

From: [Janezich, Craig \(PUC\)](#)
To: [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment: Northland Reliability Project - Alternative Route C
Date: Friday, December 27, 2024 12:00:19 PM
Attachments: [Northland Reliability Project - 12-24.pdf](#)

Please post the comment below and the attached document to 22-415; 22-416.

Thanks,

Craig

From: JOSEPH ECKERT <eckertjt@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, December 27, 2024 11:57 AM
To: Janezich, Craig (PUC) <craig.janezich@state.mn.us>
Cc: rcgilsrud@hotmail.com; bradley1935bodle@crosslake.net; nick.d.eades@hotmail.com; jimandheather@charter.net; semaj43@hotmail.com; jeffreywig@gmail.com; eddie_spaghetti01@yahoo.com; bogart.jon.k@gmail.com; russhorsch@yahoo.com; Doug.Houge@crowwing.gov
Subject: Public Comment: Northland Reliability Project - Alternative Route C

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Craig, here is a reminder of our public comments we've provided throughout this process - once informed. Please insure the decision makers see this so they can be reminded of our concerns. I know both the administrative law judge and the Applicants are against using Alternative Route C due to the cost (in dollars, loss of a pristine part of Crow Wing County and the environment impact) vs. benefits sought by the DNR.

I am one of several property owners (several copied on this email) along the Alternative Route C line of Cty Rd 106 and Lens Rd in Crow Wing County - Ross Lake Township. This area is very much like a Minnesota State Forest, in fact it is more peaceful than many Minnesota State Forests. It is full of virgin Red and White Pines that are rare in the state of Minnesota. All of this will be destroyed and turned into an urban nightmare, if the PUC approves this route.

Early in this process, before this area was to be impacted our group of landowners were not able to comment on this proposal by the DNR. While the DNR is trying to protect the environment and state property, they have shown no interest in protecting many of us who have supported the DNR. Some of us have forestry plans, my property is enlisted in the SFIA program to help maintain this area as is, and many of the group have invested in creating better habitat for wildlife. They are making a request to re-route the proposed line from an existing corridor that goes through an

area that is mostly inaccessible to the public. They are requesting that a new route is constructed in an absolutely beautiful area of which would be completely destroyed. I'm surprised by this move from the DNR as this goes against what they support through the SFIA program.

Now lets look at the facts, mostly from the EA:

- On 12/1/23, the Applicants (Minnesota Power and Great River Energy) requested that this route be removed from the EA due to costs and construction concerns - it was not.
- The additional costs to use Route Alternative C is \$15.1 million.
- This route would require the new construction to cross over existing power lines in two different spots creating reliability issues, significant safety concerns with both construction and on-going maintenance and additional costs. This is not a good idea.
- Based on a 150 ft ROW, 84 acres will be removed of trees/cover along this 4.6 mile route - within this area are dozens of Red and White pines that are 3' to 4' in diameter at the base. I've already posted several photos to the e-docket of these trees (see attached powerpoint). 57 acres of forested landcover will be destroyed vs. 29 on the preferred route of the power companies.
- Impacts 29 properties across 22 private landowners - loss of land - loss of habitat - loss of property value that cannot be valued fairly to existing property owners.
- Impacts four human settlements.
- A new set of lines could impact avian species as there will be an additional area of 4.6 miles of lines in which they can collide - even if measures are taken to decrease these instances.
- 4.6 miles of country will be turned into an urban nightmare using this route - the proposed route is already that way - why destroy more of nature that is enjoyed by many beyond the current landowners. The aesthetics of this route will be devastating! Why do we continue to want to destroy these areas?

All of this is to reduce the number of NHD stream crossings from five to two, PWI stream crossings from three to two, and three wetlands crossing of 1000 ft or more. In addition, this route would reduce the number of biodiversity significance acres by eight and native plant communities by five acres. The cost to save these acres is \$1.15 million per acre. Not to mention that most of this land is inaccessible to the public.

It makes no sense to disrupt an incredibly beautiful area, destroy the lands of 22 private landowners and burden the tax payers with an additional \$15 million when a ROW already exists and is preferred by the applicants and administrative law judge - again this area the DNR is trying to protect is virtually inaccessible to the public to enjoy. Please put a stop considering Route Alternative C.

Sincerely,

Joe Eckert

Northland Reliability

Re-route R

County Rd. 106 and Lens L

Ross Lake Township

Purpose - Process - Payoff

- Purpose

- Describe the impact on the environment, tax payers and businesses potentially impacted by the re-route of Lens Rd in Ross Lake Township when an easement is granted for the preferred route suggested by Great River Energy.

- Process

- Provide data, photos and both tangible and intangible information.

