



Energy Environmental Review and Analysis
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September 5, 2014

Dr. Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

RE: Advisory Task Force: Options
Great Northern Transmission Line Project
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis Staff
Docket No. E015/TL-14-21

Dear Dr. Haar,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the Department of Commerce (Department) Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff efforts since the close of the Commission's public comment period (Notice of Public Comment Period, eDocket No. 20148-102194-01) on the *Request to Reconsider Establishment of an Advisory Task Force* for the great northern transmission line.

In response to EERA's request (*Request to Reconsider Establishment of an Advisory Task Force*, eDocket No. 20147-102144-01) that the Commission reconsider efforts to assemble an advisory task force (ATF) due to lack of sufficient participation to meet the statutory requirements of an advisory task force (Minn. Stat. 216E.08), the Commission opened and noticed a public comment period on the matter. The comment period closed on August 22, 2014.

Twenty-two comments (2 via edockets and 20 via the Speak Up forum) were filed; 7 of the comments were filed by one individual (Mr. Richard Libbey, Izaak Walton League). Mr. Libbey, on his own initiative, reached out to those local units of government (LUG) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) identified on the EERA's proposed ATF structure (EERA Comments and Recommendation – Application Acceptance, eDocket No. 20145-99563-01) in an effort to elicit additional participation on an ATF. Mr. Libbey's efforts focused on the eastern portion of the proposed GNTL route. Through Mr. Libbey's efforts, three additional LUGs and one NGO agreed to sit on an ATF (See Attachment A LUG/NGO Table).

The resulting complement of ATF candidates remains insufficient to meet the statutory requirements under Minn. Stat. 216E.08; however, there are other means by which to solicit input from those LUG and NGO representatives identified in the attached table. EERA proposes two options for the Commission's consideration: 1) Augment the continuing work with those individual LUG/NGO representatives as stated in EERA's August 8, 2014, request; and 2) the formation of an informal "working group." EERA's concept of each option is outlined below:

1. Individual Solicitation of Input. In this process EERA staff would continue to work with those interested LUG/NGO representatives previously identified (plus the new additions identified on the attached table) directly to assure that their concerns are recorded and considered, and assist them in developing potential alternative route segments should they so desire. This includes providing a cd of the complete HVTL Route Permit Application for their reference.

Augmentation of this approach would include:

- Providing those interested LUG/NGO representatives with a copy of the *Summary of Scoping* once it is completed (anticipated date of September 30, 2014). The *Summary of Scoping* document will include a description of the EIS scoping process, a matrix/table listing each commenter and their comments, and maps illustrating each alternative route segment or alignment modification put forth for consideration.
- Along with the *Summary of Scoping*, provide a Survey (similar to the attached example in Attachment B) to focus the participants on potential conflicts with, or issues relative to, regional and local planning for consideration in the scope of the environmental impact statement. A cover letter explaining the use of the survey, a review and comment timeline, and contact information to the EERA staff member to assist the LUG/NGO representative would be included.

EERA staff believes these efforts would have a minimal (2-3 weeks) impact on the anticipated EIS Scoping Decision release date of October 31, 2014, (ALJ First Pre-hearing Order, eDocket No. 20148-102112-01).

2. Working Group. This process would also begin with a telephone conversation to each person identified on the attached table (plus to each of the four original West ATF candidates) inviting them to join an informal working group. The proposed charge to the working group would be identical to EERA's original ATF charge (EERA Comments and Recommendation – Application Acceptance, eDocket No. 20145-99563-01) and the meetings would be accompanied with the similar support (i.e. EERA staff, applicant representatives and GIS facilities). The working group is anticipated to meet three times.

Assuming that the initial telephone conversations and mailings (including cover letter and RPA) are completed by September 19th, the first meeting occurring the week of September 29th (anticipating the second and third meetings during the weeks of October 20th and November 10th, respectively) and allowing two weeks to assemble the findings, EERA staff believes this would push the anticipated EIS Scoping Decision release date from October 31, 2014, (ALJ First Pre-hearing Order, eDocket No. 20148-102112-01) to late December.

Staff is available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

William Cole Storm
EERA Staff

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Attachment A – LUG/NGO Table

Minnesota Statute 216E.08 states that task forces appointed to evaluate sites or routes considered for designation shall be comprised of at least one representative from each of the following: regional development commissions, counties and municipal corporations and one town board member from each county in which a site or route is proposed to be located.

COMBINED CENTRAL/EAST ATF

		First	Last	Interested in Task Force	Status	Number
Township	Balsam	John	Kannas	Yes	Application submitted	218.245.1561
	Carpenter	Larry	Salmela	Yes	Application submitted	218.780.9712
	Lawrence	Casey	Venema	Yes	Called 7/11 will send in form	218.245.2749
	Waskish	David	Leonhardt	Yes	Application submitted	218.766.5607
	Trout Lake	Jeanne	Newstorm	Yes	Called 9/2/14 – Agreed to sit on ATF	218.245.2057
County	Itasca	Michael	Gibbons	Yes	Application submitted	218.327.7357
	Koochiching	Rob	Ecklund	Yes	Application submitted	218.283.9259
	Beltrami	Charlene	Sturk	Yes	Application submitted	218.333.8345
City	Taconite	Mike	Troumbly	No	Called 7/11, not interested	218.245.3011
RDC	Arrowhead	Patricia	Henderson	No	Called 7/11, not interested	218.722.5545
NGO/OTHER	Minnesota Forest Resources Council	Dave	Zumeta	Yes	Through “speak-up” agreed to sit on ATF	651.603.0108
	Northern County Land Use Coordinating Board	John	Chell	No	Not interested based on communication with Richard Libbey	218.259.4628
	Izaak Walton	Richard	Libby	Yes	Application submitted	218.326.1874
	MN Deer Hunters	Mark	Johnson	Unkn	Called 9/2.	218.327.1103

Previously stated interest in ATF membership

Newly expressed interest via Richard Libbey efforts

Potentially interested

Not Interested

Attachment B – Survey Example



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Local Government/NGO Scoping Questionnaire

Great Northern Transmission Line Project

PUC Docket Numbers: E015/TL-14-21

Name:

Representing:

Phone:

Email:

Proposed Project Location(s) at issue (township, range and section):

1. Please identify the existing planning and zoning districts where the facility is proposed in your area. Are you aware of any planned changes in zoning, the comprehensive plan, or transportation facilities in the area where the facility is proposed? If so, please describe the planned changes and the timeline for those changes.

4. Are there specific alternative locations (route segments) for the proposed project or modification to the anticipated alignment of a proposed rights-of-way (ROW) that you believe should be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for this project? If proposing a specific alternative location (route segment), please consider some of the factors Minnesota Power used in identifying the proposed route and ROW alignment locations proposed in their application¹.

If possible, please utilize the illustrations contained in the attached cd² to print and sketch out alternative route segments or alignment modifications.

¹ Minnesota Power Route Permit Application, Section 4 *Development and Screening of Alternatives*, April 15, 2014.

² Minnesota Power Route Permit Application, Book 2/3 *Appendix A Detailed Figures*, April 15, 2014.



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5. Please describe what potential impact(s) moving the facility from the route proposed by Minnesota Power to the alternative route segment or modification to the proposed alignment might address. It is not expected that you know the answer now, but please provide some rationale for exploration of alternative location (for example, moving the x facility to y location would allow for new commercial development near the proposed new highway interchange).

Please contact Bill Storm at 651-539-1844 with any questions.

Please send your response **no later than 4:30 pm Friday, October 24, 2014** to:

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