# Appendix M Agency Correspondence

**Federal Agency Correspondence** 

**Federal Agency Initial Outreach** 







Andy Peek
Manager - Dakota / Minnesota Airports District - Minneapolis Office
Federal Aviation Administration
6020 28th Ave S Suite 102
Minneapolis, MN 55450

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Andy Peek,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

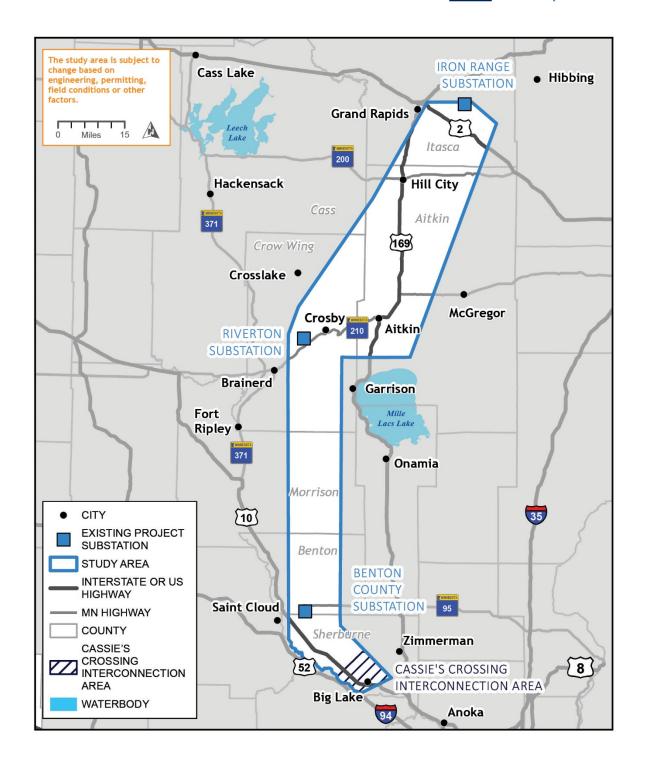
Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>











Wendall Meyer
Division Administrator
FHWA
180 East Fifth Street Suite 930
St. Paul, MN 55101

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Wendall Meyer,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Kris Laman Project Manager - Regulatory Office U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 600 South Lake Avenue Suite 211 Duluth, MN 55802

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Kris Laman,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher







U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 10867 East Gull Lake Drive NW Brainerd, MN 56401

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power ibatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Alan Fogarty
Acting Superintendent
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
5600 American Blvd W Suite 500
Bloomington, MN 55437

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Alan Fogarty,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Troy Daniell
Minnesota State Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
375 Jackson Street Suite 410
St. Paul, MN 55101

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Troy Daniell,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Kristine Kust
Minnesota State Conservationist Executive Assistant
U.S. Department of Agriculture
375 Jackson Street Suite 410
St. Paul, MN 55101

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Kristine Kust,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Sarah Quamme Ecological Services Field Office U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 4101 Amercian Blvd E Bloomington, MN 55425

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Sarah Quamme,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Margaret Rheude Midwest Migratory Bird Program U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 5600 American Blvd W Suite 990 Bloomington, MN 55437

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Margaret Rheude,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power <u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u> Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a> Federal Aviation Administration / St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority

# **Northland Reliability Project**





### **Minutes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project		
Subject:	FAA and DOT Project Introduction Meeting		
Date:	Thursday, November 03, 2022		
Location:	Microsoft Teams		
Attendees:	FAA:	MnDOT:	
	•Tracy Schmidt – Program Manager	•Jason Radde	
	•Marcus Watson	•Daniel Boerner	
		•Arika Johnson	
	GRE:	•Kevin Carlson	
	•Brian Hunker	•Ryan Juran	
		•Kevin Carlson	
	HDR:	•Matthew Lebens	
	•Dan Schmidt	Crystal Nickles	
	•Meredith Haas	•John Flemming	
		•Daniel Boerner	

#### Introductions

 Martin Johnson – Manages a corridor that will be impacted for FAA (not on call, but will probably be on future meetings)

#### Questions:

- o Will this be following the existing line?
  - Segment 2, yes. Segment 1 will be new

#### Presentation (Stakeholder Workshop Presentation Slides)

- o Project overview
- o Project need
- o Study area
- o Segments
- o Schedule

- Routing process
- Design
- Upcoming engagement
- Questions:
  - o How tall are the towers?
    - 140-170ft
  - o How will you handle height constraints when it comes to airports?
    - Kevin Carlson can get in touch with engineers
    - Engineers will be able to look at these constraints
    - Either reroute, or get engineers involved not likely to go underground
  - Dan Boerner was involved with the CapX project
    - This existing line is 6,000 ft from St. Cloud Airport
    - What are the existing heights at line near St. Cloud Airport? follow-up\*
    - Stacy Kotch-Egstad is contact at MnDOT he is going to contact her
  - Do not seem to be any plans at St. Cloud Airport to expand
  - Rylan Juran Wider corridors- are these lines more refined? Can you share with the people on the call?
    - The lines on the map are existing lines
    - Blue line is what will be replaced
    - Can you provide the corridor and existing lines? Rylan + team will provide a height analysis on the airports around. HDR/GRE/MP will follow up
    - Point of contact- Rylan Juran
  - Marcus Watson Airport plans- Airports within federal jurisdiction
    - St. Cloud, Aitkin, Brainerd, Grand Rapids federal jurisdiction
    - MnDOT has layout plans can provide those to Team
    - Some requirements to file notice with FAA for alterations, etc. \*Marcus can provide website with interactive features to see maps, locations etc.
    - 7460 notice filing <a href="https://oeaaa.faa.gov/">https://oeaaa.faa.gov/</a>
    - Point of Contact Marcus Watson

#### Maps Review – north to south

- Grand Rapids Airport
  - Iron Range substation expansion Pink and blue lines are existing lines
  - 5.5 miles from existing line; more than 3 miles, doesn't really affect FAA, but still need to do an airspace case.
  - Less than a 100:1 slope, most likely not required
- Hill City Airport
  - Would be a differentiation on slopes
  - Northern Line very close to end of runway
  - 0.25 miles from end of runway
  - Would not want anything higher or closer
  - Clear zone is 1000 feet out, don't want anything there
  - Southern end is 1 mile from end of runway
  - Process is same for airspace review as it would be for federal airports
- Aitkin Airport

- Existing line is over one mile from end of runway
- Brainerd Airport
  - Riverton Substation
  - Expanding southern substation
  - About 18,000 ft from the airport to proposed southern substation
  - No plans for extensions at Brainerd airport
- Sea Planes
  - MnDOT publishes public use seaplane passes
  - Possible plan for ramp from river to Brainerd Airport
  - One upgraded ramp might be in planning stage Contact Tracy Schmidt
- Haven Airport no comments
- Leaders Clear Lake airport -private- no comments
- Schroeder Airport-private- no comments
- St. Cloud Airport
  - 6,000 ft from, end of runway to blue line (east)
  - 20,000 from end of runway to southeast blue line
  - Rylan Juran contact for information

#### Additional meetings or information?

Send Shape file to group for review/comments

#### Next steps and action items

- Send shapefile to team (HDR, Dan)
- o Provide group with public open house info (HDR)
- o Send Dan Boerner heights of existing lines near St. Cloud Airport (GRE)

From: <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

To: Schmidt, Tracy (FAA); Watson, Marcus S (FAA); Rylan.Juran@state.mn.us

Cc: Solis, Joshua; Jim Atkinson (MP); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

Date: Monday, November 7, 2022 11:25:52 PM

Attachments: NRP FAA DOT IntroMtq Notes 11032022.docx

NRP study area confidential.cpg
NRP study area confidential.dbf
NRP study area confidential.prj
NRP study area confidential.sbn
NRP study area confidential.sbx
NRP study area confidential.sbx
NRP study area confidential.shp
NRP study area confidential.shp.xml
NRP study area confidential.shx

## This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Tracy, Marcus and Rylan,

Thanks so much for the very useful meeting last week. We really appreciate you taking the time to learn about the project and to help us gather information so we can develop the best route possible for our project. Attached is a shapefile of the project area and the notes from the meeting. Any information about the restrictions within our study area would be great. We will keep you all informed as the project progresses. Again thanks and have a great week.

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP **D** 763.278.5928 **M** 612.812.2069

hdrinc.com/follow-us

----Original Appointment----

From: Schmidt, Dan

Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 3:16 PM

**To:** Schmidt, Dan; Schmidt, Tracy (FAA); Johnson, Mark R (FAA); Butler, Lindsay (FAA); Watson, Marcus S (FAA); Lebens, Matthew (DOT; Carlson, Kevin (DOT); Rylan.Juran@state.mn.us; Gaug, Ryan (DOT; Haas, Meredith; jbatkinson; Brian Hunker

Cc: Solis, Joshua; Fleming, John (DOT); Nickles, Crystal (DOT); Johnson, Arika (DOT)

Subject: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

When: Thursday, November 3, 2022 2:00 PM-3:00 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Teams

Introduction to the Northland Reliability Project. The project team will describe the project and we will be able to view maps of the current project proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_

### Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device Click here to join the meeting

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 8:51 AM

**To:** William.towle@ci.stcloud.mn.us; Lynn.Hoff@ci.stcloud.mn.us

Cc: Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson

(MP); Schmidt, Dan; Bentz, Nick; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG; Dean Harrison (MP); Agrimonti, Lisa; Benjamin

M. Doyle (ben.doyle@capitolairspace.com); David Beranek

**Subject:** Northland Reliability Project Introduction - St. Cloud Airport

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning Mr. Towle -

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power are developing the Northland Reliability Project (NRP). NRP is a new double-circuit 345kV transmission line from near Grand Rapids, MN (Iron Range Substation) to near St. Cloud, MN (Benton County Substation), about 140 miles long. In addition, there will be two existing transmission lines replaced to double-circuit 345kV transmission lines from near St. Cloud, MN (Benton County Substation) to near Becker, MN (Sherco Substation and Big Oaks Substation). Both replacements are slightly longer than 20 miles each. We would like to provide you with an overview of the Project and schedule.

Please note that the two transmission line replacements have segments that are a little over one mile from the end of the runway that extends northeast to southwest.

For more information, please visit the Project website - <a href="https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/">https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/</a>. Otherwise, we would be happy to provide any information in advance of the conference call.

Would you have time on Friday, April 28th for a conference call to introduce the project?

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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From: Johnson, Mark R (FAA) <Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 1:43 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; john.fleming@state.mn.us; Hahn, Robert (FAA)

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Hyland, Emily; Schmidt,

Dan; Walter, Jennifer; Northland Reliability Project; Bentz, Nick

**Subject:** RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

#### Hello Brian,

We are in the heart of grant season, so I have not had a chance to run any trials in our airspace case program OE/AAA. However I do know that, although not a NPIAS (National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems) airport (i.e. the airport does not get federal funding, but likely gets state funding), Hill City-Quadna Mountain Airport (07Y), could very well be affected. I have cc'd Robert Hahn, the resident airspace-OE/AAA guru in our FAA MN office to take a look at it. I will ask him take a look at any potential affects to St Cloud - STC, Brainerd - BRD, and Grand Rapids – GPZ as well, which are NPIAS airports. Please ensure Robert is included in all future correspondences.

v/r,

Mark R. Johnson, P.E. Program Manager

Federal Aviation Administration Dakota-Minnesota Airports District Office 6020 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 102 Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tel: 612-253-4642 Fax: 612-253-4611

Email: mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 1:29 PM

To: john.fleming@state.mn.us; Johnson, Mark R (FAA) <Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson

(MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>; Hyland, Emily <emily.hyland@hdrinc.com>; dschmidt@hdrinc.com <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer <jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi John and Mark -

I'm following-up to inquire if you were able to review the Northland Reliability Project's preliminary route and intended right-of-way with any potential concerns, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 7:19 AM

To: john.fleming@state.mn.us; mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

**Cc:** Lesher, Dan GRE-MG < dlesher@GREnergy.com >; Zach Golkowski (MP) < zgolkowski@mnpower.com >; James B. Atkinson (Jim) - (jbatkinson@mnpower.com) < jbatkinson@mnpower.com >; Hyland, Emily < emily.hyland@hdrinc.com >; Schmidt, Dan < dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com >; Walter, Jennifer < jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com >; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi Mark and John -

Thank you very much for attending the Northland Reliability Project's open house. It was great to meet you and share information about the project. As a follow-up from our discussions, please find attached are shapefiles of the preliminary route, intended right-of-way, and intended centerline. This information was provided to Capital Airspace Group who is assisting us with review.

We are interested in learning more about any potential concerns with the preliminary route and intended right-of-way, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Please let us know of any questions or if you need additional data.

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 11:41 AM

**To:** William Towle < William.towle@ci.stcloud.mn.us>; Schmidt, Dan < dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>;

Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>

Cc: GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Bentz,

Nick < Nicholas. Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Greene Guentzel, Amanda

<Amanda.GreeneGuentzel@hdrinc.com>

Subject: NRP - St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority Meeting Notes

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello William and HDR -

I'm sorry for the delay with emailing these meeting notes to you.

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Northland Reliability Project (NRP) team meet with William (Bill) Towle, who is the Executive Director of the Saint Cloud Regional Airport Authority. The NRP team presented about the Project's need, route development, preliminary route, and estimated right-of-way. The meeting discussed the following points:

- Introduced the Capital Airspace Group who is assisting NRP with Obstacle Clearance Surface
- NRP Engineering team is reviewing design parameters in this area
- GRE has existing transmission lines near the St. Could Airport that will be rebuilt as a part of the NRP project
- There is an FAA notification process that must be followed
- The airport is now part of a separate airport authority, they have a nine-member board from the Sherburne, Benton and Stearns counties
- The existing transmission line is outside of airport zoning and at first did not see issue with the NRP location as long as the towers were 140 feet or less.
- An issue for consideration was taller structures during construction, such as cranes that might be used to set structures. NRP will need to work with Saint Cloud Regional Airport Authority when the time to closer to construction.

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

#### **Transmission Permitting, Project Manager**

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

#### Bring, Jennifer

**From:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 3:44 PM

**To:** William Towle; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG; Hawkins, Rebecca; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Lynn Hoff

Cc: Zach Golkowski (MP); Dean Harrison (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Northland Reliability Project; Bentz,

Nick

**Subject:** RE: NRP - St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority Follow-up Meeting

Attachments: NRP\_St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Bill -

Thank you very much for meeting with us on Thursday afternoon, 7/13/2023. Per your request, please find attached is a figure showing the St. Could Airport in relation to the Northland Reliability Project. Below are notes from our meeting. Please let us know of any questions or further data needs.

#### Attendees:

- Bill Towle (STC RAA)
- Brian Hunker (GRE)
- Tyler Myers (GRE)
- Dan Lesher (GRE)
- Becky Hawkins (HDR)

#### Discussion topics:

- GRE provided an update on the NRP status and revisions to the Proposed Route since the last meeting
- The Project area near the St. Cloud Regional Airport was reviewed
- GRE provided a summary of preliminary transmission line structures that could be used near the airport's airspace
- Bill commented that he was pleased with the design changes and was appreciative that GRE and Minnesota Power had FAA experts provide input on surface clearances
- Brian noted that FAA notifications would occur as required once final design was complete
- Brian asked if there were any future expansion plans for the airport; Bill responded that the crosswinds runway (smaller runway) is the only one that could be impacted by the NRP and if it were to be lengthened, that would be the only source of conflict but there are no current or long-term plans to do so. Heavier use of the main runway would not conflict with the Project.
- Bill commented that FAA staff had attended a project open house and received a lot of useful information about the project
- Bill requested a copy of the map Brian was showing during the presentation and Brian will send a screenshot of that area
- Brian offered that if Bill would like the NRP team to present to the St. Cloud Regional Airport board, they can accommodate; Bill will let him know if that is needed
- Meeting adjourned with no additional questions or actions

Thank you, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

----Original Appointment----From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2023 3:59 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; William Towle; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG; Ralston Hawkins, Rebecca; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Lynn

Hoff

Cc: Zach Golkowski (MP); Harrison, Dean MISC-MN Power; James B. Atkinson (Jim) - (jbatkinson@mnpower.com)

Subject: NRP - St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority Follow-up Meeting

When: Thursday, July 13, 2023 1:00 PM-2:00 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: https://grenergy.webex.com/grenergy/j.php?MTID=m2a4925d7a454f05f959544fb6896cd44

Hello -

Let's meet to provide an update on the Northland Reliability Project.

Thanks, Brian

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Meeting password: GrCrcEE4B33

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#### Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll

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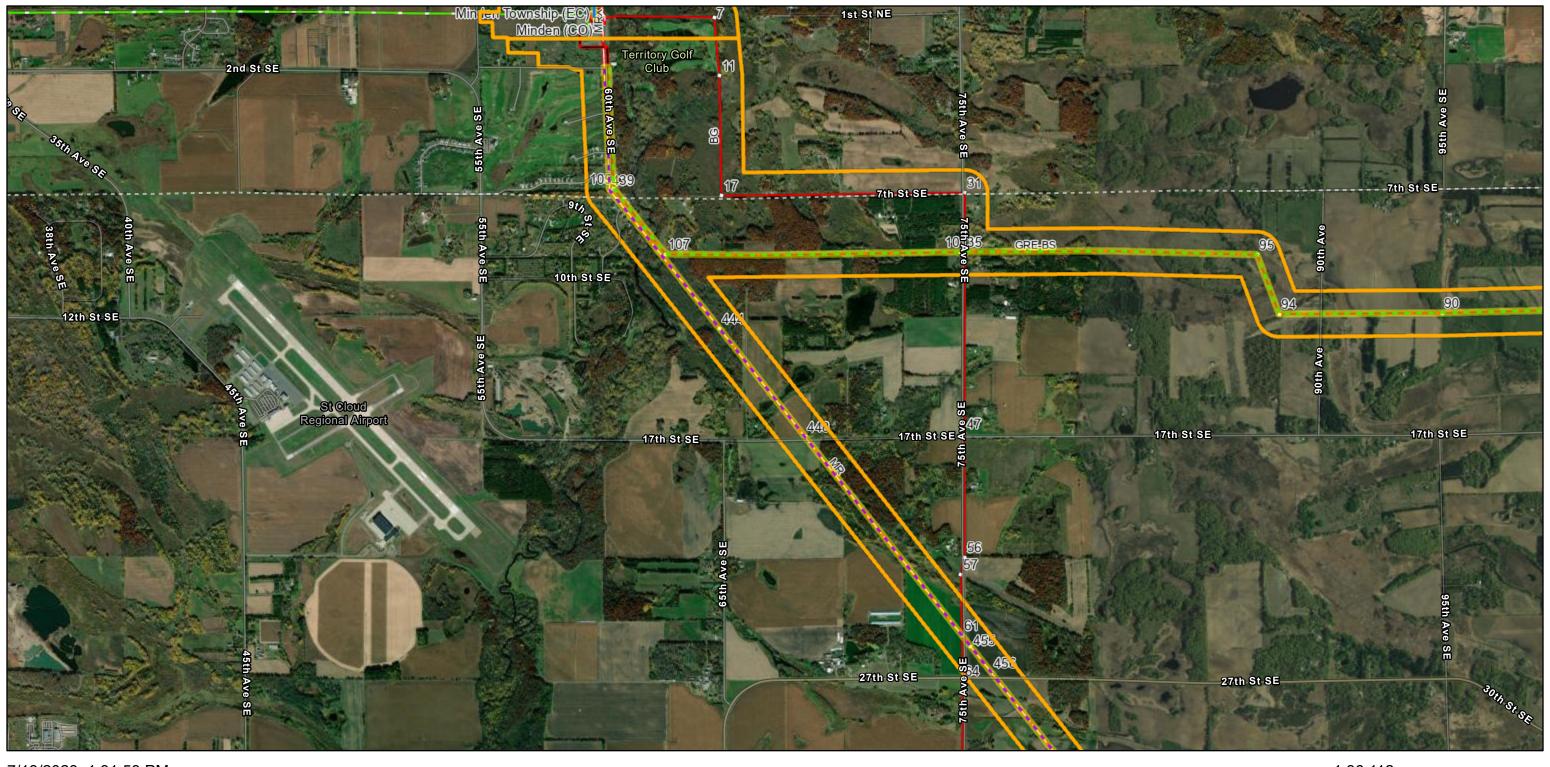
Dial 24906995534@grenergy.webex.com

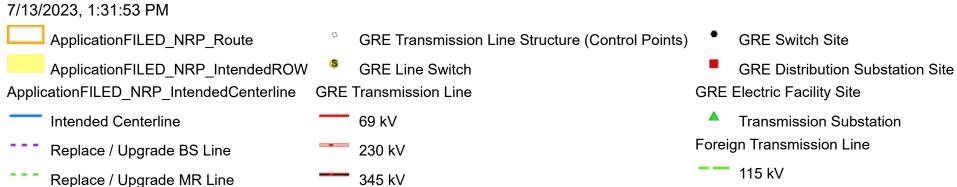
You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

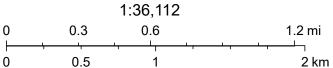
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# St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority







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Appendix M Page 26 of 294 Bat-River Energy

### **Northland Reliability Project**





### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date**: July 14, 2023 **Time**: 9am **Project**: Northland Reliability Project

Subject: FAA and MnDOT Aeronautics Update Meeting Location: WebEx

Attendees		
$\boxtimes$	Brian Hunker – GRE	
	Dan Lesher – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Tyler Myers - GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Zach Golkowski - MP	
$\boxtimes$	John Fleming - MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Mark Johnson - FAA	
$\boxtimes$	Pam McWharter - HDR	

#### 1. GRE/MN POWER Introductions

- Applicant introductions made
- o Update on the St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority meeting held 7/13/2023

#### 2. <u>Description of Project and Progression</u>

- o GRE (Brian) presented a PowerPoint overview of the Project
- Project can be considered as two Segments
  - Segment 1: 140 miles long. Iron Range Substation to Cuyuna Series Compensation Station to Benton Count Substation. Existing transmission will be re-configured.
  - Segment 2: Replace about 20 miles of 230 kV and about 20 miles of 345kV. Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation and Sherco Substation
- Stakeholder workshops were held in Fall 2022
- Public meetings were held in January and May 2023
- There were three major route revisions from the Preliminary to Proposed Route were made as a result of these meetings and workshops.
- o Anticipated schedule with a start of construction in 2025 and an in-service date of 2030.

#### 3. Question and Answer

John: was originally concerned about Crosswind runway at St Cloud Airport if it were to be lengthened. But there are no current plans to lengthen that runway.

Tyler: NRP has been working with an airspace consultant to assist with surface clearance data. They had to think about an alternative structure design for the St. Cloud Airport because of ceiling height limits. There will be a unique structure design near the St. Cloud Airport. There are pinch points near the Benton County Substation. The design is for shorter, more compact

structures that will be around the existing structure heights in the Benton County Substation area.

Mark: How tall are the proposed structures?

Tyler: They will vary and are far from final, probably vary from 110 to 130ish feet tall near the St. Cloud Airport. The standard structures will be about 20 to 40 feet taller.

Brian – the area is challenging because there is a golf course and people have built homes right up to the existing right of way.

Tyler: They evaluated Hill City Airport too, and they did not have height restriction from the analysis and can use the standard structures for this area.

Mark: FAA will be working with Hill City as it is still within the FAA's purview to notify the sponsors in the area. The government does not help fund this airport.

For the obstruction evaluation, you don't want to file too quickly with the FAA and don't want to file too late. If it looks like the general location is pretty stable, if you file its good for 18 months and that brings you into that 2025 timeframe. Mark recommends filing now to have the FAA evaluate the airspace. The evaluation can be tweaked if one of the poles moves after the evaluation is submitted. Also, it would be good to submit a 'case point' in the open areas of the line where there is a bend in the line. Suggested filing in the next 6 months or so.

Brian – would you be okay with a preliminary design?

Mark – its up to you, especially around the airports, once you are at 95% design it should be ok.

Zach – what's the harm of filing now? Even if they need to re-file in 18 months?

Mark – you have 30 months from the time you initially file even though you have 18 months from the original approval letter. You can request an extension for that initial review. Its just a process to ask for an extension.

Airport district office looks at the line from the perspective of the airfields. Mark's office (Airport District Office) is the central processing office that coordinates with the airfields.

Tyler – its looking like 26 months before putting the poles in the air. Will need FAA approval around Quarter 1 of next year. That will work with timing for when the foundation work will start. Work will also be in segments.

Mark said submitting evaluations in segments would be fine and is doable on his end as well.

John – Will provide the Hill City airport manager's contact information for us to contact

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45am

#### Bring, Jennifer

**From:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 7:11 PM

To: Fleming, John (He/Him/His) (DOT); Johnson, Mark R (FAA); Hahn, Robert (FAA)

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Hyland, Emily; Schmidt, Dan; Walter,

Jennifer; Northland Reliability Project; Bentz, Nick; Dean Harrison (MP); Myers, Tyler GRE-MG;

Hawkins, Rebecca; McWharter, Pamela

**Subject:** RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data **Attachments:** NRP\_FAA\_MnDOT\_Meeting\_July142023.docx

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi John and Mark -

Please find attached for your review are meeting notes from last week Friday, 7/14.

Also, I emailed Mr. Casper, Hill City Airport Manager, regarding the Project. I appreciate this contact.

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Fleming, John (He/Him/His) (DOT) < John.Fleming@state.mn.us>

Sent: Friday, July 14, 2023 9:49 AM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>; Johnson, Mark R (FAA) <Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov>; Hahn, Robert (FAA) <Robert.Hahn@faa.gov>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>; Emily Hyland <Emily.Hyland@hdrinc.com>; dschmidt@hdrinc.com <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer <jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Harrison, Dean MISC-MN Power <dharrison@mnpower.com>; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG <tyler.myers@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

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Brian,

The Hill City airport manager is George Casper and the email we have is <u>cityhall@hillcity-mn.com</u>. It would be good to reach out let them know what's going on. Once the FAA review is completed I'll be reaching out to them as well.

