APPENDIX B

Survey Letter to Scope EA
Public Comments/Responses Received

Survey Letter

ITASCA COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
Zoning/Solid Waste
Itasca County Courthouse
123 N.E. 4th Street
GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA 55744-2600
Office (218) 327-2857
Fax (218) 327-7331

October 19, 2011

RE: Survey on Proposed Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project near Nashwauk, MN

Dear Landowner:

Great River Energy and Lake Country Power are proposing a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission project north of Nashwauk, Minnesota that is needed to meet the growing electrical needs of the area (see attached fact sheet/map).

Lake Country Power proposes to construct the new "Shoal Lake" 115 kV Substation in Section 4, T57N, R23W just south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 56 in Nashwauk Township (see photo of typical substation on fact sheet). Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power, proposes to construct approximately 7.75 miles of new overhead 115 kV transmission line to energize this new substation.

The project is divided into two segments as described below:

- The first five miles of transmission line will be double circuited with a new Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line that will exit the new Minnesota Power McCarthy Lake Substation and run north through Sections 25, 24, 13, 12 and 1 of Nashwauk Township as shown on the fact sheet map. Minnesota Power will own the transmission structures and the 230 kV circuit, and Great River Energy will own the 115 kV circuit that will be strung on the same poles. The 230 kV line was permitted through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for the line.

- Great River Energy will construct the approximately 2.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line west along CSAH 56 to the Shoal Lake Substation. The line will be constructed using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. When practical, Lake Country Power will attach an upgraded distribution system on wood crossarms (see photo on fact sheet). The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles. Where guys and anchors are not practical, a laminated wood pole or steel pole on foundation may be used.

Great River Energy is seeking approval for the project from Itasca County. As part of the permitting process, Itasca County must prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the project and afford the public an opportunity to participate in the development of the scope of the EA before it is prepared.

This survey is intended to allow the public to comment on the project and provide input on the content of the EA. The EA will primarily cover the new 2.75 miles of line along CSAH 56, as an EIS has already been completed for the five miles of line that will be collocated with the new Minnesota Power 230 kV line.

A preliminary Table of Contents for the EA is attached as a starting point for what should be covered in the EA. We encourage you to provide comments on the project and additional topics you want to see addressed in the EA.

Great River Energy has requested environmental review of the project by several federal and state agencies. The status of those reviews is provided below.

United States Corps of Engineers (Corps) – the Corps provided a general response in a letter dated 8/22/11. If impacts to wetlands will exceed the allowed threshold, Great River Energy will apply for a permit from the Corps once design details are available.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – there are no federally or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat within the action area of the proposed project. The USFWS recommended that Great River Energy survey the area near the proposed line for bald eagle nests prior to construction (e-mail of 10/11/11).

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – there are no known occurrences of rare features within one mile of the proposed route (e-mail of 9/15/11).

Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) – there are no properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and no known or suspected archaeological properties in the area that will be affected by this project (letter of 8/29/11).

Minnesota Department of Transportation (aviation issues) – no anticipated effect on publicly-owned airports; no objection to the proposed project (letter of 8/23/11).

Thank you for your input on this project. Please return your survey form in the self-addressed envelope provided by **November 2, 2011**.

Sincerely,

Don Dewey

Don Dewey
Itasca County Environmental Services Administrator

Enclosures

Preliminary Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Proposed Project and Project Need
- 1.2 Project Location, Description and Schedule
- 1.3 Project Cost Estimate

2.0 Regulatory Framework

- 2.1 Permit Requirement
- 2.2 Environmental Assessment Requirement
- 2.3 Public Participation/Scoping of Environmental Assessment
- 2.4 Zoning Permit

3.0 Engineering Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Construction

- 3.1 Substation
- 3.2 Transmission Line
- 3.3 Right-of-Way Acquisition
- 3.4 Construction and Maintenance Procedures

4.0 Assessment of Impacts and Mitigation

- 4.1 Description of Environmental Setting
- 4.2 Impacts on Human Settlement
  - 4.2.1 Socioeconomics
  - 4.2.2 Displacement
  - 4.2.3 Noise
  - 4.2.4 Aesthetics
  - 4.2.5 Human Health and Safety
  - 4.2.6 Public Services
  - 4.2.7 Transportation
- 4.3 Impacts on Land-based Economies
  - 4.3.1 Recreation/Tourism
  - 4.3.2 Agriculture
  - 4.3.3 Mining and Forestry
- 4.4 Archaeological and Historic Resources
- 4.5 Natural Environment
  - 4.5.1 Air Quality
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5.0 Regulatory Permits and Approvals Required

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General Vicinity Map
Project Map
Shoal Lake Substation Plot Plan
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Rare Features Map

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Common Noise Sources and Levels
Noise Area Classifications
Regulatory Permits and Approvals Required

Appendices

Appendix A Notices

Appendix B Summary of Comments from Survey

Appendix C Agency Correspondence

Shoal Lake 115 kV substation and transmission line

GREAT RIVER ENERGY
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard
Maple Grove, MN 55369
1-888-521-0130
www.greatriverenergy.com

