

**STATE OF MINNESOTA  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD**

In the Matter of the Route Permit  
Application by Great River Energy for  
the Plymouth-Maple Grove High  
Voltage Transmission Line in Hennepin  
County

**FINDINGS OF FACT,  
CONCLUSIONS, AND ORDER  
ISSUING ROUTE PERMIT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION OF A HIGH  
VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE**

**MEQB DOCKET NO.  
03-65-TR-GRE PMG**

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The above-captioned matter came before the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board at a regular meeting on May 20, 2004, pursuant to an application by Great River Energy to issue a Route Permit for a new 115-kilovolt high voltage transmission line in the cities of Plymouth and Maple Grove, Hennepin County, Minnesota and to find that the Environmental Assessment that was prepared for the proposed HVTL addresses the issues identified in the Scoping Decision.

**STATEMENT OF ISSUE**

Should Great River Energy, (GRE) be granted a Route Permit for a 115 kilovolt transmission line approximately 14 miles long in Hennepin County, and if so, along what route and under what conditions?

Based upon all of the proceedings herein, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board makes the following:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The Summary of Evidence (paragraphs 1 – 76) of the Administrative Law Judge in her Report of May 6, 2004, is hereby adopted as Findings of Fact by the EQB, except as amended below.
2. Paragraph 15 is amended to add the following:

The Environmental Assessment at page 10 identifies those permits that Great River Energy is required to obtain. Several permits are required from the cities of Maple Grove and Plymouth and from Hennepin County. These governmental bodies were provided with notice that the Environmental Assessment was available when the notice of the March 18 hearing was mailed to them. Exhibit 15. The

only other authorization identified is approval from the federal Rural Utilities Service. The RUS is the agency that will consider financial assistance for the project and is not an agency that will issue permits for the project.

3. Paragraph 51 of the Judge's Report is amended to add a sentence to read:

It is prudent to continue to monitor the issue of whether high voltage transmission lines can interfere with the proper functioning of implanted cardioverter defibrillators or other medical devices, and the utility industry and the medical field will be looked to for the latest evidence in this regard.

4. Paragraph 71 of the Judge's Report is amended to add a sentence to read:

It is not necessary to determine with more precision whether undergrounding would result in more or less energy losses because the additional construction costs of over \$1 million make undergrounding not feasible, particularly when the new 115 kV line will follow the exact same route as the existing 69 kV line.

5. The Environmental Assessment addresses the issues identified in the Chair's scoping decision.

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Environmental Quality Board makes the following

### **CONCLUSIONS**

1. Any of the foregoing Findings more properly designated as Conclusions are hereby adopted as such.
2. The Environmental Quality Board has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this proceeding pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 116C.57, subdivision 2.
3. This project qualifies for review under the Alternative Review Process of Minn. Stat. § 116C.575 and Minn. Rules parts 4400.2000 to 4400.2950.
4. The Applicant and the EQB have complied with all procedural requirements required by law.
5. The EQB has completed an Environmental Assessment on this project as required by Minn. Stat. § 116C.575, subdivision 5, and Minn. Rules part 4400.2750, and considered all the pertinent factors in determining which route to approve.

6. The conditions included in the Route Permit are reasonable and appropriate and will help to minimize the impacts of this new line and are agreed to by the Applicant.

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions contained herein and the entire record of this proceeding, the Environmental Quality Board hereby makes the following

**ORDER**

A Route Permit is issued to Great River Energy for construction of a 115 kilovolt transmission line in Hennepin County along the route proposed by the Applicant and under the conditions specified in the permit. The Permit shall be issued in the form attached hereto, with a map showing the approved route.

Approved and adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2004

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

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Robert A. Schroeder,  
Chair