 has stabilized to better -- to be able to better
21 project what the demands and needs will be and what
22 the development will be in this area.

23 I believe that we need to hedge our bets
24 on new technology. I am upset with Great River
25 Energy's finished project that happened on

1 Highway 34 East. Take a look if you haven't seen
2 it. It shows their lack of sensitivity to our
3 beautiful Park Rapids lakes area. Let us deny them
4 the right to do this type of development and
5 destruction of any more of our natural resources in
6 our backyard.

7 I propose to preserve the essence and
8 integrity of the Potato Lake and Park Rapids areas.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. EK: Thank you for your comments.

11 I'd like to go back to Del and Alice
12 Holz, would you like to come back up, are you ready?

13 MS. HOLZ: I certainly do not wish for
14 anybody to have their property not be what they
15 would like it to be. But I happen to live near the
16 other proposal that you are making tonight and I
17 think it sounds like not in my backyard.

18 We have a beautiful environmental area
19 around Emmaville and the Skunk Lake area. This
20 morning I saw trumpeter swans on the lake. Every
21 year for the last number of years they've been
22 nesting in nearby ponds which are south of the lake
23 and in the very area that you're proposing that the
24 line might go through.

25 Secondly, you've underestimated -- one of

1 you has and I can't remember which one -- the number
2 of property owners. At least in the 2009 plat book
3 which I have here, there are more than -- I think
4 one of you used the figure of five property owners,
5 and there is definitely more than that
6 including also -- or beyond that, the forest lands.

7 It's a land that currently houses a lot
8 of wildlife. It's an environmental wetland, and my
9 neighbor has a map with her that can show you the
10 wetlands that this would have to go through. I
11 really feel that it's unkind, unfair for the people
12 to propose that it should come through my backyard
13 instead of yours.

14 MR. EK: Thank you.

15 I apologize if I get this name wrong
16 here, Norm and Martha Leistikow.

17 MR. LEISTIKOW: I knew it was me when you
18 started.

19 I don't expect to very popular tonight,
20 and the reason I'm not going to be very popular is
21 that I disagree with most of you. But I'm also
22 representing about 60 people compared to his 15, so
23 I think that I probably had better speak because
24 there are some things in this proposal -- proposed
25 alternate route that need to be, probably,

1 discussed.

2 I noticed, for example, he talked about
3 seeing those beautiful birds along the road, but he
4 didn't see the beautiful birds back in the woods
5 because he can't drive there, they are protected.
6 They are well protected by acres and acres and miles
7 of trees, wetlands, streams, and lakes. Yes, lakes.

8 My wife has the picture back here, we
9 brought the whole quadrant, and you would be amazed
10 at the number of little pothole lakes there. And if
11 you think it's going to be easy to build an easement
12 back there, guess again, because it was just a
13 couple years ago that somebody was trying to do some
14 logging back there and they went across what they
15 thought was a frozen pond, which didn't freeze up
16 too good in the winter, and they sank 15 feet deep
17 in the mud.

18 Now, you think about that. That was a
19 logging machine, 15 feet in the mud in that back
20 area. And we're proposing to take big trucks with
21 long poles and things like that back in there. Not
22 so good.

23 The gentleman talked about the natural,
24 pristine area. He hasn't seen anything about
25 natural, pristine areas until you get back in there

1 behind Emmaville and you see miles and miles and
2 acres and acres and acres of pristine area, of
3 pristine trees. And not just little brush, but
4 beautiful, magnificent trees.

5 So everything that the attorney talked
6 about, I basically agree with. We need to be
7 respectful of those trees, we need to be respectful
8 of those wetlands, and of those properties. But we
9 also wonder -- we know who he speaks for, but who
10 speaks for the deer, the birds, and the animals that
11 live in that forest, who speaks for those trees?
12 Well, I guess maybe I will.

13 Now, the original plan was to go along
14 40, the proposed second proposal was to go along 18,
15 and now we're talking about a northern proposal
16 which isn't supposed to offend anybody, it's longer
17 and it will cost more and it will be about ten times
18 as many trees to cut down.

19 We also know that if you put a power line
20 in you have to be able to maintain it. And if
21 you're going to maintain it, that means there has to
22 be a road or at least a well-traveled trail
23 underneath that power line. And it has to be
24 maintained in the wintertime because you have to
25 plow the snow otherwise one or two days a year

1 you're not getting in there, we're going to be
2 without power because the line will go down and they
3 won't be able to get to it. Now, the reason it's
4 pretty good right now is because we have those
5 right-of-ways.

6 Okay. So why is it that important to me?
7 As soon as you cut a 100-foot lane through the
8 woods -- if you think you can, as soon as you cut
9 that 100-foot lane, you know and I know what comes:
10 The snowmobilers and the four-wheelers and you've
11 got a route. And we know and you know and I know
12 and the taxpayers in my township know who's going to
13 have to plow the road that's put in there.

14 And remember that the governor's cut all
15 the in-lieu-of-taxes. So all that land that's
16 tax-forfeited and it looks so nice to you is land
17 that pays nothing -- basically nothing to support
18 those roads. We have to plow the road, we have to
19 maintain the road, and as soon as there is a pathway
20 there it will be a road. And my taxpayers in my
21 township don't want to be saddled with that. Those
22 roads are expensive to maintain. And if we don't
23 maintain them you're not going to have power, you're
24 not going to have the transmission, and then you'll
25 know what need is, I guess.

1 I know that a lot of people are saying
2 well, yeah, you know, the trucks are going to go
3 back in there any time they want to, if they can
4 make it. For the last 35 years, I hate to tell you
5 how many times somebody's knocked on my door and
6 they've been back in the backwoods there and they
7 need a tow truck or they need to get pulled out.

8 Mr. Holz sitting over here finally said I
9 won't pull any more people out back there. Because
10 there's a lot of wetlands and you go back there, you
11 think that you're just going over hills and over
12 dales, but it's not true. Most of you are
13 probably -- or a lot of you are snowmobilers, you've
14 been back there and you've been down Alligator
15 Alley. And you know what Alligator Alley is in the
16 wintertime, it's frozen and you can drive a
17 snowmobile on it, and in the summertime it's a
18 swamp.

19 And if you think there's no lakes, we'll
20 show the lakes to you. You think there's no swamps,
21 there's a huge swamp that runs right down the middle
22 of that. Try to get a truck through that in the
23 summer or the winter, it won't matter, you can't do
24 it.

25 So the northern route just isn't all that

1 it's cracked up to be in this case. It's populated
2 by huge trees and by birds and wildlife. Again,
3 it's all those things that he talked about we needed
4 to treasure.

5 And think back to what he talked about,
6 he said we shouldn't be putting in treated poles
7 because it's hard on nature. Holy mackerel, what do
8 you think it's going to do to those trees in the
9 backwoods there, is there going to be no damage to
10 those trees? The only trees that are going to be --
11 the only place nature's going to be damaged is on 18?
12 No.

13 Don't think we can go through west of
14 Emmaville because nobody lives there. We do live
15 there. I live very close to this power line. It's
16 not the power line I'm worried about, it's what's
17 going to happen to a 100-foot wide path eight miles
18 long through the woods, and my taxpayers are
19 wondering what's going to happen when we have to
20 maintain that road. Well, some other township will
21 get some of that, I suppose, and some of the others.

22 But it's not as easy as you think it is.
23 And I understand, I don't want to get -- you know,
24 say, well, you should pay more taxes, or I don't
25 want now to say somehow it should affect your

1 property values.

2 But I don't think anybody's really yet
3 proven that building one power line in place of
4 another is going to have such a great
5 environmental -- I mean, one power line in place of
6 another won't have such great property damage.

7 But we do know that a 100-foot path eight
8 miles through the woods does a lot of damage. A lot
9 of damage. And that's why we don't want this to
10 happen at all.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: Do you want to show the
12 map?

13 MR. LEISTIKOW: (Indicating throughout.)
14 Only if anybody wants to see it. This is the map of
15 that quadrant, take a look at it. There's Potato
16 Lake over on this side. Look, how can you say
17 there's no lakes? How can you say there's no
18 wetlands? There's a whole swamp down through here
19 and there's water everywhere and --

20 UNIDENTIFIED: It's on its side.

21 MR. LEISTIKOW: Pardon?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: You've got it turned on
23 its side.

24 MR. LEISTIKOW: There it is. Yeah. It
25 don't matter, it's the same either way you look at

1 it, nothing but wetlands all the way across, nothing
2 but swamps and forests and lakes and trumpeter
3 swans.