- Payoff

- The decision-makers will see how this re-route impacts the interests of all parties involved

High-Level Summary

The DNR has suggested a re-route due to some imposed concerns which we respect. However, what they are doing to the tax-payers (many of which are supporting the DNR through hunting/fishing licenses as well as other contributions) and the beauty and serenity of a nearly five-mile stretch of unblemished route would destroy several majestic red and white pines and turn it into an eye sore, and severely impact 22 property owners that are using their properties, caring for their land to the advantage of getting away from civilization. All the work that is protecting is virtually inaccessible. Furthermore, the area that already has the eye sores the DNR is proposing to create has absolutely no sense for the bigger picture. I certainly hope the Environmental Assessment team have driven this home. The trees they'll need to remove – there are not many left.

Data

- A nearly five mile re-route - Approximately 200 acres of land and 22 different owners impacted – several have been in the area for over 30+ years
 - Two residential structures
 - Two non-residential structures
 - Loss of property
 - Loss of property value
 - Loss of use during construction
 - Turning an incredibly beautiful, remote, and serene area into a hideous buzzing jungle of wires and towers
 - Change in habitat that tax-payers have invested significant money and work in creating

Data Con't

- From what we can tell, the DNR claims that the various creeks/streams/brooks at five locations those crossing are with 250' from each other, with a span approximately 600'
- The nearly five mile re-route is enjoyed by many throughout the year – the area the DNR is trying to make inaccessible throughout much of the year – it's many tax-paying citizens are enjoying this section of the route
- The additional cost to use this route is \$15.1
- The power companies would need to cross two major safety concern as well as reliability concerns after construction

