

12300 Elm Creek Blvd • Maple Grove, Minnesota 55369-4718 • 763-445-5000 • Fax 763-445-5050

September 18, 2014

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Dr. Burl W. Haar Executive Secretary Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Notice Plan Petition for the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need for the Menahga Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota MPUC Docket No. ET2/CN-

Dear Dr. Haar:

On behalf of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power, Great River Energy hereby submits this Notice Plan Petition for the Menahga Area Project for review and approval by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Great River Energy and Minnesota Power intend to submit a Certificate of Need Application to construct a new (approximately 22.5-mile) 115 kV transmission line and to construct/modify substations in the Menahga area in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker counties.

If you have any questions regarding this filing, please contact me at 763-445-5218.

Respectfully Submitted,

GREAT RIVER ENERGY

Stephenson

Associate General Counsel

Enclosure

cc: The Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources Office of the Attorney General, Residential and Small Business Utilities Division Special Service List - General List 7850.2100-1A

STATE OF MINNESOTA BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Beverly Jones Heydinger David C. Boyd Betsy Wergin Nancy Lange Dan Lipschultz Chair Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF GREAT RIVER ENERGY AND MINNESOTA POWER FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR ITS 115 KV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT IN HUBBARD, WADENA AND BECKER COUNTIES, MINNESOTA MPUC Docket No. ET2/CN-14-____

NOTICE PLAN PETITION

Public Comments on this Notice Plan Petition can be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission until 4:30 P.M. October 8, 2014.

Replies to Comments can be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission until 4:30 P.M. October 28, 2014.

The Commission's address is: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St Paul, MN 55101-2147

I. INTRODUCTION

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power ("Applicants") intend to file a request for a Certificate of Need for a 115 kilovolt ("kV") high voltage transmission line ("HVTL") in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker counties named the Menahga Area Project ("Project"). The Project is primarily driven by Great River Energy's load-serving needs and the need to serve a proposed new Minnesota Pipe Line Company ("MPL") pumping station, but Minnesota Power will be a joint applicant to capture their load-serving needs in the area.

On behalf of Applicants, Great River Energy respectfully submits this Notice Plan Petition for approval by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") pursuant to Minnesota Rule 7829.2550.

The additional capacity provided by the Project is needed to:

- Relieve transmission system overloads in the area.
- Provide electrical service to the proposed new Red Eye distribution substation, to be built by one of Great River Energy's cooperatives, Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative ("Todd-Wadena"). This substation will provide power to a new pumping station to be built by MPL as part of the Minnesota Pipe Line Reliability Project. MPL submitted a Certificate of Need application for the Minnesota Pipe Line Reliability Project on July 25, 2014 (MPUC Docket No. PL-5/CN-14-320).

Applicants intend to submit a combined application for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit to construct the Project. Applicants will seek permission to:

- Construct an east-west transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation, of which approximately 4.5 miles will be double-circuit 115 kV line and approximately 2.5 miles will be single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct a generally north-south transmission line between the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation and the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation, which will be approximately 15.5 miles of primarily single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct the proposed new Great River Energy Blueberry Substation in the vicinity of the existing Menahga Substation, construct the new Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation to serve the new MPL pumping station, and modify the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation and the Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation.

Load-Serving Need

The 34.5 kV sub-transmission system (**Attachment A**) sourced from the Hubbard 230/115/34.5 kV Substation and the Verndale 115/34.5 kV Substation is at risk of experiencing transmission system overloads.

The system issues occurring on the 34.5 kV sub-transmission system were first detected in 2007. The Menahga area would experience low voltage if an outage of the Hubbard-Twin Lake 34.5 kV transmission line occurred. Great River Energy submitted a project in the 2007 Biennial Plan title "Hubbard-Menahga Area" (tracking number 2007-NE-N3), which was intended to solve the issues on the 34.5 kV system by offloading the 34.5 kV system. The "Hubbard-Menahga Area" project included construction of a 115 kV transmission line from Minnesota Power's Pipeline Substation to Great River Energy's Menahga Substation.

However, as an alternative to constructing the "Hubbard to Menahga Area" project, Minnesota Power installed a 2.4 MVAR capacitor at Sebeka Regulator Station in 2008, which relieved the voltage issues for awhile. The capacitor bank was, however, a short-term solution because the transmission line and transformers were close to the thermal limits.

Between the loads currently served by the Hubbard–Verndale 34.5 kV system and the proposed new MPL pumping station load, the system has reached its maximum capacity and a solution is needed to unload the system or build more capacity into the system. The most economical plan is to remove a large load from the 34.5 kV system and place it on a new higher voltage system (therefore alleviating the capacity constraint), rather than rebuilding the whole 34.5 kV system to avoid overloads.

The Project will remove a large load (Menahga), from the 34.5 kV system and place it on a new 115 kV circuit. This will require construction of a new 115 kV transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation, and then south to the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation to serve the new MPL pumping station. Removing Menahga from the 34.5 kV system alleviates the capacity constraint on the Hubbard-Verndale System and also provides a source to the Hubbard-Verndale System in a more ideal location.

MPL Need

MPL is proposing to construct six new pumping stations along its newest pipeline (Line 4) to ensure that Minnesota refineries continue to have access to reliable and sufficient crude oil supplies to meet demand for transportation fuels. MPL plans to use available capacity on Line 4 to ensure reliability of its pipeline system, which is the primary crude oil pipeline system supplying Minnesota's two refineries. In addition to the local load-serving need discussed above, the Menahga Area 115 kV Project is needed to provide electrical service to the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation, which will serve one of these six proposed pumping stations (the Sebeka Pumping Station), which will be located at the southern terminus of the Project.

Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, subdivision 2 provides that no "large energy facility" shall be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a Certificate of Need by the Commission. The definition of a "large energy facility" that is applicable here is "a high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 100 kV or more with more than 10 miles of its length in Minnesota." Minn. Stat. § 216B.2421, subd. 2(3). Minnesota Rule 7829.2550 requires a Notice Plan to be submitted for review by the Commission at least three months before filing a Certificate of Need application for any high voltage transmission line under Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.2421. On behalf of Applicants, Great River Energy therefore submits this Notice Plan for the Commission's approval.

