

Written Public Comments Received on the
Scope of the Environmental Assessment for the
Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
Docket Nos. ET2, E015/CN-14-787 and ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Agencies

- (1) Minnesota Department of Transportation

Citizens

- (1) Roger Alajoki
- (2) Gerald Benjamin
- (3) Wayne and Gala Dunbar
- (4) Lori Elmore
- (5) Wayne and Heidi Haverinen
- (6) Mel and Ardith Holtan
- (7) Leofwin Lindblom
- (8) Michelle Neels
- (9) Kari Tomperi
- (10) Joseph Wuollet



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Technical Support

395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-366-4635

Fax: 651-366-4769

stacy.kotch@state.mn.us

Mailstop 678

April 10, 2015

Ray Kirsch, Environmental Review Manager
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA)
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: In the Matter of the Route Permit Application the Menahga Project 115kV Transmission Line Project
PUC Docket No ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Dear Mr. Kirsch:

On November 26th, 2013, a request was made for public comment on the scope of the Environmental Assessment (EA) relating to the route permit application by Great River Energy (GRE) and Minnesota Power for a 115kV High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL) with new and modified substations in Becker, Hubbard and Wadena Counties. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) submits the following comments in response to the request.

MnDOT appreciates the opportunity to comment on the scope of the EA. MnDOT wishes to participate in the development of the EA so that it will contain a thorough evaluation of the effects various route proposals may have on the state transportation system. MnDOT's fundamental interest is to ensure that the EA identifies and quantifies, to the extent possible, any impacts the proposed high voltage transmission line (HVTL) may have on the safety of the transportation system, the effectiveness of the operations or maintenance of the state trunk highway system and any additional costs that may be imposed on the state trunk highway fund as a result of the location of the proposed HVTL.

Upon initial review of the project application, it appears that a portion of the proposed single circuit 115Kv that runs parallel to and crosses over a Minnesota's trunk highway (TH) 87 may be close enough to occupy a portion of the highway right of way. MnDOT requests that in locations where the selected route crosses or runs parallel to a trunk highway, the route width should remain wide enough to provide flexibility in determining the exact alignment of the HVTL. Given the significant

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tree coverage along both sides of TH 87, MnDOT's Roadside Vegetation Management Unit will need to review the long form utility permit for potential impacts to native plant communities, DNR listed threatened and endangered plant species, specimen trees, and other functional (landscaped) woody vegetation on MnDOT right of way. GRE and Minnesota Power may choose to have this area reviewed prior to submitting a long form utility permit to avoid possible affects to the permitted route late in the permitting process.

Additionally, the proposed single circuit 115kV appears to require two crossings over US 71. Highway crossings by utilities generally do not pose insurmountable difficulties in issuing a permit, and MnDOT routinely grants such permits to a variety of types of utilities. These permits usually have conditions associated with them, such as placement of the poles so that they do not become a physical obstruction that might be struck by an errant vehicles or block the visibility of traffic. MnDOT also does not permit utilities to run diagonally across intersections and prefers that crossings occur as close to right angles as possible. MnDOT has a long history of working with utilities such as the GRE and Minnesota Power to establish appropriate conditions in locations where the utility seeks to cross a trunk highway. MnDOT does not anticipate encountering circumstances that would prevent it from being able to grant a permit, with appropriate conditions, for the HVTL proposed in this matter to cross US 71.

MnDOT's approach to the HVTLs such as those involved in GRE and Minnesota Power's proposal is to work to accommodate these HVTLs within or as near as feasible to the trunk highway rights of way, based on an evaluation of the specific locations to ensure that appropriate clearance is maintained to preserve the safety of the traveling public and highway workers and the effective operation of the highway system now and in the foreseeable future. MnDOT has adopted a formal policy and procedures for accommodation of utilities on the highway rights of way ("Utility Accommodation Policy"). A copy of MnDOT's policy can be found at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/guidance.html>

Any HVTL construction work, including delivery or storage of structures, materials or equipment that may affect MnDOT right of way is of concern such that MnDOT should be involved in planning and coordinating such activities. If work is required within MnDOT right of way for temporary or permanent access, please coordinate with Stephen Frisco (Hubbard Co), District 2A Permits, at 218-755-6553 / Stephen.Frisco@state.mn.us , Rich Munsch (Wadena Co), District 3A Permits, at 218-828-5778 / Richard.Munsch@state.mn.us , or Jim Utecht (Becker Co), District 4 Permits, at 218-846-7950 / James.Utecht@state.mn.us.

MnDOT has a continuing interest in working with GRE and Minnesota Power to ensure that possible impacts to the state transportation system are adequately addressed. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

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Sincerely,



Stacy Kotch

Utility Transmission Route Coordinator

Minnesota Department of Transportation

cc: Jim Utecht – MnDOT D4 Permits
Stephen Frisco – MnDOT D2A Permits
Rich Munsch – MnDOT D3A Permits
Tina Markeson – MnDOT Roadside Vegetation Management

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PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
Docket Nos. ET2, E015/CN-14-787 and ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Name: Alajoki Cemetery Roger Alajoki Chairman
Street Address: 38016 590 Ave
City: Menahga, State: mn ZIP: 56464
Email or Phone: 218.849.2624

Please share your comments on the environmental assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the Menahga Area 115 kV transmission line project.

- What impacts need to be evaluated for the project? What mitigation measures?
- Are there alternative routes that should be considered that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the route and the impact(s) being mitigated. If possible, include a map.
- Are there alternatives to the project that should be studied that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the alternative and the impact(s) being mitigated.

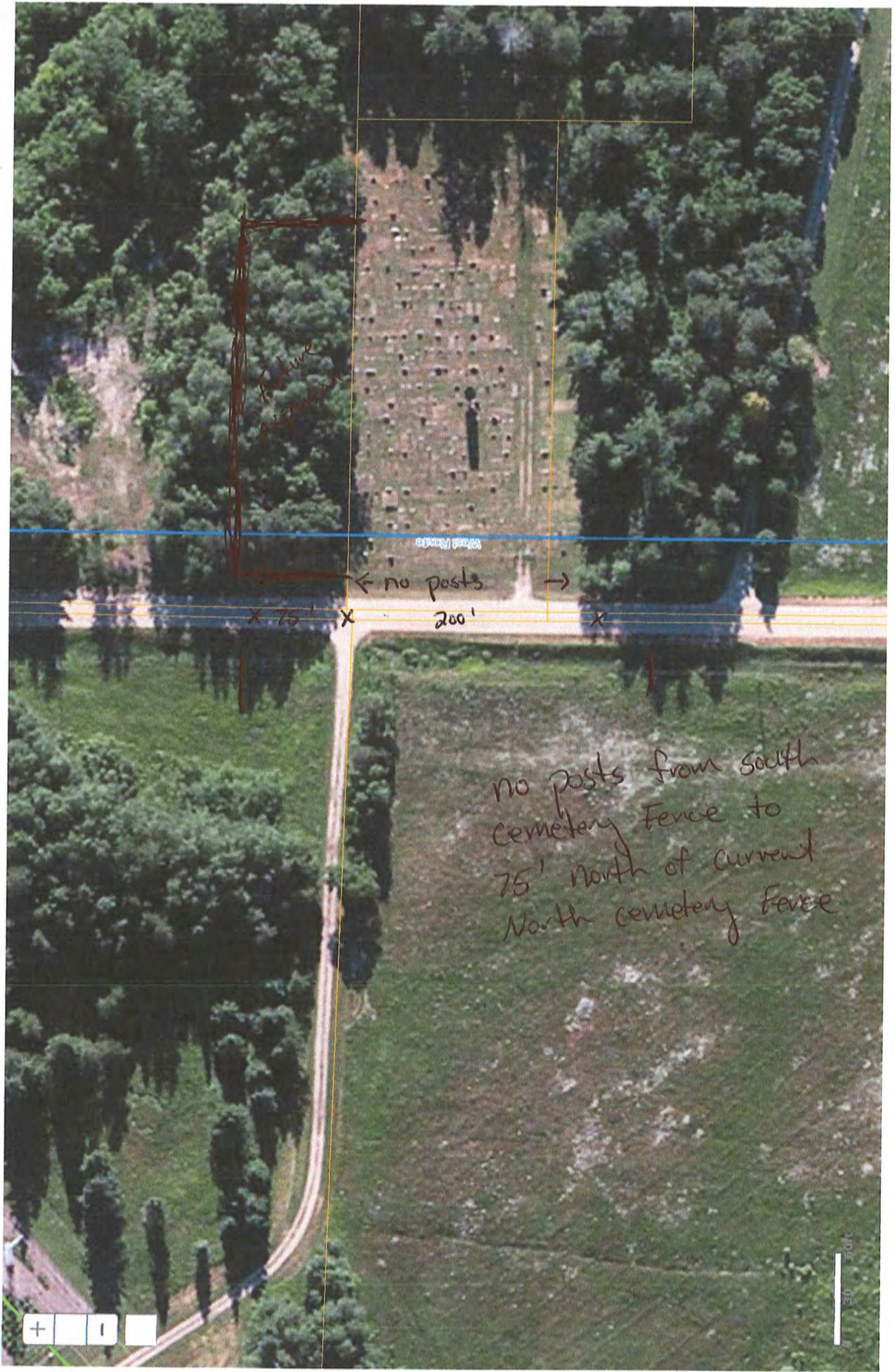
COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2015.