LAKE COUNTRY POWER
2810 Elida Drive
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
1-800-421-9959
www.lakecountrypower.com

Project Need

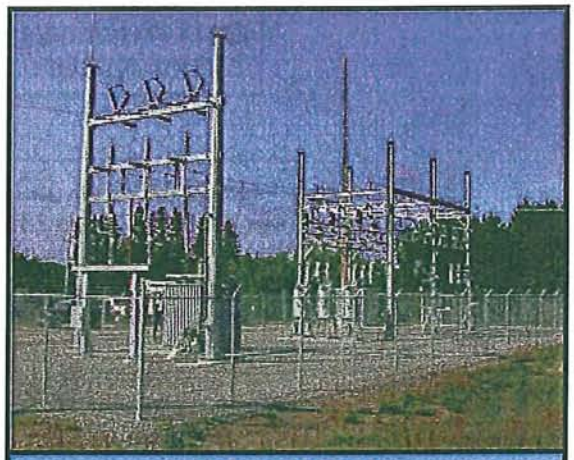
Lake Country Power members north of the City of Nashwauk are currently served by two substations. These substations are energized by a 23,000 volt (23 kV) transmission line built in 1958. This system can no longer support growth or the increasing demand for electric service and at times experiences low voltages.

To increase capacity and improve the electrical service, Lake Country Power will build a new substation in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be energized by a new 115 kV transmission line built by Great River Energy, power supplier to Lake Country Power. The new substation and transmission line will provide a long-term solution to the area's electric needs. The two existing substations will be retired and their electric loads transferred into the new substation.

Substation and Transmission Line

Lake Country Power will construct the new "Shoal Lake" Substation (similar to that shown right) on County Highway 56, approximately 3.5 miles west of Minnesota Highway 65 in Nashwauk Township. The substation will be fed by the new transmission line and contain a transformer that will lower the voltage to distribution levels. This substation location was chosen to bring a strong electric source to the middle of the demand area.

Great River Energy will build approximately 7.75 miles of new 115 kV transmission line to energize the Shoal Lake Substation (see map on back). The new 115 kV transmission line will tap the Minnesota Power 115 kV "28" Line (that is to be relocated near the new McCarthy Lake Substation at the corner of Hilltop Road and County Highway 58). For the first five miles Minnesota Power and Great River Energy will construct a double circuit 230/115 kV transmission line sharing common poles. At County Highway 56, Great River Energy's 115 kV transmission line will turn west and parallel the highway for 2.75 miles to the new substation. Where practical, the new line will overtake the existing Lake Country Power distribution system along Highway 56.



Typical 115 kV distribution substation

Poles and Construction

Great River Energy will construct the new line along County Highway 56 using wood poles with horizontal post insulators. The poles will generally be 65-75 feet above ground with a 280-400 foot span between poles. The shorter spans are necessary where Great River Energy overtakes Lake Country Power's distribution system. Where the distribution system is overtaken the distribution line will be attached to the transmission poles on wood crossarms (see photo). Guy wires and anchors will be used to counter angles in the line.

Typical 115 kV transmission line with distribution underbuild

Schedule

Permitting – Fall 2011
Survey/Easement Acquisition/Engineering – Winter 2011-12
Construction – 2012-2013

