

April 15, 2025

Mr. Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
127 7th Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

RE: Environmental Assessment Routing Alternatives
Appleton to Benson 115 kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Seuffert,

Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff has completed the environmental assessment scoping process in the following matter:

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy, Otter Tail Power Co., Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Agralite Electric Coop., and the City of Benson for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Appleton to Benson 115 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project in Swift County, Minnesota.

The scoping period for the environmental assessment (EA) was open from February 11, 2025, through March 28, 2025. Public meetings for the project were held on March 12 and March 13, 2025. Verbal and written comments related to the scope of the EA were received from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.¹ None of the commentors suggested an alternative route or route segment for the Appleton to Benson 115 kV Transmission Line Project.

Accordingly, EERA staff recommends that the Commission authorize EERA to include in the scoping decision for the EA solely the route and route alternatives for the project identified by the applicants in their application. The three route alternatives through the City of Benson proposed by the applicant can be found in Figure 5-1 of the Route Permit Application²

¹ Oral Public Meeting Comments on the Scope of the Environmental Assessment, eDockets No. [20254-217378-01](#); and Written Comments on Environmental Assessment Scoping, eDockets No. [20254-217555-01](#)

² Appleton to Benson Joint Application - Figures, eDockets No. [202412-213349-03](#)

EERA staff is available to answer any questions the Commission may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Weaver". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'W'.

Sam Weaver
Environmental Review Manager
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis