



Public Information and Scoping Meeting

Menahga Area Transmission Project

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Numbers

- ET-2,E-015/CN-14-787 – Certificate of Need
- ET-2,E-015/TL-14-797 – Route Permit

March 2015
Menahga



AGENDA

- ▶ Certificate of Need and Route Permit Process
 - Public Utilities Commission
- ▶ Project Summary
 - Great River Energy
- ▶ Environmental Review
 - Department of Commerce
- ▶ **Citizen Comments and Questions**



Public Utilities Commission

- ▶ **Regulates**
 - Permitting for power plants, pipelines, transmission lines
 - Local and in-state long distance telephone companies
 - Investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities – rates and services
- ▶ **5 Commissioners**
 - Appointed by the Governor
 - Serve staggered terms
 - Full time employment
- ▶ **50 staff**



Large Energy Facility

- Capacity of 200 kilovolts (kV) or more *and*
- More than 1500 feet long

-OR-

- Capacity of 100 kV or more *and*
- More than 10 miles in Minnesota *or* crosses state line
- Requires **Certificate of Need** from Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
 - Minnesota Statutes, Chapter [216B](#)
 - Minnesota Rules, Part [7849](#)



High Voltage Transmission Line

- Will operate at 100 kV or more *and*
- Greater than 1500 feet in length

- Requires **Route Permit** from Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
 - Minnesota Statutes, Chapter [216E](#)
 - Minnesota Rules, Part [7850](#)



Who's Who?

- ▶ **Applicant** – Companies asking for Certificate of Need and Route Permit – *Great River Energy and Minnesota Power*
- ▶ **Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)** – State agency, conducts environmental review
- ▶ **Department of Commerce Energy Regulation & Planning** – State agency, represents the public interest when utilities ask to change rates, services, facilities
- ▶ **Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH)** – State agency, Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) holds hearings, summarizes the facts in the record, writes report for Public Utilities Commission



Who's Who?

- ▶ **Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Energy Facilities Planner** – Assists in building the record. Informs Commissioners on impacts of different decisions. Neutral party, does not give legal advice, not an advocate.
- ▶ **Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Public Advisor** – Helps citizens participate in the certificate of need and route permit processes. Neutral party, does not give legal advice, not an advocate.



Factors considered in Public Utilities Commission's decision on the **need and route**

- ▶ Human settlement – displacement, noise, aesthetics, cultural values, recreation, public services
- ▶ Public health and safety
- ▶ Economy– agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining
- ▶ Archaeological and historic resources
- ▶ Natural environment – air, water, plants, animals



Factors considered (continued)

- ▶ Maximize efficiencies
- ▶ Allow for future expansion
- ▶ Use of existing rights-of-way
- ▶ Use of natural boundaries – survey lines, field boundaries
- ▶ Electrical system reliability
- ▶ Costs to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line



Route Permit Includes...