II. NOTICE PLAN PROPOSAL

This Notice Plan is prepared as an initial step in the Certificate of Need regulatory process. Preparation of a Notice Plan, and its review and approval by the Commission, will ensure that interested persons have the opportunity to participate in the proceeding. The area proposed to be included in notices under this proposal ("Notice Area") is depicted in **Attachment B**.

This Notice Plan includes the following proposed direct mail and publication notices:

- Direct Mail Notice:
 - Landowners within the Notice Area (Attachment C);
 - Residents with mailing addresses within the Notice Area (Attachment C);
 - Local units of government in and around the Notice Area (Attachments D and E);
 - Local and State elected officials (Attachments D and F); and
 - State and local government agencies and offices (Attachments C and G).
- **Published Notice (Attachment H)** in local and regional newspapers with circulation within the Notice Area as identified in **Attachment I**.

A. Direct Mail Notice to Landowners

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 3(A), requires an applicant for a Certificate of Need to provide direct mail notice to all landowners likely to be affected by the proposed transmission lines. Great River Energy will obtain landowner names and addresses within the Notice Area using County GIS data, which includes tax record information. A draft of the letter proposed to be used for the direct mail notice requirement for landowners in the Notice Area is included as **Attachment C**.

B. Direct Mail Notice to Mailing Addresses

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 3(B), requires an applicant for a Certificate of Need to provide direct mail notice to all mailing addresses in the area that are likely to be affected by the proposed transmission lines. Great River Energy will rely on County GIS data (that includes the tax owner and property address) to create a list of mailing addresses within the Notice Area

for the Project. A draft of the letter that Great River Energy proposes to use for the direct mail notice to residents in the Notice Area is included as **Attachment C**.

C. Direct Mail Notice to Tribal Government Officials

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 3(C) requires an applicant for a Certificate of Need for a high voltage transmission line to provide direct mail notice to tribal governments whose jurisdictions are reasonably likely to be affected by the proposed Project. There are no tribal lands within the Notice Area; however, Great River Energy will provide notice to representatives of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

D. Direct Mail Notice to Local Governments

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 3(C), requires an applicant to provide direct mail notice to governments of towns, cities, home rule charter cities, and counties whose jurisdictions are reasonably likely to be affected by the proposed transmission lines. Great River Energy proposes to provide direct mail notice (**Attachment D**) to the towns, cities, and counties listed in **Attachment E.** The notice will also be provided to the elected officials of those local units of government identified in Attachment D and to those State Senators and Representatives whose districts are within the Notice Area as identified in **Attachment F**. Additionally, the notice provided in **Attachment C** will be provided to the federal, state, and local government agencies and offices identified in **Attachment G**.

E. Newspaper Notice

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 3(D), requires an applicant to publish notice in newspapers in the areas that may be affected by the transmission lines. The proposed notice text is provided in **Attachment H**. Great River Energy proposes to place notice advertisements in the newspapers identified in **Attachment I**.

In addition to the Notice Plan newspaper notice requirement, Minnesota Rule 7829.2500, Subpart 5, requires that after a Certificate of Need application is filed that an applicant publish newspaper notice of the filing in a newspaper of general circulation throughout the state. Given that under the proposed Notice Plan, Great River Energy will publish newspaper notice of the Certificate of Need proceeding no more than 60 days before a Certificate of Need application is filed in newspapers of local, regional, and statewide circulation, Great River Energy requests a waiver from this additional newspaper notice requirement.

F. Notice Content

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 4, requires notice packets to include several pieces of information including: a map; right-of-way requirements and statement of intent to acquire property rights; notice that the transmission upgrade cannot be constructed unless the Commission certifies that it is needed; Commission contact information; utility website information; a statement that the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental

Review and Analysis ("EERA") will prepare an environmental report; an explanation of how to get on the Project's mailing list; and a list of applicable regulatory laws and rules. Great River Energy's notice mailing will include these requirements.

The notice letter will serve three purposes: 1) to introduce and explain the need and location of the proposed Project; 2) to encourage potentially-affected persons to participate in the regulatory process; and 3) to provide contact information for citizens and officials to obtain additional information about the Project and the regulatory process. The map that will be included with the notice letter will depict the transmission line corridor area, substations, counties, townships, and notable landmarks to aid in orientation.

G. Distribution of Notice Plan Filing

As required under Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 1, this Notice Plan filing has been sent to the EERA, the Residential and Small Business Utilities Division of the Office of the Attorney General, and to those parties listed on the "General List of Persons Interested in Power Plants and Transmission Lines."

H. Notice Timing

Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 6, requires the applicant to implement the Notice Plan within 30 days of its approval by the Commission. Great River Energy requests that the Commission modify the Notice Plan implementation requirement to allow notice to more closely coincide with the Certificate of Need filing. Great River Energy requests that the Commission direct the notices identified in this Notice Plan to occur no more than 60 days prior to the filing of the Certificate of Need application.

I. Project Service List

Pursuant to Minnesota Rule 7829.0700, Subpart 1, Great River Energy requests that the following persons be placed on the Commission's Official Service List for this matter, and request electronic service for these persons:

Utility Employee	Carole L. Schmidt
Responsible for Filing	Great River Energy
	Supervisor, Transmission
	Permitting and Compliance
	12300 Elm Creek Blvd
	Maple Grove, MN 55369
	<u>cschmidt@GREnergy.com</u>

Utility Attorney Responsible for Filing	Donna Stephenson Great River Energy Associate General Counsel 12300 Elm Creek Blvd Maple Grove, MN 55369 <u>dstephenson@GREnergy.com</u>
Attorney for Minnesota	David Moeller
Power	Senior Attorney
	Minnesota Power
	30 West Superior St.
	Duluth, MN 55802
	dmoeller@allete.com

III. CONCLUSION

On behalf of Applicants, Great River Energy respectfully requests that the Commission: (1) approve this Notice Plan prepared in advance of our Certificate of Need application to construct the Menahga Area 115 kV Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker counties; (2) grant the variance from duplicative newspaper notice requirements under Minnesota Rule 7829.2500, Subpart 5; and (3) grant the variance from the 30-day implementation notice contemplated in Minnesota Rule 7829.2550, Subpart 6, and modify the time for implementation of the Notice Plan to no more than 60 days and no less than two weeks prior to the filing of the Certificate of Need application.