4 MR. EK: Mr. Leistikow -- did I get that
5 right?

6 MR. LEISTIKOW: Yeah.

7 MR. EK: I just have a question -- thank
8 you for your comments, first. You said your
9 constituents, do you represent --

10 MR. LEISTIKOW: I represent Clay Township
11 as one of the township officers. And I talked to
12 our director -- or our chairperson last night, he
13 wasn't able to be here, he said, man, we don't want
14 that.

15 And by the way, one other fact is that
16 every person who pays the extra money to cut all of
17 those trees, maintain all of that area in the back,
18 it will be added on their electric bill. So we are
19 all impacted economically that way, too.

20 MR. EK: Thank you, sir.

21 Jamie Krautkremer.

22 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Yup, close.

23 MR. EK: Sorry.

24 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Can you guys hear me
25 all right?

1 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

2 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Okay. I think Norm's
3 right and everybody's right here as far as this
4 power line. No matter where they run it, it's going
5 to be a big impact on everything. It's going to
6 destroy a lot of land, it's going to destroy a lot
7 of things.

8 I think we need to look back at the need.
9 You know, is there really a need? They said that
10 they are wanting it for their existing customers and
11 future customers. How many new customers have there
12 been this last year or last ten years?

13 Another question on that, too, why are
14 they doing everything here in ten -- or less than
15 ten-mile sections? You know, is there something
16 going on that there's a reason that they don't want
17 the certificate of need? How many other sections
18 are going to be created onto this too? And
19 shouldn't Itasca-Mantrap have an obligation to us as
20 members of the co-op to show that need?

21 Another question, too, if this has been
22 going on since 2002 like Michelle said, one of the
23 former managers of Itasca-Mantrap is right here in
24 this building, he didn't know anything about it back
25 then.

1 We've already touched on the chemicals
2 that are put into the poles, they're coated with
3 arsenic and several other chemicals. I know at
4 least on my property, these poles are going to come
5 within 40 feet of my well. That's a pretty big
6 concern, can they put it in writing that I'm not
7 going to have health problems five years down the
8 road, 30 years down the road?

9 She mentioned that in the application
10 that they wanted 150 feet of easement on both sides
11 of the road, but then she says here that they're
12 only going to take 50 feet of that. Are they going
13 to put that in writing that they're only going to
14 cut 50 feet of our trees? My guess is no, they're
15 probably going to take all 150 feet because it's in
16 writing that they can.

17 I think those are my biggest concerns.
18 I'm sure I'll have some other ones as soon as I sit
19 back down, but thanks for hearing me.

20 MR. EK: Thank you.

21 Just to clarify a couple of items that
22 you brought up, the poles, you brought up that
23 they're treating with arsenic, that's actually not
24 true. They're treated with penta --

25 UNIDENTIFIED: Pentachlorophenol.

1 MR. EK: Pentachlorophenol. I'm no
2 chemist, it's a tongue-twister. However, here's the
3 deal, your ground -- we will be looking at this.
4 It's already in the record, folks want us to look at
5 the content of the pole and how it's treated and
6 what, if any, impact could happen to groundwater or
7 domestic wells.

8 What I know is that these poles do not
9 impact your groundwater or domestic wells. One,
10 they do not leach. The attenuation that would leach
11 into the groundwater is not that far-reaching.
12 Actually, the bigger concern is more with the soil
13 immediately around the pole, and that's a report I
14 looked at because of comments I've been receiving.

15 That's usually, they say, within three
16 feet around the diameter of the pole. So you'd have
17 to have a child out there eating the dirt or the
18 sand, and I don't know how much, to have a problem
19 with that.

20 Secondly, the poles are going to be
21 buried at -- I believe in the permit application to
22 a depth of 20 feet. Groundwater here in the area, I
23 believe, is between 26 and 40, the static water
24 level. So this could be different in different
25 areas. No. No, I understand. But you're not going

1 to see the poles sitting in that static water level.

2 Another thing, these poles will be
3 encased in concrete or gravel, therefore they are
4 inert at that point and they will not leach -- well,
5 they do not leach, I should say. So they would be
6 inert and in place.

7 But I just wanted to let -- first of all,
8 they're not treated in arsenic. And we will be
9 looking at this in great detail and you'll see this
10 in the environmental assessment.

11 As for right-of-way, Jamie brought up the
12 fact that they could go ahead and take out the whole
13 100 feet of trees. That's not the case. Usually,
14 you know, depending on how it goes, how the
15 Commission decides to route a transmission line
16 along a road or a county road, whoever the
17 government unit is that has jurisdiction over that
18 road, be it the county, be it MnDOT, the applicant
19 would have to work with that entity.

20 And in this case, up north here typically
21 they're county roads. So the applicant will work
22 with the county. And they try to set them, and the
23 Commission likes this as well, five feet outside the
24 existing road right-of-way.

25 So if you look at that existing road

1 right-of-way and what you have, you'd need 100 feet
2 for this transmission line right-of-way. So you'd
3 have 50 -- let's see, you could share 50 feet of the
4 existing road right-of-way for that half of the
5 tower. So then you'd have -- actually, 55 because
6 you're five feet out, so you'd have 55 feet on the
7 other side.

8 Typically, you know, I can't speak for
9 the Commission. We're early in the process, but in
10 past cases if they're along the road right-of-way,
11 they share the road right-of-way so you, the
12 landowner, would only -- and it would be in the
13 permit, it would be specified. It's very typical
14 it's specified in the permit to limit tree cutting.
15 But you would be limited to that 50 feet, not a 100,
16 if it's along the road right-of-way. So just to
17 answer your question.

18 But we look at that, we explain that in
19 the environmental assessment, and it's a very good
20 question because it gets confusing.

21 While I'm at that, there is a one thing
22 that gets really confusing to folks. You've seen in
23 the route permit application it calls for a 300-foot
24 route width. Now, people confuse that, they think
25 well, they're going to come in and take down

1 300 feet.

2 Actually, that's not the case. The
3 Public Utilities Commission, they permit a route
4 width. So they may permit -- they are requesting
5 300 feet. So say the Commission permitted the
6 300-foot route width, within that 300 feet the
7 transmission line only needs a 100-foot
8 right-of-way.

9 So they're not going to take that whole
10 300 foot, they're only going to take the 100 feet
11 that they need. Typically, companies will ask for
12 that extra so they can maneuver back and forth or go
13 across the street when needed or to avoid a
14 sensitive environmental area, and that will all be
15 brought out in the environmental assessment.

16 But just so folks know, that 300 foot,
17 that's not what is needed for the actual
18 right-of-way of the transmission line. What they
19 need is 100 feet within that 300, and I know
20 sometimes that gets confusing.

21 But thank you for your questions.

22 Let's see here, Tom Peterson.

23 MR. TOM PETERSON: I think I'll pass.
24 Everybody has said everything I wanted to say.

25 MR. EK: Okay. Thank you, sir.

1 Bob Berdahl, did I get that right?

2 MR. BERDAHL: I'm Bob Berdahl. Can you
3 hear me well?

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Why don't you lift it up,
5 raise the whole pole.

6 MR. BERDAHL: Okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: That's better.

8 MR. BERDAHL: I'm the -- I'm here to
9 represent the Potato Lake Association. I live on
10 Potato Lake.

11 I think I'm still not coming through the
12 right way.

13 And our lake association has about 280
14 people living on our lake, about half of those
15 people are members of our association. We have
16 13 miles of shoreline property and our lake's
17 probably worth about \$100 million.

18 To take a look at the property values in
19 places like Lake Emma Township and Arago Township,
20 you'd be amazed. In the case of Lake Emma, it's
21 over 80 percent of the total property value in all
22 of Hubbard -- or, in all of the township, is what I
23 meant to say.

24 Actually, I'm going to read my letter
25 that I have sent, you might have gotten it today,

1 and I'll try to stay to the letter. Potato Lake
2 Association -- by the way, I live on Green Pines
3 Road, I don't live next to where this is coming
4 through.

5 Again, I'm here to represent our lake
6 association, but I'm concerned about issues that
7 affect our lake. In fact, that's why our lake
8 association exists. The Potato Lake Association
9 exists to protect and preserve the aesthetic,
10 environmental, and economic values of our lake and
11 associated shoreland areas, and we have major
12 concerns about the proposed Potato Lake substation
13 and transmission line project.

14 Number one, both the primary, County Road
15 18, and the alternate, County Road 40, routes pass
16 through areas adjacent to Potato Lake, also Blue
17 Lake, and well within the shore impact zone. The
18 county's shoreline ordinance states that intensive
19 vegetation clearing within the shore and bluff
20 impact zones is not allowed. And in both cases, the
21 elevation of the opened, cleared right-of-way will
22 enable runoff to the lake and river.