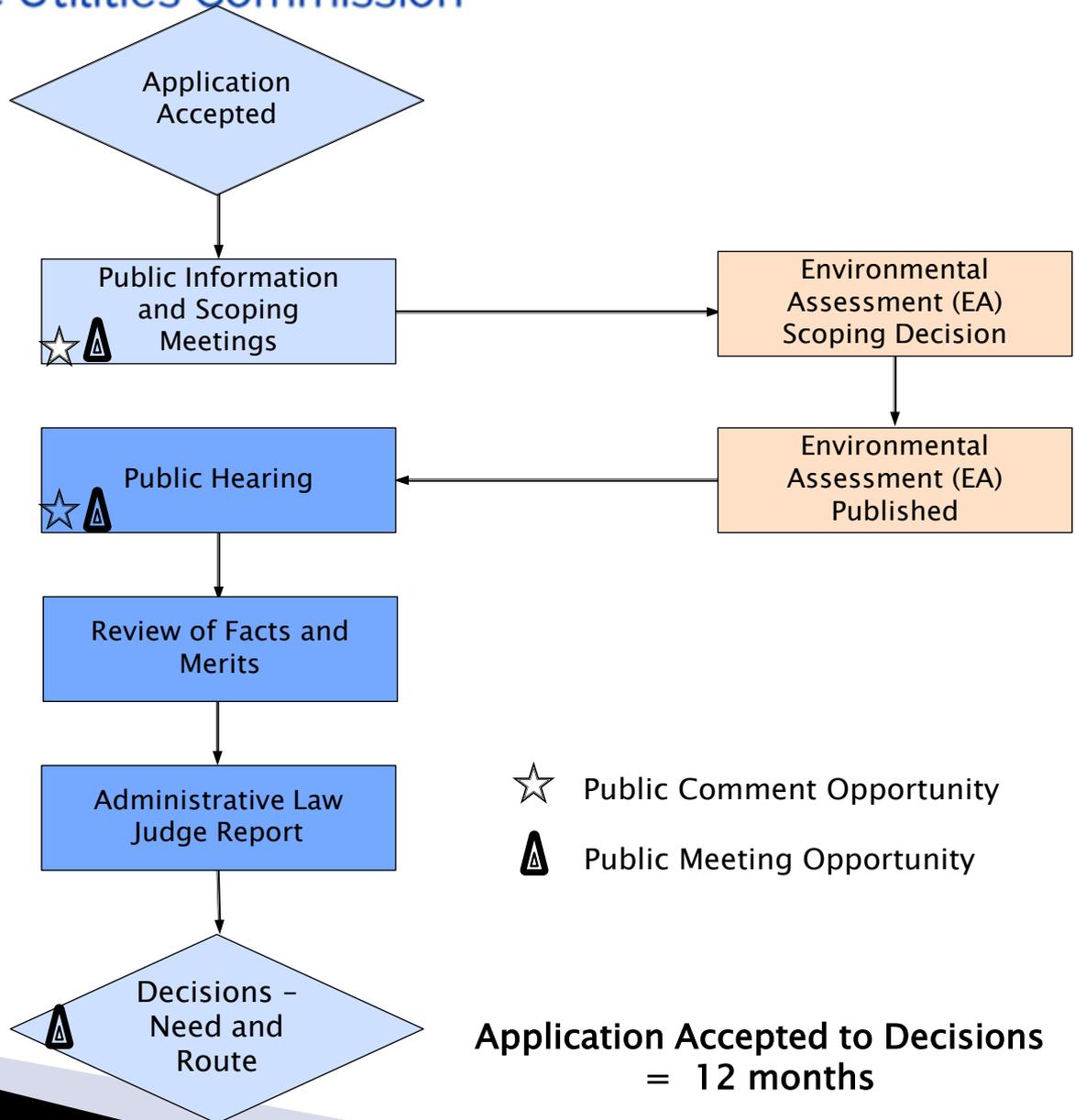
- ▶ Permitted Route
 - Location of a high voltage transmission line between two end points
 - Route width may vary, up to 1.25 miles

- ▶ Right-of-Way
 - Land required within a route for the construction, maintenance, and operation of a high voltage transmission line

- ▶ Anticipated Alignment
 - The anticipated location of the line and poles



High Voltage Transmission Line Certificate of Need and Route Permit Process





Estimated Project Timeline

Certificate of Need and Route Permit Applications Filed	January 2015
Certificate of Need and Route Permit Applications Accepted	February 2015
*Public Information & Scoping Meeting	March 2015
Comment Period Closes	April 10, 2015
Environmental Assessment (EA) Scoping Decision	May 2015
Environmental Assessment (EA) Published	August 2015
Public Hearing	September 2015
Administrative Law Judge Report	November 2015
Certificate of Need and Route Permit Decisions	January 2016



Notice of Comment Period

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD ON APPLICATION COMPLETENESS

Issued: January 26, 2015

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Route Permit for the Line 16 Reroute Project in St. Louis County

→ **PUC Docket Number/s:** E015/TL-14-977

→ **Comment Period:** Initial comment period closes February 2, 2015, at 4:30 p.m.
Reply comment period closes February 9, 2015, at 4:30 p.m.

*Comments must be received at the Commission by 4:30pm on the close date
Comments received after comment period closes will not be accepted*

Topic/s Open for Comment:

- Whether the route permit application contains the information required by Minnesota Rules parts 7850.3100?
- Whether there are there contested issues of fact with respect to the representations made in the application?
- Whether an advisory task force should be appointed?



KEYS to sending comments

- ❑ Include the PUC docket numbers
 - ❑ 14-787 and 14-797
- ❑ Stick to topics listed
- ❑ No need to submit comments more than once
- ❑ Oral and written comments carry the same weight
- ❑ Quality vs quantity
- ❑ Comments are public information
- ❑ Received at PUC by 4:30pm on end date



How do I get more information?

See all documents related to this project

- ▶ mn.gov/puc
- ▶ Select *Search eDockets*
- ▶ Enter the year and the Docket Number
 - 14 is the year and 787 is the number for **certificate of need**
 - 14 is the year and 797 is the number for **route permit**
 - Select *Search*
- ▶ The list of documents will appear on the next page



How do I get more information?

Project Mailing List

- ▶ Receive information about project milestones and opportunities for citizen participation
 - Email or US Mail
 - Complete and return *Project Mailing List* card
 - Contact the Public Utilities Commission
 - docketing.puc@state.mn.us
 - 651-201-2204 or 1-800-657-3782



How do I get more information?

- ▶ **Subscribe** to receive email notification when new documents are added to the Docket
 1. mn.gov/puc
 2. Select green box *Subscribe to a Docket*
 3. Type your email address
 4. For *Type of Subscription*, select *Docket Number*
 - 14 is the year and 787 is the number for Certificate of Need
 - 14 is the year and 797 is the number for Route Permit
 5. Select *Add to List*
- *Subscribing may result in a large number of emails



How do I get more information?

Subscribe to Dockets

Instructions

You may subscribe to receive electronic notification of documents filed before the MNPUC at
You will receive electronic notification at the email address you provide below. You may subscri

Email Address:

abc123@email.com *

Type of Subscription:

Docket Number ▼ *

Docket Number:

14 ▼ 787 *

Description:

Application of Great River Energy and
Minnesota Power for Certificate of
Need for the Menahga Area 115 kV

Add to List

Remove from List



PUC Project Contacts

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Public Utilities Commission
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Phone 651-296-0406
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Public Utilities Commission
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GREAT RIVER ENERGY