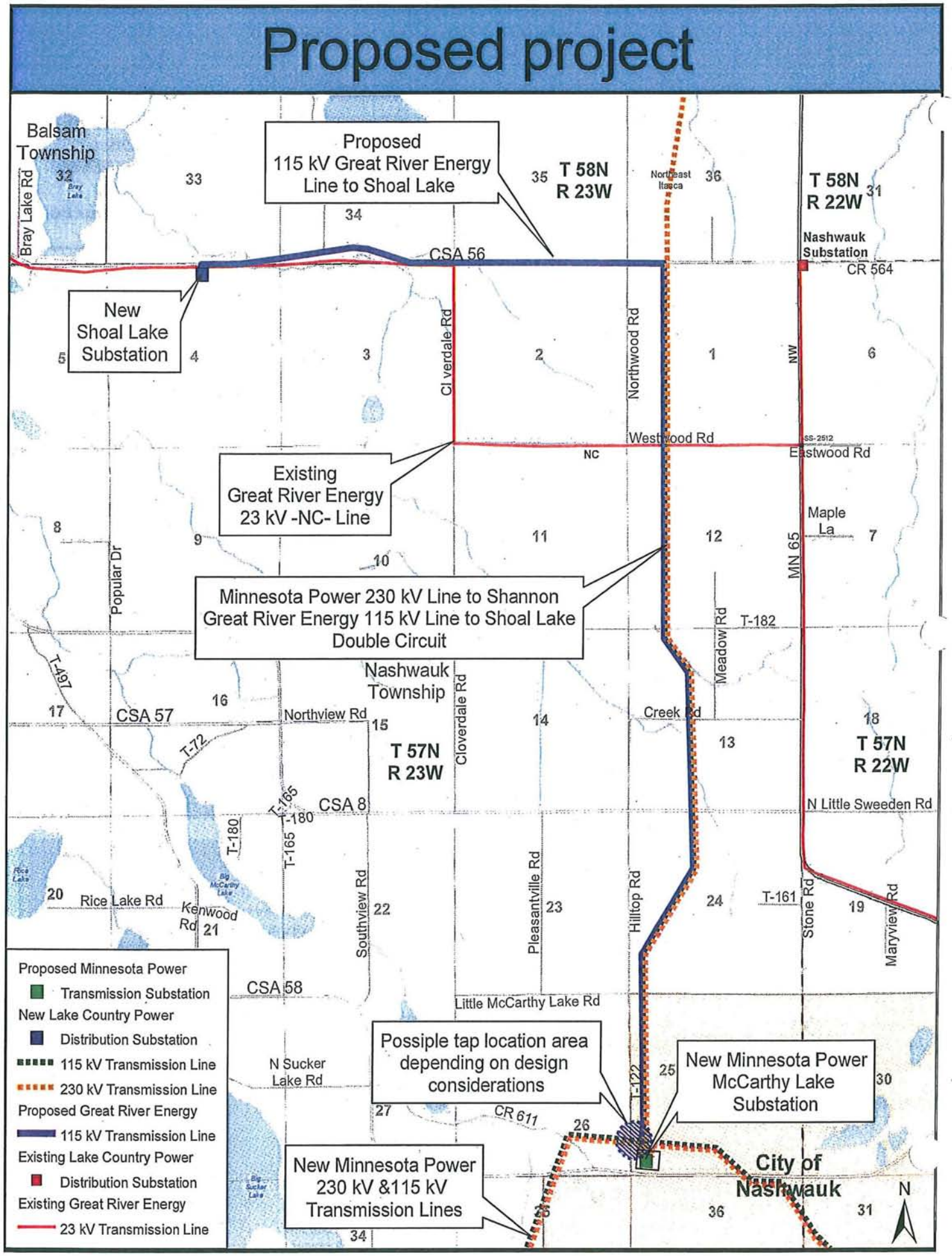
For project updates and information, visit greatriverenergy.com/ShoalLake or contact:

Dale Aukee, Sr. Field Representative
Great River Energy
763-445-5978
or 1-888-521-0130, ext. 5978
daukee@grenergy.com

Derek Howe
Lake Country Power
218-326-7178
or 1-800-421-9959
dhowe@lakecountrypower.com

Date last revised: 9/15/2011

Proposed project



☐ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Public Comments/Responses Received

STUKEY, WILLIAM E
19201 COUNTY ROAD 56
NASHWAUK, MN 55769

DULUTH MN 558
31 OCT 2011 PM 1 T

RECEIVED
OCT 2 4 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744$2600

☐ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

RECEIVED
OCT 24 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

YUHALA, ARMAS S
26682 EVERGREEN LN
COHASSET MN 55721

DULUTH MN 558

01 NOV 2011 PM 1 T

Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744+2633

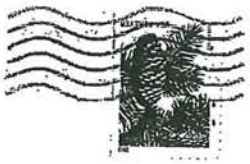
RECEIVED
NOV 02 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☐ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

☒ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

PEARSON, KEITH & SUSAN
35840 RIVER CIRCLE DR
COHASSET MN 55721

DULUTH MN 558
21 OCT 2011 PM 1 L



Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

5574432600

RECEIVED
OCT 24 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☐ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

☒ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

LAND ON COUNTY ROAD 612

BLANDIN PAPER/ FORESTRY
FORESTRY DEPARTMENT
PO BOX 407
GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744-0407

UNITED STATES POSTAGE PITNEY BOWES
02 1M $ 00.44⁰
0004260075 NOV 02 2011
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 55744

Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744+2600

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Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☑ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

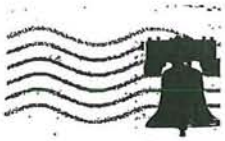
BLANDIN is not in the position to grant easements since having the Conservation Easement put on the land except through condemnation or a land exchange. Any transaction has to be approved by the MN DNR who will have to have it approved by the Lessard-Sam Outdoor Heritage Council.

Cheryl J. Adams
Forest Ecologist /
Land Manager

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

HILL, MARCUS & JOANNE
39678 CLOVERDALE ROAD
NASHWAUK MN 55769

DULUTH MN 558
28 OCT 2011 PM 1 L



Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

5574432683

4

RECEIVED
OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

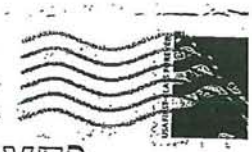
I like the power i would like it underground

thank you Marcus Hill

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

CREA, RAYMOND J & SUSAN
34774 WABANA RD
GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744

DULUTH MN 558
24 OCT 2011 PM 1 L



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OCT 25 2011
Environmental Services
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Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744$2600

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OCT 25 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

See attached.

