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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

February 19, 2016

Dear Landowner,

You are receiving this letter because your property may be directly or indirectly affected by one or more route alternatives for the proposed Palisade 115 kV transmission project (Project). The alternatives are being analyzed in an environmental assessment (EA) that is being prepared by the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

This letter provides you with information on the Project, the route permitting process, and future opportunities to participate in the process. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the proposed project, sign up for the project mailing list, and participate in the route permitting process.

Project

Great River Energy proposes to supply power to Enbridge Energy's proposed Palisade Pump Station, located near the intersection of US Highway 169 and 510th Lane in Waukenabo Township, through a new overhead 13-mile 115 kV transmission line connecting the pumping station with a new Rice River Breaker Station along Minnesota Power's 115 kV "13 Line." As shown in the attached map, Great River Energy's proposed route parallels US Highway 169 for the majority of the route, and all route alternatives under consideration are in the general vicinity of US Highway 169.

Process

Before the Project can be built, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) must issue a route permit. Great River Energy submitted a route permit application to the Commission on August 25, 2015. The Commission's docket number for the route permit proceeding is ET2 /TL-15-423.

Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is responsible for conducting environmental review for route permit applications submitted to the Commission, and is currently preparing an EA for the Project. An EA is a written document that contains an overview of the resources and potential human and environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the proposed project. This is the only state environmental review document required for the project.

Scoping is the first step in the development of the EA for the project. The scoping process gathers public input regarding potential impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives to study in the EA. EERA staff gathered input on the scope of the EA through a public meeting on October 27, 2015, at the Waukenabo Town Hall and through an associated comment period. Through this scoping process, route alternatives – beyond those proposed by Great River Energy in its application – were identified for study in the EA. Property records indicate you are located near or own property on one or more of these alternatives.

The alternatives are described in the Department's EA scoping decision of December 23, 2015. A copy of the scoping decision, including a map depicting the route and site alternatives being studied in the EA is attached. The scoping decision is also available on the Department's website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?id=34249> and on the State of Minnesota's eDockets system: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year "15" and the number "423").

Participation

The EA is currently being prepared by EERA staff. The EA will evaluate the potential human and environmental impacts of the alternatives noted in the scoping decision. The EA is anticipated to be completed and available in March 2016.

A public hearing will be held in the project area after issuance of the EA and is anticipated to occur in April 2016. An administrative law judge (ALJ) from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings will preside over the hearing. Anyone may speak at the public hearing, ask questions, and submit comments on the proposed project. The Commission decision on the route permit application is expected in June 2016.

Notice of the public hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list. To place your name on the project mailing list, contact docketing.puc@state.mn.us or 651-201-2234 with the docket number (15-423), your name, mailing address, and email address. Please indicate how you would like to receive notices – by U.S. mail or email.

If you have questions or if you would like further information, please contact me or the public advisor for this project, Tracy Smetana (651-296-0406, consumer.puc@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Steinhauer".

Suzanne Steinhauer
Environmental Review Manager
651-539-1843
suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us