



Draft Scoping Document

*Bull Moose 115 kV Project
PUC Docket No. E2/TL-15-628*

Prepared by Department of Commerce
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis

October 12, 2015

This document is intended to provide information about the scoping process as well as the process for preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA). At the conclusion of the scoping process, a formal scoping decision will identify the issues and alternatives that the Department of Commerce (Commerce) determines would be useful to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) in making a permit decision, and therefore appropriate for inclusion in the EA.

Introduction

On August 7, 2015, Great River Energy (applicant) filed an application with the Commission for a route permit to construct approximately two and one-half miles of new 115 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric high voltage transmission line (HVTL) in Cass County, Minnesota. The Commission docket number for this project is ET2/TL-15-628. A copy of the application is available at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?id=34235>.

Proposed Project

The proposed project is located entirely in Cass County, Minnesota. The majority of the applicant's proposed route is in Bull Moose Township with portions of its width crossing into Pine River Township.

Project Purpose

The applicant's stated purpose is to provide electric service to a proposed, new crude oil pumping station (pump station) located approximately two and three-quarter miles south/southwest of Backus, Minnesota. This pump station is associated with the Line 3 Pipeline Replacement Project proposed by Enbridge Pipeline, Limited Partnership (PL-9/PPL-15-137).

Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct approximately two and one-half miles of new 115 kV overhead electric transmission line extending from the existing Minnesota Power Badoura to Pine River "#142" 115 kV electric transmission line (142 Line) to the proposed pump station. The proposed transmission line will interconnect with the 142 Line and travel northeast cross-country for approximately one-quarter mile towards an existing ± 250 kV direct current electric transmission line (DC Line) right-of-way (ROW), then parallel immediately adjacent to the south side of the DC Line ROW east approximately two and one-quarter miles, and lastly turn north and cross under the DC Line to interconnect with a proposed Enbridge substation and pump station.

The applicant is requesting a 200 foot route width for the project with a wider route width in select areas near the pump station. The applicant indicates the transmission line will require a 100 foot ROW with a wider width in select locations to accommodate needed guy wires and anchors. This ROW will abut the south side of the existing DC Line ROW. Transmission line structures will be 70 to 80 feet in height, with a span of 350 to 400 feet between structures.

The applicant intends to begin construction in 2017 and energize the transmission line in spring of 2017. The proposed project is estimated to cost \$2.1 million.

Regulatory Background

The route permit application was filed pursuant to the alternative review process outlined in Minnesota Statute 216E.04 and Minnesota Rules 7850.2800–3900.

HVTL Route Permit

No person may construct a HVTL without first obtaining a route permit from the Commission. A HVTL is defined as a conductor of electric energy and associated facilities designed for and capable of operation at a nominal voltage of 100 kV or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length. Associated facilities of a transmission line might include buildings, equipment, guy wires and other physical structures necessary for the operation of the HVTL. The proposed project will operate at 115 kV and be approximately two and one-half miles in length. As a result, the proposed project requires a route permit from the Commission.

Certificate of Need

No person may construct a large energy facility without first obtaining a Certificate of Need (CN) from the Commission. A HVTL is considered a large energy facility if it meets the following capacity and length requirements:

- 200 kV or more and is greater than 1,500 feet in length
- 100 kV or more with more than 10 miles of its length in Minnesota
- 100 kV or more and crosses a state line.

The proposed project has a capacity of more than 100 kV; however, it does not meet the definition of large energy facility because it is not more than 10 miles in length or does not cross a state line. Therefore, a CN is not required for the project.

Eminent Domain

If issued a Route Permit by the Commission, the applicant may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire the land necessary for the project pursuant to Minnesota Statute 216E.12 and Minnesota Statutes 117.

Environmental Review

Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff conducts environmental review on route permit applications before the Commission. The intent of the environmental review process is to inform the public, decision-makers, local governments, state agencies, and others of potential impacts and possible mitigation measures associated with the proposed project.

Environmental review under the alternative permitting process includes a public information and scoping meeting, and preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). An EA is a

written document that describes the human and environmental impacts of the transmission line project, any selected alternative routes, and methods to mitigate impacts. Upon completion of the EA a public hearing will occur.