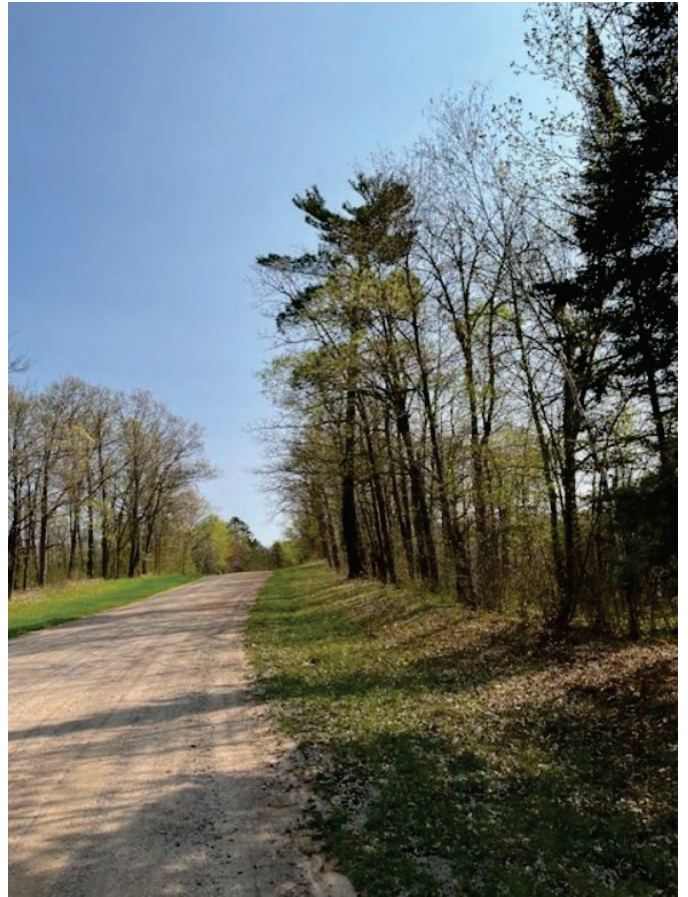
Wetlands



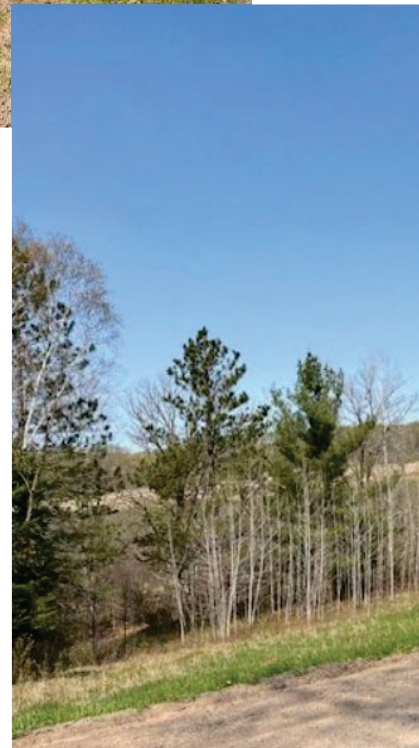
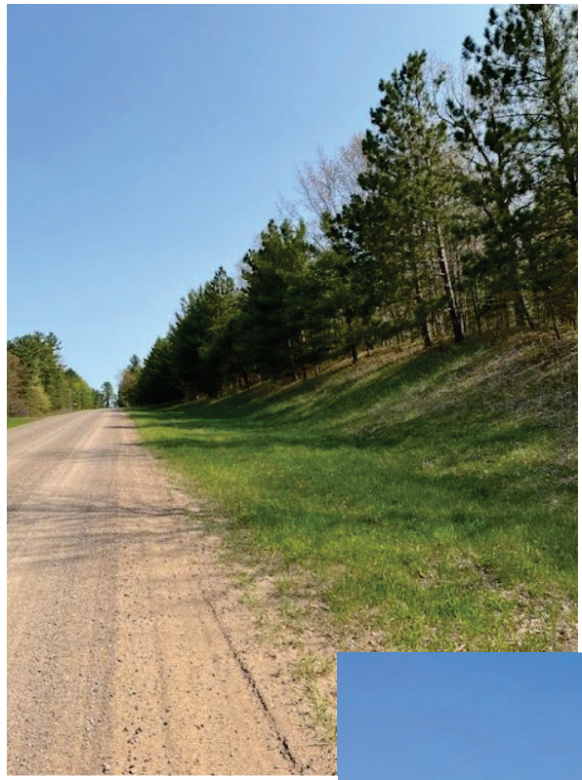
Cty. Rd. 106 Road Wetlands

