

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Issued: October 2, 2015

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

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Numbers:

ET-2, E-015/CN-14-787 (Certificate of Need)

ET-2, E-015/TL-14-797 (Route Permit)

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number: 5-2500-32715

Date: October 19, 2015

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Menahga Senior Center, 19 Cedar Avenue, Menahga, MN 56464

Bad weather? Find out if a meeting is canceled. Call (toll-free) 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc

Project Description

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power propose to:

- Build a new 22.5 mile, 115 kV transmission line
- Build three new substations

The project would be located in Becker, Hubbard, and Wadena Counties.

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power state the project is needed to address overloads on the existing transmission system and to serve a proposed oil pump station.

Public Hearing Information

- The Public Hearing starts on time.
- Arrive a few minutes early so you have time to sign in, pick up materials, and find a seat.
- Administrative Law Judge James Mortenson will preside over the public hearing.

- Public Utilities Commission, Department of Commerce and Great River Energy staff will be available to answer questions about the permitting process and the project.
- Citizens will be able to offer verbal comments, written comments, or both into the record.

The purpose of the hearing is to compile the record for the Commission to consider in making a final decision on the certificate of need and route permit application. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 14 and Minnesota Rules, Chapter 1405. Regarding any issue on which Chapter 1405 is silent, the provisions of Minnesota Rules 1400.5010 to 1400.8400 shall apply. The applicable statutes and rules are available on the Office of the Revisor of Statutes webpage at: <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us>.

Citizens will have the opportunity to ask questions and offer oral and written comments into the record. Representatives of Great River Energy and staff from the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Commerce will be available to answer questions about the project and the state review process.

The hearing will continue until all persons have had the opportunity to offer testimony and ask questions. The administrative law judge may elect to recess the hearing and set additional days for hearing, if necessary.

Submit Comments

Topics for Public Comment:

- Is the proposed transmission line needed and in the public interest?
- What are the costs and benefits of the proposed transmission line?
- What is the most appropriate route for the proposed transmission line?
- What are the environmental and human impacts of each route under consideration and how can these impacts be addressed?
- Should any specific permit conditions be placed on this project?
- Are there other project-related issues or concerns?

Comment Period: Comments accepted through November 2, 2015 at 4:30pm.

Comments must be received by 4:30pm on the close date.

Comments received after comment period closes may not be considered.

Online Visit mn.gov/puc, select *Speak Up!*, find this docket, and add your comments to the discussion.

If you wish to include an exhibit, map or other attachment, please send your comments via U.S. Mail.

U.S. Mail Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul MN 55101

Please include the Commission's docket numbers (above) in all communications.

Important Comments will be made available to the public via the Public Utilities Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Process Information

Before the project can be built, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) must approve a certificate of need and a route permit. The Commission accepted Great River Energy and Minnesota Power's certificate of need and route permit application at a February 2015 meeting. The Commission's decision-making process takes about twelve months.

The Department of Commerce prepared an environmental assessment for this project. The environmental assessment reviews the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives, as well as ways to address impacts. The environmental assessment was issued in September 2015.

Judge Mortenson will use the information in the record, including written comments and comments received at the public hearings, to write a report for the Commission. After receiving the Judge's report, the Commission reviews all the information in the record, including the environmental assessment and comments received at the public hearing. The Commission's final decision on the certificate of need and route permit for this project is expected by January 2016.

Eminent Domain: If the Commission issues a route permit, GRE and Minnesota Power may use the power of eminent domain to get land for this project.

How to Learn More

Department of Commerce Project Website:

<http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=33985>

Project Mailing List: Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate (meetings, comment periods, etc.). Contact docketing.puc@state.mn.us or 651-201-2204 with the docket number (14-787, 14-797), your name, mailing address and email address.

Subscribe to the Docket: Subscribe to receive email notifications when new documents are filed. Note - subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

1. mn.gov/puc
2. Select *Subscribe to a Docket*
3. Type your e-mail address
4. For *Type of Subscription*, select *Docket Number*
5. For *Docket Number*, select 14 in the first box, type 787 or 797 in the second box
6. Select *Add to List*

7. Select *Save*

Full Case Record: All documents filed in this docket are available via the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (14) and the docket number (787 or 797), select *Search*.

Public Libraries: The route permit application and environmental assessment will be available at the following locations:

- Menahga City Hall, 115 2nd Street NE, Menahga, MN 56564
- Park Rapids Library, 210 1st Street West, Park Rapids, MN 56470
- Sebeka City Hall, 213 Minnesota Avenue West, Sebeka, MN 56477
- Wadena Library, 304 1st Street SW, Wadena, MN 56482

Minnesota Statutes and Rules: This project is reviewed under Minnesota Statute 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849 and 7850, available at www.revisor.mn.gov.

