

STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application of Great
River Energy for a Route Permit for
115 kV High Voltage Transmission Line
to Accommodate Lake Eunice Substation
Conversion in Becker County,
Minnesota

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

On June 4, 2019, Great River Energy (Applicant or Great River Energy) filed an application for a route permit (Application) with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission or PUC). Great River Energy's Application concerns the approximately 0.8-mile long Lake Eunice 115-kilovolt (kV) Conversion Project (Project) in Becker County, Minnesota. The proposed Project will upgrade the transmission line and move the existing Lake Eunice Substation from a radial to a loop feed to improve the reliability of the transmission service to the Lake Eunice Substation that will be converted by Lake Region Electric Cooperative.

On June 21, 2019, the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis unit (EERA) filed comments. No other responsive comments were filed. In an order dated August 5, 2019, the Commission determined that the Application was complete and referred the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for the assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to conduct a public hearing on the Application and prepare a summary of public comments.

Administrative Law Judge Kimberly Middendorf conducted the public hearing remotely using WebEx and InterCall at 6:00 p.m. on May 28, 2020.

I. Notice

The Applicant published notice of the Application acceptance in the *Detroit Lakes Tribune* on August 11, 2019.¹ Copies of the Application and notice of its acceptance were mailed to the local library, certain state agencies, local government entities, and affected landowners on August 8, 2019.² Notice of the public hearing and comment period was published on March 4, 2020, and also posted to the PUC's website.³ Due to

¹ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20199-155511-01, Aug. 28, 2019.

² *Id.*

³ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20203-160934-02, March 4, 2020.

COVID-19 pandemic, the hearing was postponed.⁴ It was rescheduled for a remote hearing to be held May 28, 2020.⁵ Following a 30-day public comment period, the hearing record closed on June 11, 2020, at 4:30 p.m.⁶

II. Hearing Attendance and Comments

The hearing was lightly attended, with three or four members of the public on the call to listen to the presentations. Scott Ek, Energy Facilities Permitting Planner for the PUC, gave a presentation about the transmission line review process. Dan Leshner of Great River Energy presented a summary and overview of the Lake Eunice Project.

No oral testimony was offered at the hearing. Mr. Ek offered Exhibits 100-108, 200-208, and 300-304, all of which were received into the record.⁷

III. Written Comments

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided comments on October 3 and 10, 2019.⁸ DNR noted that public waters are present from the Audubon Switch to Structure 161. A DNR license to cross public waters and a DNR public waters work permit may be required.⁹

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) reviewed the Project application and offered comments on October 8, 2019.¹⁰ MnDOT determined that the project area does not likely affect MnDOT's right-of-way, but noted that the Project may require a miscellaneous permit from MnDOT. Early coordination with MnDOT District 4 staff is recommended.¹¹

Dated: June 17, 2020


KIMBERLY MIDDENDORF
Administrative Law Judge

⁴ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20203-161277-01, March 4, 2020.

⁵ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20205-163117-01, May 12, 2020.

⁶ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20205-163541-01, May 28, 2020.

⁷ See PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 20205-163507-01, May 27, 2020.

⁸ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 201910-156292-01, Oct. 3, 2019, and Doc. ID 201910-156467-01, Oct. 10, 2019.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ PUC Docket No. 19-311, Doc. ID 201910-156433-01, Oct. 8, 2019.

¹¹ *Id.*

June 17, 2020

See Attached Service List

Re: *In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy for a Route Permit for 115 kV High Voltage Transmission Line to Accomodate Lake Eunice Substation Conversion in Becker County, Minnesota*
OAH 21-2500-36373
MPUC ET-2/TL-19-311

To All Persons on the Attached Service List:

Enclosed and served upon you is the Administrative Law Judge's **REPORT TO THE COMMISSION** in the above-entitled matter.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (651) 361-7888, lisa.armstrong@state.mn.us, or via facsimile at (651) 539-0310.

Sincerely,


LISA ARMSTRONG
Legal Assistant

Enclosure

cc: Docket Coordinator

STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
PO BOX 64620
600 NORTH ROBERT STREET
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55164

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy for a Route Permit for 115 kV High Voltage Transmission Line to Accomodate Lake Eunice Substation Conversion in Becker County, Minnesota	OAH Docket No.: 21-2500-36373 MPUC No.: ET-2/TL-19-311
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Lisa Armstrong certifies that on June 17, 2020, she served the true and correct

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION by eService to the following individuals:

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name
Generic Notice	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce
Dan	Leshner	dlesher@greenergy.com	Great River Energy
Patrick	Mahlberg	pmahlberg@fredlaw.com	Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
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Generic Notice	Residential Utilities Division	residential.utilities@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD
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