no posts in the cemetery or 75' to the north of
North Border land owner Brian Burkman will donate
75' of property on the north edge of current cemetery
for future expansion.

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Signature:  Date: 3/26/15

Please submit this form at today's meeting or mail it to the address provided on the back. Please use additional sheets as necessary. Comments can also be e-mailed to the Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager, Ray Kirsch, at: raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us or submitted online at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>.



From: commerce.donotreply@state.mn.us [mailto:commerce.donotreply@state.mn.us]
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2015 4:33 PM
To: #COMM_Consumer Protection
Subject: Complaint Ticket: Benjamin Gerald | Other (please specify)



85 7th Place East, Suite 500 | Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101 | (651) 539-1600 |
consumer.protection@state.mn.us

Complaint

Date Submitted : Wednesday, February 04, 2015

Inquiry Type (*if general inquiry, scroll to the bottom*): Complaint

Consumer Information

Name: Gerald Benjamin

Email Address: gb838x@att.com

Phone: 218 252 4579

Address: 16433 Arbor Rd, Menahga, Minnesota, 56464

Complaint Information

Industry : Other (please specify)Electric

Reason Contacting : Other (please specify)filing comments

Account Number (*for financial institutions complaints*) :

Company Information

Name : Todd Wadena Elect and Great River Energy

Address : not known, Menahga, Minnesota 56464

Individual Information (if applicable)

Name : docket 14-797

Address : , ,

Other Party Information (if applicable)

Name :

Address : , ,

Complaint Details :

PUC Docket Number: ET2, E015/CN-14-797 Item The new power line from Hubbard Sub Station to Menahga. I do not know if this line would be required I will take the position that it would be. I am concern about the power company putting their interest over the interest of the area being effected. I am also concerned about one of the reasons for building the new line. The reasons for building the line is to increase reliability, I believe that the Hubbard substation is not the best location for the line to tap power from the 230KVA line. I believe there should be a new substation located at the location were the 115KVA (perposeded line) goes south . This would do some major improvements, 1: The land would not be required for over 5 miles that is parallel to the 230KVA line 2: there is a power saving on the distabruption system by elimination of over 10 miles of line that the power will be traveling. 3: By having over 10 miles less of line to serve the prosed locations would help to increase reliability. I asked the question to Toad Wadena Repusantive about this and was told that they are not paying for the land/ line from the Hubbard substation . Great River energy would be building the line. If they build a substation then Toad Wadena Electric would need to pay for the substation. I find this reason as flawed and not in the best interest of the public. I need this to be sumited

Rice, Robin (PUC)

From: BENJAMIN, GARY <gb838x@att.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 7:33 AM
To: staff, cao (PUC)
Subject: filing comment on 14-797

PUC Docket Number: ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Item

The new power line from Hubbard Sub Station to Menahga.

I do not know if this line would be required I will take the position that it would be.

I am concern about the power company putting their interest over the interest of the area being effected.

I am also concerned about one of the reasons for building the new line.

The reasons for building the line is to increase reliability,

I believe that the Hubbard substation is not the best location for the line to tap power from the 230KVA line.

I believe there should be a new substation located at the location were the 115KVA (perposeded line) goes south . This would do some major improvements,

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Great River energy would be building the line.

If they build a substation then Toad Wadena Electric would need to pay for the substation.

I find this reason as flawed and not in the best interest of the public.

Gerald Benjamin

Wayne and Gala Dunbar
34308 109th Ave
Menahga, MN 56464

March 15, 2015

Raymond Kirsch
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN, 55101
651-539-0109

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Dear Mr Kirsch,

Recently, I was contacted by a representative of Great River Energy, Michelle Lommel, regarding the proposed installation of a new power line to service the new pipe line pump station located in Sebeka MN. I am one of the many residents being adversely affected by the proposed location of the new 115kv transmission lines.

You see, the proposed transmission line location cuts directly through my mature stand of Pine Trees, it also goes over top of a well that I use to water my small cattle herd that sustains my family financially. This proposed route will adversely affect not only my financial sustainability but also the environmental impact on my land is devastating to me.

I have lived on my small farm for over 40 years. In that time I have watched the 40 acre parcel across from my home mature into a 20 acre parcel of mature pine trees that are approximately 500 feet deep, and run down the entire roadway that is the proposed transmission line route and a mix of woods and lowland past that point. I have watched all types of wild life utilize this pine belt for protection and nourishment.

The 40 acre parcel is also used for my small beef farm in that I rotate feeding a herd into it during the winter months. This rotation allows me to keep diseases practically non-existent in my herd. It also puts much needed nutrients on the soil to help summer grasses and other nourishment for the wildlife to grow. Observing this parcel over my ownership has proven to me that I have positively increased the wildlife population because of my conservative use of the property. (If I was only interested in cattle production I would have logged off the entire 40 acre parcel with the exception of a windbreak for my home and over utilized the property as some people do.)

In meeting with the Great River Energy representative I was sadly informed that they plan on putting a 100 foot easement through my mature pines with a 500 foot access route. I was told by their representative that they plan on cutting a clear cut swath through my

pine trees at least 100 foot wide. I say at least because as explained to me they will cut all trees down that are within fifty (50) foot of the transmission line on both sides of the line, plus any trees that are more than 50 foot tall that could fall onto their power line. That means that they will be clear cutting at least sixty to seventy feet of my pine trees away from the power line or a one hundred twenty(120) to one hundred forty (140) foot swath out of my pine trees.

In addition, the 500 foot wide access swath will effectively put under their control the entire width of my pine tree shelter belt giving them full authority to do as they please to this mature stand. This undo control of my land will prevent me from ever utilizing this beautiful parcel for anything including over wintering my cattle or even maybe someday building my wife the small retirement home on the back end of the pines because the 500 foot access control will put an end to those dreams.

