

**From:** [Thom, Anne \(PUC\)](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment\_Whiteface and Island Lake Committee Members.pdf  
**Date:** Friday, September 17, 2021 4:42:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [Public Comment\\_Whiteface and Island Lake Committee Members.pdf](#)

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Please efile to 20-675.

Thank you!

September 3, 2021

Ms. Katie Sieben; Chair  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East - Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN. 55101-2147

Dear Ms. Sieben;

As chairperson of the Whiteface Concerned Leaseholders Committee, I am contacting you to provide the attached copy of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Consumer Complaint/Inquiry form that our committee has completed.

As I indicated in the Complaint/Inquiry form approximately 65 Whiteface Leaseholders met at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at the Colvin Townhall located approximately 6 miles North of Whiteface Reservoir. Mr. Jim Atkinson and Mr. Matthew Hagelin, Representatives from the Real Estate Department of Minnesota Power were present to share the proposed sale of leased lands and to answer questions and concerns.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30, and while Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Hagelin provided answers to several questions and concerns, as indicated in the Complaint/Inquiry form, there are questions and concerns listed that leaseholders did not feel answers were adequately answered.

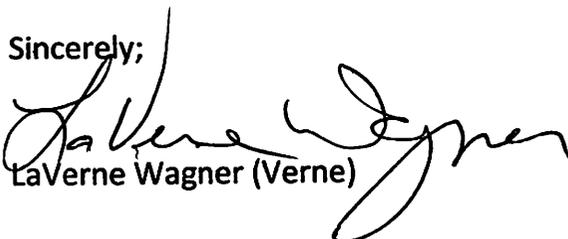
Our committee also reached out to the Island Lake Reservoir Leaseholders through their Facebook Page. Approximately 425 Island Lake Leaseholders responded to our post and asked to join us in our request to the PUC. In addition, a Road Association on Fish Lake Reservoir has also requested more information and shares our concerns as listed in the Complaint/Inquiry document.

With a decision regarding approval of the Minnesota Power proposal to be provided by the Public Utilities Commission soon, we feel it is imperative that we, as leaseholders have additional meetings and/or communication with both MN Power and PUC.

In summary and closing, we are asking that the Public Utilities Commission delay a final decision regarding Minnesota Power's proposal until sufficient public input and additional transparency is provided. We are requesting a Public Hearing and additional meetings, if necessary.

You may contact me as committee chairperson at 218-340-1277 or email: [Lwagsmn@yahoo.com](mailto:Lwagsmn@yahoo.com)

Sincerely;



LaVerne Wagner (Verne)

Whiteface Committee members:

Mari Wagner  
Chris Bacigalupo  
Lynn Fena  
Debby Repensky  
Greg Repensky

Island Lake Committee Members:

Craig Carlson  
Brian Christensen  
Jeff Monsaas  
Carole Bodovinitz  
Jon Bodovinitz

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Consumer Complaint/Inquiry

Contact ID #

The information you provide may be used to help resolve your concern and/or enforce applicable laws. The information may be shared with the utility or other public agencies. You are not legally required to provide this information. However, if you do not, we may not be able to help resolve your concern. Please attach all documentation, copies of bills, utility responses, or other communications and documents.

Name Whiteface/Island Lake Leaseholders	Name of Electric, Gas, or Telephone Company Minnesota Power
Business Name (If business complaint/inquiry)	Person Contacted at Utility Company Jim Atkinson and Matthew Hagelin
Mailing Address LaVerne Wagner (Verne) 5120 Juniata Street Duluth, MN. 55804	Phone Numbers Home: Work: Cell/Other: 1- 218-340-1277
Service Address (If different from mailing address) 2311 Cabin Circle Makinen Mn. 55763	Email Address Lwagsmn@yahoo.com
Customer Account Number	
Have you contacted the utility? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please attach any correspondence.	Have you contacted another agency or organization about this issue? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, give agency or organization name:
<b>THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED FOR SOLAR COMPLAINTS ONLY</b> Leave this section blank if your complaint is not related to solar energy.	
1. Application Identification Number	2. Date you notified utility of a dispute
Include in the narrative box, or attach the following 3. A copy of your complaint/statement of dispute to the utility 4. Copies of communications between you and the utility; email or notes on conversations 5. Step you are at in the interconnection process 6. A timeline of your interconnection application review and step where the dispute has occurred 7. What resolution you are seeking	

Please give as much information as possible about your concerns and the action you would like the utility company to take:

The Whiteface Concerned Leaseholders held a meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Aug 21st at the Colvin Mn. Townhall. LaVerne Wagner, a leaseholder arranged for and conducted the mtg. with 65 leaseholders and 2 representatives from MN. Power's Real Estate Dept. present: Mr. Jim Atkinson and Mr. Matthew Hagelin.

The purpose of the meeting was to allow the representatives to explain the proposed sale of leased lots and reasons for the sale. A tentative timeline and surveying/platting information was provided, along with an explanation that MN. Power is re-organizing and will no longer participate in leasing lake lots. They explained the purchase options for leaseholders and that before implementation MN. Power must secure approval from the Federal Energy Commission (FEC) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Currently the FEC has granted approval and a PUC decision is expected soon. Proposed sale price for the leased lots would be the 2021 County estimated market value plus 4%, with tax value for land only and not buildings or other improvements.

Since the Aug. 21st mtg. over 425 Island Lake leaseholders and a Road Association from Fish Lake have asked to join in resolving our concerns prior to any decision by the PUC.

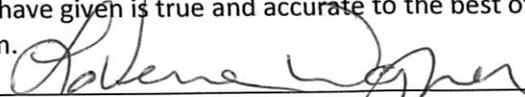
Some of the Questions and Concerns:

1. Will wells/septic systems paid for by leaseholders be considered land value taxable improvements?
2. Will money paid for to secure leased lots be deducted from sale price or will property owners assume purchase cost of the lease AND private ownership cost?
3. Will MN. Power assist with property disputes arising from lots that were not properly surveyed and have resulted in buildings on land not belonging to that leaseholder?
4. Will MN. Power use or sell lots that surround leased lots for mining and/or logging?
5. Will maintenance of access roads remain the responsibility of Road Associations or or will they now be maintained by the County?
6. Will MN. Power be responsible for dam maintenance and water level?
7. Will a history of longevity for a lease result in any type of credit for the leaseholder?
8. Has the 1854 Treaty Authority been contacted by MN. Power about this proposal?
9. Has MN. Power given due consideration to Covid-19 and its affect on dissemination of information and financial constraints for leaseholders due to the pandemic?

**Your signature is needed on this form. Electronic signatures are accepted.**

The information I have given is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and may be used as stated on this form.

Signature:



Date: 9/3/2021

121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

651-296-0406 | Toll-Free 1-800-657-3782 | Fax 651-297-7073 | [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)