



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Commerce



Issued: August 18, 2011

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETINGS

**In the Matter of the Application for a HVTL Route Permit for the
Little Falls 115 kV Transmission Project**

PUC Docket Number: ET-2, E015/TL-11-318

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) will conduct public information and environmental assessment (EA) scoping meetings on the route permit application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power (Applicants) for the proposed Little Falls 115 kV Transmission Project. The purpose of the meetings is to provide information to the public about the project and to identify issues and alternatives to study in an EA that will be prepared by EFP staff.

Public Information and Scoping Meetings

**Wednesday, September 7, 2011
6:00 p.m.**

**Little Falls Township Hall
15132 Gordon Circle
Little Falls, MN 56345**

The EFP will accept written comments on the scope of the EA until Friday, September 23, 2011. Please include PUC Docket No. TL-11-318 on all comments. Comments should be mailed, emailed, or faxed to:

Suzanne Steinhauer
State Permit Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Energy Facility Permitting
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101-2198
Fax: 651-296-2888
suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us

Comments may also be submitted on the Commission's energy facility permitting website, <http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us>,

The meeting will include a brief presentation of the state's high voltage transmission line (HVTL) permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public can participate in the permitting process. Representative from Great River Energy and Minnesota Power will be present to answer questions about the proposed project. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, present comments, and propose issues, impacts and alternatives to be studied in the EA.

Project Description. The Project is located east of Little Falls in Little Falls Township. The Project, as proposed by the Applicants, would provide an additional power delivery source to rural areas east of Little Falls. As proposed by Applicants the Project totals approximately 4.35 miles of transmission line and includes the following components:

- Great River Energy would assume ownership of a 0.51 mile segment of Minnesota Power's Transmission Line 46 and construct approximately 3.84 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line between Minnesota Power's Little Falls Substation and Crow Wing Power's Little Falls Substation. The first 0.51 miles of this component would rebuild Minnesota Power's existing 46 115 kV transmission line.
- Construction of a new 0.51 mile 115 kV transmission line to reconnect Minnesota Power's 46 transmission line with the Minnesota Power Little Falls Substation.
- Modifications to the Minnesota Power Little Falls Substation to accommodate new 115 kV sources.
- Crow Wing Power will seek local approval to expand and modify their Little Falls Substation.

The Applicants request a route width of 300 feet, within which a right-of-way of 100 to 120 feet would be located. Great River Energy proposes using single pole structures with a height of approximately 60 to 85 feet and spans of approximately 300 to 400 feet between poles, for the majority of the route length. Minnesota Power proposes to use H-frame structures with a height of approximately 60 to 80 feet for its 0.51 mile segment.

The Applicants anticipate beginning construction in mid-2012, with an in-service date of November, 2012. The Project is expected to cost approximately \$2.8 million dollars.

Review Process. In Minnesota, no person may construct a high-voltage transmission line without a route permit from the Commission (Minnesota Statute 216E.03, subdivision 2). A high-voltage transmission line is defined as a conductor of electric energy designed for and capable of operation at a voltage of 100 kV or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length (Minnesota Statute 216E.01, subdivision 4). The project as proposed would consist of approximately 4.7 miles of new 115 kV transmission line and would therefore require a route permit from the Commission. Because the proposed transmission line capacity is under 200 kV, less than ten miles in length, and does not cross a state border, a certificate of need is not required (Minnesota Statute 216B.2421, subdivision 2).

A route permit application for the project was filed under the alternative permitting process by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power on June 16, 2011. The project is eligible for consideration under

the alternative permitting process, as the transmission line voltage would be between 100 and 200 kilovolts (Minnesota Rules 7850.2800, subpart 2B). The application was accepted as complete by the Commission on June 30, 2011. The Commission has six months from the time the application is accepted to complete the alternative permitting process and make a decision on a route permit.

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

EFP Review – Environmental Assessment. EFP staff is responsible for conducting the environmental review for route permit applications submitted to the Commission (Minn. Rules 7850.3700). Environmental review for a project of this size requires the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA). An EA examines the potential human and environmental impacts of a proposed project, alternative routes or route segments, and potential mitigative measures. EFP staff conducts a public information meeting to gather comments and suggestions on the proposed project in order to focus the content or “scope” of the environmental assessment.

Public Hearing. Upon completion of the environmental assessment, a public hearing will be held near the Project location. The hearing will be presided over by an administrative law judge (ALJ) from the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Members of the public will have an opportunity to make oral presentation, present evidence, submit comments, and ask questions of Great River Energy, Minnesota Power, and EFP staff. After the hearing, the ALJ will submit a report to the Commission. A decision on the Commission on the Little Falls 115 kV Transmission Project is anticipated in late 2011 or early 2012. Notice of the hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list.

Eminent Domain. If issued a route permit by the Commission, the Applicants may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minnesota Statute 216E.12.

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

Project Documents. A more detailed description of the proposed project is contained in the route permit application; an electronic version of this document is available on the Commission’s energy facility permitting website:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=32098>

Additionally, documents are available on the Commission’s eDockets system:
<https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year “11” and the number “318”).