MENAHGA AREA 115 kV PROJECT

MPUC DOCKET NOS.
ET2, E015/CN-14-787
ET2, E015/TL-14-797



Project Need

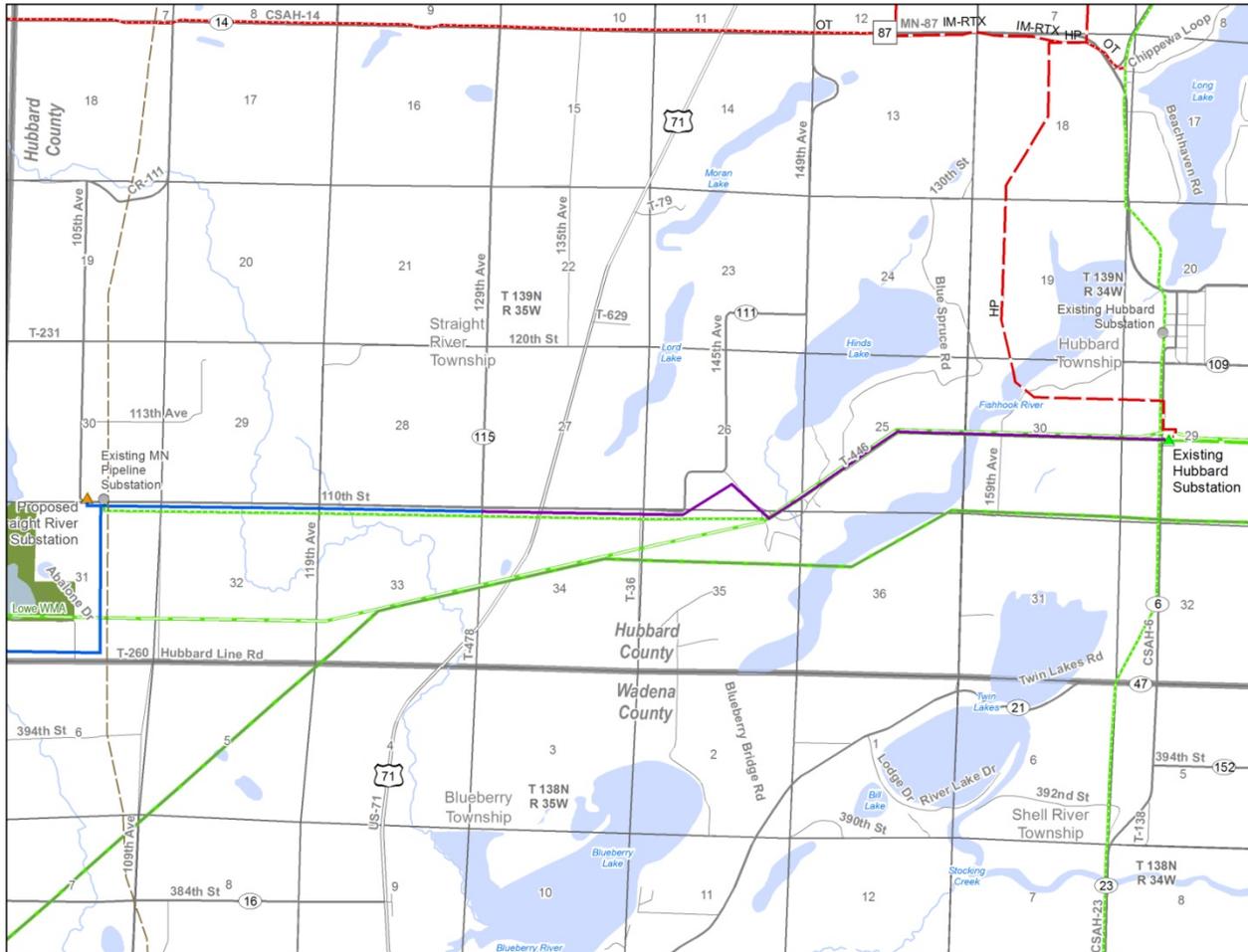
The Project would:

- Address electric system overloads in the area, as the existing 34.5 kV system is reaching maximum capacity.
- Provide an electric source to the proposed Minnesota Pipe Line Company pump station in Red Eye Township.