This one hundred forty foot swath, (at a minimum) will remove my windbreak for my home, leave my cattle with little over winter protection and damage valuable wildlife protection and production area. Not to mention that according to the GRE representative my well that I have on that parcel to water my cattle and wildlife will no longer be useable because it will be polluted with stray static electricity.

Sir, I am sure you are aware of studies done (independent of Great River Energy) that have shown negative affects that power line stray electricity has on livestock and humans. These negative affects span a range of behavioral issues to causing cancer. Both my wife and I are cancer survivors, and with me still battling the disease I am not looking forward to having another cancer cause being forced upon me.

In my meeting with the representative of Great River, she assured me that they had studies done proving that my concerns over another cancer cause was unfounded. However I honestly question the motives behind her study and am not sure it was a totally unbiased study. She also offered me 85% of their perceived value of the land of 100 foot wide easement, approx 2-1/2 acres and nothing for the rest of the 500 foot route width, to make me whole from the theft of my property, peace and quiet, shelter from the wind, and theft of my way of life. I found this personally demeaning and cold.

I have also contacted a local realtor and inquired as to the value of my 40 acre parcel should this transmission line come through. He advised me that if the line went through the property the way Great River is demanding I would not have a tract suitable as a building site because most people do not want to live that close to transmission lines and most people do not want to have approximately 20 acres of a 40 acre parcel not under their control even though they will be paying taxes on it. In addition the buildable portion of the property lie primarily if not totally within the 500 foot access swath. Therefore, the value of the land would decrease by about 50 percent.

I would like to be clear that I am not against the power line or the pipeline being done I just would like it to be done in a way that doesn't affect me and my way of life so

negatively. In fact, I offered to let the company route the line over already cleared land that I own only to be told that they did not want to take that route because it was inconvenient to Great River Energy and not a smooth road for them to travel. To be sure I was taken aback by that response. It confirmed to me that their route was being taken without due regard to the people, livestock and wildlife who live here, but rather for their convenience. I also offered a second way to take the line and again was rebuffed. I have attached a map that details both of my alternative routes that save mature trees and a way of life.

Sir, we are looking to you for help in this matter as we do not see any consideration towards us or our concerns from Great River Energy. In fact the only thing we see from them is a lack of caring for the environment and those who not only live within this specific environment but depend on it for a way of life apparently not understood by Great River Energy.

Respectfully awaiting your assistance,

Wayne Dunbar
Gala Dunbar

Wayne and Gala Dunbar

Encl: map of suggested routes
Great river Energy Notice

cc: Carole L. Schmidt
Michelle Lommel
Cezar Panait
Steve Green

Copy

January 26, 2015



NOTICE OF THE GREAT RIVER ENERGY AND MINNESOTA POWER APPLICATION FOR A NEW TRANSMISSION PROJECT IN THE MENAHGA AREA

Great River Energy, headquartered in Maple Grove, MN and Minnesota Power, headquartered in Duluth, MN are proposing a new high voltage transmission line project that will serve a new Minnesota Pipe Line Company (MPL) pump station and will significantly improve electric reliability for customers in the Menahga Area in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota (Project). On January 15, 2015, Great River Energy and Minnesota Power (Applicants) submitted an application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a route permit for the Project (Docket No. ET2, E015/TL-14-797) pursuant to the alternative permitting process contained in Minnesota Rules 7850.2800 to 7850.3900, and Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.04 (the Minnesota Power Plant Siting Act).

Because the total mileage of the proposed transmission project is greater than 10 miles, a Certificate of Need from the Commission is required per Minnesota Statutes 216B.2421 and 216B.243. The Certificate of Need application (Docket No. ET2, E015/CN-14-787) was submitted jointly with the Route Permit Application on January 15, 2015.

Applicants have studied the power service to the region and have determined that new 115 kV electrical facilities are needed to meet existing electric load and future electric load requirements. The proposed plan to address the power system overloads in the area and to serve the new Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (Todd-Wadena) Substation includes:

- Construction of approximately 7 miles of east-west transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and proposed new Minnesota Power "Straight River" Substation, which will replace the existing Minnesota Power 34.5 kV "522" feeder line. The first 4.5 miles between the Hubbard Substation and County Road (CR) 115 is proposed as double-circuit 115 kV line to accommodate a future Great River Energy project to the north. The approximate 2.5 miles between CR 115 and the proposed Minnesota Power Straight River Substation will be single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construction of a generally north to south, single-circuit transmission line (approximately 15.5 miles) between the proposed Minnesota Power Straight River Substation and the proposed new Todd-Wadena "Red Eye" Substation.
- Construction of the proposed new Minnesota Power Straight River Substation, Great River Energy "Blueberry" Substation, and Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation (that will serve the new MPL pump station); relocation of the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation to the new Blueberry Substation site and conversion of the voltage from 34.5 kV to 115 kV; and modifications to the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation.

See the enclosed fact sheet and map showing the proposed Project.

Applicants are requesting a route width of 500 feet, 250 either side of the transmission line centerline. Within those 500 feet, an easement width of 100 feet would be needed for the 115 kV line (50 feet each side of the transmission centerline, although portions of the easement will overlap with road rights-of-way). Single wood poles ranging in height from 60 to 90 feet above ground would be used for most of the Project.

The proposed Project uses or parallels existing utility and road rights-of-way. If the Commission issues a route permit for the Project, Applicants may, if necessary, exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire the land necessary for the Project (Minnesota Statute 216E.12).

Under the alternative review process, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) unit is responsible for conducting environmental review of the Project. EERA will prepare an environmental report for the Certificate of Need proceeding and an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Route Permit proceeding. EERA may elect to combine these two documents and issue one document, an EA, which satisfies the environmental review requirements for the Certificate of Need and Route Permit proceedings.

Within 60 days of acceptance of the Route Permit Application, Commission staff and the Department of Commerce will hold an information and scoping meeting in the Project area, at which the public will have an opportunity to ask questions, suggest issues to be studied, and propose system and route alternatives for evaluation. After the EA has been completed, a public hearing for the Project will be held in the Project area.

The Commission has one year to make a decision on the Certificate of Need and six months to make a decision on the Route Permit Application (Minnesota Statutes 216B.243 and 216E.04). The Commission may not issue a route permit for a project that requires a Certificate of Need until a Certificate of Need has been granted (Minnesota Rule 7850.3900). For more information about the regulatory process or to have your name included on the Project mailing lists, contact:

Minnesota Department of Commerce
Ray Kirsch, Environmental Review Manager
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
651-539-1841
800-657-3794
raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us
mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities

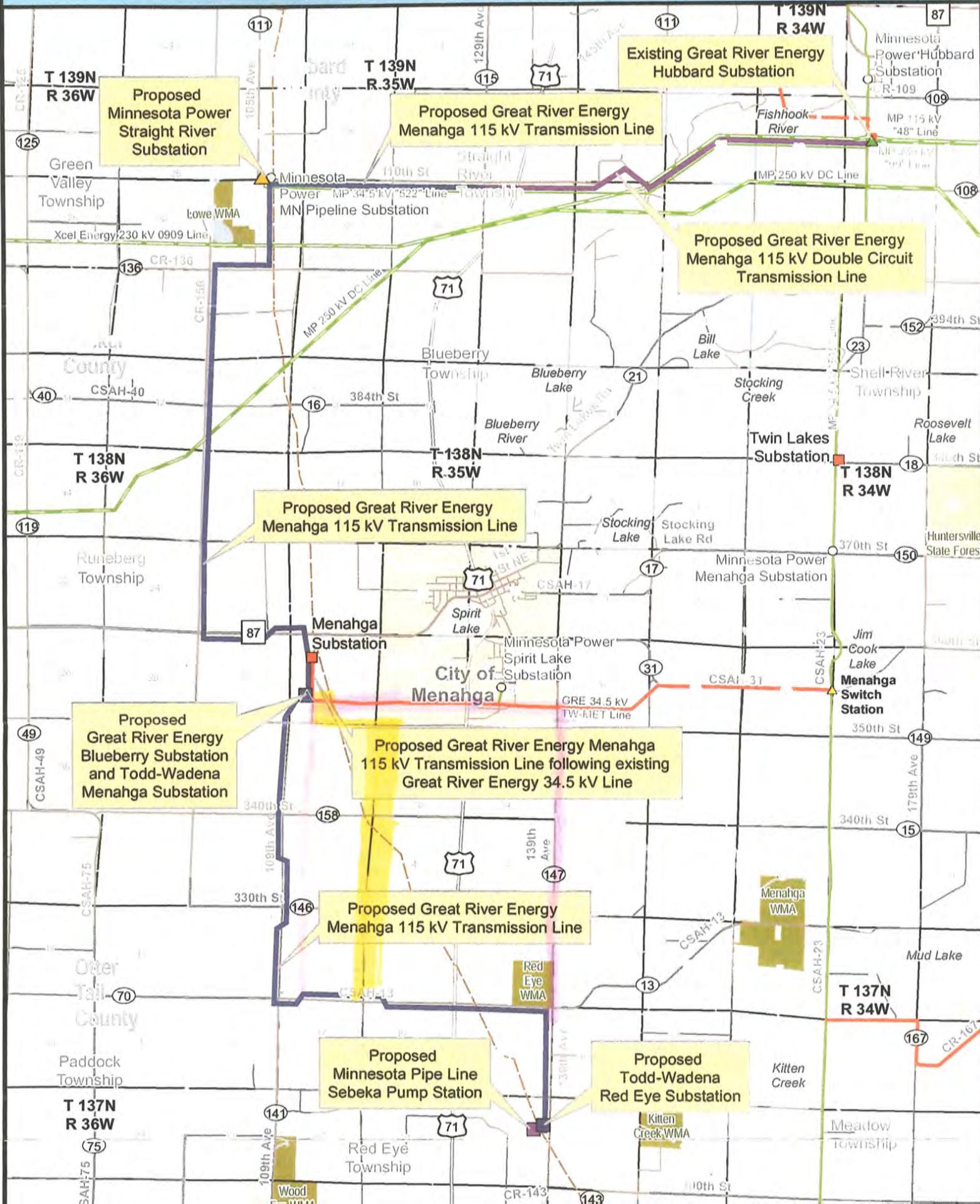
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Cezar Panait, Staff Analyst
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147
651-201-2207
800-657-3782
cezar.panait@state.mn.us
mn.gov/puc

There are two options for citizens, landowners, and interested persons to receive project information:

1. **Sign up for the Project Mailing List.** To sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate (meetings, comment periods, etc.) email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call 651-201-2234 with the docket number (14-787 or 797), your name, mailing address and email address.

You may request to receive notices by email or U.S. Mail. For projects with more than one docket (e.g., a project requiring a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit), you will be added to both mailing lists.

Preliminary Project Study Area



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PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
Docket Nos. ET2, E015/CN-14-787 and ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Name: LORI ELMORE
Street Address: 10705 ST.HWY 87
City: MENAHGA State: MN ZIP: 56464
Email or Phone: (218) 564-5096

Please share your comments on the environmental assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the Menahga Area 115 kV transmission line project.

- What impacts need to be evaluated for the project? What mitigation measures?
- Are there alternative routes that should be considered that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the route and the impact(s) being mitigated. If possible, include a map.
- Are there alternatives to the project that should be studied that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the alternative and the impact(s) being mitigated.

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2015.

- Pg. 1) At this address I have concerns regarding losing the wind buffer I have worked on for 20 years protecting my house and drive from the North/West winds in winter. Having a power pole to look at in my front yard with guy wires going to "who knows where" and a power line going over my drive way. West Central has a cable box in the same location as proposed pole location. I will have no cell reception at my home as I have already had to get a booster for them in the house. I have concerns of property losing value and in future would want to sell it would be difficult to do so.
- Pg.2) The destruction of habitat where the Showy Lady Slippers grow and flourish along with other wild flowers.
- Pg. 3) Pictures of some of the lady slippers that live there.

A couple of these concerns were discussed at the March 24 meeting, I added additional comments.

Signature: Lori Elmore Date: 3-25-15

Please submit this form at today's meeting or mail it to the address provided on the back. Please use additional sheets as necessary. Comments can also be e-mailed to the Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager, Ray Kirsch, at: raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us or submitted online at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>.



(see pictures of flowers)
 Outlined area is densely populated with the Showy Lady Slipper
 Dotted area contains the middle size yellow lady slipper and wild Iris.

Pay! Having a pole right in front of my house, guy wires running into my yard. Property value declining.
 Save Share Print Decline Met



X - marks a West Central cable box

- outlines wind break I have been trying to develop for 20 years.

pg 3



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FEB 05 2015

MINNESOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

PUC Docket No. 14-787

14-797

2-3-15

To Great River Energy : Minnesota Power,
And Daniel Wolf, Executive Secretary, MN Public Utilities Commission,

We are writing to let you know of our concerns with the proposed Menahga Area 115k-V Transmission Line Project.

First, we do not understand the need for a 500 foot easement.

Second, our farm is certified organic and in order to maintain the line, there can be no sprays used to clear vegetation.

Third, in the future we plan to put up an irrigator south of our driveway and having the power line there could reduce the acreage we can irrigate. We plan to use the water to irrigate pasture with the likely potential for cows to be grazing under the irrigator while it is operating under the wire. We are concerned that this could cause problems in our herd.

Another concern is that the pasture north of our driveway is always used for feeding the cows in the spring because it drains very well. We don't have any other clean areas for the cows in the

spring, and if it becomes a problem to have the cows under the wire we would be forced to build a barn to try keep the cows clean and dry. This could put a great financial burden on us.

Another concern is stray voltage. We have visited with many farmers that have dealt with stray voltage issues on their farms so we know it can be a real problem. We talked with our milk company's (Organic Valley) staff veterinarian, Dr. Gny, and his opinion is that we definitely won't want to feed cows anywhere near the wire. It is also his opinion that ~~the~~ the more energy running through the wire, the more problems there are with stray voltage.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our situation.

Sincerely,

Wayne: Heidi Haverinen
34585 109th Ave

Menahga, MN 56464
218-255-5611 (wayne)

Wayne Haverinen 2-3-15

Heidi Haverinen 2-3-15

Docket # 14-787 14-797

Dear Mr. Kirsch and whom it may concern,

In the past few months we have been receiving information on the proposed 115 Kv powerline project that will potentially run through our organic dairy farm. This raised many concerns for us and we started asking questions at the public meeting held a few months back. When talking with the engineers, we learned that our fence under the power line would carry current on it at all times, due to the electro-magnetic field (EMF). This causes worry about our spring feeding ground which happens to be under the proposed power line route. We brought our concerns to the Organic Valley staff veterinarian, Dr. Guy, and he advised us to not feed cows under the powerline because of the EMF and stray voltage.