Best,

John

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 12:50 PM

To: Johnson, Mark R (FAA) < Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov>; Fleming, John (He/Him/His) (DOT)

<<u>John.Fleming@state.mn.us</u>>; Hahn, Robert (FAA) <<u>Robert.Hahn@faa.gov</u>>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson

(MP) < <u>JBATKINSON@mnpower.com</u>>; Emily Hyland < <u>Emily.Hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

<dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer <jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Harrison, Dean MISC-MN

Power <dharrison@mnpower.com>; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG <tyler.myers@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

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Mark and John -

Let's plan to have a conference call from 9-10am on Friday morning, 7/14. I'll email a WebEx invite.

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2023 12:56 PM

To: Johnson, Mark R (FAA) < <a href="mailto:Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov">Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov</a>>; <a href="mailto:john.fleming@state.mn.us">john.fleming@state.mn.us</a>; Hahn, Robert (FAA)

<Robert.Hahn@faa.gov>

**Cc:** Lesher, Dan GRE-MG < dlesher@GREnergy.com >; Zach Golkowski (MP) < zgolkowski@mnpower.com >; Jim Atkinson

(MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>; Hyland, Emily <emily.hyland@hdrinc.com>; dschmidt@hdrinc.com

<dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer <jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <<u>Nicholas.Be</u>ntz@hdrinc.com>; Harrison, Dean MISC-MN

Power < dharrison@mnpower.com >; Myers, Tyler GRE-MG < tyler.myers@GREnergy.com >

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi Mark and John -

This week, would you have time to connect and we can update you on the Northland Reliability Project?

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Johnson, Mark R (FAA) < Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov >

Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 1:43 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < bhunker@GREnergy.com >; john.fleming@state.mn.us; Hahn, Robert (FAA)

Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

#### <Robert.Hahn@faa.gov>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <<u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <<u>JBATKINSON@mnpower.com</u>>; Hyland, Emily <<u>emily.hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u></<u>dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</u>>; Walter, Jennifer <<u>jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com</u>>; Northland Reliability Project</<u>connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</u>>; Bentz, Nicholas <<u>Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com</u>>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

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Hello Brian,

We are in the heart of grant season, so I have not had a chance to run any trials in our airspace case program OE/AAA. However I do know that, although not a NPIAS (National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems) airport (i.e. the airport does not get federal funding, but likely gets state funding), Hill City-Quadna Mountain Airport (07Y), could very well be affected. I have cc'd Robert Hahn, the resident airspace-OE/AAA guru in our FAA MN office to take a look at it. I will ask him take a look at any potential affects to St Cloud - STC, Brainerd - BRD, and Grand Rapids – GPZ as well, which are NPIAS airports. Please ensure Robert is included in all future correspondences.

v/r,

Mark R. Johnson, P.E. Program Manager

Federal Aviation Administration Dakota-Minnesota Airports District Office 6020 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 102 Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tel: 612-253-4642 Fax: 612-253-4611

Email: mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 1:29 PM

To: john.fleming@state.mn.us; Johnson, Mark R (FAA) <Mark.R.Johnson@faa.gov>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson

(MP) < <u>JBATKINSON@mnpower.com</u>>; Hyland, Emily < <u>emily.hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u><dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer < jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas < Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi John and Mark -

I'm following-up to inquire if you were able to review the Northland Reliability Project's preliminary route and intended right-of-way with any potential concerns, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Thanks, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

Great River Energy

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

Appendix M Page 31 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415 From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 7:19 AM

To: john.fleming@state.mn.us; mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

**Cc:** Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <<u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; James B. Atkinson (Jim) - (<u>jbatkinson@mnpower.com</u>) <<u>jbatkinson@mnpower.com</u>>; Hyland, Emily <<u>emily.hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; Schmidt, Dan <<u>dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</u>>; Walter, Jennifer <<u>jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com</u>>; Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi Mark and John -

Thank you very much for attending the Northland Reliability Project's open house. It was great to meet you and share information about the project. As a follow-up from our discussions, please find attached are shapefiles of the preliminary route, intended right-of-way, and intended centerline. This information was provided to Capital Airspace Group who is assisting us with review.

We are interested in learning more about any potential concerns with the preliminary route and intended right-of-way, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Please let us know of any questions or if you need additional data.

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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#### Bring, Jennifer

**From:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2023 6:09 PM

**To:** cityhall@hillcity-mn.com; maintenance@hillcity-mn.com; langes@scicable.com

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); McWharter, Pamela; Bentz, Nick;

Northland Reliability Project; Hawkins, Rebecca; Hyland, Emily

**Subject:** Northland Reliability Project Introduction - Hill City Airport

Attachments: NRP Hill City - Quadna Mountain Airport.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Mr. Casper -

Great River Energy and Minnesota Power are developing the Northland Reliability Project (NRP). NRP is a new double-circuit 345kV transmission line from near Grand Rapids, MN (Iron Range Substation) to near St. Cloud, MN (Benton County Substation), about 140 miles long. In addition, there will be two existing transmission lines replaced to double-circuit 345kV transmission lines from near St. Cloud, MN (Benton County Substation) to near Becker, MN (Sherco Substation and Big Oaks Substation). Both replacements are slightly longer than 20 miles each.

Currently, NRP's Proposed Route is located on the southside of the existing transmission line that is about 1-mile south of 645<sup>th</sup> Lane on the southside of the Quadna Mountain Airport. Please see attached map.

Last week, we met with John Fleming, MNDOT Aeronautics, and Mark Johnson, FAA, who ask that we contact you to inform you of the Proposed Route. NRP has reviewed the FAA's Surface Obstruction Clearances and do not anticipate concerns. After final engineering design, NRP will submit structure obstruction evaluation to the FAA.

NRP anticipates submitting a Certificate of Need and Route Permit Application to the MN Public Utilities Commission in August 2023.

For more information, please visit the Project website - <a href="https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/">https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/</a>. Otherwise, we would be happy to provide any information or maps.

The Project has hosted two public open houses in Hill City where we had the opportunity to meet Mayor Dave Lange and discuss the Project with him.

Please let us know if you're interested in a meeting or conference call about the Project as we would be happy to share information.

Thank you, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

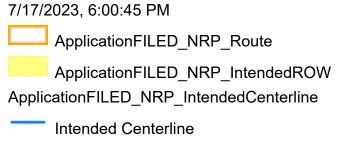
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# Hill City - Quadna Mountain Airport





GRE Transmission Line Structure (Control Points)

GRE Line SwitchGRE Transmission Line115 kV

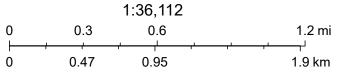
**GRE Switch Site** 

**GRE Distribution Substation Site** 

Foreign Transmission Line

115 kV

230 kV



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Appendix M
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Docket No. EG 1932 FRIXON F. 2929 16 Great River Energy | USG, GRE | United Service Group - Great River Energy | MNDNR | LIDAR | Great River Energy | United Services Group - Great River Energy | GRE) | Maxar | Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies | Docket No. EG 1932 FRIXON F. 2929 16 | Great River Energy | GRE) | Maxar | Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies | Docket No. EG 1932 FRIXON F. 2929 16 | Great River Energy | Gr

**United States Fish and Wildlife Service** 

From: Marquardt, Shauna R <Shauna\_Marquardt@fws.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 11:38 AM

**To:** Schmidt, Dan

Cc: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Utrup, Nick J; Simpkins, Darin

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Northland Reliability Project **Attachments:** 20220915\_Northland Agency Letters USFWS.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Dan,

Our lead for transmission projects funded by Rural Utilities Services is Darin Simpkins. I've cc'd him here as well as his supervisor, Nick Utrup. They will review the project information and get back with you regarding any further coordination needs and next steps.

Can you confirm if there is funding from RUS or other federal source?

Shauna Marquardt (she/her)
Field Office Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office

mobile: 573-239-3293

From: Schmidt, Dan <Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com> Sent: Monday, February 20, 2023 10:58 AM

To: Marquardt, Shauna R < Shauna\_Marquardt@fws.gov>

Cc: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
<br/>
bhunker@grenergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Northland Reliability Project

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

#### Shauna,

Good morning – I am writing on behalf of the Great River Energy and Minnesota Power about the Northland Reliability Project.

We sent a letter to your office in September 2022 (attached). As we begin to develop routes we would like to ask for your input on the project and begin discussions on how we can minimize impacts on sensitive species and habitats. We would be interested in a meeting explain the project to you learn more about the resources in the project area. We would be happy to do an in-person meeting at your office or we can do a virtual meeting when convenient for you and your staff. Please reach out to me at your earlier convenience. Thanks and have a great week.

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP Senior Project Manager

#### **HDR**

1601 Utica Ave S., Suite 600 St Louis Park, MN 55416-3400 D 763.278.5928 M 612.812.2069

dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

# **Northland Reliability Project**





## **Agenda**

Date: March 2, 2023 Time: 1pm Project: Northland Reliability Project

**Subject**: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Meeting Location: Microsoft Teams

<u>Name</u>
Brian Hunker – GRE
Marsha Parlow – GRE
Mike Swenson – GRE
Jim Atkinson – MP
Zach Golkowski – MP
Darin Simpkins – USFWS
Dan Schmidt – HDR
Jennifer Walter – HDR

Darin - biologist, wear many hats, FERC, Section 7, Rural Utilities, Species Lead

- Bloomington and Green Bay = WI/MN offices. He is stationed in Green Bay
- Worked on other Transmissions project
- Been getting a lot of requests by Chicago
- Assist to make your project goes smoothly

#### 1. Presentation - Brian Hunker

- MISO Projects
- Project Need
- Segment 1 description
- Segment 2 description
- Routing Process and Timeline
- MN routing criteria
- ROW Configuration Segment 1
- ROW Configuration Segment 2
- Public Involvement and Agency coordination
- Anticipated schedule
- Contact information

Darrin had no questions on the presentation

#### 2. IPAC

- HDR brought up the IPAC based upon the Route Corridor
- Land Crossing Do not believe crossing an NWR or WPA or USFWS managed lands
- Determination Keys were given from IPAC
  - Northern Long Ear Bat as clear some trees to expand the existing ROW
  - Tricolored bat

- Monarch Butterfly candidate species
- Farm Service Agency Interests 1390 acres

#### Darin

- Appreciates pulling IPAC
- Gives USFWS heads up and tracking number and a list of species
- Trying to get a handle on where you are and what doing
- No RUS funding
- Is there a federal nexus will determine how the consultation will go COE Section 10
  - COE Section 404 (regional general permitting)
- any COE action creates a federal nexus for the project. They must go through the steps to make sure there is no impact on TE species. Does not mean you cannot represent you. They need to be at the table
- A DKey is doing this on their behalf or COE will do own research
  - Help identify if the COE will have an impact on these species
  - The design was to streamline the processes that the COE will get an automatic letter if they have issues and get back within 30 days.
- DKey does not include the NLEB.
  - Tools being redesigned should be ready by March 31
- Species dealing with three
  - Lynx Threatened
  - Gray Wolf Threatened
  - NLB Threatened
  - Tricolored Proposed Endangered
  - Monarch Candidate

## 3. QUESTION: Would you only look at the areas the COE has district over?

- In the past, the COE (have not worked with them on transmission) has been willing to cover the entire project under Section 7. If not, it doubles the work.
- If entire project not under Section 7, then the project will be piecemeal and some parts will
  not have federal nexus and then have Section 10 which is voluntary, Proposer would then
  determine if there might be take, then a HCP and incidental take permit would be needed.
- Easiest route is to have the COE do it all under their umbrella.
- BUT if you feel there will be no take, trees removed during winter and not near known hibernacula then you do not need to do Section 10. But USFWS cannot even confirm section 10 stuff... this is similar to other federal nexus projects.
- If there was a take or expect one, he would recommend you have one. He has not been involved on the enforcement side of things
- NLEB any additional information
  - Consultation or conservation measures and avoid previously (winter cleaning and hibernacula)
  - May be additional conservation or avoidance in future
  - Visit the USFWS website NLEB for Section 7/10 info
  - More guidance on this by next month

#1 impact is white nose syndrome, will it cause stressors with the clearing

## 4. QUESTION: under regional or general permit, do you still need a biological opinion?

- Jim reference GNTL 225-mile project
  - Presidential Permit with DOE federal nexus
  - o COE regional / general permit
  - Formal Section 7 consultation with USFWS
    - Needed biological assessment
    - Never had incidental take permit
- Under Section 7 (Darin)
  - If determination is made, a species is likely to adversely affected then formal consultation is triggered
  - o This is when you need biological assessment and opinion
  - Federal agency would need this
  - Once BO rendered, there is typically a take issued
  - If not take, deemed an Informal consultation can be handled with DKey or if kicked it out, USFWS can issues a verification or concurrence letter

## 5. Regional General Permit is a suite of things

- Section 10 river crossings as long as meets specific conditions
- Regional General permit was just reissued

#### 6. QUESTION: TAKE - Habitat as loss as a take?

- It is defined in consultation paperwork
- Physically harm or harass, disturb the species
  - If work is done in the habitat, but not when they are using it You are not harming or harassing them
- If working in mines that is near hibernacula could be a take
- Bats come back to the trees in the spring and the trees are not there so the bats have to work harder to find a tree – could be a take
- Will you be taking trees from Hibernacula, number of feet X?
- If your DKey is kicked back
  - o Talk with USFWS
  - If you think there will be a take and explain why sounds logical, USFWS will agree
  - But there is no habitat, remove in winter, etc sounds logical, USFWS will agree
  - All about argument and presentation, rely on information from boots on the ground
  - Bat roosting data is typically with state agency, and they will provide you that information

DKey will help you a lot once the new version is out in the next month

## 7. QUESTION: 31st is the date for the guidance?

- Optimistically probably will not
- Guidance is being sorted out and is part of internal review

#### 8. QUESTION: Tricolored bat

- Officially on its own
- Tools for the NLE bat could be used for it and available as well once know
- Habitat is different and potentially different criteria
- Some overlap, biggest threat is White Nose Syndrome

#### KEY:

NRP: Bat is our biggest question and concern. We will pay attention to 3/31. Should we schedule another meeting to talk about the bat. The northern part of the project is in dense forest and the tree clearing aspect of this project

USFWS: Consultation with the COE for part of it, if we are going to schedule another meeting we need to have the COE. We need to talk together to see which is the path forward. Do see value to have a conversation in the near future and what they would be willing to cover under their permit. Section 10 is a lengthy process.

## 9. USFWS: Any tribal concerns with areas impacting any tribal lands and resources.

- Not on any trust lands
- Project in ceded territories.
- NRP has been coordinating with tribes
- Office has a tribal liaison for negotiations, we can bring that resource into the mix.

## 10. Next steps and action items:

 NRP: will reach out to COE contact. After the 3/31 information will circle back to conversation.





Northland Reliability Project

Solution

MISO-approved project: part of a regional plan
Learn more at misoenergy.org

3



Two main project segments

• Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation

• Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation

• Northland Reliability Project | a

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## Segment one Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to **Benton County Substation**

- New double-circuit 345-kV transmission line
- · Approximately 130 miles
- Opportunities to route near existing transmission lines
- · Connect into new Riverton Substation



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## Segment two

#### **Benton County Substation** to Big Oaks Substation

- Replace existing 230-kV transmission line to double-circuit 345-kV transmission line
- Approximately 20 miles

S ## | \*\*

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· Verifying existing route and right-ofway are suitable for a 345-kV line



#### **Additional project** improvements

- Expand the existing Iron Range Substation and the Benton County Substation
- Install a new substation at or near the existing Riverton Substation and reconfiguring existing transmission lines in the Riverton area
- · Rebuild approximately 20 miles of existing single-circuit 345-kv line from the Benton County Substation to the Sherco Substation in Sherburne County

Since III

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Northland Reliability Project 9



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#### Our routing process & input opportunities



Study area to route corridor EB. (1) 138 S ....

## Routing process considerations

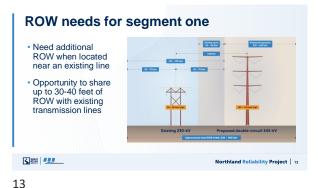
The criteria for route selection is set by Minnesota statute and guides our routing process.

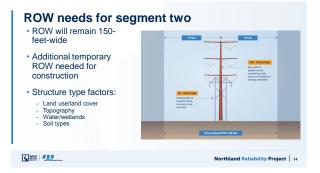
To route a project, we consider:

- Opportunities
- Constraints
- · Engineering and construction considerations

Northland Reliability Project | 12

11 12





## **Public engagement**



- · Website interactive comment
- Open houses week of Jan 23 and Jan 30
- In-person and virtual engagement opportunities



15



16

14





17 18 **Tribal Correspondence** 

**Tribal Initial Outreach** 





Catherine Chavers Chairwoman Bois Forte Band of Chippewa 5344 Lakeshore Drive Nett Lake, MN 55772

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairwoman Chavers,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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There will be several future opportunities for input regarding the Project. We anticipate reaching out to provide further Project updates and gather additional input in 2023, prior to submitting permits to the MN PUC, currently expected to occur in late 2023 or early 2024. There will be additional opportunities for input throughout the MN PUC permitting process. The schedule is subject to change, but we will provide updates on changes in future communications.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Areas where we have potential issues such as homes, rare plants, Native American artifacts or culturally significant resources, etc.





We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Jaylen Strong, THPO

Dan Lesher

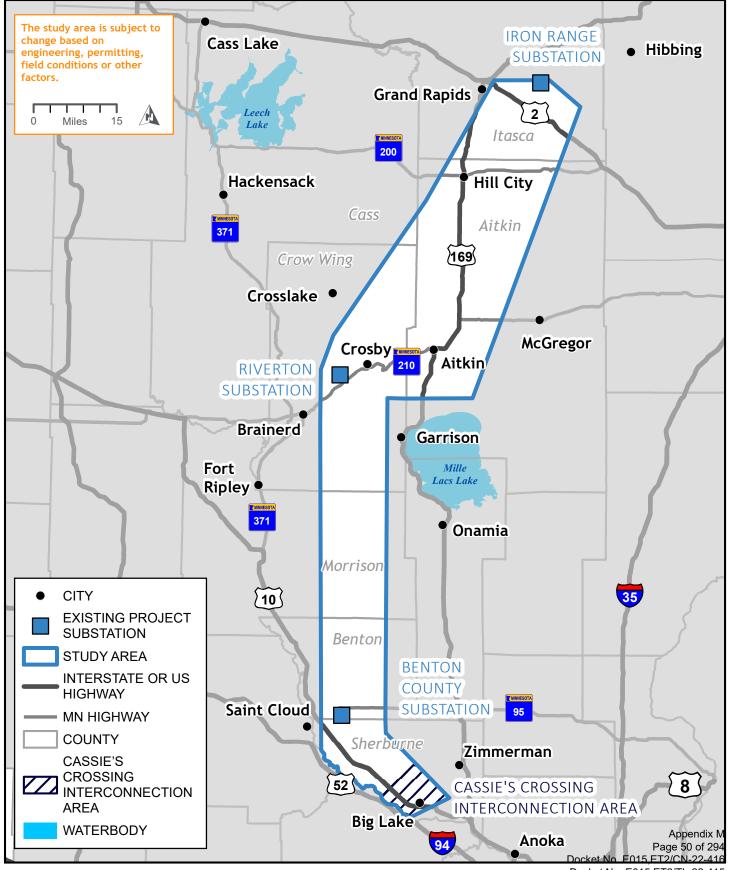
Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





## NORTHLAND RELIABLITY PROJECT STUDY AREA







Kevin Dupuis Chairman Fond du Lac Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa 1720 Big Lake Rd Cloquet, MN 55720

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Dupuis,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Jill Hoppe, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Robert (Bobby) Deschampe Chairman Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa PO Box 428 Grand Portage, MN 55605

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Deschampe,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

**Environmental and Real Estate Manager** 

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Rob Hull, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Faron Jackson Chairman Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe 190 Sailstar Drive NE Cass Lake, MN 56633

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Jackson,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Jim Atkinson

**Environmental and Real Estate Manager** 

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Amy Burnette, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Robert Larsen
President
Lower Sioux Indian Community in the State of Minnesota
39527 Reservation Hwy. 1, PO Box 308
Morton, MN 56270

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear President Larsen,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Jame Ballin

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cc: Cheyanne St. John, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Melanie Benjamin Chief Executive / Chairwoman Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe 43408 Oodena Drive Onamia, MN 56359

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chief Executive / Chairwoman Benjamin,

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Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Terry Kemper, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Johnny Johnson President Prairie Island Indian Community 5636 Sturgeon Lake Road Welch, MN 55089

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear President Johnson,

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Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Noah White, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Darrell Seki Chairman Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians 15484 Migizi Drive Red Lake, MN 56671

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Seki,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Areas where we have potential issues such as homes, rare plants, Native American artifacts or culturally significant resources, etc.





We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

**Environmental and Real Estate Manager** 

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Kade Ferris, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Keith Anderson Chairman Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community 2330 Sioux Trail NW Prior Lake, MN 55372

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Anderson,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 

dlesher@GREnergy.com

cc: Leonard Wabasha, THPO





Kevin Jensvold Chairman Upper Sioux Community 5722 Travers Lane, PO Box 147 Granite Falls, MN 56241

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Jensvold,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Jim Atkinson

**Environmental and Real Estate Manager** 

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 

dlesher@GREnergy.com

cc: Samantha Odegard, THPO





Michael Fairbanks Chairman White Earth Nation 35500 Eagle View Road Ogema, MN 56569

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chairman Fairbanks,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Jaime Arsenault, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 





Catherine Chavers President Minnesota Chippewa Tribe P.O. Box 217 Cass Lake, MN 56633

## **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear President Chavers,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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to attempt to avoid or minimize impacts to tribally significant resources, if they are present. Responses can be provided via our email addresses provided below. If preferred, we can have a more in-depth conversation either in-person or virtually, to discuss the Project and receive your input.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager

Jame Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

cc: Rob Hull, THPO

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 

dlesher@GREnergy.com

Tribal Correspondence: Lower Sioux Indian Community, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and Upper Sioux Community

# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **Agenda**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Project Update Meeting	
Date:	Friday, January 20, 2023	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	• Gina Hugo – Parks Coordinator, Public Works • Andrew Witter – Public Works Director • Tim Sime – Assistant County Attorney  Lower Sioux Indian Community • Cheyanne St. John – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe • Terry Kemper – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  Upper Sioux Indian Community • Samantha Odegard – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Great River Energy

# **Discussion**

- Great River Energy (GRE) presented an overview of the Northland Reliability Project (project) (see PowerPoint presentation).
- Proposed Big Elk Lake Park Area there is an existing transmission line and easement that
  crosses a portion of the proposed park (part of Segment 2 of the project). Propose to replace
  the existing 230 kV line with 345 kV double-circuit line. There are approximately six (6) existing
  H-frame structures within the proposed park, which would be replaced with monopoles.
- Questions asked by participants:
  - Lower Sioux asked if there is a project website where there are maps or files to facilitate review.
    - GRE indicated there is a project website <a href="https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/">https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/</a>

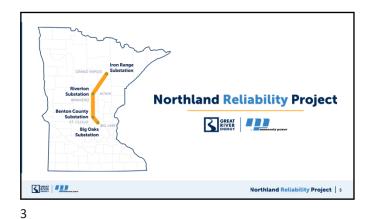
- The Study Area has been narrowed down to a Route Corridor (orange and green areas on the PowerPoint maps). The process was informed by review of available data as well as outreach with stakeholders.
- GRE and Minnesota Power (MP, project partner) are analyzing constraints and potential routes within the Route Corridor. A shapefile of the Route Corridor can be provided to facilitate review.
- GRE and MP want to engage with stakeholders as early and often as possible. It is important to gather as much information to be aware of routing opportunities and potential concerns/constraints. Information gathered from engagement will inform a proposed route that will be included in a Certificate of Need (CON) and Route Permit Application (RPA).
- Lower Sioux inquired regarding the type and size/depth of foundations for the new monopoles.
  - GRE indicated the new poles will be on concrete foundations, on average 30 ft deep and 6-10 feet in diameter.
- Upper Sioux asked if there are options if the poles need to be moved. Three of the existing poles may have impacted resources when originally constructed.
  - GRE indicated it is preferred to use the existing easement in this area, but there
    is likely some flexibility within the existing 150 ft right-of-way regarding pole
    placement.
  - The current Route Corridor is larger than the existing 150 ft right-of way.
- Sherburne County asked if there is an opportunity to minimize the number of poles within the park.
  - GRE indicated there is probably an opportunity to have longer spans than currently but, the wider the span, the wider the right-of-way that's required. GRE can look at expanding the span but stay within the 150 ft right-of-way.
- Mille Lacs asked who the current easement is with?
  - GRE indicated the easement is with the land
  - Mille Lacs indicated the County is now the landowner.
- The County is currently working with their partners regarding designation/listing of a traditional cultural landscape and a potential National Heritage Area, which would require additional consideration. A tribal cultural property survey is in progress and should be complete in June 2023.
- The park is planned to be developed in 3 phases over the next 15 years.
- Sherburne County indicated their intent to rehabilitate the prairie, which includes prescribed burning every 3-5 years. Burning is not feasible under the current wood structures; is it feasible under the monopoles?
  - GRE will confirm and follow up.
- Sherburne County asked about the process of woody vegetation management within the right-of-way. The Park's mission is to provide opportunity for people to connect with nature – clearing for transmission line removes some of the tree cover.
  - GRE indicated that woody vegetation is often removed or cut back within right-ofway.
- Lower Sioux indicated that additional information requested to inform review of the project would be the span of the structures and alternative routing options, if needed.