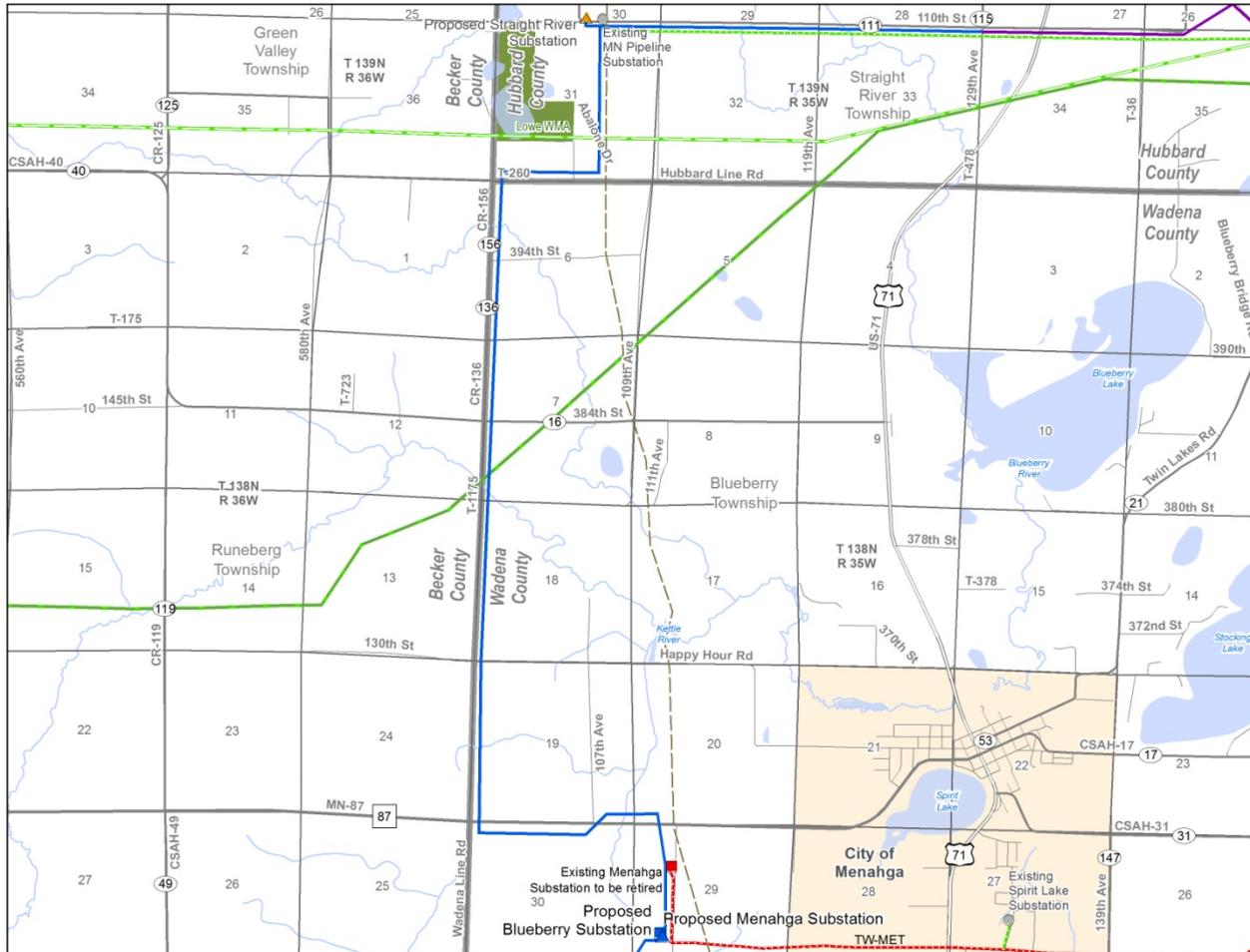
Proposed Project

- Construct a new 7-mile 115 kV line between the existing Hubbard Substation and the proposed Minnesota Power Straight River Substation (4.5 miles of this segment would be constructed to double-circuit standards).
- Construct a new 15.5-mile 115 kV line between the proposed Straight River Substation and the proposed Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation.
- Construct the new 115 kV Blueberry Substation in Section 29 of Blueberry Township. The existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation would be relocated to the Blueberry Substation site.

North Project Area



Central Project Area



South Project Area



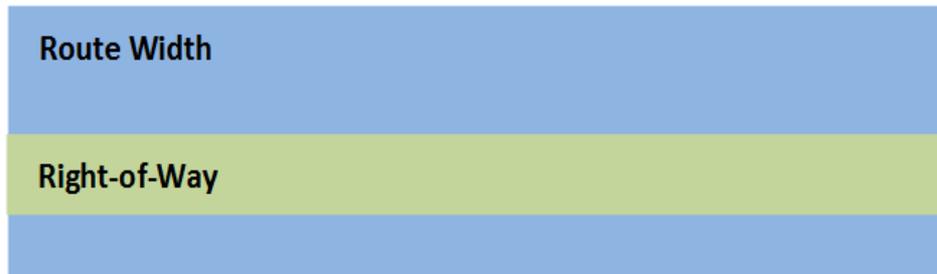
Route Width

Generally requesting 500-foot route width except for these areas:

- 1) requesting a wider route width in Section 26 of Straight River Township to route around a large wetland.
- 2) requesting additional route width around the Hubbard, Straight River, Blueberry and Red Eye Substations to allow adequate space for lines to enter the substations.

