

April 2, 2015

Daniel P. Wolf  
Executive Secretary  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

RE: **Petition for Certificate of Need**  
Docket No. ET2,E015/CN-14-853; ET2,ET015/TL-15-204

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Attached are the comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Department) on the following matter:

Application for a Certificate of Need by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for the Motley Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Morrison, Cass, and Todd counties, Minnesota.

The petition was filed on March 19, 2015 by:

William R. Kaul  
Vice President, Transmission  
Great River Energy  
12300 Elm Creek Blvd.  
Maple Grove, MN 55369

The Department recommends that the Commission **find the application complete** and is available to answer any questions the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission may have.

Sincerely,

/s/ MICHAEL N. ZAJICEK  
Rate Analyst

MNZ/lt  
Attachment

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

COMMENTS OF THE  
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

DOCKET NOS. ET2,E015/CN-14-853; ET2,ET015/TL-15-204

I. BACKGROUND

A. NOTICE AND EXEMPTION PETITIONS

On October 1, 2014, Great River Energy (GRE), on behalf of itself and Minnesota Power (Applicants) filed a *Notice Plan Petition for the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need for the Motley Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Morrison, Cass and Todd Counties, Minnesota* (Notice Petition). The Notice Petition provides the Applicants' proposed Notice Plan to communicate its intent to construct a 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line and construct/modify substations in the Motley area in Morrison, Cass, and Todd counties. According to GRE, the project is required to serve a proposed new Minnesota Pipe Line Company (MPL) pumping station, but Minnesota Power is a joint applicant to capture load-serving needs in the area.

The Notice Petition provided a plan to notify potentially affected members of the public about the proposal, under Minnesota Rules part 7849.2550. In response to the Notice Petition, comments were filed by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Department) and the Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review and Analysis.

On October 30, 2014, the Applicants submitted their *Exemption Request Petition for the Application of Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for a Certificate of Need for the Motley Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Morrison, Cass, and Todd Counties, Minnesota* (Exemption Petition) in order to obtain exemption from certain data requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849. In response to the Exemption Petition, comments were filed by the Department.

On January 30, 2015, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued its *Order Approving Notice Plan, Approving Exemption Request, and Granting Variances* approving the Exemption Petition and Notice Petition with modifications.

## **B. CERTIFICATE OF NEED PETITION**

On March 19, 2015, the Applicants filed their *Application for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit by Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for the Motley Area 115 kV Transmission Line Project in Morrison, Cass and Todd Counties, Minnesota* (Petition). The Petition requested that the Commission approve a certificate of need (CN) to construct approximately 15.5 – 16.5 miles of new overhead 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The proposed project is located in Morrison, Cass, and Todd counties.

In response to the Applicants' filing, on March 23, 2015 the Commission issued its *Notice of Comment Period on Completeness of Certificate of Need and Route Permit Application* (Notice). The Notice states that comments on completeness are due April 6, 2015 and reply comments on completeness are due April 13, 2014. Below are the comments of the Department regarding the completeness of the CN portion of the Petition.

## **II. DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

The Applicants propose to construct approximately 15.5 – 16.5 miles of new overhead 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The project also includes the conversion of the existing 34.5 Motley Substation to 115 kV with the addition of a three-way switch, the construction of a new substation to serve the new MPL Fish Trap pump station, the addition of breakers to the existing Minnesota Power Dog Lake substation with transmission to connect the station to the "24 Line" 115kV transmission line, and the installation of a three way switch to allow for the construction of a future substation. Since facilities proposed to be greater than 10 miles long with 100 kV capacity would be created, the proposed project qualifies as a large energy facility (LEF) under Minnesota Statutes §216B.2421, subd. 2 (3). Minnesota Statutes §216B.243, subd. 2 requires that LEFs must obtain a CN before they could be constructed. Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849 includes the filing requirements for a CN for a large high voltage transmission facility.

### **B. COMPLETENESS REVIEW**

The Department reviewed the Petition for completeness under Minnesota Rules. The Department concludes that the Applicants met the completeness requirements.

### **C. PROCESS REVIEW**

During the completeness review process the Department also makes a recommendation regarding the proper process to use for the Petition. At this time, the Department does not have any disputes as to material facts. Thus, in these completeness comments the Department does not request the Commission to order a contested-case proceeding. However, the Department recommends that the Commission review the comments and reply comments of other parties, assess the explanation for any request for a contested case, and

order a contested case only if a party requests such a proceeding and provides reasonable grounds to do so.

### **III. DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends that the Commission:

- determine the Applicants' petition is substantially complete; and
- order a contested case if a party requests such a proceeding and provides reasonable grounds to do so.

/lt

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Sharon Ferguson, hereby certify that I have this day, served copies of the following document on the attached list of persons by electronic filing, certified mail, e-mail, or by depositing a true and correct copy thereof properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States Mail at St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Minnesota Department of Commerce  
Comments**

**Docket No. ET2, E015/CN-14-853 and ET2,E015/TL-15-204**

Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2015

/s/Sharon Ferguson

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Julia	Anderson	Julia.Anderson@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	1800 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012134	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Katie	Clark Sieben	katie.clark.sieben@state.mn.us	DEED	332 Minnesota St, #E200 1st National Bank Bldg Saint Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Randall	Doneen	randall.doneen@state.mn.us	Department of Natural Resources	500 Lafayette Rd, PO Box 25  Saint Paul, MN 55155	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 500  Saint Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Travis	Germundson	travis.germundson@state.mn.us		Board of Water & Soil Resources 520 Lafayette Rd Saint Paul, MN 55155	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Rick	Heuring	RHeuring@GREnergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd  Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Ray	Kirsch	Raymond.Kirsch@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 500  St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Karen	Kromar	karen.kromar@state.mn.us	MN Pollution Control Agency	520 Lafayette Rd  Saint Paul, MN 55155	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
John	Lindell	agorud.ecf@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012130	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Susan	Medhaug	Susan.medhaug@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	Suite 500, 85 Seventh Place East  St. Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
David	Moeller	dmoeller@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St  Duluth, MN 558022093	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Bob	Patton	bob.patton@state.mn.us	MN Department of Agriculture	625 Robert St N  Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Donna	Stephenson	dstephenson@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Mark	Strohfus	mstrohfus@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  Maple Grove, MN 553694718	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853
Daniel P	Wolf	dan.wolf@state.mn.us	Public Utilities Commission	121 7th Place East Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 551012147	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_14-853_CN-14-853

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Julia	Anderson	Julia.Anderson@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	1800 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012134	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 500  Saint Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
Rick	Heuring	RHeuring@GREnergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd  Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
John	Lindell	agorud.ecf@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012130	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
David	Moeller	dmoeller@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St  Duluth, MN 558022093	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
Donna	Stephenson	dstephenson@greenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
Mark	Strohfus	mstrohfus@greenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  Maple Grove, MN 553694718	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853
Daniel P	Wolf	dan.wolf@state.mn.us	Public Utilities Commission	121 7th Place East Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 551012147	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_15-204_ET2,E015 CN-14-853



First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Mark	Strohfus	mstrohfus@greenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard  Maple Grove, MN 553694718	Electronic Service	No	SPL_SL_15-204_GRE-MP Motley TL Project Contact List