This in turn brought on a meeting with a neighboring beef cattle farmer, Wayne Dunbar, myself, and Great River Energy's Michelle Lommel. She assured us that veterinarians tend to know nothing about stray voltage and EMF's. She also agreed to provide us with locations

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of cattle operations that feed cattle under high voltage power lines so we could talk to them about their experiences. So far we have heard no more on the subject from her.

Another concern we have has to do with our plan to put up an irrigator on the field south of our driveway. It worries us to pump water through the irrigator while it is passing under the wires because of the EMF. How will the current passing through the water stream, picked up from the EMF, affect children or cattle or other living beings that happen to be under the irrigation system?

We are asking you to consider an alternate route; either following Hwy 71 North from County Road 13 to the existing 34.5 kv power line that crosses Hwy 71, or going North on 139th Ave from County Road 13 to the 34.5 kv line (see attached map with alternate routes highlighted). When considering these alternate route, please think about how many homes will be affected by the current proposed route and how many less homes would be affected by one of our suggested routes.

In closing we ask that you feel free to stop

at our farm to visit as we consider granting permission
for the line to cross through our farm. Please remember
that the change to our farm will last forever.

Respectfully awaiting your consideration,

Wayne & Heidi Haverinen & family

Wayne Haverinen

Heidi Haverinen

4-4-15

Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Project



Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718
1-888-521-0130
www.greatriverenergy.com



TODD-WADENA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative
550 Ash Avenue NE
Wadena, MN 56482
1-800-321-8932
www.toddwadena.coop

Project Need

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power propose a new overhead 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project (Menahga Area Project) in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties to relieve overload issues on the transmission system in the area and to serve a new pump station to be built by Minnesota Pipe Line Company (MPL). The Menahga Area Project would:

- Strengthen the Menahga area electric transmission system, as the existing 34.5 kV system serving the area is becoming outdated and reaching its maximum capacity.
- Provide electric service to the proposed new Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative (Todd-Wadena) "Red Eye" distribution substation that would provide electric power to a new pipeline pump station proposed by MPL.

Project Description

The Menahga Area Project (see map on back) would consist of:

- An east-west section between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the proposed Minnesota Power Straight River Substation, of which approximately 4.5 miles will be double-circuit 115 kV line (see top photo) and approximately 2.5 miles will be single-circuit 115 kV line (see middle photo).
- A generally north-south section of single-circuit 115 kV line (approximately 15.5 miles) between the proposed Minnesota Power Straight River Substation and the proposed Red Eye distribution substation.
- The proposed new Minnesota Power Straight River Substation, Great River Energy Blueberry Substation, and Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation; relocation of Todd-Wadena's existing Menahga distribution substation to the new Blueberry Substation site and converting the voltage from 34.5 kV to 115 kV; and modifications to the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation and Great River Energy Hubbard Substation.

The proposed transmission line would generally require a 100-foot-wide right-of-way, 50 feet on each side of the centerline. The majority of the project would use single round wood poles ranging in height from 60 - 90 feet above ground and a distance between poles of 275 - 400 feet. Poles with guy wires/anchors, two-pole H-frame or steel poles may be required in some areas as line angles, soil conditions, or crossing of existing utilities necessitate. Some segments of the line would carry lower-voltage distribution underbuild (see bottom photo).

Permitting

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) must issue a Certificate of Need (CON) and Route Permit before project construction can proceed. Great River Energy will be the permitting lead and a combined CON/Route Permit application will be submitted containing relevant information that will help the Commission determine if there is sufficient need for the project and evaluate the proposed route and any alternative routes brought forth by the public. At the conclusion of the permitting process, the Commission will determine the final location of the proposed transmission facilities.

The public and regulatory agencies will have numerous opportunities to provide input during the CON and Route Permitting process, which is conducted and facilitated by Commission and Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) staff. Public meetings will be held and other opportunities will be provided for collecting comments and responses. The DOC will prepare an Environmental Assessment document for the project.

Easements/Trees

Later in 2015, Great River Energy will begin to contact landowners to present an easement and offer of compensation. Most poles will be located on private property, although the majority of the right-of-way can continue to be used for agricultural cultivation, underground utilities, fencing and access drives. During acquisition, information is shared on tree removal, access and construction practices. Removal of trees and vegetation in the right-of-way will be necessary for safety and maintenance.



Typical 115 kV Wood
Double Circuit Structure

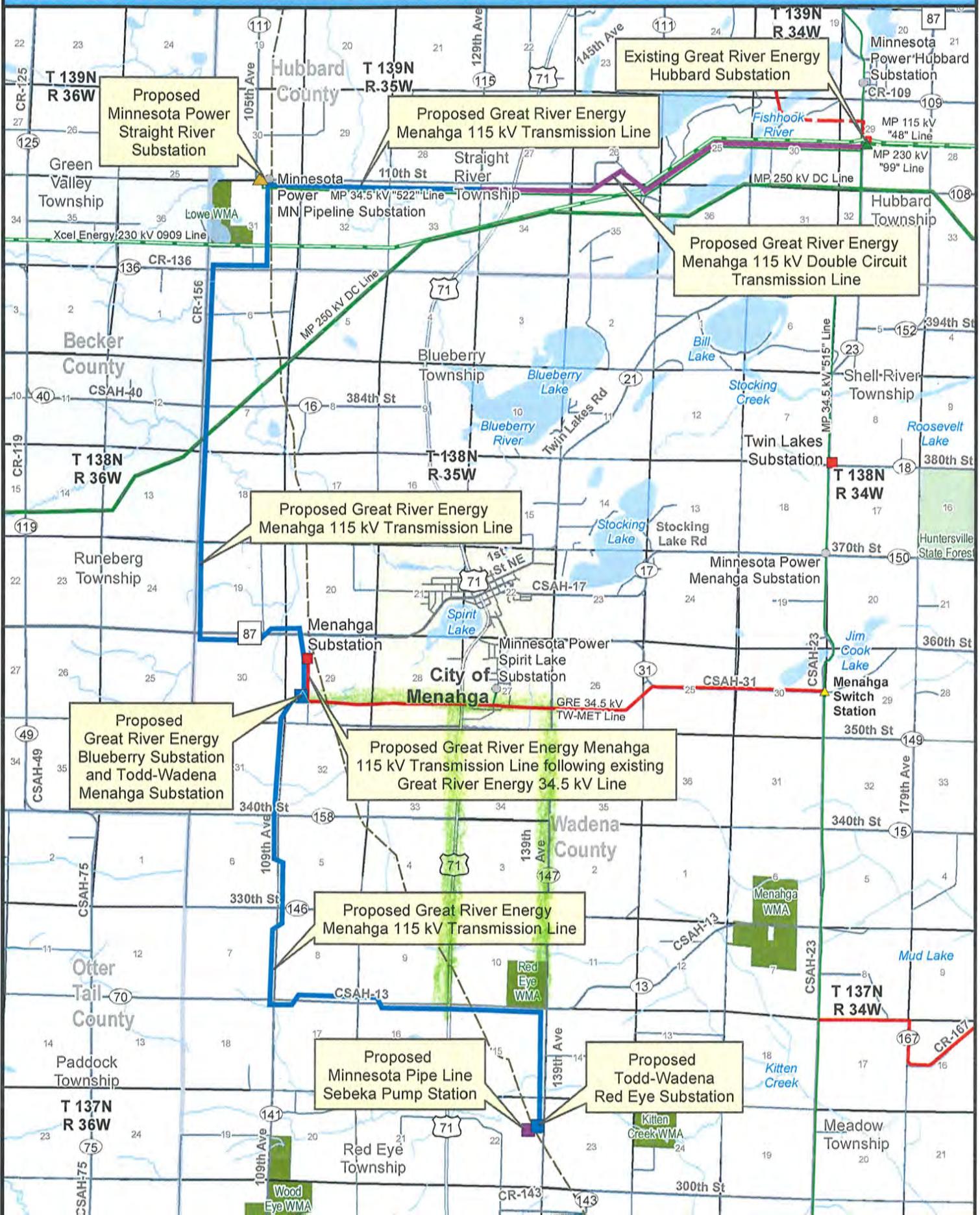


Typical 115 kV Wood
Single Circuit Structure



Typical 115 kV Wood
Structure with
Distribution Underbuild

Proposed Project



RECEIVED
FEB 02 2015

January 26, 2015

Daniel Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 – 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Docket Number 14-797
Routing for Great River Energy 115 KV Transmission Line