Right-of-Way (ROW)

- Within the 500-foot route width, requesting a ROW (also known as easement area) of 100 feet.



- Most structures would be located on private property and the ROW will overlap existing road rights-of-way in most areas. The majority of the ROW will be available for agricultural cultivation, underground utilities, fencing and access drives.
- During easement acquisition, landowners will be presented with an easement and offer of compensation.
- Information on tree removal, access and construction practices will also be shared during easement acquisition.



Proposed Transmission Structures

- Single pole wood structures, 60-90 feet above ground, will be used in most areas.
- Spaced approximately 250 to 450 feet apart.
- Specialty structures such as two-pole H-frames may be necessary based on final design to accommodate poor soils or crossing of existing utilities.



Construction Process

- Stake clearing limits and ROW/easement centerline
- Clear trees and vegetation from ROW
- Frame and set structures
- String conductor
- Restore and repair damage

Great River Energy Contacts

Menahga Area 115 kV Project

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Energy Environmental Review and Analysis

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Toll Free: 1-800-657-3794

Environmental Review

Department of Commerce Conducts Environmental Review for Transmission Lines

- Objective Analysis of the Project
 - Impacts and Mitigation Measures
 - Does not Advocate – Just the Facts
 - Goal = Informed Decision Making

Environmental Review

Environmental Assessment

- An Environmental Assessment will be Prepared for the Environmental Review of the Project
 - Certificate of Need
 - Route Permit
- First Step is Scoping – “Table of Contents”
 - What Do We Need to Know / Analyze
 - Input from Agencies, Local Governments, and the Public

Environmental Review

Scope of Environmental Assessment (EA) - Certificate of Need

- Human and Environmental Impacts
- Strategies to Mitigate Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
 - Size, Type, Timing

“A person desiring that a particular alternative or possible adverse impact of the project be considered...shall identify the alternative or impact to be included, provide an explanation of why the alternative or impact should be included... and submit all supporting information the person wants the commissioner to consider.”

Minnesota Rule 7849.1400

Environmental Review

Alternatives to the Project Must:

- Mitigate a Specific Impact(s)
 - Aesthetic Impact
 - Land Use Impact
 - Natural Resource Impact
 - Other
- Meet the Need for the Project



Environmental Review

Scope of Environmental Assessment (EA) - Route Permit

- Human and Environmental Impacts
- Strategies to Mitigate Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Route

“A person desiring that a particular site or route be evaluated shall submit to the commissioner, during the scoping process, an explanation of why the site or route should be included in the environmental assessment and all supporting information the person wants the commissioner to consider.

Minnesota Rule 7850.3700

Environmental Review

Alternative Routes Must:

- Mitigate a Specific Impact(s)
 - Aesthetic Impact
 - Land Use Impact
 - Natural Resource Impact
 - Other
- Be Specific and Identifiable
- Meet the Need for the Project



Comments

Comments on the Scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA)

- Verbal Comments at Tonight's Meeting
- Complete and Submit a Comment Sheet
- Comment On-Line
<http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>
- Mail, Fax, or Email a Comment:
 - Ray Kirsch
 - Minnesota Department of Commerce
 - 85 7th Place East, Suite 500
 - St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
 - fax: 651-539-0109
 - raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us
- Comment Period Ends: **April 10, 2015**

Comments

Comments on the Scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA)

- One Speaker at a Time
- Please State and Spell Your Name for the Court Reporter
- Please Limit Comments to a Few Minutes
- Maintain Respect for Others
- Direct Your Comments / Questions to the Scope of the EA

Comments

Comments on the Scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA)

- “Table of Contents”
 - What Do We Need to Know / Analyze
- Human and Environmental Impacts
- Strategies to Mitigate Impacts
- Alternatives to the Proposed Project
- Alternatives to the Proposed Route