Dated: September 18, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

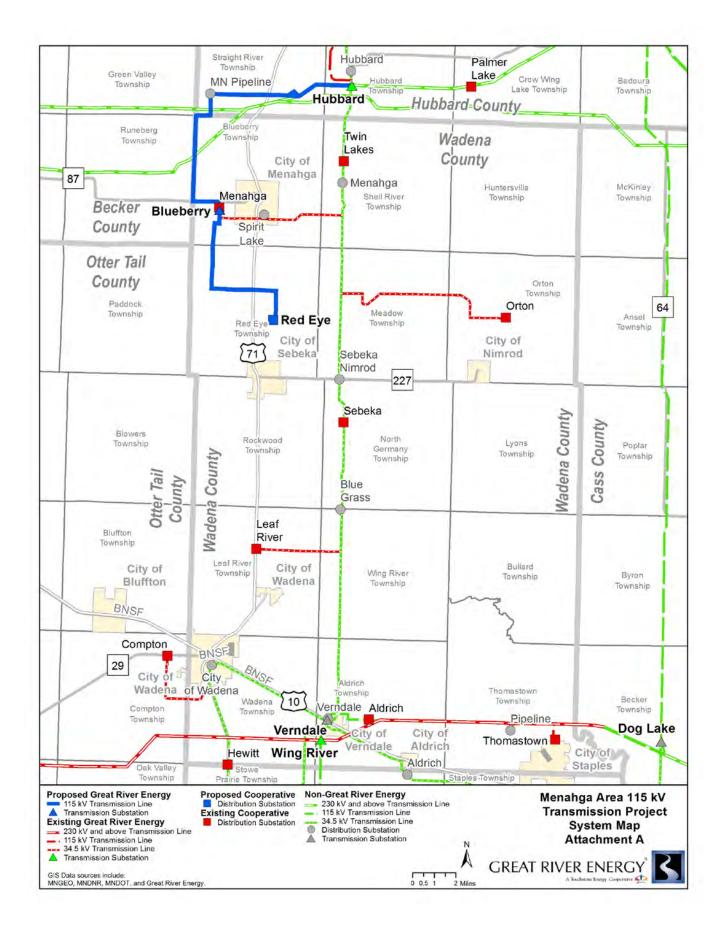
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

By: <u>/s/ Donna Stephenson</u> Donna Stephenson (#0291584) Associate General Counsel 12300 Elm Creek Blvd Maple Grove, MN 55369

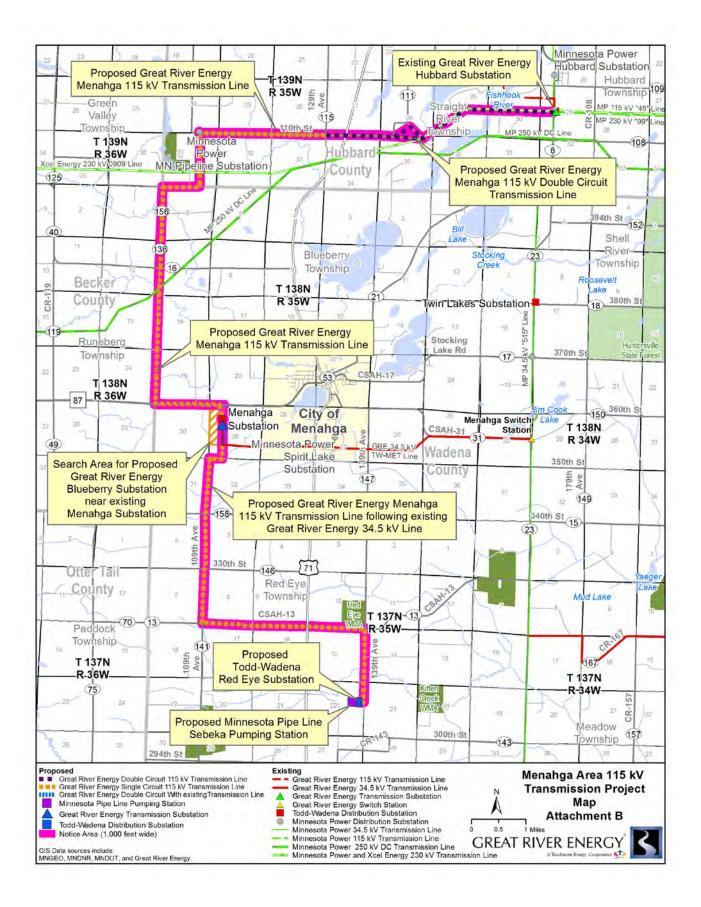
763-445-5218

Attorney for Great River Energy

Attachment A



Attachment B



____, 2014

RE: Notice of Certificate of Need Application for Great River Energy and Minnesota Power's 115 kV Transmission Line Menahga Area Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota MPUC Docket No.: ET2/CN-____

Dear Stakeholder:

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power are proposing a 115 kV transmission line project in the townships of Hubbard and Straight River in Hubbard County; the townships of Blueberry and Red Eye in Wadena County; and in Runeberg Township in Becker County, Minnesota. Great River Energy and Minnesota Power will jointly file a combined Certificate of Need and Route Permit application with the Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") and request permission to:

- Construct an east-west transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation, of which approximately 4.5 miles will be double-circuit 115 kV line and approximately 2.5 miles will be single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct a generally north-south transmission line between the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation and the proposed new Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative ("Todd-Wadena") Red Eye distribution substation, which will be approximately 15.5 miles of primarily single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct the proposed new Great River Energy Blueberry Substation in the vicinity of the existing Menahga Substation; construct the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation to serve the proposed Minnesota Pipe Line Company ("MPL") Sebeka pumping station; and modify the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation and the Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation.