Project Contacts

Public Utilities Commission Public Advisor

Tracy Smetana at consumer.puc@state.mn.us, 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782

Public Utilities Commission Energy Facilities Planner

Cezar Panait at Cezar.Panait@state.mn.us or 651-201-2207

Department of Commerce Environmental Review Manager

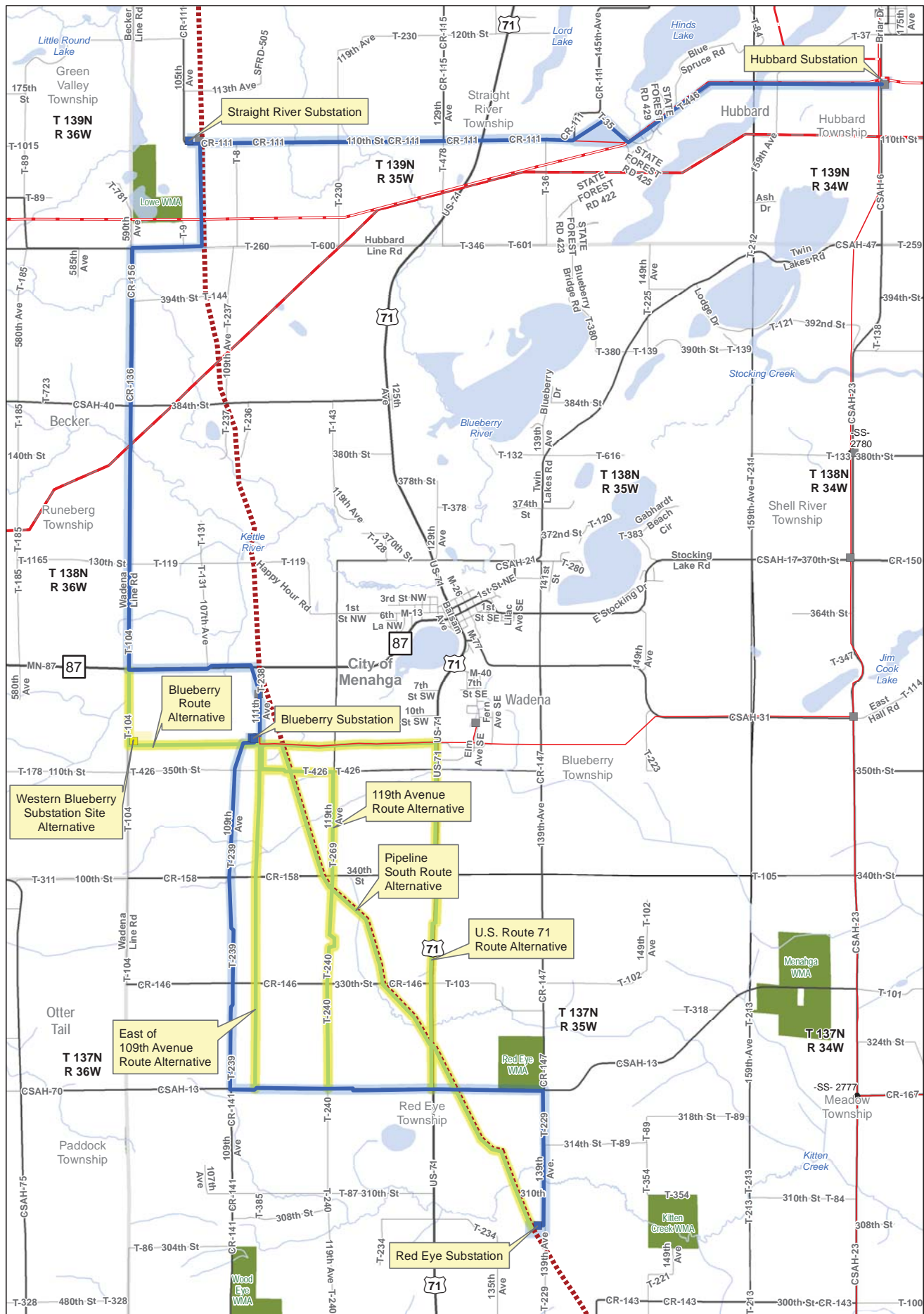
Ray Kirsch at Raymond.Kirsch@state.mn.us, 651-539-1841 or 1-800-657-3794

Great River Energy Project Contact

Michelle Lommel at mlommel@GREnergy.com or 763-445-5977

If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these meetings (e.g., sign language or large print materials), please contact the Office of Administrative Hearings at 651-361-7000 (voice) or 651-361-7878 (TTY) at least one week in advance of the meeting.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (e.g., large print or audio) by calling 651-296-0406 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.



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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Applicants | Existing |
| Proposed Alignment | 34.5 kV Transmission Line |
| Proposed Route | 230 kV Transmission Line |
| Proposed Substation | 250 kV Transmission Line |
| Alternatives | Substation |
| Alternative Alignment | Pipeline |
| Alternative Route | MN Wildlife Management Areas |
| Alternative Substation | |

Data Sources Vary Between MNDOT, MNDNR, MNGEO and Great River Energy Aerial Image from ESRI Web service

Map Projection: WGS 1984 Web Mercator

0 3,900 Feet

Updated: 5/19/2015

**Menahga Area
115 kV Project**

**Route and Site
Alternatives**