On January 12, 2015, I mailed a letter to your office (dated January 12, 2015) commenting on the above docket. Based on the letter I received on January 23, 2015, I was unsure if I have to resubmit that information because the final parts of Great River Energy's package were not submitted until January 15th. The end of the comment period for that docket is February 4, 2015. Please have the enclosed information considered by the Commission when they are reviewing this case and the comments by the people affected by it.

I live in a residence that is within the 500-foot blue band that is shown on the routing maps that are part of the GRE submission. About 4 to 6 residences (and a business) are within that band where the proposed routing of the new 115 KV transmission line is shown going east along State Hwy 87 for about 1.3 miles. The enclosed communication describes an alternative route that does not route the transmission line close to any residences in this area. Since I wrote the enclosed letter, I have learned the GRE has an option to purchase land south of all the residences on 11th Avenue that will be the location of the proposed Blueberry Substation (and relocated Menahga substation) and prevent the proposed transmission line from passing close to their homes.

A neighbor pointed out that there are pink-and-white Lady Slippers, the endangered or threatened State Flower, in both the north and south roadside ditched along State Hwy 87 west of 107th Avenue. There are also pink-and-white Lady Slippers in the ditch beside my house. A yellow Lady Slipper has been seen in the ditch near 107th Avenue. Menahga area residents know that these flowers are here generally between June 16th and June 26th each summer and come to look at them. These delicate flowers would probably not survive the construction activity of placing transmission line poles.

Please send this package of information (both the letters dated January 12th and January 26th) to the Commission for their consideration related to the GRE Transmission line.

Sincerely,


Mel Holtan


Ardith Holtan

10244 State Highway 87
Menahga, MN 56464
218-564-4140

Copies of this communication were sent to:

Michelle Lommel
Senior Field Representative
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Trans. Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Todd-Wadena Electric Coop
Design/Permitting Section
P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Cezar Panait, Staff Analyst
121 - 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

1-12-15
RECEIVED
JAN 15 2015
MAILROOM

Re: Docket No. ET2, E015/CN-14-787
Routing for Great River Energy 115 KV Transmission Line

I am a resident of property adjacent to the proposed route of this transmission line. I wish to suggest a route change that would move a part of that line so that it would not run beside seven residences while not making any difference in the total length of the line.

Almost all my knowledge about this project is the result of a conversation with Michelle Lommel of Great River Energy (GRE) at the public meeting held in late September in Menahga, MN. My interest in the project deals with the part of the line that runs beside State Highway 87 between the County Line between Wadena and Becker Counties and 111th Avenue in Wadena County. Based on that conversation, GRE intends to create a 100 foot wide Right-of-Way (ROW) on the south side of Hwy 87 for some distance east from the County Line, and then move the Right-of-Way and transmission line to the north side of Hwy 87 some place west of 107th Avenue. The Right-of-Way would continue along the north side of the highway until the transmission line would cross the highway a short distance west of 111th Avenue to go south to the proposed substation. My understanding of the reason for moving the ROW from the south side of highway to the north side is because they need to have guy lines to support the poles when the line makes a 90 degree turn, and there would not be space for such anchors if the ROW was right beside the south side of the highway.

My land and residence is in the NW quarter of the NW quarter of Section 29 of Blueberry Township. Highway 87 runs along the north side and 111th Avenue runs along the east side of my property. The existing Menahga Substation of Todd-Wadena Electric is adjacent to the SE corner of my 40 acres. There is an easement and distribution power line for Todd-Wadena Electric along the east side and north side of this property. The centerline of that easement is 61 feet from the north end (and television antenna) of my house. The three pipelines of Minnesota Pipe Line Company also cross the northeast corner of my property. A Natural Gas pipeline enters the south side of my property and exits

the north side to cross the highway and continues north. Its path across the 10 acres of grass along 111th Avenue is unclear, but is not a straight line (a few years ago I was going to do some digging in that area. The man from the Gas Company that marked the line said that he could not have good confidence in detecting that pipe location.) With the proposed routing, the new 115 KV line would follow the existing distribution line across that 10 acres of grass and have to miss both the oil and natural gas pipelines. The 115 KV transmission line would also be routed close to a residence on the west side of 111th Avenue in this scenario.

I am concerned that the presence of the 115 KV transmission line across the road from my house would, if not reduce the market value of my residence, it would at least reduce its marketability (speed of sale) when I, or my heirs, considered it to be time to sell the property. While I am willing to consider health problems/fears blamed on EMF from power lines as old-wives tales, a more immediate EMF concern is the closeness of my TV antenna to that EMF source. I presently have TV service off-the-air through that antenna. Having a high EMF source nearby might introduce static that would ruin the picture, etc. Cable service would be a extra \$500-a-year cost that I could ill-afford. Another problem is that the radio stations I prefer to listen to have weak signals in this area. Would there be additional static in those signals?

My goal in trying to change the routing of the 115 KV transmission line is to suggest a routing change that will remove proximity to residences along Highway 87 without putting it close to any other residences.

There are six residences and a business (gravel pit with buildings near the highway) along Highway 87 between the County Line road and 111th Avenue. They are all (except one farm place) within a hundred feet or so of the highway. The southeast corner of the intersection of the County Line road and the highway is a gravel pit operation that is primarily bare ground. There are no buildings along the west side of County Line road between a half mile north of Highway 87 and where the extension of the GRE 34.5 KV transmission line would meet the County Line road. There is a small housing development back in the woods west of the County Line road about a half mile south of the highway. Both north and south of Highway 87 there is a

wetland about a quarter mile wide that must be crossed. The headwaters of that wetland start somewhere in the center of Section 30, but might not be as much as 3/4th mile south of the highway. The land in the south half of Section 30 is all woods with a mixed stand of hardwoods (no residences or farm ground).

If the 115 KV transmission line is routed straight south along the east side of the County Line road to a quarter mile north of 350th Street and then east across Section 30 of Blueberry Township (lining up with where the GRE 34.5 KV line comes in from the east), the route does not pass close to any residences. If GRE and Todd-Wadena Electric select a site for the proposed new GRE/Blueberry Substation that is south of the residence that is between the existing Menahga Substation and the present location of the GRE 34.5 KV line, the 115 KV transmission line would not pass close to any residences on Sections 29 or 30 of Blueberry Township. The transmission line leaving the proposed Substation to go south toward Sebeka could go back west along the incoming line through the woods until it lined up with 109th Avenue to continue south. The Natural Gas pipeline comes up 109th Avenue to enter Section 30 at 350th Street.