- Mille Lacs indicated that there is a separate meeting coming up and other items can be discussed during that meeting.
- Lower Sioux indicated that they did not respond to the letter sent out in August; however, they would also be interested in meeting. GRE indicated Dan Lesher (GRE), Jim Atkinson (MP), and Jenny Bring (HDR) are contacts to set up a future meeting.
- It was determined that a follow-up call would be scheduled after the individual meetings with Mille Lacs and Upper Sioux.



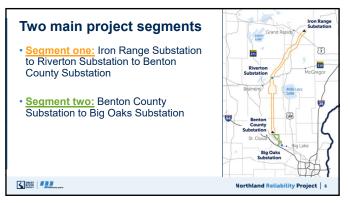


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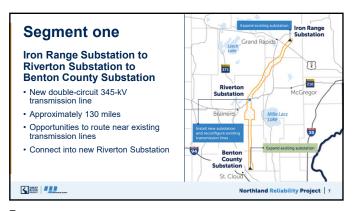


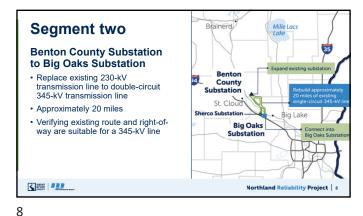
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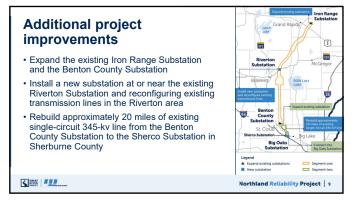


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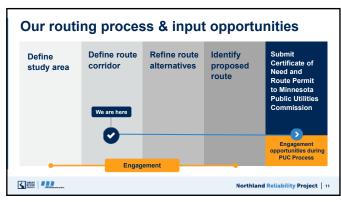


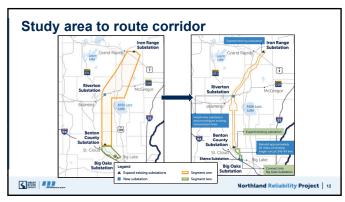
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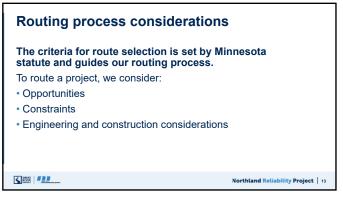


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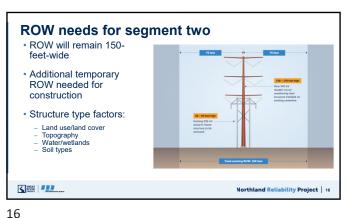
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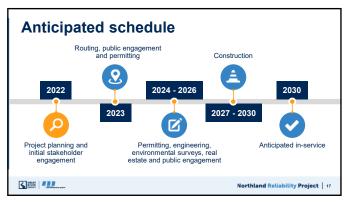


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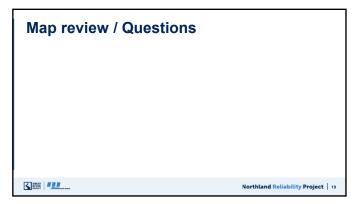
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Appendix M Page 79 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415



From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 4:03 PM

**To:** Gina Hugo; Terry Kemper; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; Cheyanne St.

John; Andrew Witter; Tim Sime; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Solis, Joshua; Schmidt, Dan;

Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Haley Waller Pitts; Bring, Jennifer

**Cc:** Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP

**Subject:** RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Attachments: NRP Sherburne County Project Update Mtg Notes 01202023.docx; NRP RouteCorridor

20230122.zip; NRP\_Elk\_Lake\_Meeting\_Presentation\_Updates\_1.20.2023.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

#### Good afternoon -

Thank you very much for meeting last week. We really appreciate your time and insight on the Northland Reliability Project (NRP). Please find the following attached your review and use:

- Meeting notes
- PDF of the PowerPoint
- Shapefile of the Route Corridor

I'm checking with GRE's Vegetation Management team regarding controlled burns for maintenance. I'll let you know next week.

Please let us know of any questions. Note that the NRP team will be at open house meetings this week and next week, therefore we may have delayed replies to emails.

We look forward to our next meeting. Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

----Original Appointment----

From: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us>

Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 9:56 AM

**To:** Gina Hugo; Terry Kemper; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; Cheyanne St. John; Andrew Witter; Tim Sime; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Solis, Joshua; dschmidt@hdrinc.com; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Subject:** Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

When: Friday, January 20, 2023 2:15 PM-3:15 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Thank you all for helping to coordinate a time for this meeting. See meeting link and call-in information below.

Sincerely,



# Gina M. Hugo

Sherburne County Public Works - Parks Coordinator

Work: (763) 765 – 3308 www.co.sherburne.mn.us

www.facebook.com/SherburneCountyMN

NOTICE: Unless restricted by law, email correspondence to and from Sherburne County government offices may be public data subject to the Minnesota Data Practices Act and/or may be disclosed to third parties.

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**State Agency Correspondence** 

**State Agency Initial Outreach** 





Leanne Buck
Executive Director
Minnesota Associaton of Soil and Water Conservation
255 Kellogg Boulevard East, Ste 101
St. Paul, MN 55101

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Leanne Buck,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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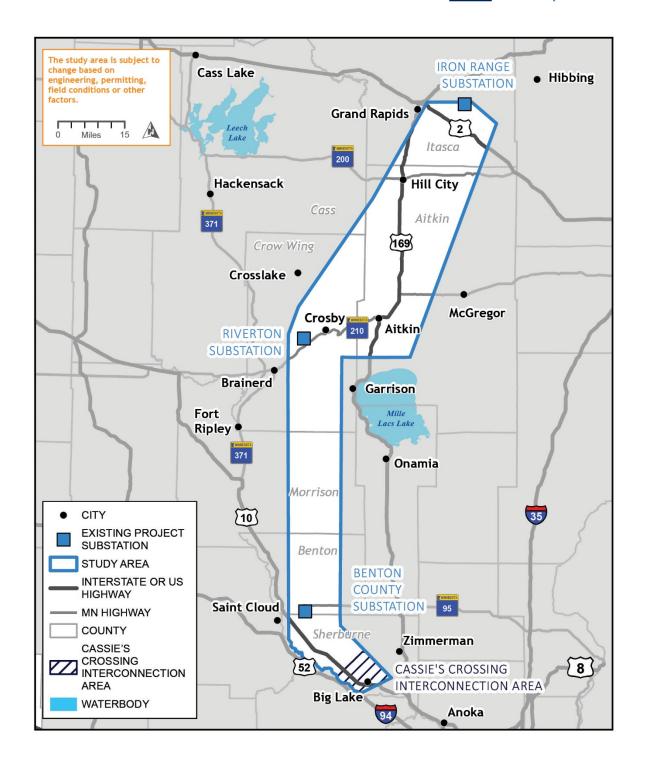
Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher











Chuck Rau
Vice President and West Central Area 2 Director
Minnesota Associaton of Soil and Water Conservation
11275 West Lake Road Rice
Rice, MN 56367

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Chuck Rau,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Kurt Beckstrom Northeast Area 3 Director Minnesota Associaton of Soil and Water Conservation 17404 60th Avenue Milaca, MN 56353

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Kurt Beckstrom,

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Emily Javens
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
595 Aldine Street
St. Paul, MN 55104

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Emily Javens,

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Ryan Hughes Northern Region Manager Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources 394 South Lake Avenue, Room 403 Duluth, MN 55802

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Ryan Hughes,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Marcey Westrick Central Region Manager Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources Waite Park, MN 56387

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Marcey Westrick,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com **Dan Lesher** 





August 22, 2022

Shannon Geshick Executive Director Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) 161 St. Anthony Ave, Ste 919 St. Paul, MN 55103

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Executive Director Geshick,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included with this letter.

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The route has not been determined, but we will look at routing opportunities, including using existing transmission line corridors, and constraints<sup>13</sup> and evaluate their feasibility. We will develop and refine the route based on standard routing criteria, community feedback, engineering best practices, environmental considerations and regulatory guidelines. Because of the early stage of Project development, analysis and/or surveys for archaeological and historic resources have not yet been conducted.

There will be several future opportunities for input regarding the Project. We anticipate reaching out to provide further Project updates and gather additional input in 2023, prior to submitting permits to the MN PUC, currently expected to occur in late 2023 or early 2024. There will be additional opportunities for input throughout the MN PUC permitting process. The schedule is subject to change, but we will provide updates on changes in future communications.

As we start initial planning, we wanted to make you aware of this Project and begin gathering information helpful to determine potential routing corridors. We would appreciate and value your input

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Areas where we have potential issues such as homes, rare plants, Native American artifacts or culturally significant resources, etc.





to attempt to avoid or minimize impacts to tribally significant resources, if they are present. Responses can be provided via our email addresses provided below. If preferred, we can have a more in-depth conversation either in-person or virtually, to discuss the Project and receive your input.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

**Environmental and Real Estate Manager** 

Jam Ballin

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 

dlesher@GREnergy.com





August 22, 2022

Shannon Geshick Executive Director Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) 1819 Bemidji Ave N, Ste 2 Bemidji, MN 56601

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager

Jame B Adein

Minnesota Power

jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

**Great River Energy** 

dlesher@GREnergy.com





Cynthia Warzecha Energy Projects Review Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Cynthia Warzecha,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Martha Vickery Region 3 - Regional Operations Coordinator Minnesota Department of Natural Resources St Paul, MN 55106

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Martha Vickery,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>







Joe Rokala Region 2 - Regional Operations Coordinator Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grand Rapids, MN 55744

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Joe Rokala,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com **Dan Lesher** 





Shelly Patten
Northeast Region Director
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
1201 East Highway 2
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Shelly Patten,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Louise Miltich
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis - Unit Supervisor
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th PI E #280
St. Paul, MN 55101

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Louise Miltich,

As you're aware, Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to continuing to provide you updates about the Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Ray Kirsch
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis - Lead
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th PI E #280
St. Paul, MN 55101

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Ray Kirsch,

As you're aware, Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Bret Eknes Energy Facilities Supervisor Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place E Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55101

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Bret Eknes,

As you're aware, Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Janet Gonzalez Regulatory Analysis Manager Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place E Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55101

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Janet Gonzalez,

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Kristin Raab Environmental Impacts Analysis Unit Minnesota Department of Health 625 Robert Street N St. Paul, MN 55164

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Kristin Raab,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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David Bell Environmental Impacts Analysis Unit Minnesota Department of Health 625 Robert Street N St. Paul, MN 55164

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear David Bell,

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Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Stacy Kotch-Egstad
Utility Routing and Siting Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Stacy Kotch-Egstad,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Jeff Udd Duluth Region Manager Minnesota Pollution Control Agency 525 Lake Ave South Suite 400 Duluth, MN 55802

# **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Jeff Udd.

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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The route has not been determined, but we will look at routing opportunities, including using existing transmission line corridors, and constraints and evaluate their feasibility. As we start initial planning, we wanted to make you aware of this Project and start gathering information helpful to determine potential routing corridors and any permitting constraints or considerations. We would like to request a meeting to begin early regulatory consultation through individual or multi-agencies meetings to present the proposed Project and understand potential issues as early in the routing and siting process as possible. Feel free to reach out to Dan Schmidt by phone (763.278.5928) or email (dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com) to schedule a virtual or in-person meeting during a date and time that works best for you and your group.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Troy Daniell
Minnesota State Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
375 Jackson Street Suite 410
St. Paul, MN 55101

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Troy Daniell,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Kristine Kust
Minnesota State Conservationist Executive Assistant
U.S. Department of Agriculture
375 Jackson Street Suite 410
St. Paul, MN 55101

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Kristine Kust,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

This Project will help support the reliability of the grid and customer needs as utilities continue to shift their supply toward more renewable energy sources and reduce carbon emissions. Minnesota Power and Great River Energy are in the early planning stages. Developing this Project will include a comprehensive permitting process that includes applying for a certificate of need and route permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Additional permitting processes and consultations will occur with agencies and other jurisdictions.

The route has not been determined, but we will look at routing opportunities, including using existing transmission line corridors, and constraints and evaluate their feasibility. As we start initial planning, we wanted to make you aware of this Project and start gathering information helpful to determine potential routing corridors and any permitting constraints or considerations. We would like to request a meeting to begin early regulatory consultation through individual or multi-agencies meetings to present the proposed Project and understand potential issues as early in the routing and siting process as possible. Feel free to reach out to Dan Schmidt by phone (763.278.5928) or email (dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com) to schedule a virtual or in-person meeting during a date and time that works best for you and your group.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy dlesher@GREnergy.com





Sarah Beimers Environmental Review Manager Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office 50 Sherburne Ave #203 St. Paul, MN 55155

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Sarah Beimers,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

This Project will help support the reliability of the grid and customer needs as utilities continue to shift their supply toward more renewable energy sources and reduce carbon emissions. Minnesota Power and Great River Energy are in the early planning stages. Developing this Project will include a comprehensive permitting process that includes applying for a certificate of need and route permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC). Additional permitting processes and consultations will occur with agencies and other jurisdictions. At this early stage, it is unknown if Section 106 compliance may be needed.

The route has not been determined, but we will look at routing opportunities, including using existing transmission line corridors, and constraints and evaluate their feasibility. As we start initial planning, we wanted to make you aware of this Project and start gathering information helpful to determine potential routing corridors and any permitting constraints or considerations. We would like to begin early regulatory consultation through individual or multi-agencies meetings to present the proposed Project and understand potential issues as early in the routing and siting process as possible. We have also initiated engagement with federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. At this early stage of Project development, analysis and/or surveys for archaeological and historic resources have not yet been conducted.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson
Environmental and Real Estate Manager
Minnesota Power
jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights

Great River Energy

dlesher@GREnergy.com





Amanda Gronhovd State Archaeologist Office of the State Archaeologist 328 W. Kellogg Blvd St. Paul, MN 55102

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Amanda Gronhovd,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson
Environmental and Real Estate Manager
Minnesota Power
jbatkinson@allete.com

Dan Lesher
Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights
Great River Energy
dlesher@GREnergy.com

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture** 

# Telephone Record

Date:	May 25, 2023	
Project:	Northland Reliability Project	Project No:
Call to:	Stephen Roos	Phone No:
Call from:	Dan Schmidt	Phone No:
Subject:	Introduction to Northland Reliability Project	

Telephone Conversation with Stephen (Steve) Roos, MN Department of Agriculture (DOA)

- DOA role is to assist in reviewing and developing agricultural mitigation plan for the project. DOA does not take a stance on whether project is good or bad.
- Main areas of focus for transmission lines:
  - How agricultural soils are managed during construction
  - o Surface and sub-surface (drain tiles) water movement
  - o Soil Compaction due to construction and future maintenance
- Typically they require a 3<sup>rd</sup> party monitor process during construction. MN agencies are pushing to simplify and consolidate the monitoring process with the EERA.
  - Not quite there yet, so the ag mitigation plan will still need a monitoring plan, but likely will be consolidated with EERA in the future
- Preference is to have the ag mitigation plan complete with application submission
- Mr Roos would review prior to submission (1-2 week turnaround at most)
- Mr Roos will send an example of a recent ag mitigation plan for our review

Note: Mr Roos sent example agricultural mitigation plan to Dan Schmidt via email on May 25, 2023

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources





# **Agenda**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Project Update Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, December 20, 2022	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	*Jessica Parson – Regional     Environmental Assessment     Ecologist, Region 2, Ecological and     Water Resources     *Melissa Collins – Regional     Environmental Assessment     Ecologist, Region 3, Ecological and     Water Resources     *Joe Rokala – Regional 2 Operations     Supervisor, Lands and Minerals     *Cynthia Warzecha - Energy Projects     Review   Minnesota Power     *Jim Atkinson - Environment and     Real Estate Manager     *Zach Golkowski – Senior     Environmental Compliance     Specialist     *Kyle Larson – Construction     Management	• Dan Lesher – Manager,     Transmission Permitting and Land     Rights • Brian Hunker – Transmission     Permitting Project Manager  HDR  • Jennifer Bring – Environmental     Section Manager, Cultural     Resources and Tribal Engagement     Lead • Mike Swenson – Environmental     Permitting Lead • Jenn Walter – Routing/Siting Lead

### Agenda topics:

- Introductions
- Project overview
- Preliminary route corridor
- DNR interests
- Application process
- Point of contact
- Ongoing project meetings

### **Discussion**

- Minnesota Power (MP) presented an overview of the Northland Reliability Project (NRP or project) (see PPT presentation).
- Questions asked by DNR:
  - Confirmation of length? 150 miles total Segment 1 is 130 miles and Segment 2 is 20 miles
  - How much new ROW is needed? Is it new ROW or does it follow existing lines and use some of the existing ROW?
    - Double circuit 345kV will require a 150 foot (ft) wide ROW. If following an existing transmission line, there could be economy or ROW sharing estimate 100-120ft needed. If the line does not follow an existing transmission line, the NRP will need 150 ft wide ROW. Estimate approximately 90 percent of the project would follow existing transmission lines.
    - Segment 2 anticipate being able to utilize existing ROW.
- Expansions anticipated at the Benton County and Iron Range substations adjacent to existing and owned by GRE and MP, respectively.
- Desktop review through GIS of the Riverton Substation area. MP discussed the reconfiguration
  of existing 115kV and 230kV substations and transmission lines. MP showed the approximate
  location of Tax Forfeit lands where Crow Wing County would like to reconfigure existing
  transmission lines due to the county's landfill.
- Estimate combined Certificate of Need (CON) and Route Permit Application submission to the DOC/PUC around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2023.
- DNR asked if there is work ongoing within Cuyuna State Recreation Area now? MP confirmed that there is small distribution pole replacement work – staging equipment and materials in the area.
- DNR noted that the Mississippi River and Cuyuna State Recreation Area may have Blandings turtle occurrences and potential for state listed plants (such as moonwart species)
  - High probability there will be construction timeline limitation in various habitats due to potential impacts to listed species
  - High probability that rare plant surveys will need to be conducted to identify potential avoidance areas or if necessary, take permits.
- DNR indicated, based on experience on past projects, getting as much done early is important.
- DNR mentioned concern with Blandings turtle and the newly listed northern long-eared bat (NLEB). DNR is attending a training in January to learn more about habitat protection for NLEB.
- DNR requested that we provide them with the project corridor shapefile to allow for them to
  prepare an Early Coordination Letter, which will help to define areas of concern from the DNR
  and identify potential areas where rare flora or fauna surveys/habitat survey may be needed.
- DNR has concern regarding the funding of multiple types of DNR administered property, potential Land and Water Conservation Fund etc. may cause issues on licensing the project to cross lands. Specifically, SNAs, WMAs and State Parks/Trails.

- DNR will coordinate a review of lands within the route corridor as part of the Early Coordination Letter process and identify their funding sources.
- DNR stressed the importance of early coordination with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding cultural resources. HDR indicated we are gathering information on known cultural resources within the route corridor and have included SHPO, Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) in initial outreach for the project.
- DNR requires that the project utilize the MN Conservation Explorer to initiate an official Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) review of the project once we're at a point in the process that an official review is required.
- Due to schedule, DNR environmental review and licensing processes will likely need to run parallel.
- DNR will commit to monthly project update meetings hybrid meetings are best
  - HDR will facilitate a doodle poll to identify a recurring time that works for attendees.
  - DNR Lands and Minerals may add additional attendees to the meetings as the project progresses.
  - There may be a need in the future to have separate coordination meetings with both Ecological and Water Resources (EWR) and Lands and Minerals Divisions as the project progresses.

Note: After the meeting, DNR requested a more "defined" route or routes being considered to better understand the areas of interest within State owned properties. This request was geared to defining areas of concern that may have associated federal funding (e.g., Land and Water Conservation Fund) and, therefore, may require additional coordination.





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Fulfilling a need Maintaining reliability Enabling clean energy Strengthening resiliency Enhancing flexibility afely and reliably iver clean energy from where it's uced to where it's needed by our customers and members. Northland Reliability Project | 4



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Our study area How we defined our study area: B · Substation connections · Existing corridors Sim III

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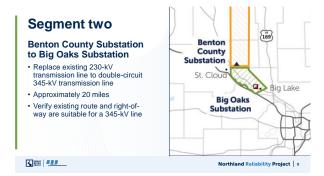
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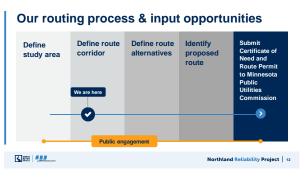
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### **Public engagement**



- Stakeholder workshops in October
- · Website launch this month
- · Open houses in early 2023
- In-person and virtual engagement opportunities

Communicating our path forward

Ongoing communication with stakeholders and landowners throughout the project.

Northland Reliability Project | 13

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# Tribal and agency outreach We're committed to communicating early, often and throughout the project: Initial Tribal and tribal organizations letters – August 2022 Initial agency letters sent – September 2022 Continued and ongoing opportunities to meet one-on-one and at key project milestones

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# Preliminary route corridors

 Existing transmission lines that cross DNR lands

15



# Preliminary route corridors

 Existing PWI stream crossings of transmission lines



Northland Reliability Project | 14

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17 18



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### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Monthly Project Update Meeting	
Date:	January 30, 2023	
Location:	Webex	
Attendees:	Jessica Parson – Regional     Environmental Assessment Ecologist,     Region 2, Ecological and Water     Resources     Melissa Collins-Regional     Environmental Assessment Ecologist,     Ecological and water Resources     Cynthia Warzecha - Energy Projects     Review     Elizabeth Rasmussen –Natural     Resources Specialist, Ecological     Services     Joe Rokala – Regional 2 Operations     Supervisor, Lands and Minerals  HDR      Dan Schmidt – HDR Project Manager	• Curt Anderson-Director of Environmental and Land Manager  • Curt Anderson-Director of Environment and Manager

# **Discussion**

- Cuyuna Rec Area
  - DNR will check to see if parcels near the potential route may have federal funding
  - Need to check for bonding or Lessard-Sams and LAWCON and Parks Administration funding
  - o Cathy Henrick Parks and Trails Resources Specialist for NE Region (reviewer of project areas)
  - May cause problems with routing because of limitations on development
  - o School Trust Fund parcel just south of Rec Area
- DNR would like a preferred route and a specific list of parcels. This will help with the development of the
  application. A draft application for the public lands crossing would help. NRP will provide that once a more
  detailed route is developed
- Other funding discussions
  - o Pittman-Roberts funding to acquire parcels has a 1-yr waiting period for approval
- No way to rank the funding sources based upon priorities
- Take Permit requires avoidance, minimization and taking
- Don't grant access to state land if it doesn't comply with maintenance of lands
- Potential NHIS issues
  - Botrichum app.
  - o Butternut endangered tree need a survey and special time of year
  - Endangered fungi
  - o NHIS reviewers are interested in tree clearing areas
- Next steps and action items
  - o Forward NHIS report to Melissa, Cynthia, and Jessica

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- o MCS 2022-00891
- o Shapefile of the narrow route area
  - 1000-ft buffer of the 115kV and 230kV lines
- Draft license application side
  - Bare bones application
  - List of parcels list of 40's and 1/4, 1/4 sections
  - Karen and Mary Land and Minerals tasks
- o Schedule regular meeting with Jessica
- Look up easements on properties in Cuyuna





### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Monthly Project Update Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, March 07, 2023	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	*Jessica Parson – Regional     Environmental Assessment     Ecologist, Region 2, Ecological and     Water Resources     *Cynthia Warzecha - Energy Projects     Review     *Elizabeth Rasmussen – Natural     Resources Specialist – Ecological     Services     *Joe Rokala – Regional 2 Operations     Supervisor, Lands and Minerals  Minnesota Power     *Jim Atkinson - Environment and     Real Estate Manager     *Deb Kellner – Land and Title     Specialist	•Matt Hagelin – Senior Field Representative •Brian Hunker – Transmission Permitting Project Manager  HDR  •Dan Schmidt – HDR Project Manager •Jenn Walter – Routing/Siting Lead •Kirsten Granstrom-Arndt – Environmental Specialist

# **Discussion**

### • Cuyuna/Riverton Area

- New substation land Tax Forfeit land that Minnesota Power would like to purchase at auction in July 2023
  - Logging land and ATV trails
  - Reroute ATV trails in the area
  - Timber sale may want to pull timber from the properties
  - 20 acres within the 140 acres would be for the substation
  - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) noted a concern with a road to their property to harvest timber

- Corridor has been identified around the east side of the Cuyuna Recreation Area, then running diagonal along Hwy 210, and continuing south away from the County's landfill.
  - Crosses trails, crosses the mining historic district, and Natural Heritage area
  - Potential reroute may alleviate concerns with MN DNR Parks and Trails Staff
- There is not a lot of a new 150-foot-wide right-of-way.
- MN DNR provided a reminder that they review state listed species within one mile. There
  could be rare plant species within that radius.

### • USACE Project Coordination

- Minnesota Power and Great River Energy are entering into Section 214 agreement with USACE to facilitate permitting support
  - MN DNR thought it is a good idea to have the USACE join the project meetings.
  - MN DNR stated that it is not unusual to invite other state or federal agencies to coordination meetings and can be very beneficial.
  - USACE has to determine least environmentally impactful alternative.

### Early survey strategy

- Resources needed for surveyors, construction staff, etc.. are constrained with all the new projects being proposed
- Anticipate initiating surveys at the end of this year earlier than previously anticipated
- Survey data would help inform the decision
- DNR suggested that we develop survey plan in coordination with NHIS staff
- Provide results to NHIS staff
- NHIS staff will decide avoidance or impact
- o Potential Takings Permit if we can not avoid
- \*DNR Action Item DNR to discuss early survey strategy and make sure there is land access for survey.