The area under consideration for the location of the Project is depicted in Attachment 1.

This notice is being provided to those who fall within one or more of the categories listed below as they relate to the 1000-foot wide area ("Notice Area") shown on Attachment 1:

- Landowners with property within the Notice Area;
- Residents within the Notice Area;
- Local units of government in and around the Notice Area;
- Local and State elected officials; or
- State and local government agencies and offices.

Regulatory Process Overview

For the Project, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and where the Project should be located (Route Permit). Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must first certify that the Project is needed. Certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, and Minnesota Rules Chapters 7829 and 7849, specifically Rules 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Great River Energy and Minnesota Power have proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project. The Certificate of Need application, once submitted, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at <u>www.puc.state.mn.us</u> in Docket No. ET2/CN-14-___.

In addition to certifying the Project, the Commission must also grant a Route Permit for the Project. Routing of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850, specifically Rules 7850.2900 to 7850.4600, as they pertain to the alternative permitting process. Information on the Route Permit application, once filed, can be obtained by visiting the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis ("EERA") website at _____.

EERA staff is responsible for conducting environmental review of the Project. EERA staff is responsible for preparing both an environmental report ("ER") for the Certificate of Need proceeding and an environmental assessment ("EA") for the Route Permit proceeding. EERA staff may elect to combine these two documents and issue one document, an EA in lieu of an ER, which satisfies the environmental review requirements for the Certificate of Need and Route Permit proceedings.

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power will be submitting an application for a Route Permit and will identify a proposed route and routes that were evaluated but rejected. More detail on the route Great River Energy and Minnesota Power intend to propose for the Project in their Route Permit Application is shown on **Attachment 2**. Other routes can be proposed during the EA scoping process to be completed by EERA. As part of its analysis, EERA will evaluate the route proposed by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power in its Route Permit application and any other routes proposed during the scoping process that will aid in the Commission's decision on the Route Permit application. The Commission may determine that a route submitted by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power, or a route proposed during the scoping process, or some combination of such routes is the most appropriate route for the Project. Selection of a final route by the Commission will be based on evaluation of the routes, guided by the Factors identified in Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.03, subdivision 7, Minnesota Rule 7850.4100, and stakeholder input received during the regulatory process.

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power anticipate that a 100-foot wide right-of-way ("ROW") will be required for the Project. Before beginning construction, Great River Energy will acquire

property rights for the ROW, typically through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel.

The proposed structures for the Project are primarily single pole, wood structures approximately 60 to 90 feet above ground using spans of approximately 275 to 400 feet between poles. Additionally, specialty structures, other than the single pole wood structures discussed above, may be used through areas of environmental sensitivity or where construction conditions require their use.

Need for the Project

The Menahga Area Project is needed by 2017 to address circuit overloads that already exist on the Hubbard – Verndale 34.5 kV system and to meet the MPL in-service date for the Sebeka pumping station, as discussed below.

Load-serving Need

The 34.5 kV sub-transmission system sourced from the Great River Energy Hubbard 230/115/34.5 kV Substation and the Minnesota Power Verndale 115/34.5 kV Substation is at risk of experiencing transmission system overloads. These system issues were first detected in 2007. As a temporary measure, Minnesota Power installed a 2.4 MVAR capacitor at Sebeka Regulator Station in 2008 to relieve these voltage issues. However, the capacitor bank was viewed as a short-term solution, because the transmission line and transformers were close to the thermal limits.

With continuing risk of transmission system overloads and a new pumping station load, it is now necessary to remove a large load (Menahga), from the 34.5 kV system and place it on a new 115 kV circuit. This will require construction of a new 115 kV transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation, and then south to the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation to serve the new MPL pumping station.

Minnesota Pipe Line Company Need

MPL is proposing to construct six new pumping stations along its newest pipeline (Line 4) to ensure that Minnesota refineries continue to have access to reliable and sufficient crude oil supplies to meet demand for transportation fuels. MPL plans to use available capacity on Line 4 to ensure reliability of its pipeline system, which is the primary crude oil pipeline system supplying Minnesota's two refineries. In addition to the local load-serving need discussed above, the Menahga Area 115 kV Project is needed to provide electrical service to the new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation, which will serve one of these six proposed pumping stations (the Sebeka Pumping Station), which will be located at the southern terminus of the Project. MPL submitted a Certificate of Need application for the Minnesota Pipe Line Reliability Project on July 25, 2014 (MPUC Docket No. PL-5/CN-14-320).

Biennial Transmission Planning

Minnesota statutes include a requirement that each electric transmission-owning utility in the state file a biennial transmission planning report with the Commission in the fall of odd years. These reports provide an excellent source of background information on the transmission planning process used by utilities in Minnesota. The 2013 Biennial Transmission Planning Report is available at: <u>www.minnelectrans.com</u>.

Project Notifications

To subscribe to the Project Certificate of Need docket and receive email notifications when information is filed that is related to the Certificate of Need for the Project, please visit www.puc.state.mn.us, click on the "Subscribe to a Docket" button, enter your email address and select "Docket Number" from the Type of Subscription dropdown box, then select "14" from the first Docket Number dropdown box and enter "____" in the second box before clicking on the "Add to List" button. You must then click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page to confirm your subscription to the Project Docket. These same steps can be followed to subscribe to the Project Route Permit docket (Docket No. ET2/TL-14-____).

Please visit <u>http://greatriverenergy.com/deliveringelectricity/currentprojects/</u> for more information on the Project. If you have questions about the process, you may contact the Minnesota regulatory staff listed below:

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission	Minnesota Department of Commerce
Bret Eknes	Deborah Pile, State Permit Manager
121 7 th Place East, Suite 350	85 7 th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
651.296.7124	651.297.2375
800.657.3782	800.657.3794
bret.eknes@state.mn.us	deborah.pile@state.mn.us
www.puc.state.mn.us	

If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/TL-14_____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at <u>mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/</u>, clicking on the "Transmission Lines" tab, selecting the link for the 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Menahga Area from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the "Mailing List" heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above.