The route permit applications are also available at the locations noted below:

Morrison County Planning and Zoning Morrison County Government Center 213 First Avenue SE Little Falls, MN 56345	Little Falls City Library 108 3 rd Street NE Little Falls, MN 56345
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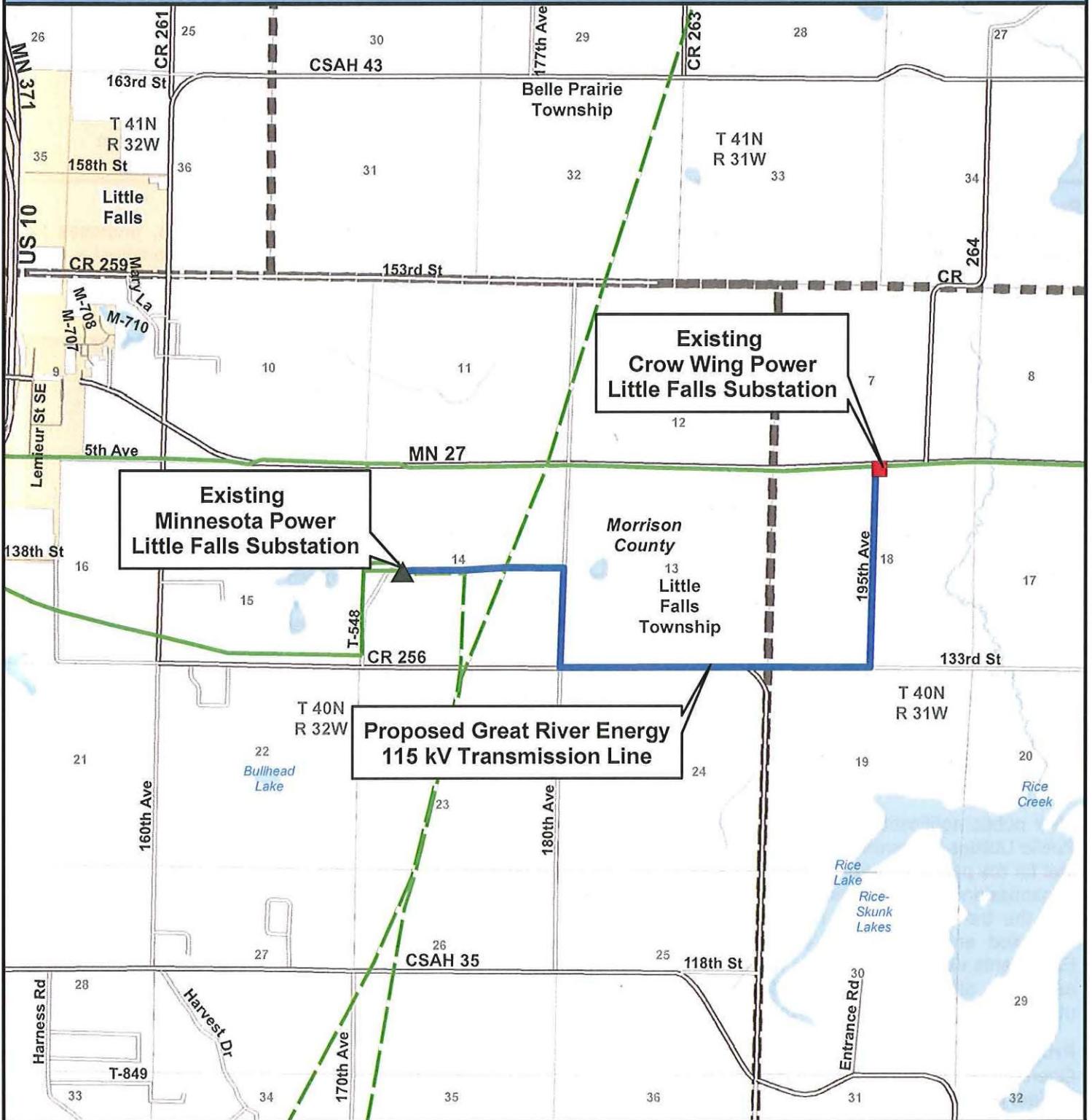
Project Contacts. If you have questions or would like further information about this project, please contact:

Suzanne Steinhauer, State Permit Manager Minnesota Department of Commerce 85 7 th Place East, Suite 500 St. Paul, MN 55101 Phone: 651-296-2888/Toll-Free 800-657-3794 Fax: 651-297-7891 suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us	Jamie MacAlister, Public Advisor Minnesota Department of Commerce 85 7 th Place East, Suite 500 St. Paul, MN 55101 Phone: 651-297-1335/Toll-Free 800-657-3794 Fax: 651-297-7891 jamie.macalister@state.mn.us
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Applicants. Information on the Project may be obtained by contacting Marsha Parlow with Great River Energy (763-445-5215, mparlow@greenergy.com), Michelle Lommel with Great River Energy (763-445-5977, mlommel@greenergy.com), or Dan McCourtney with Minnesota Power (218-355-3515, dmccourtney@allete.com).

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651-296-0391 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1-800-627-3529 or by dialing 711.

Project Map



Crow Wing Power

■ Existing Distribution Sub

Great River Energy

— Proposed 115 kV Transmission Line

— Existing Single Circuit 69 kV Transmission Line

Minnesota Power

▲ Transmission Substation

— 34.5 kV Transmission Line

— 115 kV AC Transmission Line



GREAT RIVER ENERGY

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



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