### Next Steps and Timeline Updates

- Moved anticipated PUC Application filing from Nov to Aug.
- MN DNR indicated their resources staff are stretched very thin and field staff will be starting fieldwork and don't have time to review an application.
- DNR NHIS review will take time, may not have full review by the time we expect to file with the PUC. Would be better to file with a full DNR NHIS review.

### Additional meetings or information

Regular Monthly Meeting to be scheduled on Tuesdays





### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Monthly Project Update Meeting	
Date:	April 24, 2023	
Location:	Webex	
Attendees:	MN DNR  Jessica Parson – Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Region 2, Ecological and Water Resources Melissa Collins-Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Ecological and water Resources Cynthia Warzecha - Energy Projects Review Elizabeth Rasmussen –Natural Resources Specialist, Ecological Services  HDR  Dan Schmidt – HDR Project Manager Hirsten Granstrom-Arndt – HDR Env Scientist  Minnesota Power Jim Atkinson - Environment and Real Estate Manager Kyle Larson- Construction Manager Zach Golkowski- Environmental Compliance Specialist VSACE Sean Kelly – Project Manager	

## **Discussion**

- Review of previous meeting:
  - Overview of project
  - Cuyuna area: three parcels associated with funding. This will be ongoing discussion
  - High level NHIS report
  - **Action Items** 
    - Forward that report to Cynthia, Jessica, Elizabeth
    - Draft bare bones land and water application to start funding review
    - Set up reoccurring meetings
    - Look up existing easements for Cuyuna Recreation
- New Route Alternatives in Riverton Area
  - We have new route alternatives in April have a 1000ft or slightly larger in some area to review to start that NHIS review
- Early Survey Strategy
  - Resource crunch due to multiple projects needing SME and regulators to review
  - Could we do surveys end of this year, 2024 or even 2025? Is there ability we are going to follow existing transmission lines and will cross some state lands with the requirement to do surveys.

Survey on specific species will help inform environmental information to help support age 125 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 decision.

Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

- DNR would like survey information even before the PUC application. It is so important for us to get the DNR a route sooner than later. NHIS staff can review the survey plan by NHIS staff.
- DNR are concerned since they will be doing field work sooner and would have to happen when not in the field. We still have snow and we could have them review.
- Potential USACE Coordination
  - 404 and Section 10 permitting
    - Coordination is beneficial with other resource agencies as the project develops
    - Would DNR be ok with COE on some of these call
    - DNR yes during the WAC process, what would be done in that process or other process.
    - MP for the COE to say done the least impactful process, hard for them to concur when not part of the process
    - DNR will internally review and come up with an agreement on what is best. Agree, sooner is preferrable.
- Project Timeline
  - Moved to August instead of November
  - Less resistance so far
  - PUC pushing up timeline
  - Purchasing County land Jessica and Joe will review the request to purchase 400 acres of Crow Wing County Tax Forfeit land
  - NHIS review through the MCE will be submitted before PUC application is submitted The sooner the better.
  - Process once have proposed routes, will ask staff to review areas that are touched and then develop an early coordination letter and coordinate with Cuyuna State land folks. Although we are not on state park parcels but are within the larger rec area. ACTION ITEM: confirm who manages the lands in the larger rec area: county, private, state, (Grant aid dollars). DNR will review this all as part of the process and consult all groups like land and minerals

#### **Action Items**

- NRP will get routes to DNR ASAP
- Confirm who manages the lands in the larger rec area: county, private, state, (Grant aid dollars) DNR will review this all as part of the process and consult all groups like land and minerals
- DNR assist on survey strategy
- NRP will start the formal NHIS review

From: <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

To: Collins, Melissa (DNR); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Cc: Parson, Jessica (DNR); Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR); Zach Golkowski (MP)

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - MCE

Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:38:59 PM

Attachments: <u>image001.png</u>

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This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Melissa.

Thanks for the clarification. We do intend to submit a final request very soon with our proposed route. Thanks

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP **D** 763.278.5928 **M** 612.812.2069

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Collins, Melissa (DNR) < Melissa. Collins@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:30 PM

To: Schmidt, Dan <Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@grenergy.com>

Cc: Parson, Jessica (DNR) <jessica.parson@state.mn.us>; Warzecha, Cynthia (DNR)

<cynthia.warzecha@state.mn.us>

Subject: Northland Reliability Project - MCE

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Brian and Dan,

After reflecting on our meeting earlier this week, we wanted to make sure there was not a misunderstanding about the Minnesota Conservation Explorer submittal.

Natural Heritage staff do not review "preliminary" projects in MCE. The initial project draft that you created is for your planning purposes only. Once you are ready for DNR staff to review the project, you submit the "final" project so that it goes into the queue to be reviewed by DNR. This is necessary to initiate coordination regarding state-listed species and rare features on this project. This early coordination is very important to prevent delays in your project. Even though GRE/MN Power does not have a final route, they still need to submit a "final" request. It will also be very helpful for you to include as much detail as possible in the MCE submittal so that our understanding of the impacts to state-listed species is as accurate as possible.

Once submitted, you will receive an automated response indicating whether or not state-listed species have been identified in the vicinity, and to let you know if further review is required. If so, the project will then be reviewed manually by our Natural Heritage staff so that next steps such as surveys and/or avoidance measures can be provided. This manual review can take several months depending on the workload of our staff. Unless you submit a "final" NH request now in MCE, we cannot initiate a review of state-listed species and rare features, and the PUC will not have information needed to inform their route selection. DOC/PUC expects a "final" Natural Heritage review to be included in the project proposer's permit application (which GRE/MN Power plans to submit by August 1). We recommend that you submit the updated/final route to MCE again within one year of construction in order to cover any changes to the route as well as new rare species that have been added to the Natural Heritage Information System.

I hope this helps to clear up any confusion. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you,

#### **Melissa Collins**

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources Pronouns: She/her/hers

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

1200 Warner Road St. Paul, MN 55106 Phone: 651-259-5755

Email: melissa.collins@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



From: <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

To: Teegarden, Jennifer (DNR); Parson, Jessica (DNR)
Cc: Zach Golkowski (MP); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Subject: RE: SFIA Private land projects

Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:40:45 PM

Attachments: <u>image001.png</u>

image002.png image003.png image004.png

# This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Jennifer.

Thanks for the response. Let me touch base with our project team and see what could work next week.

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP **D** 763.278.5928 **M** 612.812.2069

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From: Teegarden, Jennifer (DNR) <jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 25, 2023 4:38 PM

**To:** Parson, Jessica (DNR) <jessica.parson@state.mn.us>

Cc: Schmidt, Dan < Dan. Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

**Subject:** RE: SFIA Private land projects

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks.

David, tomorrow and Friday are busy for me. I'm happy to have a meeting early next week to grasp how you would use the data and how you plan on handling land enrolled into SFIA.

### Jennifer Teegarden

Forestry Incentives Coordinator | Division of Forestry

#### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155 Phone: 651-259-5285

Email: Jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov





From: Parson, Jessica (DNR) <jessica.parson@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 11:47 AM

To: Teegarden, Jennifer (DNR) < jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us>

Cc: Schmidt, Dan < Dan. Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

**Subject:** RE: SFIA Private land projects

Hi Jennifer,

Thank you for getting back to me. They are working with HDR Engineering on one of their larger transmission line projects, I think Dan Schmidt might be the best contact. I will copy him here. Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com

#### Jessica Parson

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

1201 Highway 2 Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Phone: 218-328-8826

Email: Jessica.Parson@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov



From: Teegarden, Jennifer (DNR) < <a href="mailto:jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us">jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us</a>>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 25, 2023 10:42 AM

**To:** Parson, Jessica (DNR) < <u>jessica.parson@state.mn.us</u>>

**Subject:** SFIA Private land project

Hi Jessica,

I would like to get more information about how Minnesota Power would use SFIA data.

Do you have a contact or want to send them my way?

I coordinate the DNRs work on SFIA.

Thanks,

Jennifer Teegarden

### Forestry Incentives Coordinator | Division of Forestry

### **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155 Phone: 651-259-5285

Email: <u>Jennifer.teegarden@state.mn.us</u>

mndnr.gov







### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Northland Reliability Project Land License Application Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, May 16, 2023	
Location:	Webex	
Attendees:	*Karen Tamminen – Realty Specialist, secondary license coordinator for central, northeast regions     *Angela Means – Realty Specialist, license coordinator for northeast region     *Mary Witte – Realty Specialist, license coordinator for central region     *Joe Rokala – Regional 2 Operations Supervisor, Lands and Minerals  *Minnesota Power     *Jim Atkinson - Environment and Real Estate Manager     *Zach Golkowski – Environmental Compliance Specialist	Oreat River Energy         •Dan Lescher – Manager for Transmission Permitting and Land Rights         •Brian Hunker – Project Manager for Transmission Permitting  HDR      On Schmidt – HDR Project Manager         •Kirsten Granstrom-Arndt – Environmental Scientist

### **Discussion**

### MCE Process

- Question (Joe Rokala): What is the status of the Minnesota Conservation Explorer (MCE) application for state threatened and endangered species review?
  - Dan Schmidt (S.) indicated that this application will be (or has been) submitted during the week. Dan S. will keep Joe updated on progress.

### State Land Crossings

- Question (Joe): What are the current, known state land (state forest, WMA, AMA) crossings for the preferred preliminary route area?
  - Dan S: 159 state land crossings (state forest, WMA, AMA) are within the preferred route but this number could decrease as the route becomes finalized.
  - DNR indicated only land crossings within the preferred route right-of-way should be identified.
  - The group decided conducting a detailed analysis of right-of-way crossings as soon as possible would be useful as most of the preliminary route will be used in the final Project.
- Question (Dan S.): Where is the most up to date source of DNR-owned property data?

Angela Means: Shapefiles are available on DNR and County websites.
 DNR will answer questions regarding data quality.

### • Funding Restrictions for Parcels

- Question (Dan S.): Does the DNR have a list of state parcels with funding information that could be acquired to assist with identifying funding restrictions?
  - Joe indicated this was possible, but HDR must develop a skeleton application looking at all state land crossings within the proposed route along with potential alternatives.
  - Once a response regarding federal aid funding feasibility for the route is obtained, a more detailed right-of-way crossing and funding restriction analysis can be conducted.
- Timing for federal aid review is unknown at this point but will be known upon the submission of the crossing analysis.
- If there is agency or individual concern, a response that parcel analysis is still in progress should be sufficient.

### Funding for Route Segments

 Question: Will one federal aid application be done for the full route, or will multiple applications be submitted for different segments along the proposed route?

### DNR Required-Funding Estimate

- DNR to provide meeting attendees with a DNR required-funding estimate for work that will be done on the Project.
  - The estimate will likely be for a couple years of work and will include a prelicensing and post-licensing estimate.

### • Substation Location Finalization

- o MP is purchasing tax forfeit land from Crow Wing County.
- DNR has not reviewed and approved this process at this point.

### Agency Presentation

- NRP Agency presentation given to Benton County was shared with meeting attendees
  - Included Project need, study area, application progression preliminary route, right-of-way needs, anticipated needs and public engagement.

### Action Items

- HDR will prepare a "skeleton" utility crossing permit application to submission to the DNR. This will include maps of each crossing and a list of the crossing with TRS info. PENDING
- HDR will update the DNR on progress for the MCE application. PENDING
- MP (Jim) will follow up with Crow Wing County about the required tax forfeit land coordination with the DNR. PENDING





### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Northland Reliability Project DNR Monthly Update Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, May 23, 2023	
Location:	Online Teams	
Attendees:	*Jessica Parson – Regional     Environmental Assessment Ecologist     *Melissa Collins - Regional     Environmental Assessment Ecologist     *Cynthia Warzecha – Energy Projects     Review     *Elizabeth Rasmussen – Natural     Resources Specialist, Ecological     Services  Minnesota Power     *Jim Atkinson - Environment and Real     Estate Manager     *Kyle Larson – Construction Manager     *Zach Golkowski - Environmental     Compliance Specialist	Dan Schmidt – Senior Project     Manager     Kirsten Granstrom-Arndt –     Environmental Scientist     Jennifer Walter – GIS Specialist  United States Army Corps of Engineers     Sean Kelly

### **Discussion**

### Review of previous meeting

- Overview of project
- Cuyuna area: Three parcels are associated with funding this will be an ongoing discussion.
- High-level Minnesota Conservation Explorer (MCE) Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS) report
- o Action Items
  - Forward MCE report to Cynthia Warzecha, Jessica Parson, Elizabeth Rasmussen
  - Draft bare bones land and water application to start funding review
  - Set up reoccurring meetings
  - Look up existing easements for Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area

### • New Route Alternatives in Riverton Area

 The new route alternatives from April have ~1000ft to review first before starting the MCE NHIS review process

### Early Survey Strategy

- Resource crunch due to multiple projects needing engineers and regulators to review
- Question: Can surveys be completed by the end of this 2023, 2024 or 2025? What is the likelihood the Project is going to follow existing transmission lines and will cross some state lands with the requirement to do surveys.
  - Response: A survey on specific species will help inform environmental information and help support a decision.
  - DNR would like survey information before the Public Utility Commission (PUC) application. HDR will need to finalize a route for the DNR as soon as possible so NHIS staff can review the survey plan.
- DNR are concerned since they will be doing field work sooner and would have to happen when not in the field.

#### Potential USACE Coordination

- 404 and Section 10 permitting
  - Coordination is beneficial with other resource agencies as the Project develops
  - Question: Would DNR be "okay" with having the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) on some of these calls?
    - DNR "Yes" during the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) process.
       Question: What would be done in that process or other processes?
    - MP MP stated they would like the concurrence of the COE as part of the diplomatic process.
    - DNR will internally review and come up with an agreement on what is best as soon as possible.

### • Project Timeline

- PUC is pushing up timeline
  - Submission date moved to August instead of November
  - Minimal resistance so far
- Purchasing County Land Jessica and Joe will review the request to purchase 400 acres of Crow Wing County Tax Forfeit Land
- NHIS review through the MCE will be submitted ASAP before PUC application is submitted.
  - Process Once have proposed routes are finalized, NHIS staff will review areas that are touched and then develop an early coordination letter and coordinate with Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area folks.
  - ACTION ITEM: Confirm who manages the lands in the larger Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area (county, private, state) and confirm if acquired with grant aid dollars. DNR will review this information and consult land and minerals groups.

#### Action Items

- NRP will get routes to DNR ASAP
- Confirm who manages the lands in the larger Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area:

- DNR will assist on survey strategyMCE NHIS staff will start the formal NHIS review





### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Northland Reliability Project DNR Monthly Update Meeting	
Date:	Tuesday, June 27, 2023	
Location:	Online Teams	
Attendees:	*MN DNR     *Jessica Parson     *Melissa Collins     *Cynthia Warzecha     *Joe Rokala   Minnesota Power     *Jim Atkinson     *Kyle Larson     *Zach Golkowski	•Kirsten Granstrom-Arndt •Jennifer Walter •Jennifer Bring  GRE •Dan Lesher •Brian Hunker  United States Army Corps of Engineers •Sean Kelly •Benjamin Orne

# **Discussion**

#### Updates

- Application draft was submitted to EERA division of Department of Commerce on June 26, 2023. This will be reviewed over next 2-3 weeks and will facilitate official submittal in early August.
- Brian Hunker summarized the three recent route changes from Preliminary Route to Proposed Route
  - Route narrowed near Iron Range Substation to be closer to central part of the substation expansion area
  - Route selected on the eastside of the Riverton area
  - Route narrowed south of the Benton County Substation
- Jenny Bring provided an update on the draft land crossing application that will be submitted this week

### • Concerns Addressed

- Cuyuna State Recreation Area
  - Jessica Parson had concerns with wetland areas that may be able to be avoided

- Brian Hunker: There are many constraints within that area (residential areas, state lands, rivers, lakes, county land fill, crossing of Highway 210, pipeline). Because of all constraints, wetland crossing is unavoidable.
- Jim Atkinson: Wetland crossings won't have fill associated and all (or the majority of) wetlands can be spanned
- Hay Lake area, Irondale Township
  - Jessica summarized a concern voiced by a wildlife manager regarding the Hay Lake area of Irondale Township: Why did the route not go through the WMA south of Highway 210?
    - Jim: It was likely determined there were too many residential homes south of the WMA or the route was too close to Crow Wing State Forest land.
    - Joe Rokala: This will be further examined after the land crossing application is received.
  - Melissa Collins asked why three circuits can't be used on the existing line to accommodate the proposed 345 kV line.
    - Kyle Larson, Jim: This can't be done due to reliability, safety and it may
      be defeating the purpose of the new line when triple circuiting such a line.
    - Melissa: Suggested moving the line parallel to the road that borders the Cuyuna State Recreation Area
- Iron Range Substation
  - Jessica had question about the Proposed Centerline "ending in the middle of nowhere" near Iron Range Substation.
    - Jim: The Proposed Centerline ends on Minnesota Power property. Final location of substation will be placed somewhere on Minnesota Power property.

### Proposed Meeting

- Melissa believes that there are reasons for route alternatives beyond Hay Lake/Cuyuna, but greater clarification is necessary in multiple areas as there are heavy natural resource impacts.
  - Example: Multiple Elk River crossings in Benton County resulting tree clearings, in over 40 acres of shoreland/flood zone impacts
  - Specific mineral, peat concerns in some project areas
- Brian, Zach Golkowski will set up meeting with DNR to go over routes after DNR sends coordination letter about concerns on a county-by-county basis.
  - DNR goal to send coordination letter by end of week (June 30, 2023)
  - Meeting will be in person if possible
  - Meeting will be mid-July, after DNR comments are reviewed, before monthly meeting or during an extended monthly meeting
  - A doodle poll will be sent to meeting attendees and meeting time/location will be determined

### Other

- Joe noted that the DNR will still need to review the land crossing application for federally funded lands
  - This will likely not be ready by the July meeting

### Action Items

- o Brian, Zach Golkowski will set up meeting with DNR.
- Brian will provide shapefiles to DNR as requested. Joe will get back to Brian concerning shapefile requests.
- DNR will begin review of the land crossing application and send coordination letter by end of week (June 30, 2023)



Division of Ecological and Water Resources Region 3 Headquarters 1200 Warner Road Saint Paul, MN 55106

June 30, 2023

Brian Hunker Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Dear Brian Hunker,

Thank you for engaging the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in early coordination during the development of the Northland Reliability Project 345 kV High Voltage Transmission Line (HVTL). This HVTL project proposes to connect to power generating facilities in Becker, MN and extend a total of 180 miles to the northeast through Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Morrison, Benton, and Sherburne Counties. Based on the specific project information that we requested, and that was provided to us on April 25, 2023, and in the Natural Heritage Review request that was submitted to Minnesota Conservation Explorer (MCE) on May 12, 2023, the DNR respectfully submits the following comments for your consideration as you prepare to submit a route permit application to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

### **General Comments:**

- 1. The proposer's preferred route would significantly impact several sensitive natural resources throughout the entire proposed route. The DNR would like to evaluate alternate routes in certain segments, to avoid or minimize impacts to sensitive areas identified and organized by county below. Route alternatives and efforts to avoid impacts to sensitive natural resources have not been presented throughout the early coordination process with DNR beyond a discussion of Cuyuna State Park. It is still unclear what limitations for sharing ROW exist versus what is the proposer's preference along the proposed route.
- 2. Installing newly disturbed and maintained corridors, rather than following existing infrastructure will fragment the landscape and habitat, and result in an additional corridor susceptible to future development and subsequent habitat loss and degradation. Habitat fragmentation is one of the largest threats to wildlife as increasing development puts pressure on what few natural areas remain intact. The DNR encourages the proposer to prioritize avoiding natural areas that would require vegetation and tree removal or ground disturbance in shoreland, wetlands, Minnesota Biological Sites of Biodiversity Significance, and DNR Native

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Transmitted by Email

Plant Communities. Habitat preservation should also be prioritized near public lands, wildlife management areas (WMA), state parks, and county parks.

Approximately 26 miles of new greenfield ROW is proposed in this preferred route. Using existing ROW to a greater extent of the proposed route would be less impactful. It is unclear how these portions of the proposed route were selected, given that they would result in significant natural resource impacts to public waters, rare species, as well as contribute to further forest and habitat fragmentation.

- 3. Despite following existing routes for a large portion or the proposed route, some of the additional 120 feet of right-of-way (ROW) width expansion would have a greater impact on natural resources and state-listed species than an entirely new route would in a less sensitive location. This is particularly true through river corridors where extensive tree clearing would be required within shoreland, and in areas where rare plant and animal species occur.
- 4. At this time in the coordination process, DNR has not received or reviewed plans for temporary or permanent access roads and construction staging areas. Once the route has been finalized, further coordination with DNR may be necessary to review these for additional impacts to rare features and public waters.
- 5. Coordination regarding rare features and state-listed species has not informed route selection up until this point due to the delay in submitting the project to Minnesota Conservation Explorer (MCE). Minnesota's Endangered Species Statute (Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0895) and associated Rules (Minnesota Rules, part 6212.1800 to 6212.2300 and 6134) prohibit the take of threatened or endangered species without a permit. Further discussion of route alternatives may be necessary to avoid significant impacts to state-listed species. Of particular concern, is further forest and wildlife habitat fragmentation, which should be avoided to the greatest degree possible. There are numerous documented occurrences of Northern Longeared Bat (NLEB) across much of the proposed project, this species is federally listed as endangered and will require close coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on avoidance and permitting. Please see the attached Natural Heritage letter (issued June 30, 2023) for further direction regarding the potential impacts to rare features and state-listed species.
- 6. Where the route crosses Public Water Wetlands, a utility license to cross is not needed, but a DNR Public Waters Work Permit is required and can be applied for through the <u>Minnesota DNR Permitting and Reporting System</u> (MPARS). Please be aware that part of our permit review process will require an alternative analysis that examines why other less impactful routes that wouldn't require impacts to a public water wetland were not used.
  - A DNR Water Appropriation Permit is required if the water pumped exceeds 10,000 gallons in a day, and/or one million gallons in one year. The DNR General Permit for Temporary Appropriation, with its lower permit application fee and reduced time for review, may be used for the dewatering if the dewatering volume is less than 50 million gallons and the time of the appropriation is less than one year. A DNR Water Appropriations Permit can also be applied for using MPARS.
- 7. The lands package requested by the DNR Division of Lands and Minerals was submitted much later than we requested during early coordination. As a result, much of this information will not

be able to inform decisions on routing prior to the submission of an application for a route permit to the PUC, according to the timeline the proposer has indicated. The DNR Lands and Minerals Division is responsible for granting permission to companies that propose to cross state lands and public waters with utility infrastructure projects. This permission is in the form of a utility crossing license. Applicants apply for a license by submitting an application.

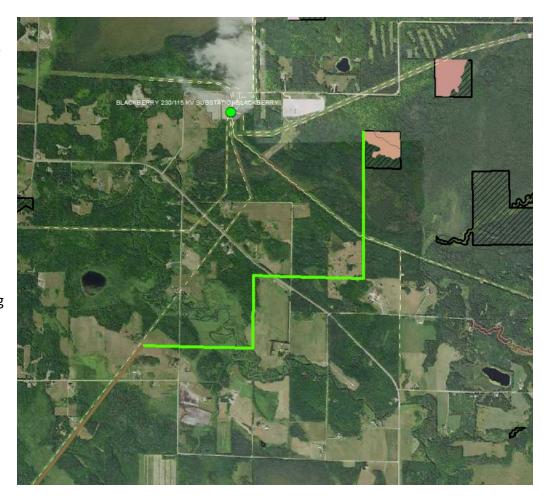
- a. <u>To date the project proposer has not applied for utility license to cross public waters</u>, even though this was requested by DNR in order to begin the lengthy review process.
- b. The project proposer submitted an application for utility license to cross state lands on June 27, 2023, which is too late to be reviewed by DNR staff prior to the planned date of submittal to the PUC.
- c. The utility license to cross state lands review will identify if there are natural resource and recreation concerns.
- d. The utility license to cross state lands review will also determine if there are deed, contract, funding, or other restrictions on state lands. <u>Deed, contract, and funding restrictions could impact licensing and routing of the transmission line</u>.
- e. Some lands owned by the State of Minnesota were purchased using funds that put restrictions on the lands. Before the DNR can grant a utility license over state lands with funding restriction, DNR must receive written approval from the funding provider. The DNR will identify if and where there are funding restrictions on state lands. <a href="#">The funding provider review can take up to a year or more.</a> <a href="#">Approval may or may not be granted by the funding provider.</a>
- f. There are different types of funding restrictions and funding providers have different requirements. If it is determined that funding provider review and approval is required, DNR will request additional information from the project proposer. Examples of some of the information that may be required for funding provider review include project description, maps, aerial photos, ROW plans, construction plans, evaluation of potential impacts to natural resources and recreation, construction plans, construction dates, environmental plans, completed cultural review, completed Natural Heritage Review, appraisal, mitigation or land replacement, and alternatives considered.

### **Itasca County**

The proposed greenfield route at the northernmost extent of the project goes through more wetlands than existing lines and creates a new crossing over the Swan River; crossing in the same location as existing right of way would greatly reduce the number/acres of impacted wetlands and eliminate the need for a new river crossing. There are rare mussel species in the vicinity of this crossing. Please refer to the June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review Letter for next steps on avoidance, surveys, or permitting as it applies.

The rest of the proposed line in Itasca County follows existing transmission line ROW, while this is the best way to limit impacts and keep habitat continuity and quality in other areas, there are still natural resource concerns to consider during planning. Much of this ROW goes through sites of High Biodiversity Significance as determined by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and the route is near several lakes of High or Outstanding Biological Significance. Impacts to these resources should be

limited as much as possible. Threatened, endangered, and species of special concern are an important consideration especially through these areas. Please refer to the June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review Letter for next steps on avoidance, surveys, or permitting as it applies.