Several more areas along these roads with

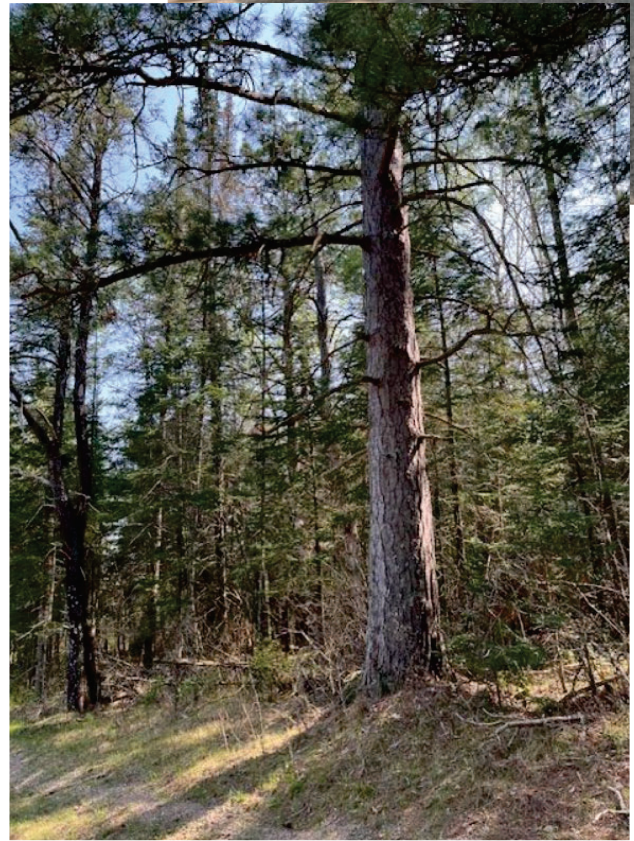
Majestic Pines



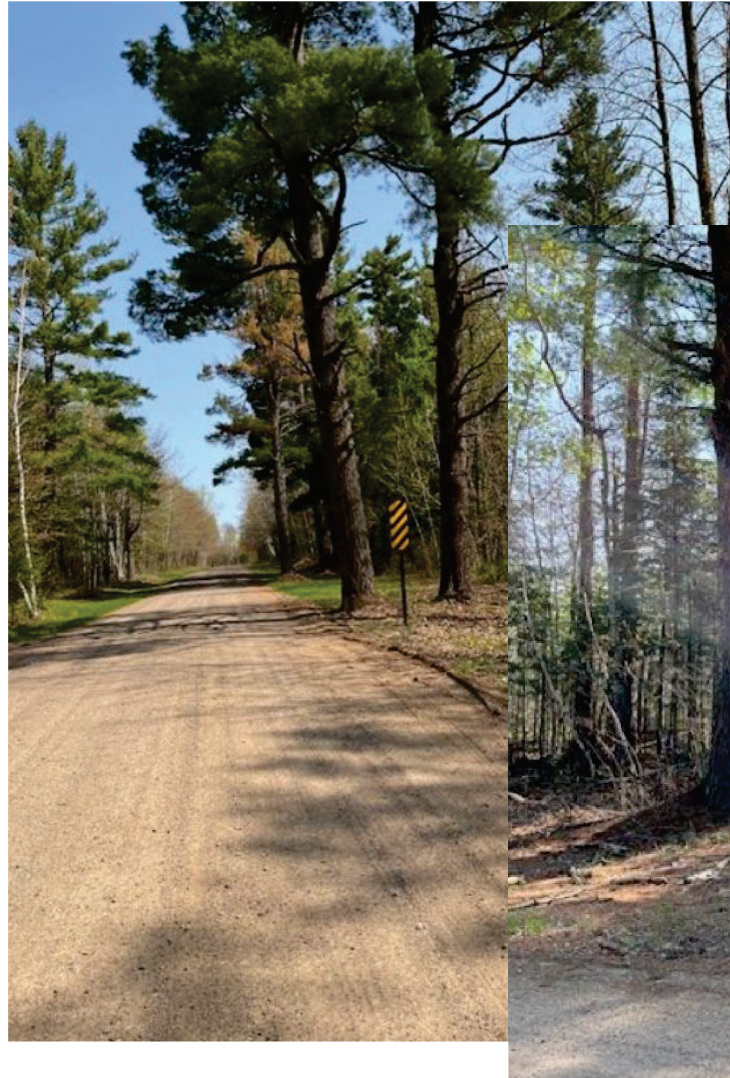
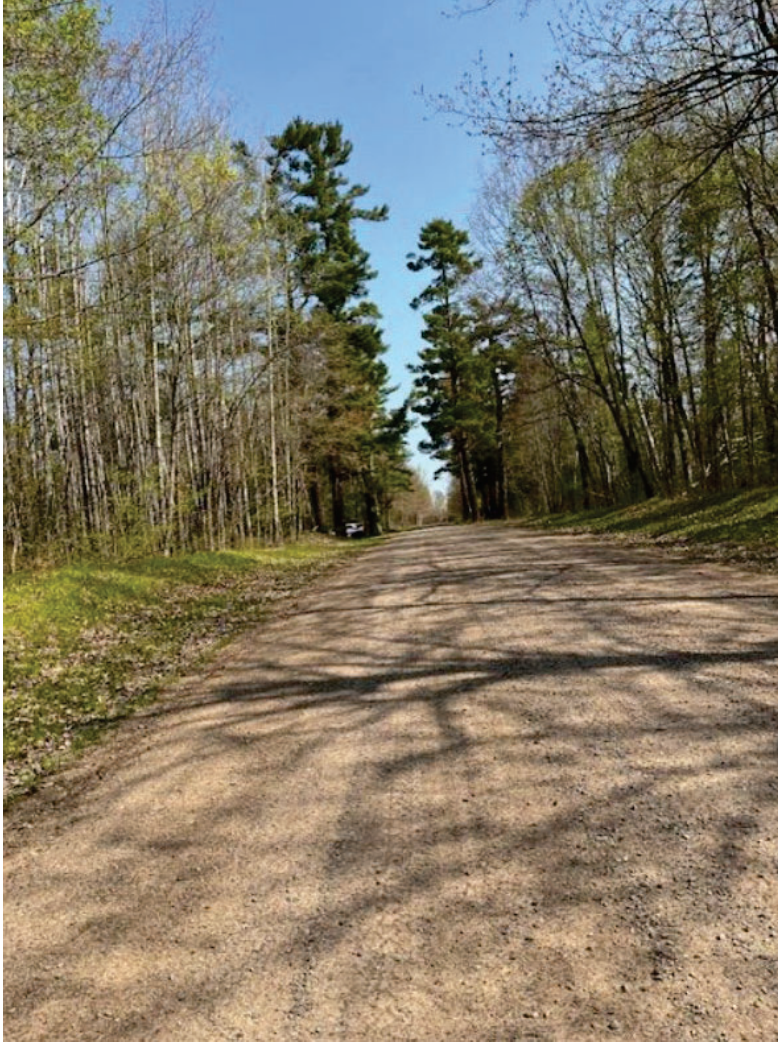
Majestic Pines



Majestic Pines



Majestic Pines



Majestic Pines

This is just a sampling of the beautiful pines and wetlands along Cty Rd 106 and Lens Rd. There are many more of a variety of ages/sizes – both red and white.



Please Stop this Re-route

- Destroying a peaceful – beautiful area for no valid reason – there is a route already
- Destruction of majestic pines, many of which have become rare in MN
- Disruption of tax-payers lives
- Added expense to all tax-payers
- Loss of property habitat
- This makes already privately owned Properties owners – damage accessibility