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Proposed Shoal Lake Substation

As of 10/23/11, there has been no information on GRE's web site pertaining to this project or any future plans related to this project. Because of this and a limited window to which to respond to this questionnaire, many concerns may be missed.

There are already two power lines and two rights of way in existence. Three would be excessive. Two swaths exist. There is no reason to cut more.

There would be a devaluation of property which will impede future land development opportunities.

Therefore, I will not give my consent to further confiscation of land or easement rights on the north side of CSHA 56.

There is tax forfeited land south of CSHA 56 that is available for this project without taking advantage of private property owners, subjecting us to health risks, and disrupting our heritage for the sake of the path of least resistance.

There are health issues associated with the risk of exposure to EMF. Magnetic fields likely cause childhood and adult leukemia, adult brain cancer, spontaneous abortions, and ALS. They may also possibly cause childhood brain cancer, female and male breast cancer, Alzheimers disease, suicide, and heart problems.

As proposed, there would be a negative impact in environmental aesthetics.

There is a potential for noise disruption and television and radio interference.

No other power line options have been provided.

No values in terms of land value, timber value or easement compensation have been proposed.

To my knowledge, there have not been any complaints of power outages in this area.

Based on electricity rates, GRE and LCP have adequate resources to find, fund and recoup costs for an alternate route for said project.

Recommendations

Generate a safer alternate route/plan.
Consider combining all three lines onto one pole south of old CSHA 56.
Utilize tax forfeited land south of CSHA 56

GREAT RIVER
ENERGY®

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050 • www.GreatRiverEnergy.com

November 8, 2011

Ray and Susan Crea
34774 Wabama Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

RE: Preliminary Information on EMF

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Crea:

As I discussed with Mr. Crea, I am enclosing some preliminary information on electric and magnetic field (EMF) levels that can be expected from the proposed 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would cross your property. The enclosed table and plots of EMF levels are for the Enterprise Park project that we are also working to develop in Minnesota. Like the proposed Shoal Lake project, the Enterprise Park project involves the construction and operation of a 115-kV transmission line. Next week, our engineers will be performing similar calculations to determine the EMF levels that can occur from the Shoal Lake project. Once they provide me with their results, I will forward them on to you.

The enclosed table lists the expected EMF levels associated with operation of the new transmission line proposed as part of the Enterprise Park project. There are several scenarios listed that are based on the configuration of the transmission line and the load level on the line. EMF levels are proportional to the current on the line, which is directly related to the amount of electricity being consumed by the end user, or load level. As consumer load goes up, EMF levels will increase. The calculations the engineer will make next week will be based on the projected average and peak load levels for the proposed Shoal Lake transmission line. I believe the current plan for the proposed transmission line is to attach the existing distribution line to the new transmission line structures (we call this underbuild). If this is correct, then the third and fourth scenarios in the table are most representative of the transmission line that will cross your property. The only difference from these two scenarios is the third scenario is based on average loading and the fourth is based on peak loading. I have also included plots of the data for these scenarios.

As you will see from the data, the EMF levels are highest closest to the transmission line and decrease further from the line. Typical EMF levels within a home average roughly 1 milliGaus (mG) due to the operation of the electrical systems such as lighting, TV, computers, etc. EMF from the Enterprise Park transmission line is near average household levels at 150 feet from the line at average line load and 300 feet at peak line load.

Once again, I will provide you data specific for the Shoal Lake Project once our engineers are able to complete the calculations. In the mean time, if you have any questions about the enclosed data, please contact me at 763-445-5210.

Sincerely,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Mark Strohfus
Environmental Project Lead

c: Dale Aukee
Carole Schmidt

Table 5-3 Calculated Magnetic Fields (mG) for the Proposed Project[20]

Scenario	Distance to Proposed Centerline										
	-300'	-200'	-100'	-50'	-25'	Max.	25'	50'	100'	200'	300'
Horizontal Post Operation No Distribution Underbuild Average Load	0.12	0.27	0.98	3.10	7.00	13.62	8.24	3.53	1.06	0.28	0.12
Horizontal Post Operation No Distribution Underbuild Peak Load	0.72	1.59	5.89	18.59	41.97	81.71	49.44	21.16	6.37	1.66	0.74
Horizontal Post Operation with Single Circuit Distribution Underbuild Average Load	0.21	0.45	1.61	5.17	14.18	39.67	19.62	7.46	2.10	0.52	0.23
Horizontal Post Operation with Single Circuit Distribution Underbuild Peak Load	0.78	1.69	5.83	16.11	32.82	87.35	53.42	23.76	7.33	1.90	0.85
Horizontal Post Operation with Double Circuit Distribution Underbuild Average Load	0.22	0.50	1.84	6.00	14.64	25.39	14.64	6.19	1.93	0.51	0.23
Horizontal Post Operation with Double Circuit Distribution Underbuild Peak Load	0.83	1.82	6.42	18.44	37.73	59.02	39.21	19.98	6.92	1.90	0.8

Note: The maximum magnetic field for the Enterprise Park 115-kV Project is 87.35 mG at a 5 foot offset from the centerline within the horizontal post operation with single circuit distribution underbuild peak load scenario.