23 Second point, chemicals are used to treat
24 the power poles. And if they are used in the
25 maintenance of the right-of-ways, runoff into the

1 lake and river will include those chemicals and
2 become a serious threat to the water quality and the
3 fishery.

4 The third point, the river that flows
5 into Potato Lake from the north end and out under
6 County Road 18 is a sensitive environmental area
7 subject to the runoff from the transmission line
8 right-of-way.

9 The next point, both routes pass through
10 the heart of our lake country and destroy the scenic
11 roadway that's part of our lake country experience,
12 although that goes with what I said earlier, about
13 60 percent of the property value in Hubbard County
14 is waterfront property. So we need to give it a
15 little more attention in terms of how we -- what we
16 do to change the way it looks. People drive through
17 it, people come here to enjoy it.

18 The next point, both routes would have an
19 adverse impact on wildlife that in some cases are
20 protected, including trumpeter swans, eagles, geese,
21 and waterfowl.

22 The sixth point, Great River Energy is
23 in -- in its application admits that there will be
24 an impact on surface water quality in the wetlands
25 but say it will not be significant. Our prediction

1 is that any adverse impact on water quality in
2 wetlands, lakes, and rivers is too much and
3 unacceptable.

4 The next point, Great River Energy has
5 not provided complete information about the overall
6 environmental impacts of the proposed project.

7 It sounds like you're about to do that,
8 though, right?

9 MR. EK: (Nods head.)

10 MR. BERDAHL: Okay. So running a
11 transmission line through the heart of this
12 beautiful country needs to be done in a manner that
13 does not impact the water quality or the fisheries
14 of the area, and minimizes to the maximum extent
15 possible the impact on the rest of the area.

16 What we request is that you delay the
17 project and select an alternative route such as
18 running west from Emmaville or the possibility of an
19 underground transmission line if it could be done.
20 I think the underground idea is a reasonable idea to
21 consider. And I don't know what the researchers are
22 doing with that kind of thing for high-powered lines
23 such as this, but that may be the only win/win
24 solution that we have.

25 I think there's a pretty good argument

1 about the problems of running it through Emmaville.
2 But my point is that we think that you should delay
3 the project. In looking at some of the data that
4 was sent out, it looks to me as if the energy demand
5 projections for the area to be served have declined
6 in the last couple of years from what was originally
7 projected, and we assume this would allow for a
8 project delay.

9 Thank you for your consideration.

10 MR. EK: Thank you for your comments.

11 Those are actually very good comments.

12 And just to let you know -- as you folks
13 know and we've seen by the map, water quality is
14 going to be a very big part of this environmental
15 assessment considering the area we're talking about,
16 that I can assure you.

17 Liz Shaw.

18 MS. SHAW: Okay. Itasca-Mantrap is
19 working to improve service to customers and provide
20 a reliable source of power to businesses, homes, and
21 cabins. If indeed it is a need, it is a request
22 that should be honored to keep the area vital and
23 thriving.

24 But it is also important at the same time
25 to take great care of the natural resources and the

1 people who live, work, and vacation here. We are
2 asking Great River to be more discrete in their
3 efforts to complete their route west of Pine Point.

4 We need to protect the integrity of our
5 lake chains, our wildlife that's been placed on
6 threatened species list, and the property values of
7 owners, many whom can't afford to bear the financial
8 burden if a transmission line were to run over their
9 home.

10 The proposed and alternate routes,
11 Counties 18 and 40, Great River has given to the PUC
12 impacts vacation lands significantly. We are a
13 world-class destination known best for our sky blue
14 waters, scenic beauty, and as a gateway to the
15 Mississippi headwaters. To run transmission lines
16 through the heart of this country takes no
17 consideration for the cultural values of the people
18 here.

19 This is a highly visual, sensitive area.
20 And judging from the work that was done on
21 Highway 34 as you enter the city of Park Rapids,
22 Great River made no obvious efforts to mitigate the
23 impact to our state's lake country scenic byway.

24 If New York City were put -- to put in a
25 new runway to accommodate travelers, I doubt they

1 would place it in Times Square. Yet, the equivalent
2 of that would be done here if Great River would be
3 allowed to run their line and clearcuts through the
4 heart of the recreational lake system which could
5 impact Potato, Blue, Eagle Lake, and connecting
6 rivers.

7 The routes as proposed are within the
8 shoreland impact zone and would render many
9 properties to nonconforming status.

10 And let's see, I'm scanning over stuff
11 we've already covered here. By choosing the very
12 northern route, it would preserve the integrity and
13 aesthetics of a premier recreational lake system, it
14 would mitigate harm to state and federally protected
15 threatened species.

16 In addition to the birds we've talked
17 about, the heelsplitter mussels, the colonial
18 (phonetic) ducks, and the Blanding's turtle. It
19 would preserve water quality in a sensitive area
20 that would result in runoff for sensitive lakeshores
21 and water areas.

22 It would eliminate the destruction of
23 natural visible -- visual and noise buffers. It
24 would protect privately-owned wells from potential
25 hazards. It would preserve the integrity and beauty

1 of the lake country for our tourism industry,
2 something we sell to guests from the state, country,
3 and world. It would protect property owners in
4 highly valued areas from financial loss.

5 Great River and Itasca-Mantrap can't
6 forget the reason why we're here working to get
7 power to customers, because the people who live,
8 work, and visit here are here to enjoy what nature
9 can provide. It is a special place made up of
10 special people who chose to protect what is here so
11 it is preserved for future generations.

12 If transmission towers will go up, for
13 now they will only be used to conduct 34.5 kilovolts
14 of power. The lines won't be used at 115 kilovolt
15 capacity for another 30 to 40 years, an exact quote
16 from one of Great River's engineers. I had to ask
17 twice because I didn't think I heard it right the
18 first time, my husband and I both heard her say 30
19 to 40 years.

20 Their design is already archaic for the
21 potential technology to bury lines in the near
22 future. There are portions of Great River's loop
23 that could be postponed and still serve today's
24 needs of Itasca-Mantrap. Why destroy what's here
25 now when the near future will bring technology that

1 will do less harm?

2 I don't know that there is such a thing
3 as a perfect route, but we tried to provide one that
4 affects the least amount of disturbance to property
5 owners and wildlife as possible. I believe that the
6 northern route is the most compassionate route
7 available to us. Given that, I believe it is the
8 right thing to do.

9 MR. EK: Thank you for your comments.

10 All right. I believe I'm done with the
11 list now, so we'll go to hands.

12 That's the first hand I saw, sir.

13 MR. HOLZ: My name is Del Holz, H-O-L-Z.
14 I live in Clay Township. Some of my very good
15 friends live on Potato Lake and I wouldn't speak
16 against them for minute.

17 And I want you to know that every single
18 person that has spoken against this proposal has
19 said pretty much the same thing: The environment,
20 aesthetics, endangered species, the lakes, the
21 waters, the swamps, the trees.

22 We could add a few more from Clay
23 Township. I represent deer, bear, bobcat, coyote,
24 wolves, and at least one mountain lion that the DNR
25 doesn't think exists but which we've seen and had

1 pictures of, but it doesn't exist. We are also in
2 the flyway for the redtailed hawk. We have
3 trumpeter swans, we have loons, we have the great
4 horned owl, we have waterfowls.

5 We have all those things, too, and so I
6 would hope you wouldn't speak against those over
7 yours. I would hope that we hold them equal. And I
8 also understand the whole issue of property value
9 perhaps better than any in this room. And that is
10 because in 1978 Alice and I didn't have a proverbial
11 container to put yellow liquid in nor a window to
12 throw it out of. I'll give you a translation later,
13 I don't want it on public record.

14 And we started building our place in Clay
15 Township, and we did it ourselves. We spent
16 20 years of sweat equity and we're on the lake, we
17 are on an environmentally protected lake. And we
18 love that lake and we love the reason that we're
19 there. Our good neighbors have dedicated the great
20 bulk of their property to the Minnesota Land Trust,
21 which means they will never be able to develop it
22 because they care about the environment to that
23 degree that they're willing to prevent abuse of
24 that, they're willing to preserve that in memoriam
25 forever in perpetuity, nobody can build on that

1 except for the three lots that they've designated.

2 That's the kind of dedication that exists
3 in Clay Township. Don't assume, though, that
4 because there's only four of us who have spoken
5 against going through the Emmaville route that we're
6 for putting it down 18, we didn't say that. And
7 don't assume that because only four of us have
8 spoken against the Emmaville route that other people
9 don't care, they don't know about this meeting.