A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/CN-14-____), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or <u>robin.benson@state.mn.us</u>.

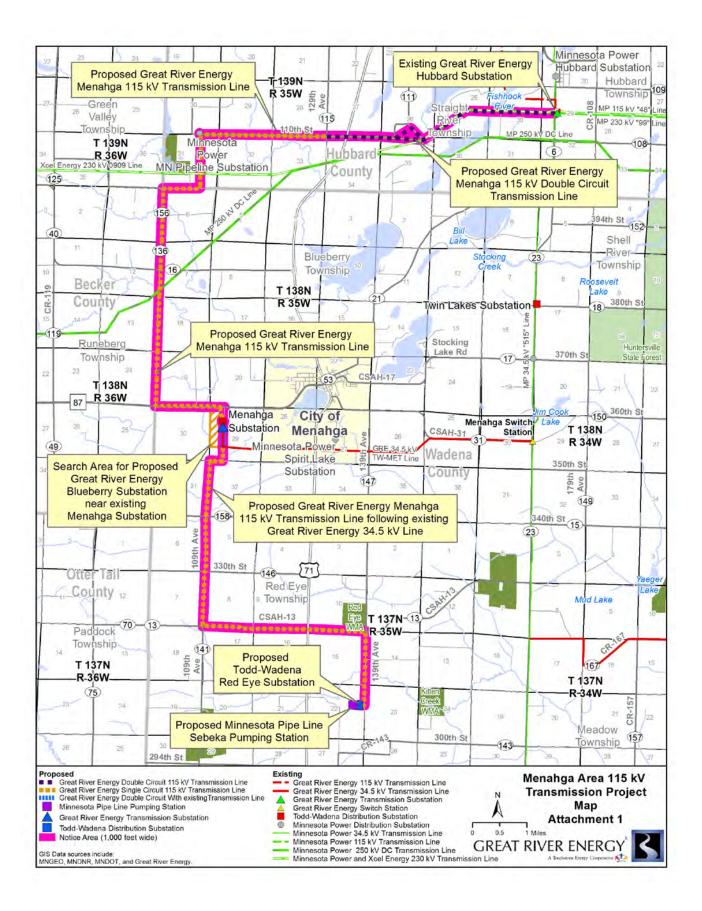
The Great River Energy contacts for questions about this Project are:

Carole L. Schmidt	Michelle Lommel
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and	Senior Field Representative
Compliance	Great River Energy
Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd
12300 Elm Creek Blvd	Maple Grove, MN 55369
Maple Gove, MN 55369	763.445.5977
763.445.5214	612.309.6839
<pre>cschmidt@GREnergy.com</pre>	mlommel@GREnergy.com

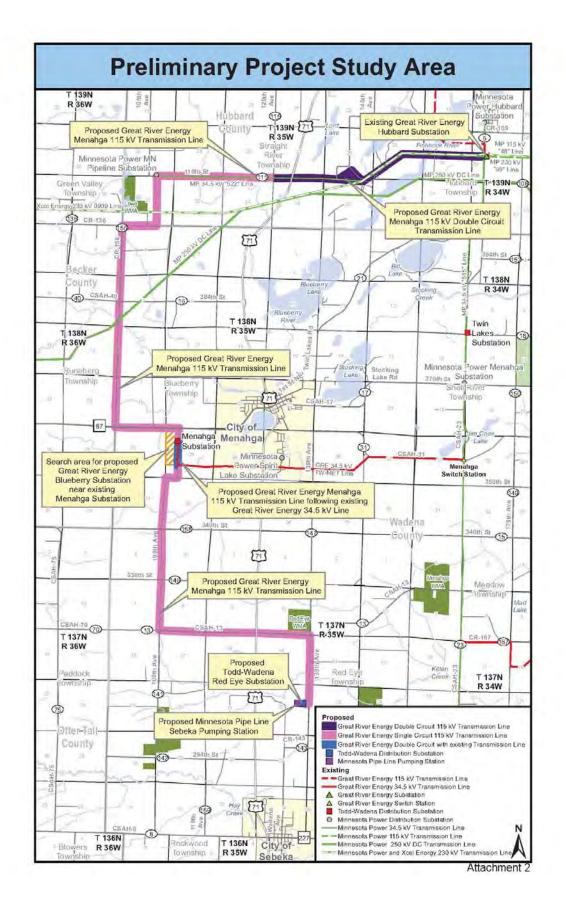
Sincerely,

Carole L Schmidt Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Attachment 1 to Notice Letter







____, 2014

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Dear Local Government Representative or Elected Official:

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- Landowners with property within the Notice Area;
- Residents within the Notice Area;
- Local units of government in and around the Notice Area;
- Local and State elected officials; or
- State and local government agencies and offices.

Because your constituents may have questions related to the Project, we wanted to inform you of our proposal and also how you and your constituents may get involved in the regulatory process for the Project.

Regulatory Process Overview

For the Project, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and where the Project should be located (Route Permit). Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must first certify that the Project is needed. The certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, and Minnesota Rules Chapters 7829 and 7849, specifically Rules 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Great River Energy and Minnesota Power have proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project. The Certificate of Need application, once submitted, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at <u>www.puc.state.mn.us</u> in Docket No. ET2/CN-14-___.

In addition to certifying the Project, the Commission must also grant a Route Permit for the Project. The routing of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850, specifically Rules 7850.2900 to 7850.4600, as they pertain to the alternative permitting process. Information on the Route Permit application, once filed, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website in Docket No. ET2/TL-14-____.

Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis staff ("EERA") is responsible for conducting environmental review of the Project. EERA will prepare an environmental report for the Certificate of Need proceeding. EERA will prepare an environmental assessment ("EA") for the Route Permit proceeding. EERA may elect to combine these two documents and issue one document, an EA, which satisfies the environmental review requirements for the Certificate of Need and Route Permit proceedings.