[20] Calculations are based on a maximum voltage of 121 kV.

Figure 5-12 Magnetic Field with double circuit distribution underbuild, average load

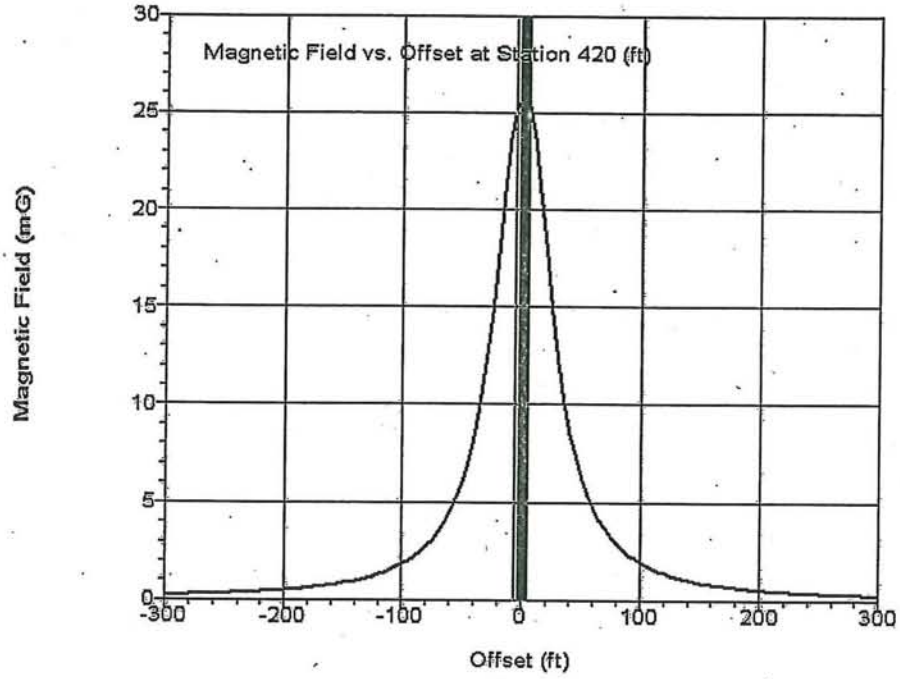
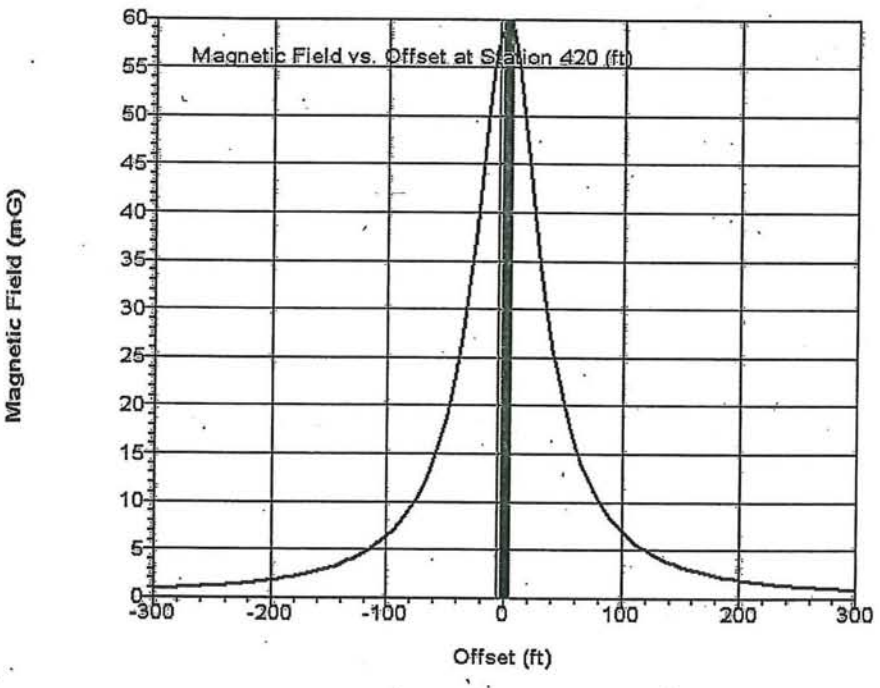


Figure 5-13 Magnetic Field with double circuit distribution underbuild, peak load



June Holmes
1820 S. Golden West Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92704

Mr. Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast 4th St.
Grand Rapids, Minnesota
55744-2600

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Please see enclosed letter

RECEIVED
OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

RECEIVED
OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

October 27, 2011

Mr. Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Dear Mr. Dewey:

As a part-owner of property that includes frontage on Shoal Lake and which will be traversed by the proposed 115-kV line, I am concerned that there may be significant environmental impacts from the proposed project. These impacts, if not effectively mitigated, may cause harm to the environment. I have concerns about the following sections of the proposed Environmental Assessment:

2.2 Environmental Assessment Requirement – If the Environmental Assessment identifies any potentially significant impacts from the proposed project, an Environmental Impact Study will be required.