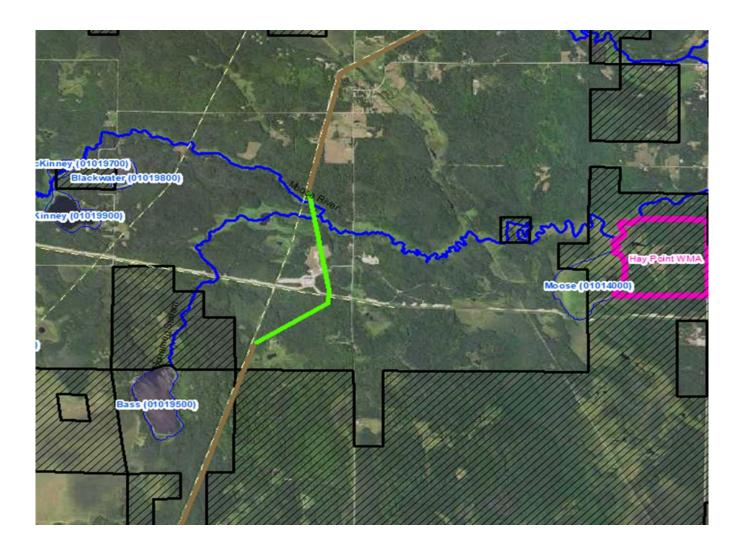


### **Aitkin County**

The proposed greenfield route that intersects the Line 3 replacement project creates new disruptions through intact forest. Additionally, this adjustment brings the line closer to known rare species occurrences, rather than avoid them. Please refer to the June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review Letter for next steps on avoidance, surveys, or permitting as it applies. Additionally, this greenfield route creates two new river crossings at the Moose River and the adjoining unnamed stream.

In Aitkin County, the proposed brownfield sections of ROW pass through large expanses where sites of High Biodiversity Significance occur that contain rare species, old growth forest, and sensitive native plant communities. Please refer to the June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review Letter for next steps on avoidance, surveys, or permitting as it applies. The ROW also dips into Moose Willow WMA, and further coordination with our agency will be needed regarding this crossing.

In addition to the sensitive resources, there are four sites in Aitkin County along the proposed ROW that have aggregate potential (T52N R25W Section 28, T51N 26W Section 31, T50N 27W Section 26, T50N 27W Section 23). In the event of future mine development, the HVTL would need to be moved at the owner's expense, whereas sand and gravel could be encumbered.



## **Crow Wing County**

This proposed greenfield section runs between two main units of the Cuyuna Recreation Area and crosses other state parcels in between. Further analysis is required to determine the administrator of these parcels and identify any restrictions. There are several parcels that are not within the Cuyuna Recreation area, that are administered by the Division of Parks and Trails (PAT) and are points of recreational access. Please note that the proposed corridor would cross the Cuyuna Lakes State Trail, which is a paved recreational trail. A DNR Special Use Permit may be required for activities that occur on DNR administered public water access sites if the activity is not normally allowed, is likely to cause significant environmental effects, or is likely to disrupt or pre-empt normal use of the facility.

Additionally, this area has abundant cultural resources, and will require further coordination with the State Historical Preservation Office, and PAT Historical Society staff. The area on north end of this greenfield section is one of the areas that a potential aggregate inclusion was identified (T46N R29W Sections 7 & 8). The forthcoming substation at this location will require further analysis by the Division of Lands and Minerals. There are several threatened, endangered, and species of special concern through this corridor and proposed ROW. Please refer to the June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review Letter for next steps on avoidance, surveys, or permitting as it applies. In addition to the direction

provided in the Natural Heritage Review Letter, additional survey work and/or avoidance measures could be required on lands administered by PAT.

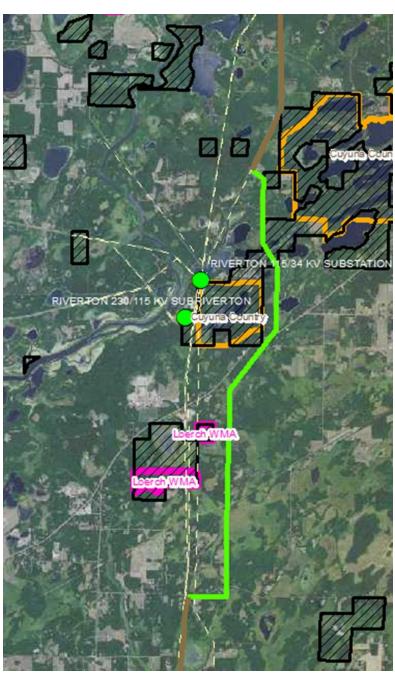
There are also natural resource concerns associated with this greenfield section (below). The proposer has indicated that rather than expanding existing substations in the Riverton area as originally discussed, a new substation will be built on previously county tax forfeit land that the proposer recently acquired, located at the north end of this proposed greenfield route. The new substation is planned to be built on currently intact forest, which is a significant impact from a natural resource perspective, especially compounded with the adjacent proposal to install brand-new ROW.

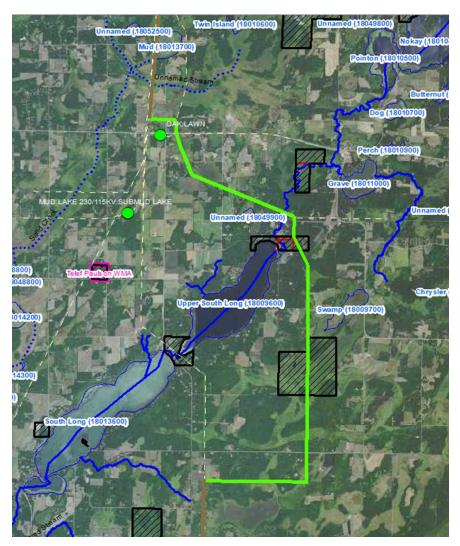
The proposed greenfield corridor in this area is concentrated in the largest expanses of public waters and wetlands through this area and doesn't appear to be the minimal impact solution as described in Minnesota Rule 6115.0210 subp. 5.

Additionally, the proposed line crosses one of the widest parts of Hay Lake, a public water, where it appears there could be other alternatives with less encroachment and change/damage to the ecology of the public water. Work in riparian areas or within the water could impact fish spawning and feeding habitat as well as overhead cover and coarse woody habitat availability. Land-based impacts could include erosion and nutrient runoff. The information above, as well as the inclusion of work exclusion dates to allow for fish migration and spawning, will need to be considered during this project.

Installing newly disturbed and maintained corridors, rather than following existing infrastructure will fragment the landscape and habitat; and be another corridor with subsequent habitat loss and degradation. Using more of the existing transmission line ROW would be preferable and reduce impacts in this area.

The proposed greenfield section located north and east of Upper South Long Lake and wrapping around to the south, crosses large blocks of intact wetlands. It is unclear to the DNR what other alternatives were considered as the proposal for this new greenfield section





was being developed. This section also crosses snowmobile trails in three new locations. Further coordination with our agency will be needed for these crossings.

In addition to these sensitive resources, there are ferrous resources along the proposed ROW in Crow Wing County and will require further coordination with the Division of Lands and Minerals.

## **Morrison County**

We have few natural resource concerns for Morrison County other than what is identified within the attached June 30, 2023 Natural Heritage Review letter. We recommend choosing a route that minimizes river crossings and tree removal to the greatest degree possible since this is an area dominated by agriculture. Any remaining habitat is significant to local wildlife.

It is also worth noting that the HVTL will cross the headwaters for Little Rock Creek (M-078), a designated trout stream. Any removal of trees that provide canopy cover should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

## **Benton County**

The expanded ROW proposed through Morrison and Benton Counties will require 120 additional feet of tree clearing along that 40-mile segment of the proposed route. In Benton County, the proposed route closely follows the Elk River crossing over it as many as six times in less than a quarter of a mile in

one section. Based on a rough estimate, it appears the project would clear nearly three miles, or over 40 acres of trees in shoreland or floodways within Benton County. This seems unnecessarily excessive.

Examples of expanded ROW within shoreland







Fragmenting riparian corridors has a huge impact on non-game species like Red Shouldered Hawks. These rivers and shoreland vegetation are important wildlife corridors, especially in an area dominated by agricultural fields.

Trees canopy is also important for stabilizing river banks, providing wildlife habitat, and keeping water cool.

It is unclear why an existing route to the west could not be used instead. This selected route through Benton County has some of the largest natural resource impacts possible.

## **Sherburne County**

According to the information provided, the majority of the ROW in Sherburne County will be completely shared with an existing corridor and no new ROW expansion will be needed other than a few locations near the Big Oaks Station. There are many sensitive areas along this route including MBS Sites of Biodiversity Significance and DNR Native Plant Communities. We would have great concerns about any ROW expansion in these sensitive features.

In the image below, there is another ROW that continues to the north rather than turning west. By continuing along this route or a similar route through this area, much of the riparian impacts to Benton County could be avoided. We would like to know more about why an alternate route to the east through Benton County was not considered.



The St. Cloud Regional Airport is planning to expand further east towards the proposed transmission line. It is unclear how much buffer or clearance would be needed for approaching planes. We suggest coordinating further with them to avoid any potential conflicts.



## **Next Steps**

The DNR appreciates continued coordination with the proposer prior to the final route permit application submittal to the PUC with the goal to identify solutions to concerns raised in this letter. We look forward to a productive conversation at our next meeting scheduled for July 25, 2023. At this meeting, we hope to see other route options that address some of these larger natural resource concerns. Our desire is to work through these issues together to find the least impactful route options that also work for Minnesota Power and GRE.

Thank you again for your ongoing coordination. Please let us know if you have any questions. Sincerely,

Melissa Collins & Jessica Parson

Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist | Ecological and Water Resources Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Lessa Collins Justica Gorson

CC: Jim Atkinson, Minnesota Power

Dan Schmidt, HDR Inc

Cynthia Warzecha, DNR Energy Planner
Joe Rokala, DNR LAM State Program Administrative Director
Shelly Patten, DNR Northeast Regional Director
Darrell Schindler, DNR R2 Regional Manager
Greg Root, DNR R2 Assistant Regional Manager
Liz Harper, DNR R3 Assistant Regional Manager

# **Northland Reliability Project**





## **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project		
Subject:	Northland Reliability Project DNR Monthly Update Meeting		
Date:	Tuesday, July 25, 2023		
Location:	In-Person (Natural Resources Department (1201 E Highway 2, Grand Rapids, MN 55744) and Online Teams		
Attendees:	Oberek Bahr     James Bedell     Melissa Collins     Jacob Frie     Paul Hansen     Keri Hull     Angela Means     Jessica Parson     Elizabeth Rasmussen     Russell Reisz     Christine Reisz     Joe Rokala     Karen Tamminen     Mary Witte     Cynthia Warzecha	United States Army Corps of Engineers	

# **Discussion**

#### Route Application Status Updates

- Jim Atkinson provided overview of project for meeting attendees. Project is part of the transition away from fossil fuels.
- Application will be submitted August 4<sup>th</sup>. Will take a year or a year and half to get through the PUC process.
- o Jim gave an update on outreach to tribes, agencies, and landowners.
- DNR perspective: items of concern from natural resources, land/minerals. Want to go over concerns in particular areas and guide applicants through concerns
- Review of Specific Area of Concern (using GIS webmap)
- Crow Wing/Upper South Long Lake
  - o AMA concerns

- Parcels 41 at Nokay Lake, 87, 88 were acquired in the 1970s; did not find any restrictions on the DNR parcels.
- Derek Bahr says there should be no concerns from federal funding standpoint, but parcels were acquired to protect northern pike/walleye spawning habitat. Biggest concern is if line is impacting wetland area to the west. Proposed right-of-way (ROW) should not be in this area.
- There is a lot of wetland and not a lot of public use and hard to access.
- Area should be reestablished with native seed. Jim Atkinson confirmed area can be reestablished with native seed. Invasive species management, restoration, and seeding will be standardized in the project's vegetation management plan.
- DNR: To protect wetlands, construction should be timed to avoid impacts, e.g. winter
- Group discussed constraints between Upper/Lower south Long Lake
- No major funding restrictions parcels 89-95
- DNR added that they would prefer winter construction in this area
  - Matting, timing, and other BMPs should be looked at if Winter construction cannot be done.
- Derek Bahr noted that there are recreation trail systems to be aware of within this area.
- Crow Wing/Cuyuna
  - Cuyuna Series Compensation Substation
    - Deed restrictions have not been reviewed; deed that was known to have conservation restrictions was removed from route.
    - Parcel to be acquired for Cuyuna Series Compensation Station is approximately
       420+ acres, footprint of station will be about 15 acres.
    - Substantial development, series compensation station needs to be located approx. midpoint along circuit.
    - Jacob Frie requested background info on existing substation in relation to new substation. Jim Atkinson explained new substation area chosen due to space constraints – river, industrial facility, park, several existing circuits with little to no room for the expansion needed for NRP
      - Christine asked why can't lines be stacked? Jim explained that the main reason is cost and reliability stacking the lines has concerns with maintenance, restoration, height, and would be counter to purpose of project.
    - Area is also of large concern to public
- Crow Wing/Hay Lake (north)
  - Concern about infrastructure that will be constructed in lake. Will there be pedestals, etc. constructed in water?
    - Jim: There will be a few (at least) footings in lake. Drilled monolithic steel pier foundations 8-10 feet in diameter, 1,000 feet apart.
    - DNR indicated that the project should avoid putting structures in lake if possible. Any alternatives?
      - Jim: several alternatives were looked for, but this is one of the areas where
        line needs to move away from existing transmission line largely due to
        residential development, recreation area, federal funding. The centerline may
        be able to go further west closer to recreation area, but unsure about federal
        funding at this point.

- DNR would like the area further west, east of recreation area considered. But Jim said this area would result in displacement of houses if the line was built within the road ROW on the east side of the road.
- DNR suggested going diagonally, spanning the corner of the recreation area.
   Applicants considered this as a potential option, however there are still housing concerns.
- DNR suggested the potential of going slightly into recreation area, using road ROW. DNR will do funding review.
- DNR stated that they will look at the options but they ARE NOT committing to any alternatives that involve moving the centerline into Cuyuna State Park.
- Crow Wing/Hay Lake (south)
  - Concern near Loerch WMA by joining back up with existing line. Was this considered?
    - Dan Schmidt: This was considered, but there were constraints here as well including homes.
    - DNR voiced concern that the route heavily weighs homes over natural resource impacts – many impacts to bogs, moderate to high-WAN Rank areas.
    - Jim: many constraints, but there are some micrositing changes that can be considered.
  - DNR requested access to the homes/structures layer in order to review possible options and see where natural resource areas could potentially be avoided.
  - DNR would like to follow existing line as much as possible, even if the line crosses state land.
  - o DNR will look into deed and funding restrictions within this area on public lands.
- Crow Wing/Birchdale WMA
  - Potential funding restrictions here, parcel 66.
  - Proposed NRP route goes along existing transmission ROW
  - Christine to send parcel numbers to double-check restrictions in this area.
  - DNR does not think that route will change as proposed NRP route goes along existing line in this area.
- Morrison, Benton/Golden Spike Road
  - DNR voiced concerns about crossing Elk River, which would involve tree removal and shoreland disturbance. Melissa Collins asked why NRP chose to go along the river. This is one the only and major natrual resources within this area.
    - Jim noted that we were following existing infrastructure and paralleling existing lines.
  - Project team noted that there are restrictions in areas with center pivot irrigation, residential structures (e.g. farm buildings).
  - o DNR concerns about following river corridor, migratory birds are there not other options?
    - Applicants: Using this area allows proposed route to follow existing transmission line
    - DNR: is it possible to go farther west in Morrison County?
      - Applicants are concerned that breaking off from line to avoid further river impacts here will result in proposed route going below 80% brownfield/utilizing existing ROW.
    - James Bedell, area hydrologist: DNR also noted that the transmission line may experience flooding impacts in this area.
    - Applicants: Micrositing is a possibility in this area, but moving away will result in new impacts to homes, farmers, structures, center pivot irrigation. Following roads in this area is not always best as many people are located along roads. Many natural

- resource impacts, but following existing transmission line still seems to be the best option.
- Applicants note that DNR can propose centerline changes later in alternative process scoping phase.
- DNR requested the crop/irrigation layer to assist in evaluating alternatives. They
  don't want to propose something that is obviously not feasible and that data will help.

#### Aitkin/Moose Willow WMA

- Funding restrictions on two parcels in Moose Willow WMA, which are crossed by the project (parcels 48,49). Pitmann Roberts Funding.
- o Will need USFWS approval, go through environmental assessment for these parcels.
- o There is old growth forest adjacent to the proposed NRP route to the north.
- DNR does not think that route will change as proposed NRP route goes along existing line in this area.

#### Sherburne County

- 99% of route will be along existing corridor, no additional vegetation clearing
- Applicants: Alternatives in this area could result in impacts to agricultural land, new impacts here could force GRE/MP to purchase land if farmers ask for it.

#### • Wildlife, Soil, Wetland, Cultural Surveys

- Applicants are working with consultants to determine when these surveys will be done, including completing desktop wetland delineation surveys.
- DNR noted that Parks and Trails properties have a different, more intensive process to access property. Requires permit. 2 week turnaround to apply for access
- For surveys intended to start in 2023, need to figure this out very soon, as survey window is almost over.
- Dan Schmidt: if surveys are done in 2023, can data be used for next 1-3 years?
  - DNR: This can be discussed during process. Can apply for wildlife permit 6 months 1 year depending on species. Wetland delineations are good for 5 years. NHIS 12 months.
  - Melissa Collins: there is no fixed date for wildlife depends on species being surveyed, for instance, nest surveys will be accurate for less time than mussels.

#### Lands and Minerals Discussion

- Review of lands crossing application, just a preliminary review, things might still pop up
  - Ongoing full review parcel 1-34, will continue on the rest of the parcels
  - Lot of trail crossings, timber crossings, DNR does not see trail crossings as being an issue as long as MP/GRE coordinate with DNR
  - Still working through wildlife crossings
  - Parcels 28, 29, 30 aggregate issues
  - No timber sale contracts
  - There is a state trail crossing near Cuvuna
  - Potential Peat

#### Review Next Steps:

- o Company will file application, PUC will rule if application is complete or not.
- o Once deemed complete, agencies will be given a chance to comment on scope of EA.
- o Proposals for alternative routes can be submitted during EA scoping.

- Then EA will be prepared and during the public comment period of EA, permit conditions and other stipulations can be submitted.
- o Cynthia Warzecha will be the primary POC for DNR after the application is submitted.

#### Action Items

- Applicant will continue to hold monthly project update calls with DNR, calls will be canceled if there are no issues to discuss.
- o Applicant will provide two GIS data layers to DNR for homes/structures and for crops/irrigation.

**Minnesota Department of Transportation** 

# **Northland Reliability Project**





## **Minutes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	FAA and DOT Project Introduction Meeting	
Date:	Thursday, November 03, 2022	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	FAA:	MnDOT:
	•Tracy Schmidt – Program Manager	•Jason Radde
	•Marcus Watson	•Daniel Boerner
		•Arika Johnson
	GRE:	•Kevin Carlson
	•Brian Hunker	•Ryan Juran
		•Kevin Carlson
	HDR:	•Matthew Lebens
	•Dan Schmidt	•Crystal Nickles
	•Meredith Haas	•John Flemming
		•Daniel Boerner

#### Introductions

 Martin Johnson – Manages a corridor that will be impacted for FAA (not on call, but will probably be on future meetings)

#### Questions:

- o Will this be following the existing line?
  - Segment 2, yes. Segment 1 will be new

#### Presentation (Stakeholder Workshop Presentation Slides)

- o Project overview
- o Project need
- Study area
- Segments
- o Schedule

- Routing process
- Design
- Upcoming engagement
- Questions:
  - o How tall are the towers?
    - 140-170ft
  - o How will you handle height constraints when it comes to airports?
    - Kevin Carlson can get in touch with engineers
    - Engineers will be able to look at these constraints
    - Either reroute, or get engineers involved not likely to go underground
  - Dan Boerner was involved with the CapX project
    - This existing line is 6,000 ft from St. Cloud Airport
    - What are the existing heights at line near St. Cloud Airport? follow-up\*
    - Stacy Kotch-Egstad is contact at MnDOT he is going to contact her
  - Do not seem to be any plans at St. Cloud Airport to expand
  - Rylan Juran Wider corridors- are these lines more refined? Can you share with the people on the call?
    - The lines on the map are existing lines
    - Blue line is what will be replaced
    - Can you provide the corridor and existing lines? Rylan + team will provide a height analysis on the airports around. HDR/GRE/MP will follow up
    - Point of contact- Rylan Juran
  - Marcus Watson Airport plans- Airports within federal jurisdiction
    - St. Cloud, Aitkin, Brainerd, Grand Rapids federal jurisdiction
    - MnDOT has layout plans can provide those to Team
    - Some requirements to file notice with FAA for alterations, etc. \*Marcus can provide website with interactive features to see maps, locations etc.
    - 7460 notice filing <a href="https://oeaaa.faa.gov/">https://oeaaa.faa.gov/</a>
    - Point of Contact Marcus Watson

#### Maps Review – north to south

- Grand Rapids Airport
  - Iron Range substation expansion Pink and blue lines are existing lines
  - 5.5 miles from existing line; more than 3 miles, doesn't really affect FAA, but still need to do an airspace case.
  - Less than a 100:1 slope, most likely not required
- Hill City Airport
  - Would be a differentiation on slopes
  - Northern Line very close to end of runway
  - 0.25 miles from end of runway
  - Would not want anything higher or closer
  - Clear zone is 1000 feet out, don't want anything there
  - Southern end is 1 mile from end of runway
  - Process is same for airspace review as it would be for federal airports
- Aitkin Airport

- Existing line is over one mile from end of runway
- Brainerd Airport
  - Riverton Substation
  - Expanding southern substation
  - About 18,000 ft from the airport to proposed southern substation
  - No plans for extensions at Brainerd airport
- Sea Planes
  - MnDOT publishes public use seaplane passes
  - Possible plan for ramp from river to Brainerd Airport
  - One upgraded ramp might be in planning stage Contact Tracy Schmidt
- Haven Airport no comments
- Leaders Clear Lake airport -private- no comments
- Schroeder Airport-private- no comments
- St. Cloud Airport
  - 6,000 ft from, end of runway to blue line (east)
  - 20,000 from end of runway to southeast blue line
  - Rylan Juran contact for information

#### Additional meetings or information?

Send Shape file to group for review/comments

#### Next steps and action items

- Send shapefile to team (HDR, Dan)
- o Provide group with public open house info (HDR)
- Send Dan Boerner heights of existing lines near St. Cloud Airport (GRE)

From: <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

To: Schmidt, Tracy (FAA); Watson, Marcus S (FAA); Rylan.Juran@state.mn.us

Cc: Solis, Joshua; Jim Atkinson (MP); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

Date: Monday, November 7, 2022 11:25:52 PM

Attachments: NRP FAA DOT IntroMtq Notes 11032022.docx

NRP study area confidential.cpg
NRP study area confidential.dbf
NRP study area confidential.spri
NRP study area confidential.sbn
NRP study area confidential.sbn
NRP study area confidential.shp
NRP study area confidential.shp.xml
NRP study area confidential.shx

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Tracy, Marcus and Rylan,

Thanks so much for the very useful meeting last week. We really appreciate you taking the time to learn about the project and to help us gather information so we can develop the best route possible for our project. Attached is a shapefile of the project area and the notes from the meeting. Any information about the restrictions within our study area would be great. We will keep you all informed as the project progresses. Again thanks and have a great week.

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP **D** 763.278.5928 **M** 612.812.2069

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----Original Appointment----

From: Schmidt, Dan

Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 3:16 PM

**To:** Schmidt, Dan; Schmidt, Tracy (FAA); Johnson, Mark R (FAA); Butler, Lindsay (FAA); Watson, Marcus S (FAA); Lebens, Matthew (DOT; Carlson, Kevin (DOT); Rylan.Juran@state.mn.us; Gaug, Ryan (DOT; Haas, Meredith; jbatkinson; Brian Hunker

Cc: Solis, Joshua; Fleming, John (DOT); Nickles, Crystal (DOT); Johnson, Arika (DOT)

**Subject:** Northland Reliability Project Introduction

When: Thursday, November 3, 2022 2:00 PM-3:00 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Teams

Introduction to the Northland Reliability Project. The project team will describe the project and we will be able to view maps of the current project proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_

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From: Juran, Rylan (DOT) <rylan.juran@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Monday, December 5, 2022 1:20 PM **To:** Schmidt, Dan < Dan. Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Dan,

I have my staff working on this. It's a pretty big corridor so we are going back and forth on the best way to present the

I'll check in with them and try to get a better timeline.

Thanks for your patience.

#### Rylan

Aviation Planning Director MnDOT Office of Aeronautics

From: Schmidt, Dan <Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

Sent: Friday, November 18, 2022 1:48 PM

To: Schmidt, Tracy (FAA) <Tracy.Schmidt@faa.gov>; Watson, Marcus S (FAA) <Marcus.S.Watson@faa.gov>; Juran, Rylan

(DOT) < rylan.juran@state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

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#### Rylan,

Afternoon – hope you day is going well. We appreciate your willingness to help us understand the airspace restrictions around facilities that might affect our project. Do you have a timeline when we might get some information? Thanks so much!

Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP **D** 763.278.5928 **M** 612.812.2069

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From: Juran, Rylan (DOT) < rylan.juran@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 2:05 PM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Hello Brian,

I've attached a PDF with a number of maps that show the airspace surrounding airports within the corridor. I was hoping to get you shapefiles, but we don't have a good repository of that data.

If this is helpful please let me know. We can continue to work towards shapefiles if that is needed.