10 We weren't notified, we're not on the
11 notification list. In fact, this wasn't even
12 publicized as an alternative route. Why would they
13 be here? Nobody from Bemidji is here either. But
14 if they were going to put the power line through
15 their forest, you bet they would be.

16 So don't assume that because they're not
17 represented by an attorney or somebody else who
18 represents a lake association that the people in
19 Clay Township don't care. We care vitally, and
20 that's why we're there and that's why some of us are
21 here tonight.

22 Thanks.

23 MR. EK: Thank you for your comments.

24 You brought up a very good point, and it
25 seems to be a glitch in the statute and rules. But

1 first to explain, no alternative is -- until the
2 scoping decision document's issued, there's no
3 alternative on the books.

4 So what we go off and what we have to go
5 off is the routes that were provided by the
6 applicant, so we notify those folks. This is where
7 I'm getting to the notification and where I think
8 there's a glitch in the process, because if a new
9 route is proposed through a task force, through a
10 public comment letter and whatnot and it's looked
11 at, sometimes the folks upfront didn't get that
12 opportunity.

13 There is opportunity down the line, of
14 course. And so what we do and what I try to do, as
15 soon as it's known that there is another alternate
16 route being looked at, as soon as that scope comes
17 out, I try -- well, I do. I shouldn't say try, I do
18 send out notices to those folks immediately that are
19 on those routes.

20 And unfortunately, that's a glitch in the
21 rules and statutes that don't -- that pick that
22 little missing link up there when a new route's
23 proposed, but I take care of it myself. I try to do
24 my best. So I understand your frustration on that.

25 Comments?

1 Yes, sir. Please come to the mic.

2 MR. BARTH: My name is Eric Barth. I
3 live on County Road 4, and I have a question and I
4 have a comment.

5 As I came to the meeting tonight, I
6 thought there were two routes possible: 40 and 18.
7 I had no idea that the Emmaville northern route was
8 being proposed. And I hope that you would take into
9 consideration and understand that the people from
10 Emmaville, how they got here and knew about this, I
11 don't know.

12 But I live on County Road 4 and was not
13 notified of any northern route. The routes that I
14 was told about were 40 and 18. I came to the
15 meeting because I am interested in what's going on
16 in Lake Emma Township, so I thought this didn't have
17 anything to do with us.

18 But I would hope that if indeed a
19 northern route is considered seriously, then people
20 from that northern route should come up. Someone
21 mentioned that there's only half a dozen people
22 between County Road 40 and Emmaville, that's a
23 four-mile stretch. I can tell you a secret, there
24 are a heck of a lot more people that are homeowners
25 in that area along County Road 4. Where they come

1 up with the number four or five, I was shocked by
2 that.

3 Because on Blue Lake, along that side,
4 there's the Letchner's (phonetic) house right in
5 there, a lady just across the street, and the
6 Larson's and myself, and there's a number of houses
7 right there on Blue Lake on the County Road 4. So
8 further up from us even, there's even more people up
9 there. They aren't vacant lands.

10 Secondly -- so I hope that you'd have
11 another hearing or at least an opportunity to get
12 feedback from people who are impacted if indeed the
13 northern route is chosen.

14 Secondly, I'd like to ask a question on
15 those poles. The distributions lines, if you look
16 at that picture, are quite obtrusive and would be to
17 anybody on 18, 40, or the northern route, as you
18 call it. And I think that somehow we could work out
19 with the power company that they would bury the
20 distributions lines.

21 If you look carefully at that picture,
22 the one on the left has no distribution lines shown.
23 The one on the right has distribution lines that are
24 shown, and you can tell it's a heck of a lot more
25 obtrusive in ruining our property values that we

1 were talking about earlier if you have those
2 distribution lines showing up.

3 If somehow we could talk them into or
4 mandate that they be buried, I think whatever route
5 is chosen, I think that people will be happier with
6 that type of picture than the one on the right.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. EK: Thank you, sir. Thank you for
9 your comment. And I will, as I said, do my best as
10 soon as I know what routes are going to be
11 considered and so forth and get notice right out.
12 And there are going to be opportunities for you in
13 the future as we move on for --

14 MR. BARTH: As soon as you sit down you
15 think of something else. Can I ask you one more
16 question?

17 MR. EK: Sure.

18 MR. BARTH: Just quickly, it seems to me
19 that -- I'm sorry about that. It seems to me
20 that -- I know it's four miles from my house to
21 Emmaville, so that's from County Road 40 to
22 Emmaville. That's four miles, then you've got to go
23 across to 71 through the swamps. And it seems to me
24 that's more than ten miles and I think that you'll
25 demand a certificate of need.

1 MR. EK: Yes, you're correct in that, if
2 it does exceed ten miles it would require a
3 certificate of need. Thank you.

4 Hands?

5 Yes, sir.

6 MR. RAPP: Yes. My name is Jerry Rapp,
7 and I have some land on County Road 40 there that's
8 against -- I'm against the power line, if that is an
9 option.

10 And again, my questions are: Can
11 opposition shut this project down, or is it set in
12 stone that it's going to go one way or another? Can
13 you answer that?

14 MR. EK: Just to answer the question,
15 we're not -- this process isn't about a yes or no
16 vote. So you know, of course, we get folks -- well,
17 all of you folks here, you know, no, you don't want
18 it. And that's well known and that's very typical
19 of any transmission project.

20 However, it is ultimately up to the
21 Commission. They could decide that no, that it may
22 not -- there's many things they could do. What
23 we're looking for now is to provide them the
24 information to make that decision.

25 I don't know, they've done many, many

1 different things that have gone -- has taken a right
2 turn from what I thought they were going to do. So
3 it's important to gather this information.

4 But to answer your question, right now,
5 the process we're going through, no, it's not a yes
6 or no vote. It's more to get the public's point of
7 view and the interest you have and the concerns you
8 have and alternate routes and so forth.

9 MR. RAPP: Okay. That goes back to my
10 question if opposition can shut this down. I think
11 every person here would say let's get some
12 signatures going and let them know that we're
13 opposed to what they are projecting to do here.

14 And my next question is, how many people
15 that are on this energy source here are on any kind
16 of off-peak heating? Anybody have off-peak?

17 And so I mean, I guess -- and my next
18 question is, is if these people that are in the
19 County Road 18 area, every time something gets
20 developed -- or any area for that matter, anytime
21 something gets developed, it's going to be a cause
22 for more demand of electricity.

23 So if the area that we're proposing here
24 on 18 -- it's a need, and again, I have to emphasize
25 if it's a need, then the people that are living

1 there I would think would want it. And if it's not
2 a need, then it's strictly for -- I don't know what
3 you'd call the purpose, for future, I guess. If the
4 demand isn't -- if you can't prove that it's needed,
5 I don't think that it's necessary to be done at this
6 time.

7 Is there any county commissioners here
8 tonight? I guess remember that when you're voting,
9 too.

10 But anyway, the other thing is that
11 ten-mile rule, I think that has to be looked at.
12 Because you can do a lot of stuff under ten miles
13 over a course of time and it impacts a lot of
14 people.

15 But I just thought that if there is an
16 opposition that people need to do signatures and
17 that type of thing to say that this is not needed,
18 we should do that. That's all I got.

19 MR. EK: Thanks for your comment.

20 You know, all I can say to that is I know
21 of a couple other projects where people have filled
22 out a petition and so forth. But I think -- you
23 know, I can't suggest anything, but ultimately it
24 would come down to your representatives, your
25 legislators, your local representatives, and talking

1 to them, because those are the folks that make the
2 rules that we -- that I, my department, have to go
3 by. So it's just a suggestion. Those are the folks
4 you might want to be talking to when it comes to
5 that route.

6 So thank you for your questions.

7 Ray, I'm sorry, you pointed -- yes,
8 ma'am.

9 MS. WITKOP: Hi. Florence Witkop, and we
10 live on 18. W-I-T-K-O-P. But before we lived on
11 18, we --

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Get by the mic, closer.

13 MS. WITKOP: Before we lived on 18 we had
14 a resort on the south shore of Shell Lake, which
15 incidentally was Itasca-Mantrap, too. And the
16 reason I decided to come up and say something is we
17 had a high line going right through our property
18 that ended at our resort.

19 And it never impacted us economically, it
20 never hurt our business because it doesn't go down
21 the road, it went through the trees. Our neighbors
22 along the road never had to step out of their door
23 and look up and see a high line over their head
24 because it wasn't over their head, it was in the
25 trees.

1 And I've heard what they said about the
2 impact of the corridor, and I'm sure there is an
3 impact of the corridor because anything impacts the
4 environment. But in 15 years, we never saw it. In
5 15 years of living with that high line right through
6 our property, the only environmental impact that we
7 noticed was that it was a lovely place to walk
8 because you didn't trip over so many roots.