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power will be submitting an application for a Route Permit and will identify the route that they prefer for the Project. More detail on the route Great River Energy and Minnesota Power intend to propose for the Project in its Route Permit Application is shown on **Attachment 2**. Other routes can be proposed during the EA scoping process to be completed by EERA. As part of its analysis, EERA will evaluate the route proposed by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power in its Route Permit application and any other routes proposed during the scoping process that will aid in the Commission's decision on the Route Permit application. The Commission may determine that a route submitted by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power, or a route proposed during the scoping process, or some combination of such routes is the most appropriate route for the Project. Selection of a final route by the Commission will be based on evaluation of the routes, guided by the Factors identified in Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.03, subdivision 7, Minnesota Rule 7850.4100, and stakeholder input received during the regulatory process. Great River Energy and Minnesota Power anticipate that a 100-foot wide right-of-way ("ROW") permanent easement area will be required for the Project. Before beginning construction, Great River Energy will acquire property rights for the ROW, typically through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel.

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Need for the Project

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With continuing risk of transmission system overloads and a new pumping station load, it is now necessary to remove a large load (Menahga), from the 34.5 kV system and place it on a new 115 kV circuit. This will require construction of a new 115 kV transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation, and then south to the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation to serve the new MPL pumping station.

Minnesota Pipe Line Company Need

MPL is proposing to construct six new pumping stations along its newest pipeline (Line 4) to ensure that Minnesota refineries continue to have access to reliable and sufficient crude oil supplies to meet demand for transportation fuels. MPL plans to use available capacity on Line 4 to ensure reliability of its pipeline system, which is the primary crude oil pipeline system supplying Minnesota's two refineries. In addition to the local load-serving need discussed above, the Menahga Area 115 kV Project is needed to provide electrical service to the new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation, which will serve one of these six proposed pumping stations (the Sebeka Pumping Station), which will be located at the southern terminus of the Project. MPL submitted a Certificate of Need application for the Minnesota Pipe Line Reliability Project on July 25, 2014 (MPUC Docket No. PL-5/CN-14-320).

Biennial Transmission Planning

Minnesota statutes include a requirement that each electric transmission-owning utility in the state file a biennial transmission planning report with the Commission in the fall of odd years. These reports provide an excellent source of background information on the transmission planning process used by utilities in Minnesota. The 2013 Biennial Transmission Planning Report is available at: <u>www.minnelectrans.com</u>.

Project Notifications

To subscribe to the Project Certificate of Need docket and receive email notifications when information is filed that is related to the Certificate of Need for the Project, please visit www.puc.state.mn.us, click on the "Subscribe to a Docket" button, enter your email address and select "Docket Number" from the Type of Subscription dropdown box, then select "12" from the first Docket Number dropdown box and enter "____" in the second box before clicking on the "Add to List" button. You must then click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page to confirm your subscription to the Project Docket. These same steps can be followed to subscribe to the Project Route Permit docket (Docket No. ET2/TL-14-____).

Please visit <u>http://greatriverenergy.com/deliveringelectricity/currentprojects/</u> for more information on the Project. If you have questions about the process, you may contact the Minnesota regulatory staff listed below:

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission	Minnesota Department of Commerce
Bret Eknes	Deborah Pile, State Permit Manager
121 7 th Place East, Suite 350	85 7 th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
651.296.7124	651.297.2375
800.657.3782	800.657.3794
bret.eknes@state.mn.us	deborah.pile@state.mn.us
www.puc.state.mn.us	

If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/TL-14_____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at <u>mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/</u>, clicking on the "Transmission Lines" tab, selecting the link for the 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Menahga Area from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the "Mailing List" heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above. Please be aware that the Route Permit mailing list may not be available for online registration until the Route Permit application is submitted.

A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/CN-14-____), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or <u>robin.benson@state.mn.us</u>.

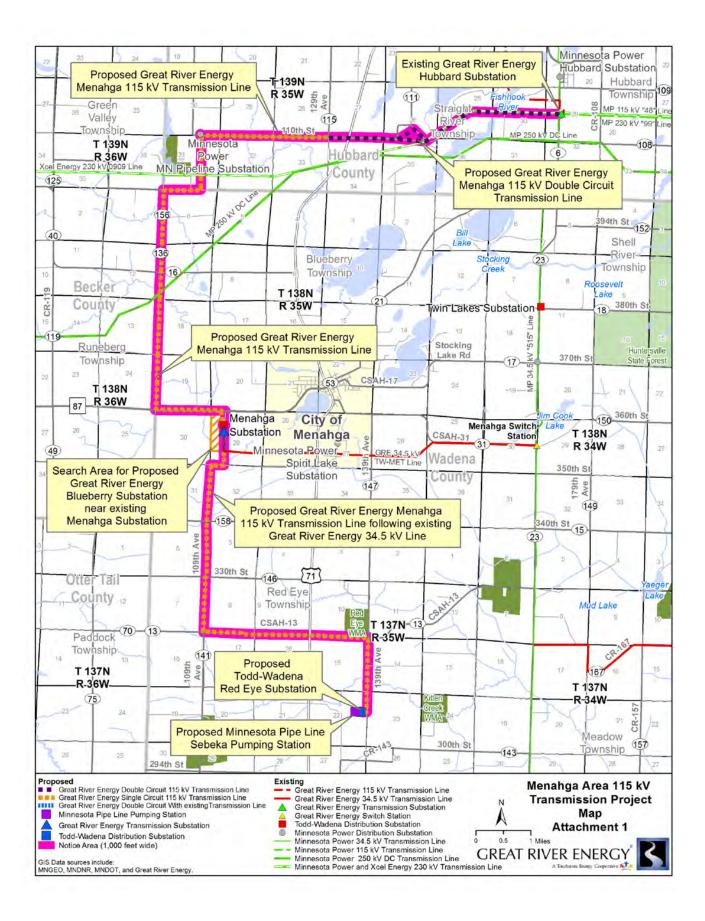
The Great River Energy contacts for questions about this Project are:

