

**From:** [Carl Gibson](#)  
**To:** [Storm, Bill \(COMM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Great Northern Transmission Line (PUC docket # 14-21)  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 12, 2014 11:00:09 AM

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The Bear Lake Cabin Owners Association has asked me to express the concerns of our group about the Great Northern Transmission Line. The Association represents almost fifty cabins on Bear Lake in northeastern Itasca County. Both the proposed Orange and Blue routes of the Great Northern Transmission Line will pass within sight of the lake. The serious impacts on the lake and its human community should be considered in the environmental impact statement.

Bear Lake is a very special place for its cabin owners, many of whom have been coming to the lake for over fifty years. Many owners live in the nearby iron range towns and come to the lake frequently throughout the year. Others come from the twin cities area and a few come from other states. The special experiences people had here as children cause them to return to visit the lake even when they now live in faraway places.

It should also be noted the Bear Lake has a DNR campground with 27 sites and a picnic ground which bring many more people to the lake. People come for various reasons and engage in many different activities, but all come to value the edge of wilderness feeling they experience at Bear Lake.

The proposed Orange Route would have a very harmful impact on the lake. As people drive into the lake on Bear Lake Forest Rd., they would drive under the line as they approach the lake. Because the Orange Route would pass only a half mile to the east and because the towers would rise high above the trees, the line would dominate the entire eastern skyline. This would be particularly annoying to the cabin owners on the west side of Bear Lake, because the line would constantly be in view across the lake. But anyone out on the lake would be bothered by the intrusive view of the transmission line.

The Orange Route would also cross over the Bear Lake Snowmobile Trail just to the east of the lake. This segment of trail east to Highway 65 is also a primitive road access to the lake and is heavily used by ATV riders, hunters, bicyclists and hikers. In addition to the undesirable visual impacts of the Orange Route, cabin owners are also concerned about a possible decline in their property values caused by the proximity of the Orange Route.

These negative impacts of the Orange Route could be mitigated by moving it one mile to the east. Even shifting in a half mile further east would greatly reduce the intrusive impact on the lake and its surrounding forest.

If the Orange Route is not moved further east, the Bear Lake Cabin Owners Association strongly prefers the Blue Route which would pass a mile from the southwestern edge of the lake. It goes through a very remote area, and people in their activities around the lake would never come near it. It would still be visible from the lake, but this impact could be mitigated somewhat by moving the route further to the southwest.

The Bear Lake Cabin Owners Association hopes that you will give serious consideration to the concerns expressed above. Thank You,

Carl Gibson

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