Rylan
Aviation Planning Director
MnDOT Office of Aeronautics

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

**Sent:** Monday, December 19, 2022 11:44 AM **To:** Juran, Rylan (DOT) < rylan.juran@state.mn.us>

**Cc:** Northland Reliability Project <<u>connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u> >; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <<u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u>>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <<u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; Bring, Jennifer

<Jennifer.Bring@hdrinc.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Introduction

Hi Rylan -

I hope that you're doing well. Dan Schmidt is out of the country for a couple weeks, therefore I'm following up with you.

Would you have a status update on the data for the Northland Reliability Project? Or would you need any additional information from Minnesota Power and GRE?

Thank you, Brian

**Brian Hunker**Great River Energy

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **Meeting Minutes**

Date: March 30, 2023 Time: 9am Project: Northland Reliability Project

Subject: MnDOT Meeting Location: WebEx

Attendees		
$\boxtimes$	Tara Carson – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Jeff Swenson – MnDOT Duluth, MN Permitting	
$\boxtimes$	Jeremy Pratt – MnDOT Utility Permitting	
$\boxtimes$	Richard Munsch -MnDOT Baxter, MN Permitting	
$\boxtimes$	Stacy Kotch Egstad – MnDOT Utility Coordinator; Liaison	
$\boxtimes$	Ann Driver – MnDOT Utility Coordinator	
$\boxtimes$	Brian Hunker – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Jim Atkinson – Minnesota Power	
$\boxtimes$	Kyle Larson – Minnesota Power	
$\boxtimes$	Dan Lesher – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Meredith Haas – HDR	

#### 1. Project Overview

Brian presented PowerPoint of the project overview

#### 2. <u>Discussion Topics</u>

- Are you required to do an alternate route?
  - i. The Northland Reliability Project (NRP) is undergoing the alternative process if the route follows 80% of existing transmission then you can propose one route in the Route Permit application
  - ii. For this Project it is advantageous to follow existing transmission infrastructure, to reduce impacts and it fits the need of the Project
  - iii. The Public or others may submit alternate routes for Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) review
  - iv. DOC determines what should be taken from scoping
- The team reviewed the anticipated MnDOT crossing locations. Many of NRP crossings of roads are parallel to existing transmission lines and should not be an issue.

# Initial MNDOT crossing review

- Crossings:
  - US Highways 2, 169, and 10
  - State Highways 200, 6, 210, 18, 27, 25 (3 crossings), 23, and 95
  - C.S.A.H.s
    - o Itasca County 10, 3, 68, 72
    - o Aitkin County 19, 29
    - o Crow Wing County 11, 1, 22, 24, 2, 36
    - o Morrison County 26, 34, 38, 39, 47, 51
    - o Benton County 12, 13, 22, 3, 4
    - o Sherburne County 16, 20, 23, 24, 3, 4, 6, 8
- Scenic Byway
  - The Great River Road (County Highway 3)
- · Construction access temporary and permanent



Northland Reliability Project | 16

- It is anticipated that no NRP infrastructure would be placed in MnDOT right-of-way
- The Great River Road Scenic Byway:
  - i. Any additional accommodations or review necessary?
    - 1. Yes, MnDOT coordination and review is necessary
    - 2. Holly Salgle MnDOT's scenic byway program
- Construction access may be needed from MnDOT
  - i. Temporary or permit access not determined yet
- MNDOT asked to elaborate more on environmental aspects and engagement that is done; elaborate on pre-filing process in order to have an application compete
  - i. NRP developed a wide study area and have met with FAA, DNR, USFWS, Tribes, MnDOT, SHPO, MIAC, OSA, etc.
  - ii. MnDOT does not send downstream permits to OES staff until they are received
  - iii. Its important for OES to know about potential impacts and keep OES informed

- iv. Permitting and OES speak to what is in/on MnDOT ROW and only a few resources outside of MnDOT ROW in certain areas
- Is there anything else that would be helpful to MnDOT from NRP beside the presentation? Shape files?
  - i. Yes. Stacy will get the team contacts of district planners
  - ii. Would like to cross reference our crossings with DOT mappings
    - 1. Controlled access could be a consideration
  - iii. Would be beneficial to have these conversations about crossings before applying in August
- Do any crossings fall into Tribal lands?
  - i. No crossings are on Tribal Reservations, Lands, or Easements
  - ii. MnDOT might need to talk to Tribes around Elk River area
    - 1. They do direct coordination with Tribal Lands
    - 2. Need approval from Tribal Lands
    - 3. Attach approvals we get from Tribal Lands for MnDOT application
  - iii. Cultural resources unit might need to review areas near cultural lands include approvals in permit as well
  - iv. In contact with DNR in Cuyuna area with mines
  - v. Include confirmation with DNR in application to DNR
- Follow up with scenic byway staff and district planning staff at MnDOT
  - i. Stacy will work with Brian to create one meeting
  - ii. Provide where existing line is for this meeting
    - 1. Districts will want a map before the meetings to prepare and review

#### 3. Next steps

- Stacy and Brian to connect on District and Scenic Bypass meeting
  - o Provide Shapefiles before meeting of existing transmission line
- Attach all confirmations from Tribes and cultural lands in application to MnDOT
- Shapefiles to Stacy and team





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## Two main project segments

gment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation

• Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation



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Simi III

5



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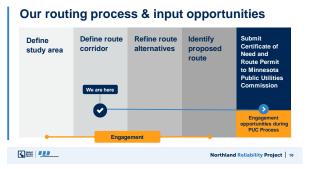
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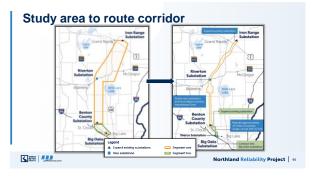
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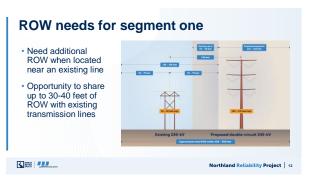
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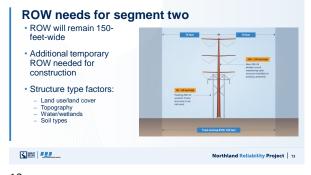


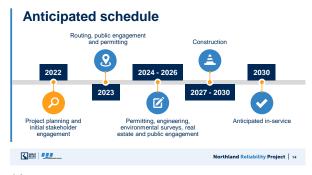
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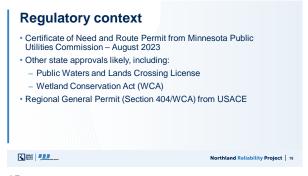


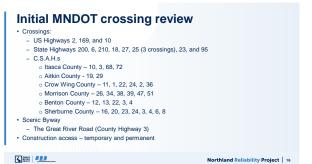
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17 18 From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:55 AM **To:** 'Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT)'

Cc: Bentz, Nick; Schmidt, Dan; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Jim Atkinson (MP); Zach Golkowski

(MP); GRE NRP; Northland Reliability Project

**Subject:** Northland Reliability Project - MnDOT Follow-up Meeting

Attachments: NRP\_FINAL\_20230414\_PrelimROUTE\_SHP.zip; NRP\_MnDOT\_Meeting\_March302023.docx

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Stacy -

As a follow-up to our March 2023 meeting, you requested a shapefile of the preliminary route. This data would be used for a discussion with MnDOT's scenic byway representative and the district planners could cross-reference with MnDOT's mapping. Please note that the preliminary route is a wider area to allow for MP and GRE to work with landowners and engineers on siting the transmission line right-of-way. The anticipated right-of-way will be 150-ft-wide within the preliminary route. This preliminary route will be presented to the public at open houses from May 2 - 4.

Please find the following attached:

- March meeting notes
- Shapefile of the preliminary route

Would you like to have one call that covers both scenic byway and district crossings? Or do you anticipate two separate calls for each topic?

Would your team be able to meet on Wednesday, 4/26, Monday, May 1, or Friday, May 5?

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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From: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Friday, April 28, 2023 3:13 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Schmidt, Dan
Cc: Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP
Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks to all for the files and info.

While I am certainly aware of the specifics of route width vs right-of way, I feel I should share that the request for the shapefiles came from our Scenic Byways Coordinator. Holly wanted to be able to see the current route in direct comparison with MnDOT's Scenic Byways layer on our mapping system in preparation for Monday's meeting.

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Thanks again and I look forward to our meeting on Monday,

#### Stacy Kotch Egstad

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678
St. Paul, MN. 55155
O: 651-366-4635
mndot.gov/





From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 9:15 AM

**To:** dschmidt@hdrinc.com <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us> **Cc:** Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

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I know that you're familiar with the MN permitting process. A quick recap on the provided project features, a transmission line route is the path that a transmission line may follow. Under Minnesota Statute 216E, subd. 8, the route may have a variable width of up to 1.25 miles.

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- Wednesday, May 3 4 6 p.m. at the Pierz Ballroom, 133 Main St. S., Pierz, MN 56364
- Thursday, May 4 10 a.m. noon at the Sauk Rapids Government Center, 250 Summit Ave. N., Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
- Thursday, May 4 4 6 p.m. at the Palmer Township Hall, 4180 105th Ave., Clear Lake, MN 55319

Please let us know of any questions and we look forward to meeting.

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Schmidt, Dan <Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 27, 2023 12:55 PM

To: stacy.kotch@state.mn.us

Cc: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Subject: Northland Reliability Project Route

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Stacy,

Brian Hunker asked me to send you the NRP Route and intended centerline. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks

Appendix M Page 172 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

#### Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP Senior Project Manager

#### **HDR**

1601 Utica Ave S., Suite 600 St Louis Park, MN 55416-3400 D 763.278.5928 M 612.812.2069

#### dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

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# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **Meeting Minutes**

Date: May 1, 2023 Time: 10am Project: Northland Reliability Project

Subject: MnDOT Meeting Location: WebEx

Attendees			
$\boxtimes$	Tara Carson – MnDOT Environmental		
$\boxtimes$	Brian Harheim – MnDOT Environmental		
$\boxtimes$	Jeremy Pratt – MnDOT Utility Permitting		
$\boxtimes$	Richard Munsch -MnDOT Baxter, MN Permitting		
$\boxtimes$	Stacy Kotch Egstad – MnDOT Utility Coordinator; Liaison		
$\boxtimes$	Holly Slagle – MnDOT Scenic Byways Coordinator		
$\boxtimes$	Keith Peterson - MnDOT		
$\boxtimes$	Jeremy Mollner – MnDOT Baxter, MN Permitting		
	Brian Hunker – GRE		
	Zach Golkowski – Minnesota Power		
$\boxtimes$	Dan Schmidt - HDR		

#### 1. Project Overview

· Brian presented PowerPoint of the project overview

#### 2. <u>Discussion Topics</u>

Holly - asked a question about the crossings of the Great River Road - near Grand Rapids and Riverton.

Brian (GRE) responded that we are aware of that and want to discuss further with MnDOT

Holly - asked what the vegetation clearing would be?

Brian (GRE) responded that vegetation would be cleared from the ROW

Tara - will make sure that the appropriate OES staff are involved.

Impact on Great River Road is defined in statute and is a concern for impacts

- Archaeological
- Cultural
- Historic
- Natural
- Recreational
- Scenic intrinsic resources

Stacy - volunteered that she can walk through the MnDOT crossing areas with information from their internal system

- Hwy 2 some contaminated areas (PCA site) nearby, sensitive plant also nearby, but not in the ROW or route. No other issues
- Co Rd 3 Great River Road need to with Carol Zoff
- Hwy 200 PCA site
- Hwy 169 protected plant species DNR species likely
- Hwy 6 no issues
- Co Rd 11 no issues
- Hwy 210 no issues
- Hwy 18 no issues
- Hwy 27 no issues
- Hwy 25 north no issues
- Hwy 23/95 cultural sites along 23 and 95
- Hwy 25 S no issues
- Hwy 25 protected plants to south to Hwy 10
- Hwy 10 species
- Holly Can we bury the line? Zach responded it is not feasible and not likely
- Holly Can we lower the line Brian (GRE) responded lower towers would require more towers and we would need to determine if safety standard can be enforced
- Brian (MnDOT)- How wide is the span length Brian (GRE) it varies but typically 700-1000 feet.
- Brian (MnDOT) Have we done renderings? Brian 9GRE) have not done that yet but are willing to look into it
- Holly stated a visual would be good to see
- Holly may need to do visual impact assessment part of NEPA

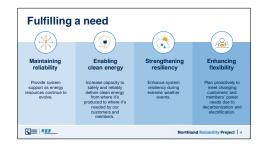
#### 3. Next steps

- Stacy and Brian to connect on District and Scenic Byway meeting
  - o Provide Shapefiles before meeting of existing transmission line
- Attach all confirmations from Tribes and cultural lands in application to MnDOT
- Shapefiles to Stacy and team



# Agenda Introductions Project overview Routing progression Questions/Discussion Northland Reliability Project | 1

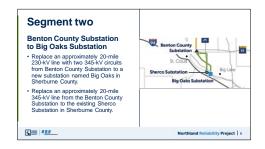














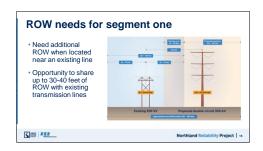


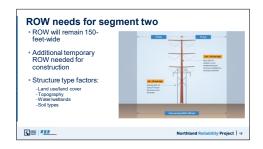


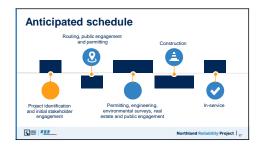














From: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Sent: Monday, May 1, 2023 11:30 AM
 To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Schmidt, Dan
 Cc: Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP
 Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

**Attachments:** 2023\_construction\_program-29433640-v1.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Per our meeting this morning, MnDOT D1 (attached) D3 (below)project pages.

Future construction projects - Central Region District 3 - MnDOT (state.mn.us)

If you find you need more information regarding a certain project, I can contact the applicable District Planner.

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Monday, May 1, 2023 8:09 AM

**To:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>; dschmidt@hdrinc.com <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com> **Cc:** Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <greenrp@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

Hi Stacy -

I've got a quick PowerPoint and the RWMM mapper queued-up.

So we should be ready for a discussion.

Thank you, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) < <a href="mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us">stacy.kotch@state.mn.us</a>>

Sent: Monday, May 1, 2023 7:45 AM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>; <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">Cc: Northland Reliability Project < <a href="mailto:connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com">connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</a>>; <a href="mailto:GRENERGY.com">GRE NRP < <a href="mailto:grenre@GREnergy.com">grenre@GREnergy.com</a>>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Brian,

I'm thinking that these layers can be helpful:

Under Layer list, then under Reference Layers:

- \*Bridges
- \*Tribal Boundaries
- \*Scenic Byways

**Under ROW Layers:** 

As you may know, we have an OES (Office of Environmental Stewardship) layer that we can view internally only. While we can't technically show you where any areas of OES are specifically, there may need to be additional conversations with that group.

A brief explanation of the project and routing process wouldn't hurt.

Thank you, Stacy

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Friday, April 28, 2023 4:03 PM

**To:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) < <a href="mailto:stacy.kotch@state.mn.us">stacy.kotch@state.mn.us</a>; <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">cschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrin

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project Route

Hi Stacy -

Glad that your team is available for review.

I can have the RWMM with the preliminary route loaded for discussion. Is there any other data than the RWMM that you think would be happy for me to present? Would it be helpful to your team if I review the project description and routing process with them on the call?

Thanks, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

**From:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <<u>stacy.kotch@state.mn.us</u>>

Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 3:13 PM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>; <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</a> <a href="mailto:ccm">cc: Northland Reliability Project < <a href="mailto:connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com">cc: Northland Reliability Project < <a href="mailto:connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com">connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</a> >; GRE NRP < <a href="mailto:greenrp@GREnergy.com">greenrp@GREnergy.com</a> >

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<sup>\*</sup>Approx ROW Limits may need to be turned on while looking at crossings if questions about spanning lengths arise.

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**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

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Dan

**Dan Schmidt,** ENV SP Senior Project Manager

### HDR

1601 Utica Ave S., Suite 600 St Louis Park, MN 55416-3400 D 763.278.5928 M 612.812.2069

dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com

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# 2023 District 1 Construction Program



### Carryover Projects

1 I-35, I-535, Hwy 53 (SP 6982-322)

Location: In Duluth

**Description:** Replace bridges and reconstruct the I-35, I-535, Hwy

53 interchange

Date: Fall 2020 to 2024 Cost: \$166 million

**Impact:** Closures, detours

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/twin-portsinterchange

### Hwy 53 (SP 8821-353)

Location: From Duluth to International Falls in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties Description: Sign replacement Date: Sept to Nov 2022, May to

July 2023

Cost: \$1.5 million

**Impact:** Shoulder closures

# 2 Hwy 61 (SP 3805-79)

**Location:** Silver Creek Bridge near Two Harbors in Lake County **Description:** Bridge replacement **Date:** May to Oct 2022, May to

Oct 2023

Cost: \$2 million

Impact: Bypass, lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy61-

<u>bridges</u>

### 3 Hwy 61 (SP 3805-99)

**Location:** Stewart River Bridge near Two Harbors in Lake County **Description:** Bridge construction,

bridge rehabilitation

Date: May to Oct 2022, May to

Oct 2023
Cost: \$3 million

Impact: Bypass, lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy61-

<u>bridges</u>

# 17 Hwy 135 (SP 6912-79)

Location: In Biwabik in St. Louis

County

**Description:** Pavement repairs

Date: June to July Cost: \$100,000

Impact: Lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy135biwab ik

# **4**

### Hwy 210/73 (SP 0915-32)

Location: In Cromwell in Carlton

County

**Description:** Urban reconstruction

Date: May to Oct 2022, May to

June 2023 Cost: \$400,000

**Impact:** Lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy210crom

well

**Total Carryover Projects: 6** 

### **New Projects**

# 5 Hwy 1/169 (SP 6903-17)

**Location:** From near Cty Rd 467 to Hwy 135 in Tower in St. Louis

County

**Description:** Pavement resurface

**Date:** July to Sept **Cost:** \$3.4 million **Impact:** Lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy1-hwy169

# 6 Hwy 2/65 (SP 3104-62)

**Location:** At the intersection of Hwy 2 and Hwy 65 and on Hwy 2 between Hwy 65 and Hwy 200 in

**Itasca County** 

**Description:** Pavement resurface

in 2023, Roundabout construction in 2024

Date: July to Oct 2023, 2024

Cost: \$8.1 million

**Impact:** Detour, lane shifts

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/swanriverrou

<u>ndabout</u>

# 7 Hwy 2/194 (SP 6908-61)

**Location:** Near Saginaw in St.

**Louis County** 

**Description:** Roundabout, pavement resurface **Date:** May to Oct

Cost: \$5.6 million

**Impact:** Detour, bypass, lane

closures Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy-194-hwy-

# 2023 District 1 Construction Program





### Hwy 23 (SP 6910-102)

Location: At US Steel Creek in Duluth in St. Louis County

**Description:** Culvert replacement

Date: July to Sept Cost: \$1.87 million Impact: Detour

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy23-culvert



Website:

### 9 Hwy: 23 (SP 6910-103)

Location: At Gogebic Creek in Duluth in St. Louis County

**Description:** Culvert replacement Date: July to Oct 2023, 2024

Cost: \$1.7 million

**Impact:** Bypass, lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy23-culvert



### 10 Hwy 23 (SP 6910-105)

Location: On Hwy 23 near Gary-New Duluth in St. Louis County

**Description:** Pavement

replacement, culvert work and

**ADA** improvements Date: May to Aug Cost: \$2.3 million **Impact:** Lane closures, temporary signal

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy23



### 11 I-35 (SP 5880-200)

**Location:** On I-35 near Hinckley

in Pine County

**Description:** Median Crossover

Construction Date: Aug to Oct Cost: \$900,000

**Impact:** Lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hinckley-

bridge/

### I-35 (SP 0980-162)

Location: On I-35 from Duluth to

**Description:** Tree Clearing Date: Nov 2023 to March 2024

Cost: \$900,000

**Impact:** Lane closures, shoulder

closures



### (12) I-35 (SP 0980-156)

Location: On I-35 over Cty Rd 61

in Carlton County **Description:** Bridge

rehabilitation

Date: May to Oct 2023, 2024

Cost: \$4.15 million

Impact: Southbound closure, traffic directed to Northbound

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/atkinsonbridge



### 13) Hwy 38 (SP 3108-83)

Location: In Bigfork between Rajala Mill Rd and Cty Rd 14 in

Itasca County

**Description:** Pavement

resurface, ADA improvements

Date: July to Sept Cost: \$2.8 million

Impact: Lane closures, truck

detour Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy38-

bigfork

### 14) Hwy 61 (SP 1605-03)

Location: At the Pigeon River Bridge near Grand Portage in

Cook County **Description:** Bridge rehabilitation Date: April to Oct Cost: \$6.5 million **Impact:** Lane closures,

temporary signal

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy61-pigeon



# 15 Hwy 65 (SP 0111-27)

Location: On Hwy 65 south of McGregor in Aitkin County

**Description:** Bituminous Mill and

Overlay and Culvert Work

Date: July to Oct Cost: \$3.1 million **Impact:** Lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy65resurfacing



### 16 Hwy 73 (SP 6929-21)

Location: On Hwy 73 replace bridge with box culvert 0.5 mi S of Beauty Mountain Rd and reconstruct bridge at Cty Hwy 16

in St. Louis County

**Description:** Culvert and bridge

replacement Date: May to Sept Cost: \$2 million **Impact:** Detour Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy73bridge

# 2023 District 1 Construction Program





### Hwy 135 (SP 6912-80)

Location: In Biwabik in St. Louis

County

**Description:** Landscaping

Date: April to June Cost: \$575,000

**Impact:** Shoulder closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy135biwab

### Districtwide (SP 8821-350)

Location: Districtwide

**Description:** Sign replacement Date: Sept to Oct 2022, 2023

Cost: \$2.2 million

Impact: Lane and shoulder

closures

### Districtwide (SP 8821-323)

Location: Districtwide

**Description:** Culvert replacement

and repairs

Date: July to Oct Cost: \$2 million

Impact: Detour on Hwy 61 and

Hwy 65, lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/culvert-

replacement-repair

**Total New Projects: 16** 

### Local Led Projects



### 18) Hwy 194 (SP 6932-17)

**Location:** At intersection of Hwy 194 and Cty Rd 98 (Canosia Rd) in Saginaw in St. Louis County **Description:** Construct Left Turn

Lanes on Hwy 194 Date: May to Sept Cost: \$700,000

**Impact:** Lane closures on Hwy 194, Detour on Canosia Rd

### Hwy 210 (SP 8821-336)

**Location:** Multiple Locations between Wright and I-35 in

**Carlton County** 

**Description:** Replace 4 box culverts at 4 locations Date: May to Sept

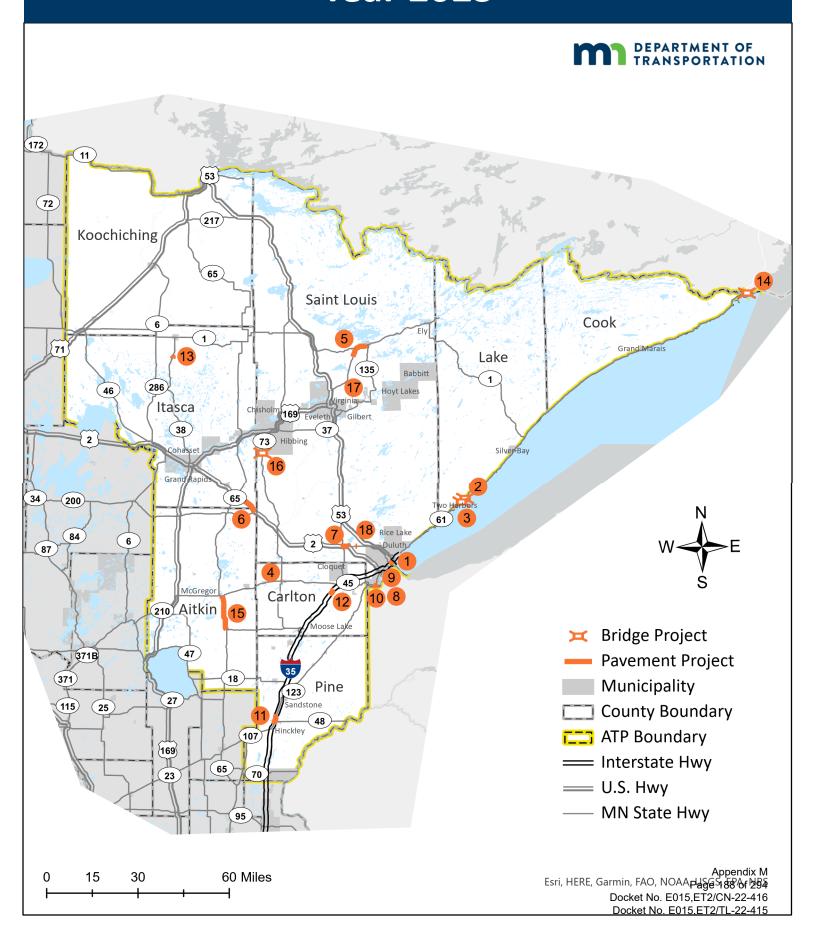
Cost: \$2.5 million

Impact: Detours, lane closures

Website:

mndot.gov/d1/projects/hwy210-<u>boxculvertsreplacements</u>

# MnDOT District 1 ATP Construction Year 2023



From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
<br/>
Hunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 1, 2023 11:34 AM

**To:** Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT); Munsch, Richard (DOT); Swenson, Jeffrey (DOT); Peterson,

Keith (DOT); Slagle, Holly (DOT); Pratt, Jeremy (DOT)

Cc: Driver, Ann (DOT); Carson, Tara (DOT); Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Schmidt, Dan; Zach

Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP)

Subject:RE: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT - MTG 2Attachments:NRP\_MnDOT\_Meeting\_Presentation\_20230501.pdf

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello -

Per the request, please find the PowerPoint attached that was presented today.