Scoping Process

The scoping process provides opportunities for the public to participate in the development of the “scope” or content of the EA. It includes a public meeting and public comment period. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information about the proposed project and applicable regulatory requirements, to answer questions, and to gather input regarding the impacts, mitigative measures, and alternatives that should be studied in the EA. The scoping process concludes with a formal decision that outlines the scope of the EA to be written.

Public Information and Scoping Meeting

The public information and scoping meeting listed below provides an opportunity to participate in the determination of the scope of the EA.

Monday, October 12, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Backus City Hall
112 King Street South
Backus, Minnesota

Public Comment Period

The public comment period closes **Monday, October 26, 2015**. Comments must be post-marked or received electronically by the comment deadline. There are several ways to submit comments:

- Complete and submit a comment form to EERA staff at the public meeting
- Complete and mail a comment form
- Mail written comments to:
ANDREW LEVI
MN DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
85 7TH PLACE EAST STE 500
SAINT PAUL MN 55101-2198
- Fax comments to Andrew Levi, EERA staff, at: (651) 539-0109
- Email comments to Andrew Levi, EERA staff, at: andrew.levi@state.mn.us
- Use the online comment form at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>

If commenting by email or fax use “*Public Comment: Bull Moose 115 kV Project (TL-15-628)*” in the subject line. Any person (meaning any individual, organization, business, government agency, and so on) can comment on the scope of the EA. All comments received, including the commenter’s contact information, will be publically available.

Environmental Assessment

Pursuant to Minnesota Rule 7850.3700, subpart 3, an EA must include the following:

- A. a general description of the proposed facility;
- B. a list of any alternative sites or routes that are addressed;
- C. a discussion of the potential impacts of the proposed project and each alternative site or route on the human and natural environment;
- D. a discussion of mitigative measures that could reasonably be implemented to eliminate or minimize any adverse impacts identified for the proposed project and each alternative site or route analyzed;
- E. an analysis of the feasibility of each alternative site or route considered;
- F. a list of permits required for the project; and
- G. a discussion of other matters identified in the scoping process.

Anticipated EA Scope

EERA staff anticipates the EA will address the following matters. (This section is not intended as a draft table of contents for the EA.)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Proposed Project
- 1.2 Project Purpose
- 1.3 Sources of Information
- 1.4 Issues Outside the Scope

2.0 Regulatory Framework

- 2.1 Certificate of Need
- 2.2 Route Permit
- 2.3 Environmental Review Process
- 2.4 Other Permits
- 2.5 Applicable Codes

3.0 Proposed Project

- 3.1 Project Detail/Design
- 3.2 Proposed Route
- 3.3 Alternative Routes Considered but Rejected
- 3.4 Right-of-Way Requirements and Acquisition
- 3.5 Construction
- 3.6 Operation and Maintenance
- 3.7 Cost

4.0 Alternative Routes and Route Segments (if applicable)

5.0 Potential Impacts

- 5.1 Archaeological and Historic Resources
- 5.2 Biological Resources
- 5.3 Cultural Resources
- 5.4 Environmental Setting
- 5.5 Human Settlement (for example, Aesthetics, Displacement and Property Values)
- 5.6 Land-based Economies
- 5.7 Land Use (for example, Zoning)
- 5.8 Natural Environment (for example, Air and Soils)
- 5.9 Public Health and Safety (for example, Electromagnetic Fields)
- 5.10 Public Services
- 5.11 Rare and Unique Natural Resources
- 5.12 Socioeconomic Setting
- 5.13 Water Resources

6.0 Impact Comparison of Alternative Routes (if applicable)

7.0 Unavoidable Impacts

Schedule for Completion of the EA

Depending on the outcome of the scoping process, EERA anticipates the EA for the Bull Moose 115 kV HVTL Route Permit will be completed in February 2016.

Upon completion of the EA, EERA staff will publish notice of its availability in the EQB Monitor, and notify those persons who have asked to be notified of its completion. The EA will be made available electronically on the Minnesota eDockets webpage at: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> by selecting "15" and "628," and the EERA webpage at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?id=34235>. The EA will also be made available for public review at Backus City Hall.

EERA Contact Information

If you have questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to contact EERA staff members:

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