9 And I did learn very early on that if I
10 wanted to go for a walk I took our two very large
11 dogs with me because there were bears and we used to
12 hear a cougar and, oh, yeah, there were grouse in
13 the high line because that was a very good bedding,
14 or whatever you call it, for grouse to live in.
15 Yeah, it really was.

16 So I'm not saying it doesn't impact it,
17 but I'm not sure it's something you have to worry
18 about in a major way. And I do not know if that's
19 just because it didn't happen or if it's because
20 Itasca-Mantrap is very careful and they are
21 concerned also.

22 But I know we never had, we never saw --
23 and we lived there 15 years with this high line
24 right through our property. And I just thought
25 maybe you should be aware that there are two sides

1 to looking at it, okay.

2 MR. EK: Thank you for your comment.

3 Other folks?

4 Yes, sir.

5 MR. NORBIE: Hi. My name is

6 Steve Norbie. I've been coming up here for

7 30 years, I've owned property in Hubbard County for

8 20 years. My coowner, Mike Westberg (phonetic), and

9 I now own property along 18.

10 And I couldn't believe it, after seeing
11 the beauty all these years of coming up here that
12 Great River would choose to go right down 18 with
13 that. And I have met with the county on plots of
14 land and everything and met all the requirements,
15 and now when you go and stick something like this
16 through here, I was right on the line of meeting the
17 requirements, which I did, but that will change
18 everything now.

19 Secondly, they told us where to build and
20 what to do according to eagles' nests and placements
21 like that. There's an eagles' nest right next -- on
22 18, on the property we own, and I don't buy this 300
23 foot for a second, because 300 feet is 300 feet.

24 They say we'll reduce it down to 50, 100,
25 whatever. They're still applying for 300 feet, so

1 if I've got a little pothole on my land -- we have
2 25 acres, if I've got a pothole there and they want
3 to go around it, who's to stop them? They have a
4 300-foot corridor to work with, they're not applying
5 for 50 foot, they're applying for 300.

6 I was really appalled when I got the
7 letter in the mail and I said -- the coowner with me
8 said I can't believe this, nah, this won't happen.
9 It's happening. I couldn't believe it. So I'm up
10 here and, you know, we're still going to own the
11 land.

12 And I went to the meeting at 1:00, all
13 they're going to do is pay us for some use of
14 something, they get an easement, they can drive
15 anything they want on there, but we still get to pay
16 the taxes. We own it, but it's going to be
17 stripped.

18 Highway 34 East is not a real pretty
19 sight where they put that business in. I do not
20 propose that my neighbors on either side of 18 put
21 up with this mess. I just wonder why in these
22 economic hard times we're even dealing with this
23 because I hear numbers of 2002.

24 Well, guess what, I've got property, I've
25 got a spec house and everything sitting on the

1 market for three years. These numbers in 2002 do
2 not apply today, there's for sale signs all over the
3 place, but yet we're bulldozing ahead on this thing
4 like there's no tomorrow.

5 And we've got, you know, 30, 40 percent
6 increase in ownership. No, people aren't buying
7 places like they were. I don't know if the need's
8 that great right now.

9 So in closing, I just don't -- I think --
10 I would like to know of further study of actual
11 sales and stuff of what is really the need other
12 than this future stuff, are you -- five years,
13 30 years, 40 years? I don't know what the need is
14 but I guess that's all I've got to say.

15 MR. EK: Thank you, sir. Thank you for
16 your comments.

17 Other folks? Let's do someone who hasn't
18 spoken yet.

19 Ma'am, in the back.

20 MS. SWANSON: Hi. I'm Donette Swanson.
21 And we keep talking about Great River, but the real
22 point, Great River won't be building anything unless
23 Itasca-Mantrap wants it. And I think Itasca-Mantrap
24 has a responsibility to tell us what the growth is,
25 how many new services have they built in the last

1 two years, last one year.

2 It's not 300 like it was several years
3 ago. Is it -- well, we've got board of directors
4 here from Itasca-Mantrap, how many new services last
5 year?

6 Oh, Mike, how many new services last
7 year?

8 MR. MONSRUD: There was 161 last year,
9 but there were 360 for the four or five years before
10 that each year.

11 MS. SWANSON: But they're already
12 covered, they've already got the power supplied to
13 them. I think we're looking a step too far, Great
14 River can't do this unless Itasca-Mantrap wants.

15 And as Itasca-Mantrap members, we are
16 going to pay. We are going to pay for this increase
17 in lines. Are we building lines for people 30 years
18 from now and it's falling on us to pay for them
19 instead of the future, the present need for all the
20 future? I think we need more answers from our local
21 co-op.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. EK: Thank you, ma'am.

24 I saw a couple other hands up.

25 Yes, sir.

1 MR. EASTER: My name is Chuck Easter
2 (phonetic), and I live on the north end of Potato
3 Lake.

4 Neither of those routes affect me in any
5 way. I got involved when Bob Berdahl and the Potato
6 Lake Association were notified of this and we got
7 very concerned about the lake. And then I started
8 going to the website and reading some of the
9 comments and then listening to what's going on here
10 tonight, and there's been a lot of very good
11 comments.

12 I guess I go to Great River and ask about
13 their corporate citizenship, and I go to Ed
14 Laubach's first comments about need. I don't know
15 what the law in this is, but quite frankly, I don't
16 care. If Itasca-Mantrap and Great River thinks they
17 can cram this down anybody's throat regardless of
18 the route, there's something seriously wrong.

19 Let me read you what it says on your
20 application: To meet electrical needs of customers
21 in northern Park Rapids area. If that's not true
22 you should never have filed the application. I'm
23 concerned that what's happened here is this is
24 corporate work that's been going downhill and nobody
25 knows how to stop it.

1 Now, a young gentleman spoke and I think
2 he hit the nail on the head. Think about what's
3 happening here tonight. 7.25 miles. They need it,
4 they say, because they may draw on it sometime in
5 the next four to five years.

6 Another part of the application says the
7 current system has capacity until approximately
8 2018. I'll bet a lot that when this line goes in it
9 won't be used. And whether it's 2012, 2015, 2018,
10 guess what they're going to be doing? They're going
11 to be back here for another three or four miles.
12 Now, what's that total? Ten. They just avoided the
13 whole certificate of need process.

14 I think Itasca-Mantrap -- I think the
15 lady's comments were absolutely right. We just
16 moved a year ago. I know nothing about
17 cooperatives, but if I'm an owner, I ask the board
18 of directors to call a public meeting. There's got
19 to be a way for you to do that and to have us as
20 co-op owners, you give us an explanation of why you
21 need it. No double-talk, just tell us where the
22 area is and why you need it. Because I haven't seen
23 anything that says you do need it.

24 Let me read something from the CEO of
25 Itasca-Mantrap. Now, I was -- if I got this letter

1 wrong, I'm sorry. I was skimming it on the Internet
2 before I came here. The CEO -- it's on the
3 website -- sent a letter in response to a bunch of
4 people's comments and said, you know what, this
5 isn't all about the future. The current customers
6 need it right now.

7 Well, what is it, is it now or is it in
8 the future? The application says it's all for the
9 future. So I don't think we ought to be arguing
10 about the route and we need to prove that the route
11 is not acceptable.

12 I agree with Tony's comments, technology
13 may change a lot this in the next five years. I
14 think I go back to where Ed was.

15 And Mr. Ek, you need to look at need.
16 You may have somebody that's abusing the statute by
17 going less than ten and going back. You've got a
18 company that wants a route that may not be needed
19 until 2018. That's ridiculous.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. EK: Thank you for your comment.
22 Thank you for your comment.

23 I thought I saw an additional hand up?
24 We want to go with folks that haven't had a chance
25 to speak yet.

1 MR. MILLER: I'm not a public speaker.
2 So if I start stammering, you know. I agree with
3 all the people that think we should produce more
4 information. Cory Miller.

5 A lot us do understand wattage and
6 amperage and current flow, what all that means.
7 Like, what is the current draw on the network right
8 now, what is the percentage of use, what is the
9 current rate of new homeowners' wattage rates? You
10 know, how much draw is being added per year?

11 We don't know any of that. I mean, we're
12 cooperative owners -- member-owners of this, and I
13 haven't heard anything. I didn't hear about this
14 until earlier this year, and it ticked me off.

15 Hearing that this is basically going to
16 put a power line right over my mother's house and
17 most of my neighbors. It's right over the house,
18 either side of the road you go. It really don't
19 make sense to just be slammed by this and don't have
20 any details.