Please let us know of any questions.

Thank you for your time, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

----Original Appointment----

From: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:22 PM

To: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT); Munsch, Richard (DOT); Swenson, Jeffrey (DOT); Peterson, Keith (DOT); Slagle, Holly

(DOT); Pratt, Jeremy (DOT); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Cc: Driver, Ann (DOT); Carson, Tara (DOT)

Subject: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT - MTG 2

When: Monday, May 1, 2023 10:00 AM-11:00 AM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

All,

Please review and be prepared to provide feedback on the attached shapefile that shows the route mentioned below. If you need assistance with viewing these files in our RWMM application, contact me.

Please invite your district planner or at least bring their feedback/immediate planning red flags to the meeting.

Holly – there are Scenic Byways within the project area and I would like you to attend if at all possible. You have valuable input that, if left to me, would surely get butchered.

Tara – while you were optional at the first meeting, following through and giving you (or an assigned replacement) an opportunity to provide any initial red flags on your end.

Brian H – please forward to your group.

Contact me with any questions. Thank you all for your participation, Stacv

\_\_\_\_\_

As a follow-up to our March 2023 meeting, you requested a shapefile of the preliminary route. This data would be used for a discussion with MnDOT's scenic byway representative and the district planners could cross-reference with MnDOT's mapping. Please note that the preliminary route is a wider area to allow for MP and GRE to work with landowners and engineers on siting the transmission line right-of-way. The anticipated right-of-way will be 150-ft-wide within the preliminary route. This preliminary route will be presented to the public at open houses from May 2 - 4.

*Please find the following attached:* 

- March meeting notes
- Shapefile of the preliminary route

\_\_\_\_\_

# Microsoft Teams meeting

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From: Fleming, John (He/Him/His) (DOT) <John.Fleming@state.mn.us>

**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 3:40 PM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Hyland, Emily; Schmidt,

Dan; Walter, Jennifer; Northland Reliability Project; Bentz, Nick

**Subject:** RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Brian,

I took a look and I don't see the portion near Hill City being a problem. The conical surface is about 1,479' AMSL at that location so there should be at least 180' of clearance.

The horizontal surface for St. Cloud is at 1,181' AMSL. Depending on the topography there are some area where the clearance is less than 160'. The FAA's airspace analysis is more precise, so that will give you a better idea of where we are at.

John

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 1:29 PM

To: Fleming, John (He/Him/His) (DOT) < John.Fleming@state.mn.us>; mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson

(MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>; Emily Hyland <Emily.Hyland@hdrinc.com>; dschmidt@hdrinc.com <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Walter, Jennifer <jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: RE: Northland Reliability Project - Data

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Hi John and Mark -

I'm following-up to inquire if you were able to review the Northland Reliability Project's preliminary route and intended right-of-way with any potential concerns, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Thanks, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 7:19 AM

To: john.fleming@state.mn.us; mark.r.johnson@faa.gov

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <<u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; James B. Atkinson (Jim) - (<u>jbatkinson@mnpower.com</u>) <<u>jbatkinson@mnpower.com</u>>; Hyland, Emily <<u>emily.hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; Schmidt, Dan <<u>dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</u>>; Walter, Jennifer <<u>jennifer.walter@hdrinc.com</u>>; Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Bentz, Nicholas <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>

Subject: Northland Reliability Project - Data

Hi Mark and John -

Thank you very much for attending the Northland Reliability Project's open house. It was great to meet you and share information about the project. As a follow-up from our discussions, please find attached are shapefiles of the preliminary route, intended right-of-way, and intended centerline. This information was provided to Capital Airspace Group who is assisting us with review.

We are interested in learning more about any potential concerns with the preliminary route and intended right-of-way, such as MnDOT's Zone A, B, and C?

Please let us know of any questions or if you need additional data.

Thanks, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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- GRE/MN POWER Introductions (due to the number of MnDOT OES attendees, MnDOT introductions will be done on a question/answer basis)
- Brief description of project and progression
- Brief description of environmental work done to-date
- Questions from Applicants on attached table summary and memo
- Question and answer exchange MnDOT staff to save questions for this time to be the most productive with the time allotted

Please see the attached OES Summary Table of Comments and Contaminated Materials Memo.

NOTE: MnDOT comments and recommendations are subject to change based on any future design/routing changes that occur during the MN PUC scoping and environmental review process.

	Great River Energy - Northland Reliability Project Summary of OES Comments and Recommendations
Resource	Comments / Revisions
Noise	No comments at this time.
Soil Erosion and Sediment Control	Given the size of the Project, we assume the Applicant will be required to obtain coverage under the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Construction Stormwater General Permit (MNR100001). If a portion of the final alignment is located within MnDOT ROW, we request that the Applicant submit a copy of its Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)/ erosion and sediment control details to MnDOT OES prior to filing its Notice of Intent for coverage under MPCA's MNR100001. In addition, MnDOT reserves the right to conduct inspections of the project for portions that are within MnDOT ROW during and after construction.
	Erosion and sediment control materials utilized within MnDOT's ROW must comply with MnDOT specifications (e.g., no plastic netting in erosion control blanket). Please refer to: https://dot.state.mn.us/pre-letting/spec/
	We recommend utility poles be placed outside of delineated wetlands and waterbodies, where feasible and sediment and erosion controls be installed around wetland/waterbody features during construction activities, consistent with MPCA's Construction Stormwater General Permit (MNR100001).
Wetlands and Water Resources	Any ground disturbance (fill, excavation, direct or indirect drainage) of regulated aquatic resources must comply with all applicable federal Clean Water Act Section 404 and Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) requirements. If ground-disturbing activities are proposed within MnDOT ROW, MnDOT ROW, MnDOT ROW, MnDOT ROW, are areas of proposed disturbance. The delineation would require approval by MnDOT DES, as the Local Government Unit (LGU) responsible for administering the WCA within MnDOT ROW. The project must restore any temoprary impacts and avoid, minimize, and mitigate any permanent impacts to delineated aquatic resources to the extent required by state and federal law.
Wildlife	The proposed project overlaps with several state threatened and endangered species occurrences. Coordination with DNR will be needed. Consulation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Service is recommended with respect to federally-listed threatened and endangered species and eagles.
	The Applicant should consult with the USFWS with respect to listed species which may occur within the project area, and limit ground disturbances to the extent practical in areas of semi-natural or natural vegetation.
Vegetation Management	State-listed threatened and endangered species may be located along portions of the route along MnDOT ROW. We recommend the Applicant consult with the MDNR to identify recorded locations and conduct species-specific surveys prior to construction to confirm locations prior to identifying pole placement and temporary workspaces. MnDOT requests copies of all biological field survey data/reports within its ROW be submitted to MnDOT.
	Require Applicant to develop a Vegetation Management/Pesticide/Revegetation Plan and submit for MnDOT review/approval. Any proposed pesticides and application rates should be submitted to MnDOT for approval (NOTE: Use of herbicides or similar chemistries may be limited to spot treatments via hand tools only [i.e., no equipment mounted broadcast applications]).
Pesticides	* Herbicide used on MnDOT ROW must be labeled for use on rights-of-way.  * Pesticide applicators must be state- certified in Categories A and J (see: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/pesticide-applicator-license-types)  * Herbicide records for work on MnDOT's ROW must be provided to the local MnDOT District Office (Districts 1 and 3)  * MnDOT reserves the right to conduct post-construction inspections to verify compliance with plans/permit conditions.
Invasive Species	If any part of the Project occurs on MnDOT's ROW, the Applicant's Invasive Species Prevention Plan must be submitted to the OES-Roadside Vegetation Management Unit for review and approval.

Prior to construction, the Applicant should conduct a field survey for noxious weeds in all project workspaces within MnDOT ROW. If any state prohibited or county designated noxious weeds (https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/minnesota-noxious-weed-list) are identified within installation limits on MnDOT's ROW, the contractor must clean equipment before leaving and/or entering If transportation of soil or plant parts from the site is necessany, a transportation permit will be required. Questions regarding noxious weed law or noxious weed transportation permits can be directed to Standard language for Unanticipated Discoveries should be used. MnDOT Cultural Resources staff should be notified in the event of an unanticipated find on MnDOT property and contact information for these staff must be included in the UDP. MNDOT ROW to prevent the spread the site. All efforts must be made to prevent transportation of propagative parts to new areas. Movement of propagative parts of these plants is prohibited by MnDOT reserves the right to conduct post-construction inspection to verify compliance with plans/permit conditions. the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at emilie.justen@state.mn.us. Minnesota Statutes, Section 18.82. Archaeological and Historical **Noxious Weeds** 

Resources

	Great River Energy - Northland Reliability Project Summary of OES Comments and Recommendations
Resource	Comments / Revisions
Avian Protection	Minimize tree clearing/trimming within MnDOT ROW to extent possible. Tree clearing may be restricted to winter months (November 15 - March 31) on MnDOT ROW (tree clearing restrictions will typcially be included in MnDOT's permit). If construction activities occur within the nesting season for migratory birds, conduct pre-construction nest surveys. If active nests are discovered, implement a Migratory Bird Plan to avoid and minimize impacts.
	Several bald eagle nests are documented in the vicinity of the project. Additional surveys are encouraged and coordination with the USFWS may be required. Construction activities may be restricted within a certain radius if the nest is active.
Restoration	If ground disturbance occurs on MnDOT's ROW, the area must be restored to a similar vegetation cover, except when that vegetation will endanger safe operation or maintenance of the utility/facility. Seeding should match existing surrounding vegetation, and native seed must have a yellow tag through the Source Identified Native Seed Program. Any seed that is to be planted on MnDOT's ROW must be a mix approved in MnDOT's seeding manual: https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/erosion/pdf/seedingmanual.pdf.
	MnDOT reserves the right to conduct its own post-construction inspection on MnDOT ROW to verify restoration status prior to the permittee filing their Notification of Restoration Completion with the Commission.
Pollution and Hazardous Wastes	Of the 17 MnDOT crossings, 4 crossings should have further review for Environmental Due Dilligence. See attached Memo (Attachment C) for details. If hazardous wastes are generated, disposal must be at a MnDOT approved waste contractor (see: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/regulatedmaterials/wastemgmt.html)
Scenic Byways	The project has two crossings of the Great River Road Scenic Byway (Co. Hwy 3 in Itasca County and Co. Hwy 11 in Crow Wing County). Based on a previous meeting with GRE, OES staff has expressed concerns with visual impacts of these crossings and has recommded burial of the line in these areas.
	The Aviation group has been in contact with GRE regarding the project and is currently waiting for the FAA to conduct more airspace analysis. The following comments have been previously provided to GRE:
Aviation	"I took a look and I don't see the portion near Hill Gty being a problem. The conical surface is about 1,479' AMSL at that location so there should be at least 180' of clearance. The horizontal surface for St. Cloud is at 1,181' AMSL. Depending on the topography there are some areas where the clearance is less than 160'. The FAA's airspace analysis is more precise, so that will give you a better idea of where we are at."
Rail	Bassed on our review, it appears three of the crossings have rail facilities next to MnDOT roads (US Hwy 2 in Itasca County and two crossings of US Hwy 10 in Sherburne County). Any crossing of the trunk highway and the rail line will require coordination and permitting with the affected railroad (BNSF).
Regulated Materials	No concerns. No work needed.
Environmental Testing	Looks like none needed at this time
Special Conditions / Other?	Minimize tree removal and ground disturbance within MnDOT ROW to extent possible. If any portions of the route will be colocated within MnDOT ROW, recommend pole placement be decided in consultation with MnDOT to minimize aesthetic and safety impacts.



### **Contaminated Materials Memo**

**Date:** 06/23/23

### **Northland HVTL CMMT Review**

The Contaminated Materials Management Team (CMMT) reviewed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) databases to check for known contaminated sites in the project area (MnDOT ROW crossings). The databases searched included: leaking underground storage tank facilities, landfills, salvage yards, voluntary investigation and cleanup (VIC) sites, Superfund sites and dump sites. A review of these MPCA files is a component of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA). A complete Phase I ESA includes at least two other components: research on historic land use, and site reconnaissance. It should be noted that the MPCA database files are continually being updated. Although this information is the most up-to-date available, some of the information may be incomplete or inaccurate. There is also a possibility that undiscovered contaminated and/or regulated materials exist in the project area.

Based on the database review, multiple landfill/dump sites, a superfund site, a VIC site, and a MDA voluntary investigation site are located within approximately 500 feet of the project area. VIC sites are sites with known or potential releases of non-petroleum contamination.

Regarding work completed within MnDOT ROW, the Permittee is required to manage contaminated materials in accordance with applicable federal/state and local regulations and/or guidance documents. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to identify the potential to encounter contaminated materials (soil/groundwater/vapor) within or adjacent to the proposed work area. Note - regulatory database files are continually being updated and it is possible that undiscovered contaminated and/or regulated materials exist in the permit area.

### Search for contaminated properties using the regulatory databases below:

- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) What's in My Neighborhood: https://mpca.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9d45793c75644e05bac197525f633f87
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) What's in My Neighborhood:
   <a href="https://mnag.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=85bade4ea512411aa32a80079246255f">https://mnag.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=85bade4ea512411aa32a80079246255f</a>

It is recommended that the Permittee review the MPCA guidance document 5-01 Managing petroleum-contaminated soil at public works projects <a href="https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/c-prp5-01.pdf">https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/c-prp5-01.pdf</a>

If MDA sites are identified on or adjacent to the proposed work area it is recommended that the Permittee review the MDA website: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/spills-cleanup

### **Contamination Risks:**

The permittee must be prepared to <u>manage all contamination</u> in accordance with MPCA requirements and is encouraged to also review the MPCA files for:

- Crossing Location : MN 200
  - o Hill City Dump II SA0007002
  - o https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/wimn/site/187958
- Crossing Location: MN 210, Crow Wing County
  - o Potlatch Deltic Monofill/Crow Wing SW 533
  - o <a href="https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/wimn/site/40344">https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/wimn/site/40344</a>
- Crossing Location: US Hwy 10, Becker
  - o BNSF Becker MND981097090
  - o https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/wimn/site/198428
- Crossing Location: MN 25/US 10
  - U of M Former Potato Warehouse PB3392 https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/wimn/site/188597

### If Contamination is Encountered:

If contaminated materials are encountered within the area, the Permittee or their consultant will immediately notify MnDOT's Environmental Investigation Unit (EIU) at <a href="EnvironmentalInvestigationPermits.DOT@state.mn.us">EnvironmentalInvestigationPermits.DOT@state.mn.us</a> and report the contamination to the MN Duty Officer. The Permittee or their consultant will provide a summary of what and where contamination was encountered, along with proposed actions for management of contaminated materials. Actions completed with management of contaminated materials will be provided to MnDOT EIU including: figures, analytical reports, field observations, disposal or reuse locations, and any other documentation.

- MN Duty Officer information: <a href="https://dehs.umn.edu/sites/dehs.umn.edu/files/duty\_officer\_poster.pdf">https://dehs.umn.edu/sites/dehs.umn.edu/files/duty\_officer\_poster.pdf</a>
  - o 651-649-5451, 1-800-422-0798

If Regulated Materials (asbestos, lead paint, treated wood, debris, etc.) are encountered contact the Regulated Materials Unit <a href="https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/regulatedmaterials/contacts.html">https://www.dot.state.mn.us/environment/regulatedmaterials/contacts.html</a>.

# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **Meeting Notes**

Subject: MnDOT Meeting Location: WebEx

Attendees		
$\boxtimes$	Tara Carson – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Luke Charpentier – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Ericca Erhard – MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Stacy Kotch Egstad – MNDOT Utility Coordinator, Liaison	
$\boxtimes$	Lisa Elliott – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Paul Hartzheim – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Marni Karnowski – MnDOT Environmental	
$\boxtimes$	Andrew Kurth – MnDOT Archeology	
$\boxtimes$	Christina Markeson – MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Jeffery Neisse – MnDOT Regulated Material Management	
$\boxtimes$	Jennifer Read – MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Holly Slagle – MnDOT Scenic Byways Coordinator	
$\boxtimes$	Christopher Smith – MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Carol Zoff – MnDOT Landscape Architecture	
$\boxtimes$	Brian Hunker – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Dan Lesher – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Jim Atkinson – Minnesota Power	
$\boxtimes$	Jennifer Walter – HDR	
$\boxtimes$	Rebecca Hawkins – HDR	

### 1. **GRE/MN POWER Introductions**

- Applicant introductions made
- Due to the number of MnDOT OES attendees, MnDOT introductions were made on a question/answer basis

### 2. Description of project and progression

- o GRE (Brian Hunker) presented a PowerPoint overview of the Project
- Note that previous versions of the Project overview referenced Cassie's Crossing which is now called the Big Oaks Substation

- Project can be considered as two Segments
  - Segment 1: Iron Range Substation to Cuyuna Series Compensation Station to Benton Count Substation
  - Segment 2: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation and Sherco Substation
- Co-location of the NRP ROW with existing transmission ROW will reduce need for new ROW clearing by 30-40ft and reduce the need for access routes
- A combined Certificate of Need and Route Permit application is under preparation and review and is expected to be submitted to the PUC in August 2023
- Stakeholder workshops were held in Fall 2022
- Public meetings were held in January and May 2023
- o The three route revisions from the Preliminary to Proposed Route were reviewed and made
- MNDOT Permitting Team provided early concerns on the 12 MNDOT highway crossings, including areas of potential contamination, state-listed plants, and cultural concerns were reviewed.
- The anticipated schedule, project website, and other connection paths (email, hotline) were presented
- Dan Lesher (GRE) added that span lengths for MNDOT highway crossings are approximately 800-1,000 feet and matches existing H-frames and noted no permanent structures are planned to be placed in MNDOT rights-of-way. Crossing permits would be obtained for all spans per the usual process.

### 3. Question and answer exchange

Paul Hartzheim - Can you confirm that all the crossings of MNDOT highways will be co-located?

 GRE (Brian Hunker): all crossings are co-located with 1 or 2 existing transmission lines, some in Segment 2 specifically will be a replacement of existing transmission

Stacy Kotch Egstad - Can you provide an estimate for the spans for crossing scenic byways?

GRE (Brian) provided an estimate of the span lengths at the Great River Road and the location of existing transmission structures are close to MNDOT ROW.

Carol Zoff (works on Great River Road [GRR]) - Can you provide information on long-term vegetation management?

• GRE (Brian)/MP (Jim Atkinson): The ROW will initially be cleared to full width of ROW for tall vegetation and woody debris. Follow-up tall vegetation and woody debris will be expected to be removed on a 5-7-year rotation. Subsequent clearing will allow more persistence of vegetation along edges of the ROW.

Carol Zoff - Is there more project specific information about your vegetation management, specifically as it relates to pesticide use?

 MP (Jim) noted that vegetation management will be developed specifically for this project.

Luke Charpentier - Have you had any outreach to local citizen groups about the work along the scenic byway (specifically Great River Road)?

 GRE (Brian): Yes, we have had some feedback from citizen groups during public meetings, notably from ATV use groups who want to make sure trails are accessible.  MP (Jim): Most of the comments from the public related to aesthetics are related to not wanting to create new corridors, but nothing specific to the Great River Road.

Christopher Smith - comments: 1) the list of highway crossings listing "No Issues" may have some USFWS concerns, also 2) focus tends to be on state-listed species but there are federally listed species that may need to be considered. He will be looking at the Application to make sure the state (DNR) and federal (USFWS) due diligence piece has been thoroughly addressed. There are some current concerns related to bats and future listing concerns. Comments from his group are likely to be on the long-term vegetation management especially as it relates to herbicide broadcast spraying and tree removal.

Christopher Smith - Would federal funding trigger an ESA Section 7 consultation or would wetland permitting trigger an ESA Section 7 consultation?

• GRE (Brian): We do anticipate a regional general permit for the wetland impacts so we are coordinating with the USACE.

Michelle Waters (Contaminated Sites) - We are finishing our in-depth review based on what Paul Hartzheim sent so slide 14 is likely to have some additions. We did not want the group here to be surprised by additional comments.

Paul Hartzheim - I did hear a comment that no poles are planned in MNDOT ROW. Can you provide a general description of how access will occur in those nearby workspaces? Will there actually be disturbance in the MNDOT ROWs to access work areas?

- MP (Jim): Yes, temporary access off of roads will usually include matting.
- GRE (Dan): An access plan will be developed further along in the project, so those details will be available. The benefits of following the existing line are leveraging the existing O&M access and dirt work will be focused on foundation locations.

### 4. General Comments

- GRE (Dan Lesher): We appreciate the opportunity to have these early discussions with the agencies and know we have a long way to go.
- DOT (Stacy Kotch Egstad): Comments from OES have been provided, understand those may be included in the Application. The Application to the PUC will be provided to the DOT team once that is filed.

Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **MNDOT - Project Update**

June 29, 2023

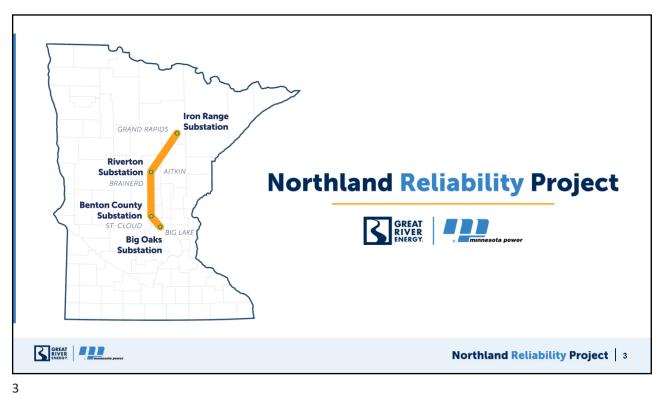
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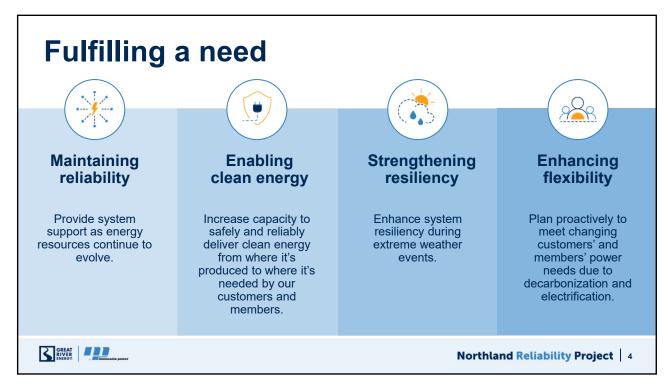
# **Agenda**

- Introductions
- Project overview
- Routing progression
- Schedule
- Questions



Northland Reliability Project 2





# **MISO-approved** project: part of a regional plan



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Northland Reliability Project 5

# Two main project segments

- Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton **County Substation**
- Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation



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### Iron Range Grand Rapids Segment one Iron Range Substation to **Cuyuna Comp Station to Benton County Substation** McGregor Riverton New double-circuit 345-kV Substation transmission line Mille Lacs Approximately 140 miles · Opportunities to route near existing transmission lines Connect into new Cuyuna Series 169 **Compensation Station** Benton County

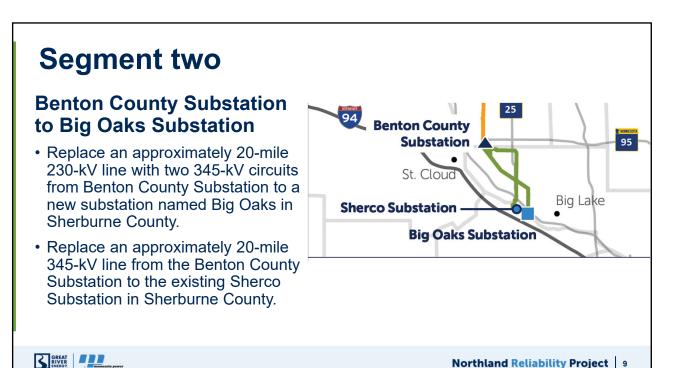
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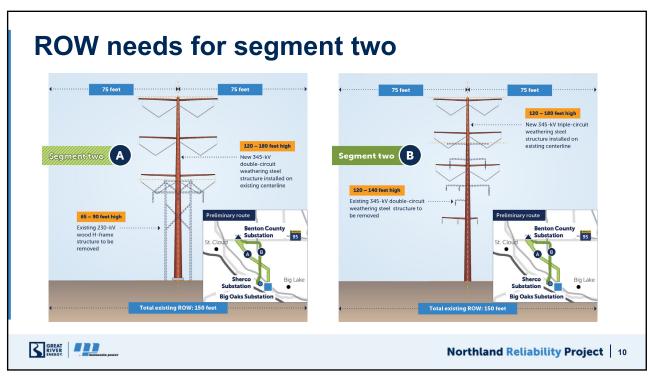
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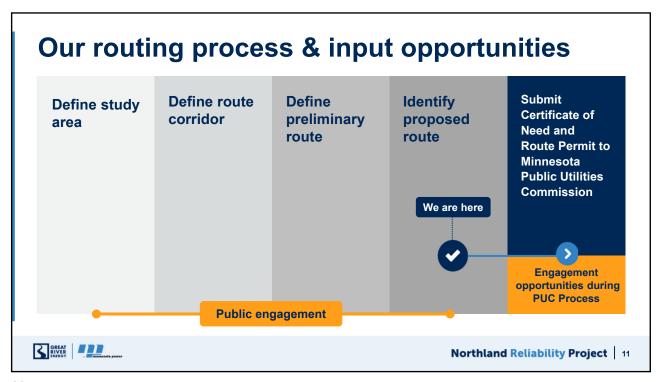
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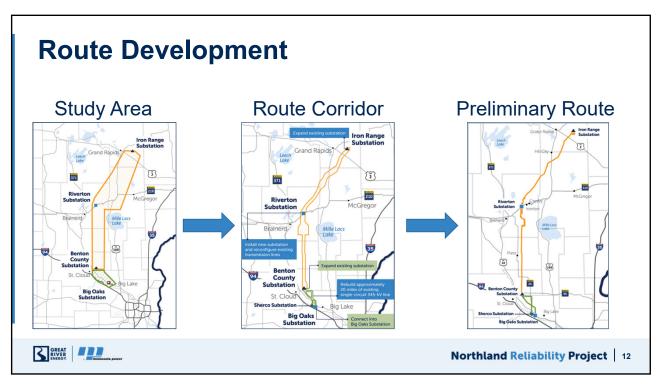
GREAT RIVER ENERGY