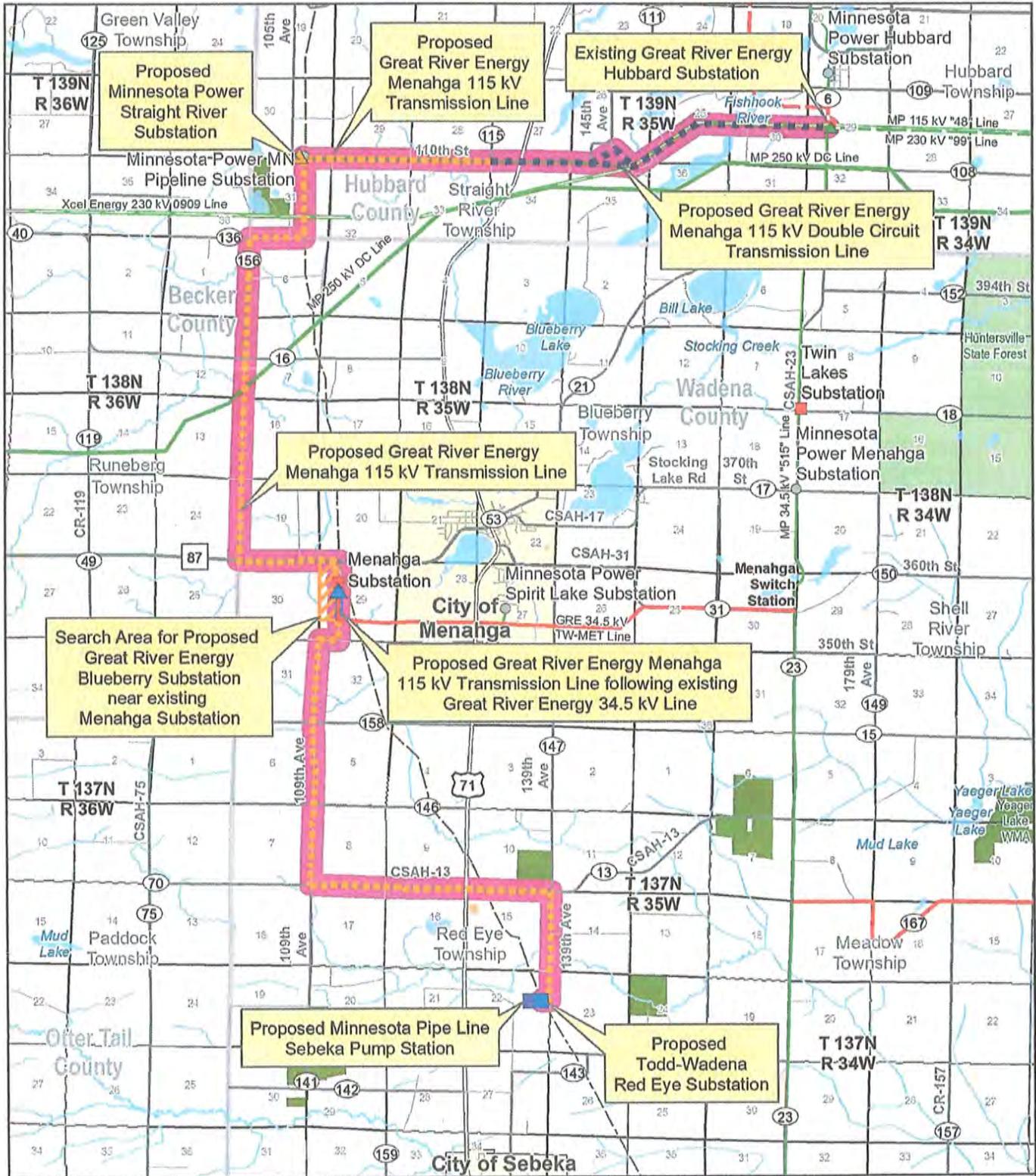
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Either way, my property has the potential to be involved.

Sincerely

Leofwin Lindblom

Leofwin Lindblom
10961 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464
southpaw@wcta.net



- Proposed**
- Great River Energy Double Circuit 115 kV Transmission Line
 - Great River Energy Single Circuit 115 kV Transmission Line
 - Great River Energy Double Circuit With existing Transmission Line
 - Minnesota Pipe Line Pump Station
 - ▲ Great River Energy Transmission Substation
 - ▲ Todd-Wadena Distribution Substation
 - Notice Area (1,500 feet wide)

- Existing**
- Great River Energy 115 kV Transmission Line
 - Great River Energy 34.5 kV Transmission Line
 - Great River Energy Transmission Substation
 - ▲ Todd-Wadena Distribution Substation
 - Minnesota Power Distribution Substation
 - Minnesota Power 34.5 kV Transmission Line
 - Minnesota Power 115 kV Transmission Line
 - Minnesota Power 250 kV DC Transmission Line
 - Minnesota Power and Xcel Energy 230 kV Transmission Line
 - Existing MPL Pipeline

**Menahga Area 115 kV
Transmission Project
Map
Attachment 1**

0 0.5 1 Miles

GREAT RIVER ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy Companies

GIS Data sources include: MNGEO, MNDNR, MNDOT, and Great River Energy.

Copies of this communication will be sent to:

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Cezar Panait, Staff Analyst
121 - 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Department of Commerce, EERA
Ray Kirsch, Environmental Review Manager
85 - 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101

Michelle Lommel
Senior Field Representative
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Carole L, Schmidt
Supervisor, Trans. Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Todd-Wadena Electric Coop
Design/Permitting Section
P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

Midwest Specialties
10121 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

M. Holtan
10244 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

B. Holtan
10482 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

Mrs. James Wilmes
10732 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

L. Elmore
10705 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

G. Tomperi
35649 - 111th Avenue
Menahga, MN 56464

Durwin Tomperi
11508 - 350th Street
Menahga, MN 56464

Butch Cole or Current Resident
10130 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464

PC 14-787
14-797

January 26, 2015

RECEIVED
FEB 02 2015
MINNESOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Daniel Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 - 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Docket Number 14-797
Routing for Great River Energy 115 KV Transmission Line

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Leofwin Lindblom

Leofwin Lindblom
10961 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464
(218)-564-4004
southpaw@wcta.net

Copies of this communication were sent to:

Michelle Lommel
Senior Field Representative
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Carole L. Schmidt
Supervisor, Trans. Permitting and Compliance
Great River Energy
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P.O. Box 431
Wadena, MN 56482

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Cezar Panait, Staff Analyst
121 - 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

Jan 12, 2015

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Either way, my property has the potential to be involved.

Sincerely

Leofwin Lindblom

Leofwin Lindblom
10961 State Hwy 87
Menahga, MN 56464
southpaw@wcta.net

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project
Docket Nos. ET2, E015/CN-14-787 and ET2, E015/TL-14-797

Name: Lesperin Lindblom
Street Address: 10962 State Hwy 87
City: Menahga MN State: _____ ZIP: 56216
Email or Phone: 218-564-4004

Please share your comments on the environmental assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the Menahga Area 115 kV transmission line project.

- What impacts need to be evaluated for the project? What mitigation measures?
- Are there alternative routes that should be considered that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the route and the impact(s) being mitigated. If possible, include a map.
- Are there alternatives to the project that should be studied that mitigate impacts? If so, please describe the alternative and the impact(s) being mitigated.

COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2015.