21 I do know that if the current loss --
22 losses are getting fairly great from the overload of
23 the system, it could actually be costing us more
24 than building a new one, and at a higher voltage it
25 is less loss. But I don't know that yet. I'd like

1 to know more before, you know, it keeps going and we
2 just get it pushed down our throats.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. EK: Thank you. And it sounds like
5 we have a subject that's of interest and hopefully
6 this process will work that out, and I think you
7 know the subject I'm talking about. And it's been
8 taken in by me in notes as well as by the
9 stenographer here. So I'm hearing you. I can't
10 give you answers tonight, unfortunately, but I am
11 hearing what you're saying.

12 Are there any other folks?

13 Yes, I think you had your hand up for a
14 while now, and then we'll go to you.

15 MR. PLATZ: Do you want me?

16 MR. EK: Sure.

17 MR. PLATZ: Sorry to come up here a
18 second time. My name is Tony Platz.

19 I think there's one thing that should be
20 cleared up. When we were talking about the fact
21 that there were probably five private landowners on
22 the northern route, we were not talking County
23 Road 40, we're only talking from County Road 4 -- we
24 talking from County Road 4 straight across west to
25 71, we were not talking of going down to 40. That's

1 the first comment.

2 The second one that I have is the task
3 force, somebody asked if there were any county
4 commissioners here. The task force, I believe, does
5 have a member who serves as a county commissioner.
6 That not his role on the task force, but I believe
7 Gary Gauldin is a county commissioner?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: No.

9 MR. PLATZ: Isn't he anymore?

10 UNIDENTIFIED: He's a school board
11 member.

12 MR. PLATZ: School board, okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Don Carlson is a county
14 commissioner.

15 MR. PLATZ: I stand corrected.

16 MR. EK: Just to let you folks know, his
17 name is Gary Gauldin. He was -- I contacted the
18 region -- Cliff Tweedale, the executive director of
19 the Headwaters Regional Development Commission.
20 Mr. Tweedale nominated Gary to fill in for the
21 Headwaters Commission. So, therefore, that's how
22 he's filling in by proxy for Mr. Tweedale.

23 MR. PLATZ: Okay. Thank you. The next
24 thing that was brought up was that Great River
25 Energy has been talking about this or looking at

1 this since the year 2000. Isn't it interesting, the
2 first correspondence I got on this as a property
3 owner came to me, I believe it was, in the middle of
4 October.

5 Isn't it also interesting that they
6 were -- had been to township meetings, different
7 township meetings ahead of schedule, they've known
8 about this a long time, so has Itasca-Mantrap.

9 Then another coincidence, they call a
10 meeting, an open house, and invite us to it. In my
11 neighborhood there are between -- I was just trying
12 to count before I came up here, between ten and 15
13 of us right in a row directly affected by this line
14 who are gone by that time. Wait for the summer
15 people to leave so we can do whatever we want to do,
16 that's the impression here on it.

17 And I think that's something to -- for
18 our own Itasca-Mantrap board of directors to be able
19 to give us a better answer and better
20 representation. They serve all of us, they do not
21 serve just the people who are here 12 months out of
22 the year or just the summer residents. Every one of
23 us, we are all cooperative members.

24 Let's see, I think that's about it for
25 this time. I hope I'm done. Thank you.

1 MR. EK: Thanks for your comment.

2 Yes, sir.

3 MR. BEHRENS: My name is Mark Behrens,
4 and I'm a property owner on County 18. I'm also a
5 member of the advisory task that has had meetings
6 here prior to this one, we've had two meetings.

7 And in the comments that I've heard, you
8 know, in support of the certificate of need that we
9 were told -- or I was told that the future -- the
10 Potato Lake substation was there to serve the
11 future. And also in the future what they wanted to
12 do was to run power out toward Pine Point.

13 Well, with the certificate of need you
14 have to have, you know, under ten miles and, you
15 know, they're going to be inching and inching all
16 the way down. Because to get to Pine Point, you've
17 go down the Two Inlets Road.

18 And they're going to keep going down that
19 way, you know, staying under the ten-mile range
20 about every two or three years or however they're
21 going to do it so that for the future they've got
22 the power to serve Pine Point.

23 And so I'm in support of this certificate
24 of need and making that a real huge research project
25 here as far as this -- their whole project is being

1 displayed here. We're not getting all the true
2 answers from them. There's stuff that they've been
3 telling us that isn't all the truth and nothing but
4 the truth. So I think we do need to have those
5 answers.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. EK: Before you leave, can you stay
8 up here?

9 MR. BEHRENS: Sure.

10 MR. EK: I just had a question, what's
11 the toilet road?

12 MR. BEHRENS: The what?

13 MR. EK: Did you say the toilet road?

14 MR. BEHRENS: Two Inlets.

15 MR. EK: Oh, the Two Inlets Road. Now
16 that's on record. I was going to go look at it
17 tomorrow morning. Bad on me. Now it's on record.
18 Did you get that?

19 Are there any other folks with questions?

20 Yes, Mr. Krautkremer.

21 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Krautkremer. It's me,
22 again.

23 They mentioned about burying the
24 distribution lines. Does this mean that they're
25 going to bury all the lines that would be going on

1 that pole, or would we still be having the poles put
2 up? That's one question that I had about this.

3 Another big question about this, I might
4 be just confused about it, but are -- is this new
5 route going to feed us or is it going to be feeding
6 people that are west of Two Inlets or north of 71,
7 who is it actually going to be feeding?

8 And if it is going to be feeding the
9 people that are west of Two Inlets, I know there are
10 a bunch of other substations that are already
11 further west, can't those be feeding these
12 potentially new customers?

13 Another question that I didn't think of
14 when I was standing up here -- I told you I'd forgot
15 something -- if they were to take the amount of
16 property that they're talking about off of my land,
17 they would be taking the majority of my buildable
18 property. A lot of my land is lowland and not
19 buildable. This would be a big problem, and I know
20 I'm not the only one that's got this problem. You
21 know, what are we going to do in this case? Because
22 I can't build if there's an easement on my property,
23 if I'm understanding that correctly.

24 What are we going to do then? We can't
25 expand, we can't put up another garage like we were

1 planning on doing. We're basically stuck with what
2 we've got. And, you know, if I just decided to jump
3 ship and sell our house, it's going to make it that
4 much harder because everybody coming in and
5 potentially looking at buying our house is going to
6 know that and they're not going to want to buy it.

7 You know -- and, I mean, not that I want
8 to sell my house. I really, really like my house.
9 But that was one question that I had thought of.

10 That's it for now. Thanks again.

11 MR. EK: Thank you. I can answer your
12 question about the undergrounding of the existing
13 distribution. That can be made a -- well, it can be
14 made a condition of a permit. The Commission can
15 make it a condition of the permit.

16 Essentially, they would say that --
17 typically they would say the company would have to
18 work with whomever owns those distribution lines and
19 work out with them to bury those lines and it can be
20 a condition of the permit.

21 I can't say that they always grant it,
22 but it is a negotiation. It would be a negotiation
23 between Great River Energy and, I would assume,
24 Mantrap that they would bury the distribution lines,
25 and that's something that can be put in the permit.

1 MR. KRAUTKREMER: All the lines or just
2 the distribution?

3 MR. EK: Just the distribution. However,
4 the task force brought up the idea of looking at an
5 underground line in total. And we are going to look
6 at that in the environmental assessment, it's an
7 idea to look at.

8 But when it comes to distribution, what
9 they do is pull those poles out -- and this is just
10 an example, this may not be, you know, for this
11 particular project. But typically they pull those
12 old distribution poles out, bury the distribution
13 lines, and put the new 115 poles in the same
14 alignment that those distributions were.

15 So you'd see that one -- the one pole
16 like this (indicating) and you'd have the
17 distribution buried instead of having the
18 underbuild, as they call it, and that can be a
19 condition of a permit.

20 MR. KRAUTKREMER: But they'd be putting a
21 pole in there regardless?

22 MR. EK: If it is an aerial line, yes,
23 that's correct.

24 MR. KRAUTKREMER: I know a lot of County
25 Road 18 doesn't have overhead lines already, so in

1 there, no matter -- if that was taken as a route, no
2 matter what, we'd still be getting a pole put in?

3 MR. EK: (Nods head.)

4 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Okay. Because if it
5 was all underground, that would probably be all
6 right. You know, I don't know if it was mentioned
7 earlier that maybe the big high voltage ones can't
8 be put underground at all. But, you know, if they
9 go all in underground that might solve a lot of
10 problems, too.

