



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Department of Commerce



Issued: November 29, 2011

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETINGS

**In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Parkers Prairie
115 kV Transmission Line Project in Otter Tail County, Minnesota**

PUC Docket Number: ET2/TL-11-867

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting (EFP) staff will conduct a public information and environmental assessment scoping meeting on the route permit application by Great River Energy to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for the proposed Parkers Prairie 115 kV transmission line project. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information about the project and to identify issues and alternatives to study in the environmental assessment (EA) that will be prepared by EFP staff.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETING

Tuesday, December 13, 2011 -- 6:00 p.m.

Prairie Event Center
201 East Main Street
Parkers Prairie, MN 56361
(218) 338-4115

EFP staff will accept written comments on the scope of the EA until Friday, December 30, 2011. Please include PUC Docket No. TL-11-867 on all comments. Comments should be mailed, emailed, or faxed to:

Ray Kirsch
State Permit Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101-2198
Fax: 651-296-7588
raymond.kirsch@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 transmission line permitting process, the proposed project, and how the public can participate in the permitting process. Representatives from Great River Energy (GRE) 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 route alternatives to be studied in the EA.

Project Description. Great River Energy (GRE) proposes to replace approximately 2.1 miles of an existing 41.6 kV transmission line in Otter Tail County, Minn. with a new line at a voltage of 115 kV. In addition, GRE, in collaboration with Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC), proposes to modify and update the existing Parkers Prairie distribution substation, and to connect the substation and new line to an existing GRE 115 kV line through a switch structure (see attached map).

GRE proposes to construct the new 115 kV transmission line on the same alignment as the existing 41.6 kV line, currently located along the south side of County Road 6 (CSAH 6). GRE has requested a route width of 300 feet centered on CSAH 6, which would allow for the new transmission line to be constructed on the north or south side of CSAH 6, or some combination thereof. GRE has indicated the 115 kV line will require a right-of-way (easement) of 100 feet (50 feet on each side of the transmission line). Wood poles, ranging in height from 60 – 85 feet, will be used for the new line. Some specialty poles (e.g., taller poles) may be required at specific locations. The footprint of the Parkers Prairie distribution substation will be expanded 40 feet to the south to accommodate a new 115 kV transformer.

Review Process. Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. 216E), a route permit from the Commission is required to construct a high voltage transmission line. A route permit application for the project was filed by GRE on October 24, 2011. The application was subsequently accepted as complete by the Commission.

EFP staff is responsible for conducting the environmental review for route permit applications submitted to the Commission (Minn. Rules 7850). Environmental review for a project of this size requires the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA). The EA will examine the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed transmission line route (and any alternative routes) 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 EA.

Upon completion of the EA, a public hearing will be held in the project area. 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 speak at the hearing, present evidence, ask questions, and submit comments. Notice of the public hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list (see below).

Upon completion of the environmental review and hearing process, the record compiled for the route permit application will be presented to the Commission for a final decision. A decision by the Commission on a route permit for the Parkers Prairie project is anticipated in May 2012.

Eminent Domain. If issued a route permit by the Commission, GRE 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 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. Project mailing list registration is voluntary and may be done at any time.

Project Documents. A 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=32307>. 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 "867").

The route permit application is also available at the location noted below:

Parkers Prairie City Hall
102 North Otter Avenue
Parkers Prairie, MN 56361

Project Contacts. If you have questions or would like further information about this project, please contact:

Ray Kirsch, State Permit Manager
651-296-7588
raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us

David Birkholz, Public Advisor
651-296-2878
david.birkholz@state.mn.us

Information about the project may also be obtained by contacting Rick Heuring at 763-445-5979, rheuring@greenergy.com or Marsha Parlow at 763-445-5215, mparlow@greenergy.com, Great River Energy, 12300 Elm Creek Blvd., Maple Grove, MN 55369.

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.