I submitted a written comment in mid-January

The suggestion was made at this meeting
that the routing be follow the pipeline
easement. I would like to add my vote
to that route. Both the natural gas &
oil pipelines cross my land

Signature: Lesperin Lindblom Date: 3-24-15

Please submit this form at today's meeting or mail it to the address provided on the back. Please use additional sheets as necessary. Comments can also be e-mailed to the Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager, Ray Kirsch, at: raymond.kirsch@state.mn.us or submitted online at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities>.

March, 24, 2014

To whom it may concern,

Recently, my parents were contacted by a representative of Great River Energy, Michelle Lommel, regarding the proposed installation of a new power line to service the new pipe line pump station located in Sebeka MN. My husband and I am one of the many residents being adversely affected by the proposed location of the new 115kv transmission lines.

The proposed transmission line location cuts directly through their mature stand of Pine Trees, it also goes over top of a well that we use to water my small cattle herd. This proposed route will adversely affect not only my financial sustainability but also the environmental impact on their land is devastating to me.

I was raised on this small farm and came back to it to follow in my parents footsteps, after being away for 10 years, and started a small cattle herd. Over time, I have watched the 40 acre parcel across from my home mature into a 20 acre parcel of mature pine trees that are approximately 500 feet deep, and run down the entire roadway that is the proposed transmission line route and a mix of woods and open pasture past that point. I have watched all types of wild life utilize this pine belt for protection and nourishment.

The 40 acre parcel is also used for my small beef herd, in that we rotate feeding a herd into it during the winter months. This rotation allows me to keep diseases practically non-existent in my herd. It also puts much needed nutrients on the soil to help summer grasses and other nourishment for the wildlife to grow. Observing this parcel over the years has proven to me that we have positively increased the wildlife population because of our conservative use of the property.

In meeting with the Great River Energy representative my father was sadly informed that they plan on putting a 100 foot easement through this mature pine belt with a 500 foot access route. He was told by their representative that they plan on cutting a clear cut swath through the pine trees at least 100 foot wide. I say at least because as explained to him, they will cut all trees down that are within fifty (50) foot of the transmission line on both sides of the line, plus any trees that are more than 50 foot tall that could fall onto their power line. That means that they will be clear cutting at least sixty to seventy feet of these pine trees away from the power line or a one hundred twenty(120) to one hundred forty (140) foot swath out of the pine trees.

In addition, the 500 foot wide access swath will effectively put under their control the entire width of the pine tree shelter belt giving them full authority to do as they please to this mature stand. This undo control of his land will prevent me from ever utilizing this beautiful parcel for anything including over wintering my cattle.

This one hundred forty foot swath, (at a minimum) will remove my windbreak for my home, leave my cattle with little over winter protection and damage valuable wildlife protection and production area. Not to mention that according to the GRE representative the well that is on that parcel to water my cattle and wildlife will no longer be useable because it will be polluted with stray static electricity.

I am sure you are aware of studies done (independent of Great River Energy) that have

shown negative affects that power line stray electricity has on livestock and humans. These negative affects span a range of behavioral issues to causing cancer. Both my parents are cancer survivors and I am concerned what effect this power line will have on them.

In my fathers meeting with the representative of Great River, she assured him that they had studies done proving that our concerns over another cancer cause was unfounded. However I honestly question the motives behind her study and am not sure it was a totally unbiased study.

She also offered him 85% of their perceived value of the land of 100 foot wide easement, approx 2-1/2 acres and nothing for the rest of the 500 foot route width, to make him whole from the ravashing of his property, our peace and quiet, shelter from the wind, and theft of our way of life. I found this personally demeaning and cold.

I would like to be clear that I am not against the power line or the pipeline being done I just would like it to be done in a way that doesn't affect me, my parents and our way of life so negatively. In fact, he offered to let the company route the line over already cleared land that he owns, only to be told that they did not want to take that route because it was inconvenient to Great River Energy and not a smooth road for them to travel. To be sure he was taken aback by that response. It confirmed to me that their route was being taken without due regard to the people, livestock and wildlife who live here, but rather for their convenience and gain. He also offered a second way to take the line and again was rebuffed. We spent some time to check out several alternative routes that would not adversely affect our, or others, way of life and should be convenient for Great River Energy.

we are looking to you for help in this matter as we do not see any consideration towards us or our concerns from Great River Energy. In fact the only thing we see from them is a lack of caring for the environment and those who not only live within this specific environment but depend on it for a way of life apparently not understood by Great River Energy.

Respectfully awaiting your assistance,



Michelle Neels
34236 119th Ave
Menahga, MN 56464

From: apache@web.lmic.state.mn.us
To: [Kirsch, Raymond \(COMM\)](#)
Subject: Tomperi Mon Apr 6 14:23:25 2015 ET2, E015/TL-14-797
Date: Monday, April 06, 2015 2:23:30 PM

This public comment has been sent via the form at: mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/publicComments.html

You are receiving it because you are listed as the contact for this project.

Project Name: Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project

Docket number: ET2, E015/TL-14-797

User Name: Kari Tomperi

County: Wadena County

City: Menahga

Email: Ktomperi@wcta.net

Phone: 218.564.5335

Impact: I am very concerned about the jog that is being proposed in sections 19, 20, 29, and 30 of Blueberry Township. If the Menahga substation is being abandoned, why is the route not designed to just extend further south through section 30 and then across section 29. The area where the line crosses 87 is a very pristine tamarack and lady slipper refuge. Whereas the route south through 30 is farmland and willow bog.

I am also concerned about the siting of the Blueberry Station, it would appear less damaging if it were on the far west side of sec 30.

Mitigation: I am suggesting a straight line south through Section 30 of Blueberry Township to a substation at the location where the line then heads directly east to reconnect with the existing line. This also impacts less homes on the proposed route.

Submission date: Mon Apr 6 14:23:25 2015

This information has also been entered into a centralized database for future analysis.

For questions about the database or the functioning of this tool, contact:

Andrew Koebrick
andrew.koebrick@state.mn.us

Kirsch, Raymond (COMM)

From: Joe Wuollet <cuzzyjoe@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 02, 2015 9:50 AM
To: projects@greenergy.com; Panait, Cezar M (PUC); Kirsch, Raymond (COMM);
cschmidt@GREnergy.com; mlommel@GREnergy.com; rep.steve.green@house.mn;
sen.rod.skoe@senate.mn
Subject: Power line proposed in Menahga MN Area

To Whom it May Concern:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am a property owner along the route of the Proposed Great River Energy Menahga 115 kV Transmission Line (Docket No. ET2, E015/CN-14-787). My Property is legally described as; Section 12 Township 138 Range 036 SE1/4 of NE1/4. In easier terms, I own the west side of the first quarter mile of CR-156 north of CSAH-40 along the proposed route.

I have no interest in, and no desire for, a high line to cross or run along or through said property. I will soon be building my home and have already begun to farm on that property, and do not wish to have stray electricity by my home and farm. I moved to this area from the Minneapolis metropolitan area to remove myself from these proven dangers and their effects on agriculture. My devotion to the avoidance of said dangers has prompted me to plan the construction of my home, and life thereafter, not connected to the power grid, rather finding alternative means to power my home and lifestyle.

It is my desire in this notification to state in the strongest possible terms my opposition to this line crossing my property and request that, at a minimum, the proposed line stay east on the Wadena County side of CR-156.

Any questions, comments, and concerns may be addressed by e-mail to cuzzyjoe@hotmail.com, or mailing me at my current address:

Joseph Wuollet
14787 583rd Ave
Menahga, MN 56464

Thank You,
Sincerely,
Joseph Wuollet