11 MR. EK: You're very correct in what you
12 just said, there would be -- and I drove 18. I've
13 driven all these routes last time I was -- two weeks
14 ago. I'm going to do it again tomorrow morning, and
15 I did notice there is no distribution, or limited,
16 on the greater portion of 18. And yes, so there
17 would be a new pole.

18 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Okay.

19 MR. EK: You're right. The task force --
20 I can't say anything because the scope hasn't come
21 out yet. The director will sign that and that's all
22 official bureaucratic stuff. But the task force did
23 in their recommendations ask to look at an
24 underground 115 -- undergrounding this line.

25 MR. KRAUTKREMER: The whole thing?

1 MR. EK: Yes.

2 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Oh, okay.

3 MR. EK: So it is something that will be
4 looked at in the environmental assessment as long as
5 it's included as part of the scope.

6 MR. KRAUTKREMER: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. HOLZ: Scott, I have a question. If
8 it's determined that Great River does this, then the
9 cost of the line will be borne by all 36
10 cooperatives, about five, six hundred thousand
11 members versus if Itasca-Mantrap has to do it alone
12 it will be borne by the 11,000 right here in
13 Hubbard County. Is that the difference?

14 MR. EK: That is a question I'd have to
15 ask one of the reps from GRE or Itasca-Mantrap. I
16 couldn't answer that.

17 MS. LOMMEL: The cost for the project
18 would be distributed across all of our 28 member
19 cooperatives. So the number 36, I guess that was
20 inaccurate. But as far as the portion with
21 Itasca-Mantrap taking any part of the project if
22 they would build it on their own, again, with the
23 associated transmission line, this is not a
24 distribution project with the exception of the
25 substation that is a distribution substation. But

1 the transmission line, regardless of the voltage or
2 whatever, that will provide that bulk power supply
3 to the substation.

4 So no, it would not be strictly
5 Itasca-Mantrap's members that would have to pay for
6 the project. Did I answer that?

7 MR. HOLZ: No, that's not quite what I
8 said. If power is needed out there and
9 Itasca-Mantrap has to do it versus Great River, then
10 Great River doesn't pick up any of that, nor do
11 their other member co-ops; isn't that true?

12 MS. LOMMEL: I guess I'm not certain what
13 aspect of the project that you would see
14 Itasca-Mantrap doing.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: The transmission line.

16 MS. LOMMEL: The transmission line is
17 distributed across Great River Energy's 28 member
18 cooperatives. It's not going to be assessed to just
19 Itasca-Mantrap. It's spread across all of our
20 members and is reflected in the rates to those
21 members, not to your rates.

22 MR. HOLZ: But if it didn't happen --
23 this is a hypothetical because the whole thing right
24 now is a hypothetical. Hypothetically, if Great
25 River doesn't do it, now there's a need and

1 Itasca-Mantrap has to build transmission lines,
2 Great River doesn't share in those costs, do they?

3 MS. LOMMEL: No. If Itasca-Mantrap was
4 improving their system on their own, their
5 distribution system, that would be different. That
6 would be separate from this project, but that really
7 has no bearing on this project.

8 MR. HOLZ: Well, it does if there's a
9 need. We haven't heard that yet, but if there's a
10 need and this project doesn't go through, then
11 Itasca-Mantrap will be the one that has to pay for
12 it.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: If there's a need, they're
14 going to have to reroute everything to support that
15 need if this doesn't go through, is what I think he
16 means.

17 MS. LOMMEL: Right. You know, if it gets
18 into a question of need, we're going to need
19 guidance from the state on how we handle that. I
20 think Scott alluded to that earlier, that that
21 hasn't happened before where someone has come in
22 with a smaller project based on the scope of
23 environmental assessment, it's now expanded the
24 project out of the ten-mile threshold, we're going
25 to need some guidance in that situation because, to

1 our knowledge, that hasn't happened to anyone and
2 certainly not to Great River Energy.

3 MR. HOLZ: Thank you.

4 MR. EK: Thank you, Michelle.

5 And Michelle's very correct. We're kind
6 of wading into an area where I can't really give you
7 an answer on this and I'm going to have to go back
8 and talk with the higher-ups here and hope as this
9 process moves along the information will be shared
10 with you.

11 But you brought up an interesting topic
12 that I tend to -- that I intend to throw around with
13 the people I report to just to get their thoughts.

14 So yes, sir.

15 MR. BARTH: Just a quick question or
16 comment.

17 MR. EK: If you could come to the mic.

18 MR. BARTH: Eric Barth, B-A-R-T-H.

19 Sorry, Eric Barth. A quick one, June 3rd is
20 Itasca-Mantrap's annual meeting and I'm sure that
21 this will be on the agenda, I'm sure they want to
22 discuss this with us. Is that true, do we know --
23 is anybody from Itasca-Mantrap here that can tell
24 us?

25 Yes, is it on the agenda?

1 MR. MONSRUD: My name is Michael Monsrud,
2 M-O-N-S-R-U-D. To answer your question, no, it is
3 not on the annual meeting agenda. The annual
4 meetings are bases for business that has happened
5 over the past year.

6 We're going to end up having to have, if
7 requested, a special meeting of the members. That
8 would be a better place to address this issue.

9 MR. BARTH: There's no open, like,
10 question and answer?

11 MR. MONSRUD: There's an open question
12 and answer, but we don't take the time to go ahead
13 and extend that meeting any longer than it already
14 is. So it's probably better to do it in a special
15 meeting.

16 MR. BARTH: Thank you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: When is that and will we
18 be notified?

19 MR. MONSRUD: Anybody that's on the list,
20 I can notify.

21 MR. EK: We need to -- if we're going to
22 be talking, so we can get this all official, we need
23 to talk into the mic so Christine can get this.

24 MR. MONSRUD: I can get the list from
25 Scott. Anybody that's on the list, plus any members

1 we identify that are in these areas, we can notify
2 of a special meeting. As it stands right now with
3 the interest, it's in the best interest of the
4 members and Itasca-Mantrap to have such a meeting.
5 So we will try and schedule one. Our problem is
6 that the annual meeting is coming up so fast that
7 we're engrossed in taking care of that. So we've
8 got until August, as Scott said. We'll have one as
9 soon as we can after the annual meeting.

10 We'll schedule one and we'll have
11 something in the next newsletter as well as sending
12 out mail to people. And we won't have it in the
13 fall, we'll have it in the summer.

14 MR. EK: Thank you.

15 Yes, sir.

16 MR. JONES: Thank you. I'm Larry Jones.

17 I'd like to respond to the gentleman from
18 Route 4 going north regarding our recommendations
19 and thoughts on proposing the northern route.

20 What we did -- and the people I talked
21 with, we were honestly looking for an alternative
22 which would have the minimum impact on people and
23 the hardship -- economic hardships that it would
24 create, believing that it would be very difficult to
25 stop this project.

1 Now, I think that all of the concerns
2 that have been raised tonight about the needs are
3 very germane to the issues that we're all concerned
4 about.

5 And I would request a special meeting
6 from Itasca-Mantrap, and that the need be a
7 particular point of the agenda for that meeting so
8 that there could be some definite data put together
9 which would bear on this problem and could be
10 submitted to the Public Utilities Commission for
11 their consideration.

12 Also, I wanted to comment, Tony Platz
13 indicated that we looked at and found on the plat
14 map only five -- we called them property owners
15 because we did not have the capacity to talk about
16 number of people or locations of homes or how that
17 would impact those people.

18 Now, as far as the route north on Route
19 4, initially we understood that the existing
20 right-of-way and lines could handle this 115 or 34
21 kV transmission from Mantrap up to Emmaville and
22 therefore the only consideration that was needed was
23 for the northern route which was a straight
24 east/west line.

25 However, we learned this afternoon at the

1 task force meeting that that was not the case, those
2 are distribution lines that are owned by
3 Itasca-Mantrap, but there is an existing
4 right-of-way for those lines. So I have qualified
5 my comments on the five people -- or the five
6 property owners, excuse me, by saying that that
7 right-of-way needs to be improved to handle the
8 increased transmission voltage.

9 Now, the other point about getting this
10 route under consideration is the fact that it will
11 require a certificate of need and then that will
12 become part of the consideration for the route and
13 for the need for the whole project. So I think it's
14 very important that this become a consideration --
15 the northern route become a consideration because it
16 will generate the need for a certificate of need
17 document.

18 Thank you.

19 Oh, one more comment, please. I looked
20 up the website for Great River Energy today and I
21 looked up their environmental impact statement. It
22 says, and I quote, Great River Energy understands
23 our operations impact our environment and it is our
24 responsibility to do all we can to minimize that
25 impact. Great River Energy has always taken great

1 pride in conducting its business with a high concern
2 for the environment.