2.4 Zoning Permit - Does the zoning allow this type of land use? If not, a zoning change may be required.

4.2.1 Socioeconomics – Impacts on property values of affected properties will be potentially significant and must be considered. Many potential future residents would choose not to live underneath a high voltage power line, due to perceived or actual health effects from electromagnetic emissions. This would cause a reduction of property values, causing hardship not only to the property owners, but also a reduction of the County tax base. Potential mitigation measures should include fair compensation of affected property owners for the reduced value of their properties.

4.2.3 Noise – High voltage lines are known to produce an audible humming sound. Some people are especially sensitive to such sounds and may find the noise intolerable.

4.2 4 Aesthetics – The proposed project would have a significant negative impact on aesthetics in that it would create visual blight. Alternative, including running power lines underground, should be proposed. I am concerned that an Environmental Assessment would not have an analysis of alternatives, including the no project alternative, which is required in an Environmental Impact Statement.

4.3.1 Recreation/Tourism – The proposed project would certainly not have a positive impact on recreation and tourism. Most likely, tourists and those who would take advantage of Northern Minnesota's many recreational opportunities would prefer to see the natural environment, not high voltage power lines.

4.5.2 Water Resources, Wetlands and Soils – Wetlands exist on properties that would be traversed by the high voltage lines. Construction of the transmission towers may have a significant impact on these wetlands. A permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would do nothing to mitigate such impacts.

I hope these concerns are seriously considered. I look forward to commenting on the Environmental Assessment when it is released for public comment.

Sincerely,

June Holmes

June Holmes
1820 S. Golden West Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92704

WORRATH, JUDY ETAL
2825 DESCHEPPER DRIVE
GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744

DULUTH MN 558
28 OCT 2011 PM 1 T

Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744+2653

Judy Worrath Etal

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OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning & Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

As a property owner on 56 I have the following Comments:
Will the new line be run on the N side of 56? On the S side lines already run through wetland. To have it on both sides would not be acceptable, the land on the N side would depreciate in values.
I understand power lines are necessary but have them on the same poles in the same R of way.
I feel a better plan would be to bury the powerlines. I understand the cost up front is greater but the risks to the people, animal life + the environment are reduced greatly.

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Joseph W. Merhar
36842 W Little Sweden Rd
Nashwauk, MN 55769-4306

DULUTH MN 558
29 OCT 2012 PM 1 T

Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast Fourth Street
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-2600

55744$2600

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OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

We are ½ owners of the Worrack (Merker) property and we would like to see the lines go underground - and if that is it possible - have only one line going over. Am concerned for the wild life & environment also. Plus the value of our land going down.

Joseph W Merker
Lorraine Merker

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

CERTIFIED MAIL

M.J. ZAPPALA
14816 REDWOOD DR
GARLAND, TX 75044

7011 0470 0001 9281 8902

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GARLAND, TX
75043
OCT 28, 11
AMOUNT
$5.59
00061197-06

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RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

Itasca County Environmental Services
attn: Mr. Don Dewey
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

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OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

☒ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

(Please see letter attached.)
Thank you in advance for your prompt response.
Mitzi Zappala
214-460-9471

☐ I HAVE NO COMMENTS ON THE SHOAL LAKE SUBSTATION AND TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

RECEIVED
OCT 31 2011
Environmental Services
Zoning/Solid Waste Dept.

October 27, 2011

Mr. Don Dewey
Environmental Services Administrator
Itasca County Courthouse
123 Northeast 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Dear Mr. Dewey:

As a part-owner of property that includes frontage on Shoal Lake and which will be traversed by the proposed 115-kV line, I am concerned that there may be significant environmental impacts from the proposed project. These impacts, if not effectively mitigated, may cause harm to the environment. I have concerns about the following sections of the proposed Environmental Assessment:

Environmental Assessment Requirement – If the Environmental Assessment identifies any potentially significant impacts from the proposed project, an Environmental Impact Study will be required.

Zoning Permit - Does the zoning allow this type of land use? If not, a zoning change may be required.

Socioeconomics – Impacts on property values of affected properties will be potentially significant and must be considered. Many potential future residents would choose not to live underneath a high voltage power line, due to perceived or actual health effects from electromagnetic emissions. This would cause a reduction of property values, causing hardship not only to the property owners, but also a reduction of the County tax base. Potential mitigation measures should include fair compensation of affected property owners for the reduced value of their properties.

Noise – High voltage lines are known to produce an audible humming sound. Some people are especially sensitive to such sounds and may find the noise intolerable. The lines will not only hum; they will crackle and pop loudly with the humidity of the area.

Aesthetics – The proposed project would have a significant negative impact on aesthetics in that it would create visual blight. Alternative, including running power lines underground, should be proposed. I am concerned that an Environmental Assessment would not have an analysis of alternatives, including the no project alternative, which is required in an Environmental Impact State

Recreation/Tourism – The proposed project would certainly not have a positive impact on recreation and tourism. Most likely, tourists and those who would take advantage of Northern Minnesota's many recreational opportunities would prefer to see the natural environment, not high voltage power lines.