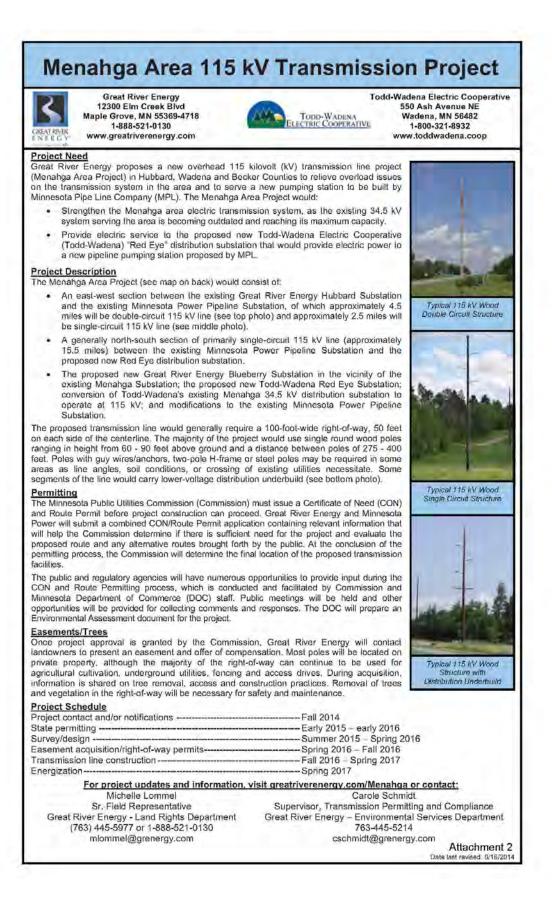
Carole L. Schmidt	Michelle Lommel
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and	Senior Field Representative
Compliance	Great River Energy
Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd
12300 Elm Creek Blvd	Maple Grove, MN 55369
Maple Gove, MN 55369	763.445.5977
763.445.5214	612.309.6839
<pre>cschmidt@GREnergy.com</pre>	mlommel@GREnergy.com

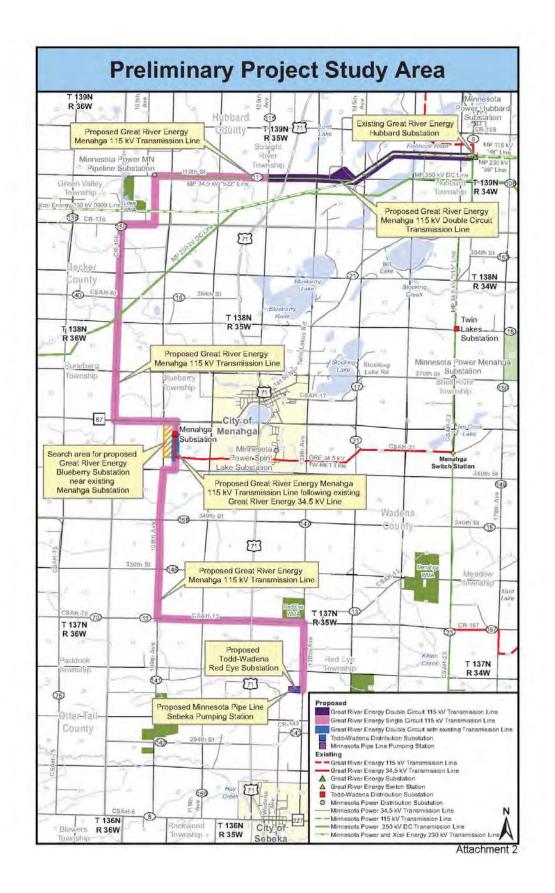
Sincerely,

Carole L Schmidt Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and Compliance

Attachment 1 to Notice Letter







Attachment E

County	City	Township
Hubbard		Hubbard
		Straight River
Wadena	Menahga	Blueberry
		Red Eye
Becker		Runeberg

Attachment F

State Elected	Congress and Senate
Rep. Steve Green	Rep. Rick Nolan
Rep. Mark Anderson	Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Sen. Rod Skoe	Sen. Al Franken
Sen. Paul Gazelka	

*This list will be revised if necessary once election results are certified.

Agencies	Regional Development	Soil & Water	Watershed
	Commissions	Conservation Districts	Districts
Minnesota Board of Water	Hubbard County Regional	Hubbard County	None
and Soil Resources	Economic Development	Soil and Water	
	Commission	Conservation District	
Minnesota Department of			
Agriculture	Region 5 Development	Wadena County	
	Commission - Staples	Soil and Water	
Minnesota Department of		Conservation District	
Health	Headwaters Regional		
	Development	Becker County	
Minnesota Department of	Commission- Bemidji	Soil and Water	
Natural Resources		Conservation District	
Minnesota Department of			
Transportation			
Minnesota Pollution Control			
Agency			
Natural Resources			
Conservation Service			
State Historic Preservation			
Office-Minnesota Historical			
Society			
Society			
St. Paul District, U.S. Army			
Corps of Engineers			
U.S. Department of			
Agriculture			
Agriculture			
U.S. Fish and Wildlife			
Service			
Service			

NOTICE

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power to Propose to Construct a 115 kV Electric Transmission Line in the Menahga Area in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power are proposing a 115 kV transmission line project in the townships of Hubbard and Straight River in Hubbard County; the townships of Blueberry and Red Eye in Wadena County; and in Runeberg Township in Becker County, Minnesota. Great River Energy and Minnesota Power will jointly file a combined Certificate of Need and Route Permit application with the Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") and request permission to:

- Construct an east-west transmission line between the existing Great River Energy Hubbard Substation and the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation, of which approximately 4.5 miles will be double-circuit 115 kV line and approximately 2.5 miles will be single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct a generally north-south transmission line between the existing Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation and the proposed new Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative ("Todd-Wadena") Red Eye distribution substation, which will be approximately 15.5 miles of primarily single-circuit 115 kV line.
- Construct the proposed new Great River Energy Blueberry Substation in the vicinity of the existing Menahga Substation; construct the proposed new Todd-Wadena Red Eye Substation to serve the proposed Minnesota Pipe Line Company Sebeka pumping station; and modify the existing Todd-Wadena Menahga Substation and the Minnesota Power Pipeline Substation.

