

December 27, 2024

**To: Persons Interested in the Proposed Construction of an approximately 29-mile, 115-kV High Voltage Transmission Line from Appleton to Benson in Swift County, Minnesota; the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Energy Facilities General List; Local Officials; Tribes; and Property Owners**

**Re: Notice of Filing of Joint Application for a Route Permit and a Certificate of Need with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC)**

**Docket No. TL-24-264 (Route Permit) & CN-24-263 (Certificate of Need)**

Great River Energy, Otter Tail Power Company, Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Agralite Electric Cooperative, and the City of Benson (together, "Applicants") propose to construct an approximately 29-mile, 115-kilovolt ("kV") transmission line in Swift County, Minnesota, between the cities of Appleton and Benson (the "Project"). Applicants submitted a joint application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") for a route permit (Docket No. TL-24-264) and a certificate of need (Docket No. ET2,E017,ET6135,E100/CN-24-263) for the Project ("Joint Application"). The route permit has been requested pursuant to the alternative permitting process contained in Minnesota Rules parts 7850.2800 to 7850.3900, and Minnesota Statutes, section 216E.04.

### **Project Description**

The Project will be an approximately 29-mile, 115-kV transmission line between the cities of Appleton, Minnesota, and Benson, Minnesota. Of the approximately 29-mile route, approximately 18 miles of the proposed route will overtake and replace an existing 41.6-kV transmission line, and another 1 mile will be a rebuild or reconductoring of an existing 115-kV transmission line. The Project will also include the proposed new Appleton Substation, a modified or new Moyer Substation, a modified or new Danvers Substation, and modifications to the existing Shible Lake Substation and Benson Municipal Substation.

### **Route Permit Process**

A Route Permit from the Commission is required before the Project can be constructed. The Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E) and Minnesota Rules parts 7850.1000 to 7850.5600 establish the requirements for submitting and processing a Route Permit application. The statutes and rules also establish notice requirements for various stages of the process. The Route Permit application will be considered by the Commission under the alternative permitting process in Minnesota Statutes section 216E.04 and Minnesota Rules parts 7850.2800 to 7850.3900. The Commission has up to six months from the time the application is accepted as complete to process and make a decision on the Route Permit according to Minnesota Statutes section 216E.04, subd. 7, and Minnesota Rule 7850.3900, subp. 1. The Commission may extend this time limit for up to three months for just cause or upon agreement of the applicants.

Within 60 days after the Commission accepts the application as complete, the Commission and the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis ("EERA") unit will hold a public information and scoping meeting to provide information and seek comments from the public. At this meeting, members of the public may propose additional route alternatives for consideration in the environmental assessment that the EERA will prepare. Once the public meeting is scheduled, notice of the meeting will be provided to persons whose names are on the Project contact list and will be published in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the Project area. After the environmental assessment has been

completed, a public hearing will be held on the application. Any person may speak at the public hearing, present documentary evidence, ask questions of Applicants' representatives and EERA staff and submit comments. Pursuant to the Minnesota Infrastructure Permitting Act, as of July 1, 2025, staff at EERA will become employees of the Commission. EERA's responsibility for preparing an EA for the Project will remain unchanged. EERA will also continue to take comments from the public regarding the Project.

If the Commission issues a Route Permit for the Project, Applicants may, if necessary, exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land necessary for the Project (Minn. Stat. § 216E.12; Minn. Stat. Ch. 117).

### **Certificate of Need**

Minnesota Statutes section 216B.243, subdivision 2 states that "[n]o large energy facility shall be sited or constructed in Minnesota without the issuance of a certificate of need by the [Public Utilities Commission]."

Minnesota Statutes section 216B.2421, subdivision 3 defines a "large energy facility" as "any high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 100 kilovolts or more with more than ten miles of its length in Minnesota." Because the Project has a capacity of more than 100 kV and is longer than ten miles in Minnesota, a certificate of need is required for the Project. The Applicants submitted a Joint Application for both a route permit and a certificate of need for the Project. The docket related to the certificate of need proceedings for the Project is Docket No. CN-24-263.

### **Additional Information and Mailing Lists**

**Review Process.** Information on the review processes for certificates of need and site and route permits for large electric power facilities is available on the Commission's website at: <https://mn.gov/puc/activities/energy-facilities/>

**Filing Requirements.** Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are also encouraged to use eFiling: [mn.gov/puc/edockets](https://mn.gov/puc/edockets), select *Go to eDockets* and follow the prompts.

**Full Case Record.** See all documents filed in this matter via the Commission's website at [mn.gov/puc/edockets](https://mn.gov/puc/edockets), select *Go to eDockets*, enter 24-264, and select *Search*.

**Subscribe to the Docket.** To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>, select *Subscribe to Dockets*.

**Project Mailing List.** Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email [eservice.admin@state.mn.us](mailto:eservice.admin@state.mn.us) or call 651- 201-2246 with the docket number (24-264) your name, mailing address, and email address.

If you have questions about the state regulatory process, you may contact the Minnesota state regulatory staff listed below:

**Minnesota Public Utilities Commission**

**Minnesota Department of Commerce**

Sam Lobby  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
(651) 201-2205  
1-800-657-3782  
sam.lobby@state.mn.us  
Website: [www.mn.gov/puc/](http://www.mn.gov/puc/)

Jessica Livingston  
85 7th Place East, Suite 280  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101  
(651) 539-1823  
1-800-657-3710  
jessica.livingston@state.mn.us  
Website: [www.mn.gov/commerce](http://www.mn.gov/commerce)

Please visit the Project website at: [https://greatriverenergy.com/transmission\\_project/appleton-to-benson-115-kv-transmission-line/](https://greatriverenergy.com/transmission_project/appleton-to-benson-115-kv-transmission-line/).

A paper copy of the Joint Application will be available for review at:

Appleton City Library  
50 E Rooney Ave  
Appleton, MN 56208

Benson City Hall  
1410 Kansas Avenue  
Benson, MN 56215

Additional information may be obtained by calling Mark Strohfus at Great River Energy: 1-888-521-0130 ext. 5210, direct 763-445-5210 or by email at [mstrohfus@greenergy.com](mailto:mstrohfus@greenergy.com).

Sincerely,



Mark Strohfus  
Permitting Manager, Transmission Permitting  
Great River Energy,  
a Minnesota Cooperative corporation