Water Resources, Wetlands and Soils – Wetlands exist on properties that would be traversed by the high voltage lines. Construction of the transmission towers may have a significant impact on these wetlands. A permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would do nothing to mitigate such impacts. Where may I find such a report on this endeavor?

I hope these concerns are seriously considered. I look forward to commenting on the Environmental Assessment when it is released for public comment.

Sincerely,

Mitzi Zappala

4816 Redwood Drive

Garland, TX 75043

mitzizd@airmail.net

214.460.9471

From: Joy Allison <joyaallison@yahoo.com>
To: Dale GRE-MGAukee <DAukee@GREnergy.com>, <dhowe@lakecountrypower.com>
CC: Daniel Swenson <Daniel.Swenson@co.itasca.mn.us>
Date: 10/28/2011 5:38 PM
Subject: Comments Regarding Survey of Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project

Date: October 28, 2011

To: Itasca County
Environmental Environmental Services

Great River
Energy

Lake Country
Power

Attn: Don Dewey, Itasca County
Environmental Services Administrator, Fax: 218.327.2857

Dale Aukee,
Senior Field Representative, sent via email

Derek Howe,
Lake Country Power, sent via email

Cc: Dan Swenson,
Assistant Planning and Zoning, sent via email

Pages: Total of 4
Pages

From: Joy Merhar
Allison, Landowner

Subject: Survey on Proposed
Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project near Nashwauk, MN

Communication with
Dale Aukee at Great
River Energy

On September 28th, I had a very long conversation with Dale Aukee with Great River Energy in regards to the September 15th letter Mr. Aukee sent discussing the Shoal Lake Substation and 115kV Transmission Line Proposal.

During the conversation, we discussed various topics associated with the proposal. I mentioned to him that based on my conversations with people in the area, land owners were under the impression at the time of the last power line install that the new line installed next to the new road would "replace" the old line. I told him that many land owners were subsequently surprised to realize that the old line, which previously ran along "old County Rd. 56" was to be left in place. I advised Dale that the choice to leave the lines separated by a significant distance, with multiple easements has created:

A depreciating factor for properties in the area.A financial and land use disadvantage for land owners due to multiple easements and depreciating impact.An eye sore and visual blight in a rural/country/natural area, which people usually visit for rest, relaxation, hunting, and getting back to nature.

I further asked Dale to discuss the possibility of combining all three power lines (in order to create less of an eyesore and take up less space). As I had mentioned during our conversation, three very large power lines (two on one side of the road and an extremely large intrusive line on the other side of the road) is not an acceptable. Dale said to me multiple times during the conversation that it would increase the project cost to combine the lines and that the power company had not considered it due to their bottom line cost. Additionally, he said that Great River Energy considered the old power line to be an asset, which they planned to sell to Lake Country Power. All reasons Dale used for not combining lines had to do with project costs, Lake Country Power's financial bottom line, and convenience for Lake Country Power.

I finally said to Dale that I would like him to explore the option of the least invasive, least land depreciating option associated with installing the power lines. I advised him that creating such a large eye sore in the area will have an impact on surrounding properties and future property sales. If indeed, the project is legitimately required (I have yet to see any of the demand data or detail, which was requested), the project should be pursued in such a way that would mitigate negative impact on the area now and in future years to come. I told Dale that I would like him to check with the engineering department about combining and running all three lines on one corridor next to County Road 56. Dale said he would contact the project management group to explore the option of combining all three lines and send me a follow up email with an update on Friday, September 30th. He further mentioned that he would be going on vacation the following week (October

3rd-7th) and would send a more thorough update upon returning from vacation. I finally received two emails from him after I sent him a follow up email last week. This afternoon, I received the following response from Dale:

"Great River
Energy and Lake Country Power visited the project site
on Wednesday (October 26) to review the routing concerns raised by you and your family. On your property it was determined that the new 115 kV transmission line can reasonably be built along the old 23 kV transmission line corridor. This will eliminate the addition of a third corridor across your property.

The new
115 kV transmission line will be built a few feet north of and parallel to the existing 23 kV transmission line. This is necessary to keep the existing circuit energized and safely construct the new line. The old 23 kV circuit will then be put on crossarms and underbuilt on the new poles. Once construction is complete the old 23 kV transmission poles on your property will be de-energized and removed.

Lake County Power's existing circuit on the south side
of Hwy 56 will remain as is."

The above option seems to say that the very
large proposed power line would be placed even closer to the house than the original proposal. As mentioned numerous times now, I would like to hear back regarding the specific discussion about running all three power lines on the current corridor directly next to County Road 56.

Efficiency Principle,
Mutual Benefit

This has created a very unfavorable situation for us since
the power company has multiple easements on our property already taking up a substantial amount of space. The county splitting through one of our 40 acre parcels at an odd division point was not in our favor to start with. The fact that the old power line was not moved to run side by side with the newer power line (next to the new road) shows a lack of consideration for the aesthetics of the area, along with a complete lack of consideration for mutual benefit and the efficiency principle (in regards to space utilized and impact on the area).