Project Information

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power anticipate that a 100-foot wide right-of-way will be required for the Project. Before beginning construction, Great River Energy will acquire property rights for the right-of-way, typically through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel.

The proposed structures for the Project are primarily single pole, wood structures approximately 60 to 90 feet above ground using spans of approximately 275 to 400 feet between poles. Additionally, specialty structures, other than the single pole wood structures discussed above, may be used through areas of environmental sensitivity or where construction conditions require their use.

Need for the Project

The Project is needed to improve local reliability (relieve transmission system overloads) and to provide electrical service to the new Todd-Wadena Red Eye distribution substation, which will provide power to a pumping station to be constructed in the area by Minnesota Pipe Line Company. Great River Energy also participates in biennial transmission planning with the most recent plan available at <u>www.minnelectrans.com</u>.

Regulatory Process Overview

For the Project, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and where the Project should be located (Route Permit). Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must first certify that the Project is needed. The certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, and Minnesota Rules Chapters 7829 and 7849, specifically Rules 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Great River Energy and Minnesota Power have proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project. The Certificate of Need application, once submitted, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at <u>www.puc.state.mn.us</u> in Docket No. ET2/CN-14-___.

Public Involvement

If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/TL-14_____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at <u>mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/</u>, clicking on the "Transmission Lines" tab, selecting the link for the 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Menahga Area from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the "Mailing List" heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above. Please be aware that the Route Permit mailing list may not be available for online registration until the Route Permit application is submitted.

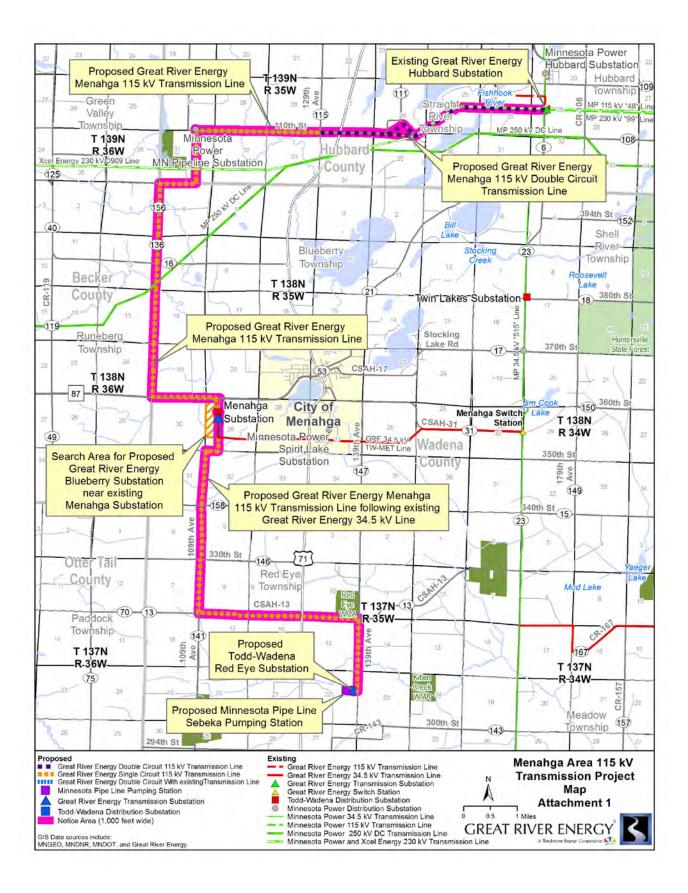
A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (Docket No. ET2/CN-14-____), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or <u>robin.benson@state.mn.us</u>.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission	Minnesota Department of Commerce
Bret Eknes	Deborah Pile, State Permit Manager
121 7 th Place East, Suite 350	85 7 th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
651.296.7124	651.297.2375
800.657.3782	800.657.3794
bret.eknes@state.mn.us; www.puc.state.mn.us	deborah.pile@state.mn.us

Please visit <u>http://greatriverenergy.com/deliveringelectricity/currentprojects/</u> for more information on the Project or you may contact us directly with your questions:

Carole L. Schmidt	Michelle Lommel
Supervisor, Transmission Permitting and	Senior Field Representative
Compliance	Great River Energy
Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd
12300 Elm Creek Blvd	Maple Grove, MN 55369
Maple Gove, MN 55369	763.445.5977
763.445.5214	612.309.6839
<pre>cschmidt@GREnergy.com</pre>	<u>mlommel@GREnergy.com</u>

Attachment H



Attachment I

Newspapers/Publications

Northwoods Press (Nevis)

Detroit Lakes Tribune

Verndale Sun

The Review Messenger (Sebeka/Menahga)

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

) ss.

)

STATE OF MINNESOTA

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need for the Menahga Area 115 kV Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota

MPUC Docket No.: ET-2/CN-14-

I, <u>Carol Heurang</u>, hereby certify that on the 18th day of September, 2014, I directed to be sent via U.S. Mail a true and correct copy of the following notice to all persons on the attached mailing list (those required by 7829.2550 Subpart 1A and 1B; those on the Special Service List - General List 7850.2100-1A requesting paper service), by depositing same, postage prepaid mail, in the United States mail:

Notice Plan Petition for the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need for the Menahga Area 115 kV Project in Hubbard, Wadena and Becker Counties, Minnesota

Carol Deurien

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of September, 2014.

NOTARY PUBLIC

Michelle F. Bissonnette HDR Engineering, Inc. Golden Hills Office Center 701 Xenia Avenue South, Suite 600 Minneapolis, MN 55416

Todd Tadych American Transmission Company LLC 5303 Fen Oak Dr Madison, WI 53718

Minnesota Dept of Commerce Division of Energy Resources 85 7th Place East, Ste 500 St. Paul, MN 55101 Colleen Mueller 22186 State Hwy 4 Paynesville, MN 56362

Office of the Attorney General Residential & Small Business Utilities Division 445 Minnesota Street St. Paul, MN 55101