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April 17, 2009

Marsha Parlow
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Boulevard
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Jennifer Buckentine
Stearns County Environmental Services
705 Courthouse Square, Room 343
St Cloud, MN 56303

**Re: Sartell 115 kV Transmission and Substation Upgrade – Local Review
PUC Docket Number: ET2/LR-09-412**

Dear Ms. Parlow and Ms. Buckentine,

This letter confirms that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC or Commission) has received notification that Great River Energy (GRE) intends to seek local review to construct two miles of new 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line and to upgrade 0.4 miles of an existing 69 kV transmission line to operate at 115 kV. The 115 kV lines would support one new and one upgraded substation near the City of Sartell in Stearns County, MN.

Under the Power Plant Siting Act, a permit from the Commission is required for transmission line projects over 100 kV (Minn. Stat. § 216E). However, local review and permitting is possible for eligible projects. For such projects, a utility may apply to a local unit of government instead of the Commission for a permit to build the project. This letter confirms that the proposed project, consisting of (a) new and upgraded 115 kV transmission lines, (b) a new distribution substation (Sartell), and (c) an upgraded distribution substation (LeSauk), is eligible for local review (Minn. Stat. § 216E.05).

Great River Energy has indicated that Stearns County is the local unit of government with jurisdiction to permit the project. A conditional use permit application was submitted to the county on April 9, 2009. A local unit of government may relinquish its jurisdiction by requesting the Commission to assume jurisdiction within 60 days of the filing of an application with the local unit of government (Minn. Rules 7849.6200, subp. 4).

An environmental review process, including the development of an environmental assessment, must be conducted by the local unit of government with jurisdiction over the project. This letter acknowledges that Stearns County is the responsible governmental unit for GRE's proposed project and associated environmental review.

Specific requirements with regard to the environmental review process include: (1) providing an opportunity for the public to participate in the development of the scope of the environmental assessment before it is prepared, (2) publishing notice in the EQB Monitor when the assessment is available for review and the procedure for commenting on the assessment, and (3) withholding a final decision on the project until at least ten days after the notice appears in the EQB Monitor. Stearns County must also provide a copy of the environmental assessment to the Commission when it is completed (Minn. Rules 7849.6200, subp. 5). Electronic filing (eFiling) of the environmental assessment is encouraged; files of less than five megabytes (5 MB) in size are also encouraged.

Finally, this letter confirms that Great River Energy has sent the required notice to those persons on the Commission's general notification list that a permit has been applied for from a local unit of government (Minn. Rules 7849.6200, subp. 3).

Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Kirsch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "K".

Ray Kirsch
Planner, Energy Facility Permitting
Office of Energy Security

cc: Burl Haar, PUC
Bob Cupit, PUC