Since my original discussion with Mr. Aukee in September, I
have had some additional conversations with people in the area. It is my understanding that there are underground power lines in the area of Balsam store. It is also my understanding that underground power lines are regularly installed in Europe in order to maintain
aesthetics and decrease exposure to negative health consequences associated with High Voltage power lines. Also, I was informed that there was another route being considered for the power lines via Lawrence Lake,
which would have avoided our area all together and the current project route

proposal.

Further, I would like to see the data justifying the supposed "increased demand and energy needs" Dale Aukee's letter refers. As I understand it, the area has been experiencing a significant decline in population for quite a few years now. Increasing demand and energy requirements seems to be counter intuitive considering the decline in population. If for some reason this project has nothing to do with the current population and is related to supposed increases in demand associated with the supposed steel processing plant that may or may not ever open in Nashwauk, I want to point out that it is imperative that the county first and foremost protect the natural environment and key attributes, which attract people to the area.

Most people reside in the area to live in the country and enjoy the outdoors. Therefore, it is not desirable to have multiple large scale power lines running all over the place. Additionally, a decent number of people who purchase properties do so for vacation and/or retirement homes, (with the goal of being outside the city environment and away from power lines). It is important for the county to consider this and mitigate negative impacts to the area by protecting the natural beauty of the environment.

The current project as proposed does not honor the efficiency principle in that a substantial amount of land is associated with the project. Further, the project does not allow for the best and most appropriate solution for "ALL" involved. By all involved I am talking about not just the power companies but also, the land owners (including all land owners in the surrounding areas), visitors, and vacationers. The county and the power companies, have an obligation to mitigate negative factors impacting the area and protect the aesthetics/beauty of the area. The current project as proposed would create a visual blight for the area and have a negative impact on surrounding property values, along with potential negative health consequences for people and animals living close to the power lines.

Comments in Regards
the Proposed Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project near Nashwauk, MN

Underground Power Line Option: I would like the option and feasibility of installing underground power lines explored. I would like to receive specific follow up and communication on this topic. Combine All Three Lines on Current Corridor Directly Next to County Road 56 Option: I would like the specific possibility of running all three power lines on the current corridor directly next to County Road 56 explored. I would like to receive specific follow up and communication on this topic. Lawrence Lake Alternative Route: Please provide detail on the Lawrence Lake alternative route option. Was a mailing sent in regards to this option? I would like to read more detail on the Lawrence

Lake plan as it pertains to pursuing a different route for the lines.Demand Data and Statistics: I would like to read and review the actual statistical data pertaining to the "growing electrical needs of the area" specified in the 10/19/11 letter.Evaluations: Please provide the definitions for and reasons why the EAW (Environmental Assessment Worksheet) and the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) are not required for this project.

Best Regards,

Joy Allison

home office: 615.942.6197

cell: 615.829.9395

--- On Tue, 10/25/11, Aukee, Dale GRE-MG <DAukee@GREnergy.com> wrote:

From: Aukee, Dale GRE-MG <DAukee@GREnergy.com>
Subject: RE: Survey of Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project
To: "joyaallison@yahoo.com" <joyaallison@yahoo.com>
Cc: "Daniel Swenson" <Daniel.Swenson@co.itasca.mn.us>
Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 5:44 PM

Hello Ms. Allison,

I was copied on this email from Mr. Swenson at Itasca County regarding the Environmental Assessment. This is the same information I would send to you. The EAW (Environmental Assessment Worksheet) and the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) are not available for a project this small. I referred to them in our conversation since they have been around longer and may have been familiar to you.

Great River Energy and Lake County Power staff have meet over the past two days to discuss the possible options for the distribution and transmission lines across the Worrath property and others. Tomorrow (Wednesday) some of our staff and the CO-OP's staff will be meeting in the field to review the options. After they return we will again discuss the feasible and practical options available and I will contact you regarding that discussion.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Dale Aukee, SR/WA
Sr. Field Representative, Land Rights

Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369
Direct 763-445-5978
Cell 612-840-4019
Fax 763-445-6778

-----Original Message-----
From: Daniel Swenson [mailto:Daniel.Swenson@co.itasca.mn.us]
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2011 9:32 AM
To: joyaallison@yahoo.com
Cc: Aukee, Dale GRE-MG
Subject: Survey of Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project

Joy,

Attached you will find the letter that was sent to Judy Worrath regarding the proposed Shoal Lake Substation and Transmission Line Project. From my understanding of our telephone conversation, you are another owner of the property (etal) and would like the opportunity to comment on the survey. Comments are due on November 2, 2011. I will also contact Dale Aukee and let him know your concerns. If you have any questions in the meantime, do not hesitate to contact our office. Please confirm receipt of this email.

Thank you,

Dan Swenson
Itasca County Environmental Services
Assistant Planning and Zoning
123 NE 4th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-327-7428
daniel.swenson@co.itasca.mn.us

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