3 So I will ask that Great River Energy
4 take their corporate statements very seriously in
5 this case.

6 MR. EK: Thank you.

7 Additional comments?

8 Holz, was it?

9 MS. HOLZ: Very quick, Alice Holz. This
10 is just quick, but if it went up 4 and across the
11 road known as 280th, it affects 12 property owners
12 on 280th and it affects 21 property owners on County
13 Road 4. So you're up to 33 people affected by the
14 northern route.

15 MR. EK: Thank you.

16 Yes, sir.

17 MR. ROYCE PETERSON: My name is
18 Royce Peterson. I serve on the board of directors
19 of Itasca-Mantrap. And I know Itasca-Mantrap has
20 been brought up here a number of times tonight and I
21 would just like to make just a couple of brief
22 comments.

23 Itasca-Mantrap -- the board of directors
24 is made up of you folks, just like each one of you.
25 Any one of you could be serving on the board that's

1 a member. And we take our job very seriously.
2 We've gone through some tough times over the last
3 few years and the economy's been tough. We
4 understand that.

5 I know money is not being spent
6 foolishly, or at least the intent is not to spend it
7 foolishly, at the Itasca-Mantrap level or at the
8 Great River Energy level.

9 The board of directors at both
10 organizations rely heavily on engineering,
11 engineering studies, and over the last -- last year
12 out of the budget there was \$600,000 -- or, I'm
13 sorry, \$600 million cut out of the budget in
14 transmission projects and some generation projects
15 as well as other cuts.

16 And so I don't think the intent is to
17 just go out and put up a bunch of lines where
18 they're really not needed. And I'm hoping that
19 we're getting good engineering information that's
20 allowing us both at the Great River Energy level and
21 Itasca-Mantrap level to make good, sound decisions.

22 And the idea of need, I've been listening
23 to that term need all the way through this. And I
24 think each and every one of you deserves an
25 explanation as to what that need is. We need to

1 readdress that. Even though this is not an
2 Itasca-Mantrap transmission project, we need to
3 address that issue of need, that's very critical and
4 it's important. If there's no need, there's no
5 reason to be spending millions of dollars on
6 transmission projects that aren't necessary.

7 Now, back in 2001 when we started,
8 perhaps, seeing a need there, I think that's
9 gradually evolved to where it got on the docket.
10 Although the last couple years hasn't been that
11 critical in growth, we've had a significant growth
12 over that period of time.

13 And one of the goals of Itasca-Mantrap
14 and the board of directors is to provide a safe,
15 reliable, and steady stream of energy to you folks,
16 and reliability is a critical issue. And in one
17 sense I want to say we should be fortunate that
18 we're able to get this money for this transmission
19 upgrade so that we have it when the need is there,
20 but granted, that need has to be addressed.

21 And I'm more than willing and I think our
22 management and our board would be happy to meet with
23 each and every one of you and anyone else that wants
24 to get together so that we can address that and get
25 some clarification of where that need really sits.

1 And so, in any event, I'm fully supportive of that.
2 I don't want you to think that Itasca-Mantrap is
3 shirking its responsibilities and duties, we're not.
4 We're each and every one of you because that's what
5 our job is, to represent our membership.

6 So basically I want to say that I've
7 heard a lot here tonight. I've sat and listened. I
8 didn't get up initially because I was hoping to let
9 everyone else talk. And the time is getting late,
10 I'm sure a lot of you want to get going. I see some
11 you have already left already.

12 In any event, I felt I had to say
13 something here regarding those issues, and let's get
14 together and talk and let's see where we're really
15 at.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. EK: Yeah. We're going to take a
18 five- to ten-minute break for the court reporter, if
19 that's all right. A couple more people, I don't
20 know, how many more people do we have that would
21 like to speak?

22 Well, let's go with the people who
23 haven't had a chance to speak.

24 MS. PLATZ: My name is Sarah Platz, and I
25 also reside on County Road 18. And 29 years today I

1 have resided on County Road 18 on the south side of
2 Potato Lake.

3 And I do know of the wildlife there and I
4 know that it's everywhere else -- everywhere else
5 also. But we do have land bearing trees that, would
6 they be affected by this line? We do have the
7 trumpeter swans, we have the nesting bald eagles,
8 would they be affected by this line?

9 We have morel mushrooms, golden eagles,
10 bobcats, bears, raccoons, red fox, they're all going
11 to be affected by this line if you choose to put it
12 in.

13 And I am the future. You keep talking
14 about the need for this in the future, so that's me.
15 And I don't see the need for this line on County
16 Road 18 in the future. I think we need to look at
17 other options, at the technological advances that
18 are happening continuously. If we don't need it
19 now, then why are we doing this damage to the
20 beautiful country right now?

21 I've heard that it's going to be --
22 they're going to take into consideration the looks
23 of the route, but did you do that on County 34?
24 Because the -- if you switch this poster picture
25 right here (indicating) with the one on 34 that

1 bypasses the sign that says welcome to Park Rapids
2 scenic byway, beautiful country, is that really
3 aesthetically pleasing? And you think that it is?

4 I'm really disappointed in that, and
5 I'm -- I would like to know alternative routes and
6 alternative ideas. So I would like you to keep in
7 mind that the future does live on that road and we
8 are part of the people that you need to serve.

9 Thanks.

10 MR. EK: All right. We'll do two more
11 people before we take a break. The gentleman in the
12 back here hasn't had a chance to speak.

13 MR. WESTRUM: Ron Westrum, W-E-S-T-R-U-M.
14 Thank you. It's very nice to see a few young people
15 here tonight, believe me.

16 I happen to be chair of Lake Emma
17 Township, so all of this is happening right in our
18 backyard. Nancy Bogaard, our clerk, is here, and
19 Jeff Adolphson, one of the other supervisors, is
20 here. We're extremely concerned about what you're
21 talking about tonight. But to me, it's very clear
22 that at this point we should stop the talk about the
23 proposed route, stop the talk about 40, and stop the
24 talk about the northern route.

25 We have nowhere near enough evidence

1 to -- future use in our area. And we've got to talk
2 and I think, Royce, you kind of alluded to it,
3 Itasca-Mantrap has to have some meeting and we have
4 to clarify whether or not there's even the need for
5 these lines. Let's talk about need before we move
6 any further about any other proposed routes.

7 Bring that back, Scott.

8 This is an extremely sensitive area.
9 People in St. Paul, maybe including yourself, do not
10 live here, even including the attorney come today
11 and from one other earlier time has driven our area.
12 They don't know how sensitive this area really,
13 truly is.

14 And whether it's your property values or
15 whether it's the woods or the bobcats or whatever,
16 it's very sensitive and you've got to understand and
17 realize that.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. EK: Thank you, sir.

20 How many more folks do we have that would
21 like to comment, just for the sake of the court
22 reporter?

23 All right. Sir, I'll get to you. I want
24 to make sure we get folks that haven't spoke yet.

25 MR. BOGAARD: Thank you. My name is

1 and they will be sharing the cost of the road if we
2 have to go the northern route. But as I sat and
3 listened to all the people talk, I just couldn't
4 help but think if this is really for Pine Point and
5 it's really very, very west of us, then why are we
6 here? Why don't we build it down 34 to Snellman and
7 go north to Pine Point? We don't have a problem on
8 18 or anywhere else.

9 MR. EK: All right. I think we'll take a
10 five- or ten-minute break here to allow the court
11 reporter to catch up and take a quick break.

12 (Break taken.)

13 MR. EK: All right. Folks, I think we'll
14 go ahead and finish the comments and questions.
15 We're kind of running out of light as well. I don't
16 have the custodian here to turn on the lights, I
17 think they're operated by key, so sorry about that.

18 Were there any other folks with any
19 questions or comments?

20 Well, with that, then, I think we'll go
21 ahead and wrap it up. I just want to let you folks
22 know you've given me quite a few good ideas, good
23 concepts to chew on and bring back. All of this is
24 in the record.

25 I encourage you to grab a comment form.

1 If you have additional comments that come up, all
2 the information's on there: E-mail, fax, U.S. mail.
3 You can send that form, you can send your own
4 correspondence, but I urge you to do that. It's
5 important, it's helpful to me.

6 Also, I have my business cards on the
7 back. If any questions pop up, feel free to call
8 me, call Ray. His information's on the PowerPoint
9 handout sheet.

10 And I really thank you. Thank you for
11 coming and thanks for all the good questions. Thank
12 you for all the comments and input. This is exactly
13 what I'm looking for. So we'll see you, probably,
14 in August, I believe. So thank you very much.

15 (Public comment concluded.)

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