

BEFORE THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF MINNESOTA

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy, Otter Tail Power Co., Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Agralite Electric Coop., and the City of Benson for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the Appleton to Benson 115 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project

MPUC DOCKET NO. ET-2, E-017, ET-6135, E-100/ CN-24-263; and
ET-2, E-017, ET-6135, E-100/TL-24-264
OAH DOCKET NO. 23-2500-40748

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF BRIAN ZAVESKY

August 14, 2025

I. INTRODUCTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Please state your name, employer, and business address.

My name is Brian Zavesky. I am a Senior Transmission Engineer with Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). My business address is 3724 West Avera Drive, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 55109.

Please briefly describe your educational and professional background and experience.

I have over 30 years of experience in the electrical utility industry—more than twenty of which have been in transmission planning. I began employment with MRES in 2002 as a senior transmission engineer. I have a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degree from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. In my role, in addition to transmission planning, I have responsibility for transmission asset management, construction project management, and NERC compliance.

What is your role with respect to the Appleton to Benson 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project (Project)?

I am responsible for routing and permitting the portions of the Project that will be constructed, owned, and operated by Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota), through its agent MRES. I will also have construction oversight of the rebuild of the Western Minnesota Appleton Substation and expansion of the Benson Municipal Substation.

What is the purpose of your Direct Testimony?

The purpose of my Direct Testimony is to describe Western Minnesota's and the City of Benson's roles in the Project and provide any related updates.

II. WESTERN MINNESOTA, MRES, AND CITY OF BENSON

Please describe Western Minnesota, MRES, and the City of Benson.

Western Minnesota is a municipal corporation and political subdivision of the State of Minnesota, headquartered in Ortonville, Minnesota. Western Minnesota owns generation and transmission facilities, the capacity and output of which are sold to MRES. MRES, based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, provides electricity, including conservation program services, to its 61-member municipal utilities in Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, who in turn serve approximately 174,000 customers.

The City of Benson is a member of Western Minnesota and MRES and is located in Swift County, in west central Minnesota, with a population of 3,562. The City of Benson operates an electric utility that services 1,867 customers. The City of Benson has five Caterpillar generators with a total generating capacity of 10 MW, 36 miles of distribution lines in service, one substation, and one 1.25-mile 115-kV transmission line.

What is Western Minnesota's role in the Project?

Western Minnesota owns the existing Appleton Transmission Substation. As part of the Project, a new transmission substation will be built at a different site and the existing transmission substation will be decommissioned when the new substation is completed. The existing location cannot accommodate the necessary expansion for the Project.

Has the location of the new transmission substation been determined?

Not yet. Western Minnesota is working with the landowners, but a purchase option has not been completed. The Applicants have identified three potential

1 approximately 10-acre parcels within the Proposed Route for the new substation.
2 The three potential locations are shown in Figure 1-1 of the Application.¹
3

4 **Q. What is the City of Benson's role in the Project?**

5 A. The City of Benson owns the existing Benson Municipal Substation. As part of the
6 Project, Western Minnesota is planning to purchase the transmission portion of the
7 Benson Municipal Substation. Western Minnesota will improve the substation to
8 allow for connection to the new 115-kV transmission line, and expand the fence
9 line on the existing substation site.

10
11 **III. CONCLUSION**
12

13 **Q. Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?**

14 A. Yes.
15

¹ Joint Application for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit (Dec. 27, 2024) (eDocket No. [202412-213349-02](#) (“Application”).