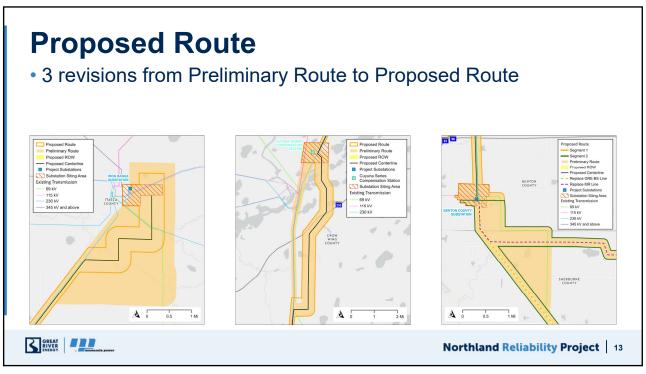
# Need additional ROW when located near an existing line Opportunity to share up to 30-40 feet of ROW with existing transmission lines Northland Reliability Project | 8

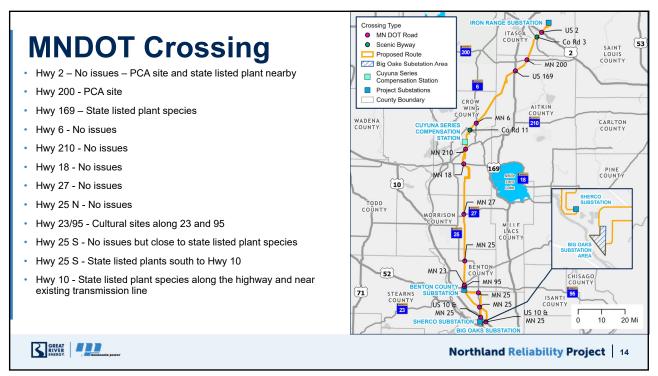




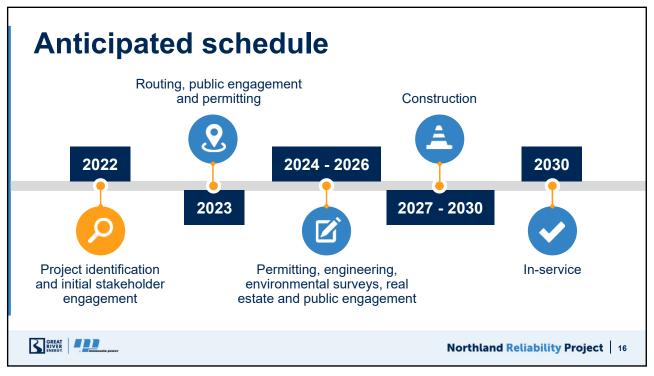


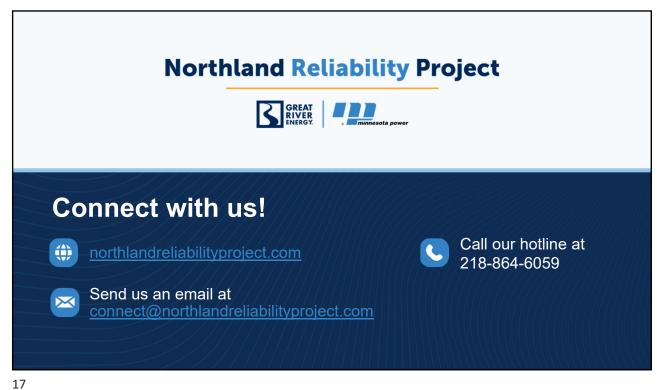














### Northland Reliability Project <northlandreliabilityproject@gmail.com>

### RE: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT OES REVIEW MEETING

1 message

Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
<br/>bhunker@grenergy.com>

Fri, Jul 7, 2023 at 10:59 AM

To: "Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT)" <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Cc: "Lesher, Dan GRE-MG" <dlesher@grenergy.com>, "Zach Golkowski (MP)" <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>, "Jim Atkinson (MP)" <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>, "Ralston Hawkins, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Ralston-Hawkins@hdrinc.com>, Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>, GRE NRP <greenrp@grenergy.com>

Hi Stacy -

Thank you for the follow-up and organizing the meeting. We really appreciated the opportunity to present to OES staff and discuss the project.

Please find attached for review and providing to OES staff:

- Meeting notes from June 29<sup>th</sup>
- · Copy of the PowerPoint
- Frazee to Erie Project Vegetation Management Plan

Also, please find linked is a recently filed Vegetation Management Plan for the Frazee to Erie Project. Please note that the Frazee Project is different project area with different land uses and therefore had different management techniques, seed mixes, etc. However, it'll provide MnDOT's team with a representation of content.

Link to PUC Docket for the Frazee to Erie VMP - https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/edockets/searchDocuments.do?method=showPoup&documentId={4083BA88-0000-C034-A637-23733D272CA4}&documentTitle=20236-196547-02 and https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/edockets/searchDocuments.do?method=showPoup&documentId={5083BA88-0000-C820-92A3-6C79A967D541}&documentTitle=20236-196547-03

Please let us know of any questions.

Thanks, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 2:17 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/> <br/> Shunker@GREnergy.com>

Appendix M Page 210 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416

Atkinson (MP) < JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>

Subject: RE: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT OES REVIEW MEETING

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim

Hi Brian,

Thank you all again for the meeting yesterday. I think it truly helped out the OES staff here and hopefully helped you out as well.

Could I please get a copy of the presentation? I know it may not be that different from the first but I'm getting requests.

Also, a friendly reminder on sending the sample VMP that was requested by Carol Zoff from Scenic Byways.

Thanks much and have a safe holiday weekend,

-Stacy

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
<br/>
bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2023 1:26 PM

To: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim

Atkinson (MP) < JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>

Subject: RE: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT OES REVIEW MEETING

### This message may be from an external email source.

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Hi Stacy -

Thank you for providing the meeting agenda and comment table.

We'll be prepared to show a PowerPoint and the MnDOT ROW mapper for discussion purposes.

Thank you, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

Appendix M Page 211 of 294

Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

----Original Appointment-----

From: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT) <stacy.kotch@state.mn.us>

Sent: Thursday, May 25, 2023 1:07 PM

To: Kotch Egstad, Stacy (DOT); Slagle, Holly (DOT); Carson, Tara (DOT); Hartzheim, Paul (DOT); Charpentier, Luke (DOT); Olson, Jeffrey (DOT); Smith, Christopher E (He/Him/His) (DOT); Brown, Elizabeth A (DOT); Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; dschmidt@hdrinc.com; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); #DOT\_OESMGRS Cc: Markeson, Christina (DOT); Wasko, Peter (DOT); Haun Schuring, Katherine (DOT); Waters, Michelle (DOT); Berger, John (DOT); Karnowski, Marni (DOT); Graeve, Kenneth M (DOT); Read, Jennifer (DOT); Erhard, Ericca (DOT); Zoff, Carol (She/Her/Hers) (DOT); Bartelt, Nicole (DOT); Walter, Jennifer; Neisse, Jeffrey (DOT); Kurth, Andrew (DOT)

Subject: NORTHLAND RELIABILITY PROJECT OES REVIEW MEETING

When: Thursday, June 29, 2023 1:00 PM-2:00 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Importance: High

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Please see the newly attached agenda and OES review summary table/memo in preparation for tomorrow's meeting.

Hello All,

Please hold this time slot for a meeting with the Northland Reliability Project team to review and discuss the project and OES staff concerns.

Intentions are to provide OES staff with SPECIFIC review material **well** before this meeting in order to make this time with the Applicant as productive as possible.

Attached: Meeting notes from our May 1st, 2023 meeting

**Itinerary -ATTACHED** 

Shapefiles

Crossing review maps (internal) - SENT

The rules for the environmental review and permitting of transmission lines are found at Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is responsible for permitting transmission lines capable of operating at 100 kilovolts or more - Minnesota Statute 216E

Apologies for the time change to those who were counting on the 8:30am time slot.

Appendix M Page 212 of 294 Please forward as needed.

Thank you very much for your efforts in this early review process,

### Stacy Kotch Egstad

Utility Routing & Siting Coordinator | Office of Land Management

### **Minnesota Department of Transportation**

395 John Ireland Blvd Mailstop 678

St. Paul, MN. 55155

O: 651-366-4635

mndot.gov/





# Microsoft Teams meeting

### Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

Click here to join the meeting

Meeting ID: 299 827 315 243

Passcode: DWQnMB

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mn@m.webex.com

Video Conference ID: 111 609 299 7

Alternate VTC instructions

### Or call in (audio only)

+1 651-395-7448,,149665441# United States, St. Paul

Phone Conference ID: 149 665 441#

Find a local number | Reset PIN

Appendix M Page 213 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416



### Learn More | Meeting options

\_\_\_\_\_

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### 3 attachments



NRP\_MnDOT\_Meeting\_June292023.docx 510K



Frazee\_Erie\_VMP\_20236-196547-02.pdf 8983K



NRP\_MnDOT\_Meeting\_Presentation\_20230629.pdf 2513K

# **Northland Reliability Project**





# **Meeting Minutes**

**Date**: July 14, 2023 **Time**: 9am **Project**: Northland Reliability Project

Subject: FAA and MnDOT Aeronautics Update Meeting Location: WebEx

Attendees		
$\boxtimes$	Brian Hunker – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Dan Lesher – GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Tyler Myers - GRE	
$\boxtimes$	Zach Golkowski - MP	
$\boxtimes$	John Fleming - MnDOT	
$\boxtimes$	Mark Johnson - FAA	
$\boxtimes$	Pam McWharter - HDR	

### 1. GRE/MN POWER Introductions

- Applicant introductions made
- o Update on the St. Cloud Regional Airport Authority meeting held 7/13/2023

### 2. <u>Description of Project and Progression</u>

- o GRE (Brian) presented a PowerPoint overview of the Project
- Project can be considered as two Segments
  - Segment 1: 140 miles long. Iron Range Substation to Cuyuna Series Compensation Station to Benton Count Substation. Existing transmission will be re-configured.
  - Segment 2: Replace about 20 miles of 230 kV and about 20 miles of 345kV. Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation and Sherco Substation
- Stakeholder workshops were held in Fall 2022
- Public meetings were held in January and May 2023
- There were three major route revisions from the Preliminary to Proposed Route were made as a result of these meetings and workshops.
- o Anticipated schedule with a start of construction in 2025 and an in-service date of 2030.

### 3. Question and Answer

John: was originally concerned about Crosswind runway at St Cloud Airport if it were to be lengthened. But there are no current plans to lengthen that runway.

Tyler: NRP has been working with an airspace consultant to assist with surface clearance data. They had to think about an alternative structure design for the St. Cloud Airport because of ceiling height limits. There will be a unique structure design near the St. Cloud Airport. There are pinch points near the Benton County Substation. The design is for shorter, more compact

structures that will be around the existing structure heights in the Benton County Substation area.

Mark: How tall are the proposed structures?

Tyler: They will vary and are far from final, probably vary from 110 to 130ish feet tall near the St. Cloud Airport. The standard structures will be about 20 to 40 feet taller.

Brian – the area is challenging because there is a golf course and people have built homes right up to the existing right of way.

Tyler: They evaluated Hill City Airport too, and they did not have height restriction from the analysis and can use the standard structures for this area.

Mark: FAA will be working with Hill City as it is still within the FAA's purview to notify the sponsors in the area. The government does not help fund this airport.

For the obstruction evaluation, you don't want to file too quickly with the FAA and don't want to file too late. If it looks like the general location is pretty stable, if you file its good for 18 months and that brings you into that 2025 timeframe. Mark recommends filing now to have the FAA evaluate the airspace. The evaluation can be tweaked if one of the poles moves after the evaluation is submitted. Also, it would be good to submit a 'case point' in the open areas of the line where there is a bend in the line. Suggested filing in the next 6 months or so.

Brian – would you be okay with a preliminary design?

Mark – its up to you, especially around the airports, once you are at 95% design it should be ok.

Zach – what's the harm of filing now? Even if they need to re-file in 18 months?

Mark – you have 30 months from the time you initially file even though you have 18 months from the original approval letter. You can request an extension for that initial review. Its just a process to ask for an extension.

Airport district office looks at the line from the perspective of the airfields. Mark's office (Airport District Office) is the central processing office that coordinates with the airfields.

Tyler – its looking like 26 months before putting the poles in the air. Will need FAA approval around Quarter 1 of next year. That will work with timing for when the foundation work will start. Work will also be in segments.

Mark said submitting evaluations in segments would be fine and is doable on his end as well.

John – Will provide the Hill City airport manager's contact information for us to contact

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45am

State Historic Preservation Office / Office of the State Archaeologist / Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

## **Northland Reliability Project**





### **Notes**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Project Meeting	
Date:	Monday, March 27, 2023	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office  •Sarah Beimers – Environmental Review Program Manager •Lucy Harrington – Environmental Review Archaeologist  Office of the State Archaeologist •Jennifer Tworzyanski – Assistant to the State Archaeologist  Minnesota Indian Affairs Council •Dylan Goetsch – Cultural Resources Specialist	Oreat River Energy

## **Discussion**

- Great River Energy (GRE) and Minnesota Power (MP) presented an overview of the Northland Reliability Project (project) (see PowerPoint presentation).
- Engagement to date it was clarified that all Minnesota federally recognized Tribes have been contacted regarding the Project. We are working with Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Lower Sioux, and Upper Sioux. Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Upper Sioux are reviewing the Route Corridor to provide further input.
- A cultural resources literature review is being conducted to identify known cultural resources within the Route Corridor. This is informing the identification of route alternatives and selection of a preliminary route to be included in the Route Permit application.

#### Questions/discussion:

- Known sites within the Route Corridor were reviewed in GIS.
- Cuyuna Iron Range Historic Mining Landscape District to avoid a pinch point near the Riverton Substation (multiple existing utility lines, several homes, State Recreation Area, Mississippi River), an alternate route on the east side of the State Recreation Area through a portion of this district is being considered.
  - Sarah Beimers indicated that the district is an industrial landscape so a transmission line would be less out of character. However, documentation of the district is limited. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would need more information clarifying the district's characteristic features within the area of potential effect (APE) to assess the transmiss Discussions with both Concerns regarding a cluster of Precontact archaeological sites located north of Big Elk Lake in Sherburne County were discussed at a meeting with the Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs, Upper Sioux, and Sherburne County in January of 2023.
  - ion line's effects on the district.
  - Jenny Bring indicated we are still developing an APE. Sarah indicated there are several examples of past transmission lines to inform developing an APE.

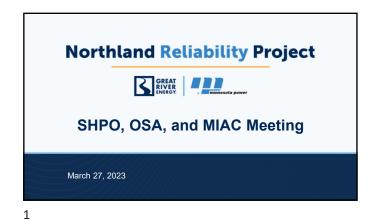
#### Long Lake area

- The existing line crossing on the isthmus between Upper South Long Lake and South Long Lake. There are constraints in this area including known archaeological sites, waterfowl crossing between the water bodies, residences, and seasonal cabins. Alternative routes to the east and west of the lakes are being considered.
- Lucy Harrington mentioned that area is likely important to Mille Lacs. It is not
  identified in the OSA Portal as being an area of MIAC concern. Jenny Bring indicated
  that we are currently working with Mille Lacs to review the Project.
- Information in Route Permit Application & Timing of Surveys
  - It was clarified that a literature review to identify known cultural resources is being prepared and will be included in the Route Permit application. The Route Permit application typically includes commitments to prepare a survey strategy/assessment of the preferred route, consult with appropriate agencies (SHPO, OSA, MIAC), and implement survey prior to construction to comply with applicable cultural resources laws.
  - Lucy indicated that approach is fine but requested a greater commitment in the application to identify what areas are intended for survey.

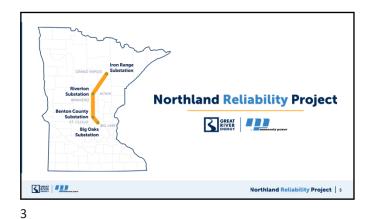
#### MIAC Comments

- Dylan Goetsch requested the list of known archeological sites within the Route Corridor.
- Dylan also requested that, if there are any areas identified in the OSA Portal as MIAC concern, we should consult with them. Jenny will confirm if there are any such areas.
- Next steps

- o GRE and MP anticipate identifying a preliminary route to present at the early May open houses. Brian Hunker said the alignment can be shared with SHPO, OSA, and MIAC.
- Jenny Bring will provide the list of known archaeological sites to Dylan and confirm there are no areas of MIAC concern within the Route Corridor.



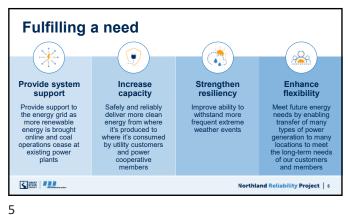




MISO-approved project:
part of a regional plan
Learn more at misoenergy.org

Northland Reliability Project 1

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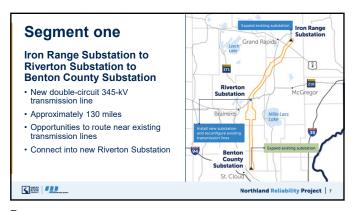


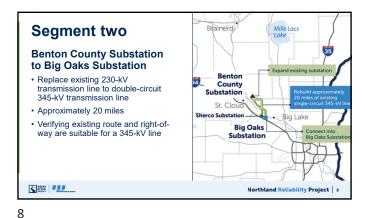
Two main project segments

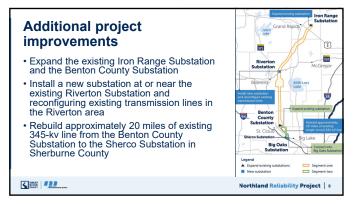
• Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation

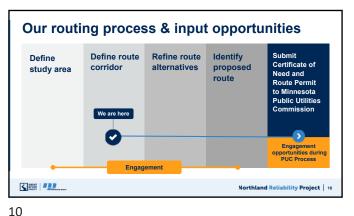
• Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation

• Northland Reliability Project 6

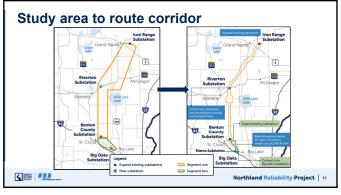








9 1



Routing process considerations

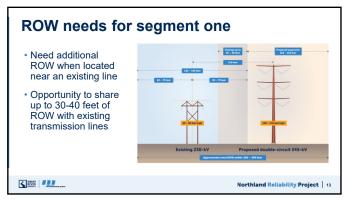
The criteria for route selection is set by Minnesota statute and guides our routing process.

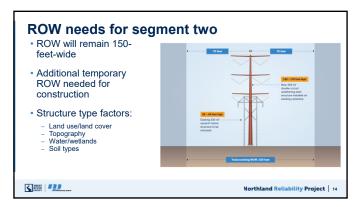
To route a project, we consider:

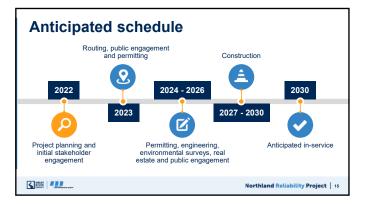
Opportunities

Constraints

Engineering and construction considerations







Regulatory context

Certificate of Need and Route Permit from Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Other state approvals likely, including:

Public Waters

Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

Regional General Permit (Section 404/CWA) from USACE

15 16



Tribal and agency outreach

We're committed to communicating early, often and throughout the project:

Initial Tribal and tribal organizations letters – August 2022

Initial agency letters sent – September 2022

Meetings with local, state, and federal agencies, including MnDNR, USACE, and USFWS – December 2022 to date

Meetings with Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Upper Sioux – December 2022 to date

Meetings with Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Upper Sioux – December 2022 to date

Big Elk Lake Park meeting with Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs, Upper Sioux, and Sherburne County – January 2023

Continued and ongoing opportunities to meet one-on-one and at key project milestones





From: Bring, Jennifer

To: Sarah Beimers (MN SHPO) (sarah.beimers@state.mn.us); Harrington, Lucy (She/Her/Hers) (ADM);

amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us, Geshick, Shannon (MIAC), Goetsch, Dylan (MIAC)

Cc: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Schmidt, Dan; Northland

Reliability Project; Koski, Laura Joreen

**Subject:** RE: Northland Reliability Transmission Project - Project Update

Date: Monday, June 12, 2023 9:25:56 AM
Attachments: NRP Cultural Lit Review 20230508.pdf

Hello all,

Please find attached for review the cultural resources literature review for the Northland Reliability transmission project. Please note that the literature review covered the Proposed Route and Notice Area for the Project to inform the routing and siting and identification of the proposed right-of-way and centerline for the project. As previously mentioned, the literature review will be summarized and included in the Route Permit application, which is anticipated to be filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in early August.

As mentioned in our last meeting, it is anticipated that a Cultural Resource Survey Strategy will be prepared in consultation with appropriate agencies (SHPO, OSA, MIAC) and Tribes (outreach is ongoing), following the Route Permit application to outline and guide survey to be completed prior to construction to comply with applicable cultural resources laws.

Please let us know if there are questions regarding the literature review. We would also be happy to meet to discuss the results of the literature review and provide further updates regarding the Project.

Thanks, Jenny

#### **Jennifer Bring**

M 651.324.0432

hdrinc.com/follow-us

From: Bring, Jennifer

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 2:19 PM

**To:** Sarah Beimers (MN SHPO) (sarah.beimers@state.mn.us) <sarah.beimers@state.mn.us>;

Harrington, Lucy (She/Her/Hers) (ADM) < lucy.harrington@state.mn.us>;

amanda.gronhovd@state.mn.us; Geshick, Shannon (MIAC) <shannon.geshick@state.mn.us>;

Goetsch, Dylan (MIAC) <dylan.goetsch@state.mn.us>

Cc: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@grenergy.com>; Lesher, Dan GRE/MG

<dlesher@grenergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson (MP);

Schmidt, Dan <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; Koski, Laura Joreen <Laura.Koski@hdrinc.com>

**Subject:** Northland Reliability Transmission Project - Project Update

Hello all,

As a follow-up to our meeting earlier this year regarding the Northland Reliability transmission project, we wanted to provide an update regarding the project. We have been working on defining a **preliminary route** for the Northland Reliability project. Attached is a GIS shapefile of the identified preliminary route that we anticipate including in the Route Permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, which we hope to submit by early August. Please note that the preliminary route includes two potential options in the Riverton area. The intent is to select one to include in the Route Permit application, anticipated to be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in early August. The preliminary route is also shown on our Project's website (<a href="www.northlandreliabilityproject.com">www.northlandreliabilityproject.com</a>). In addition, the website shows an intended right-of-way and centerline within the preliminary route (shapefiles attached).

For your information and to facilitate review of the attached GIS data, a **transmission line route is the path that a transmission line may follow**. Under Minnesota Statute 216E, subd. 8, the route may have a variable width of up to 1.25 miles. The **preliminary route is the area within which the right-of-way will be placed**. The route width is typically wider than the right-of-way to provide flexibility to address engineering, human (landowner preferences), and environmental concerns that arise after the permit has been issued.

The **intended right-of-way** is a representation of the physical land area within a route that is needed to construct and operate the transmission line; usually represented as the required easement. The **intended centerline** is a representation of the location of the transmission line within the right-of-way. In many cases, the poles would be placed in the center of the right-of-way, but in some areas, such as along roads, poles may be offset to account for road geometrics, topography, or waterbodies, etc.

The preliminary route, intended right-of-way, and intended centerline are subject to change based on comments, engineering, permitting, field conditions or other factors. However, we wanted to provide this data to you to understand where we are with the intended project routing and siting, and state permitting process. As previously mentioned, we have continued our outreach with Leech Lake, Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs, and Upper Sioux regarding the project and potential areas of interest/concern.

For reference, attached are notes and the slides from our last meeting. As requested in our last meeting, attached is a list of the 15 known archaeological sites that are located within the proposed route, as well as notation the 8 known archaeological sites located within the intended ROW. The majority of the known sites within the proposed route are Precontact or Post-Contact artifacts scatters. Also, according to the OSA Portal, there are no unknown historic cemeteries or MIAC areas of interested identified within the proposed route.

Please let us know if there are questions regarding this information or if you'd like to set up a meeting to discuss. Otherwise, as previously mentioned, we are finalizing the cultural resources literature review, the results of which will also be captured in the forthcoming Route Permit application.

Best, Jenny

#### **Jennifer Bring**

Environmental Section Manager MN/WI Senior Environmental Scientist/Project Manager

#### HDR

1601 Utica Ave. S. Suite 600 St. Louis Park, MN 55416 M 651.324.0432 Jennifer.Bring@hdrinc.com

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**Local Government Unit Correspondence** 

**Local Government Unit Initial Outreach** 





Jessica Seibert County Administrator Aitkin County 307 2nd Street NW, Rm. 310 Aitkin, MN 56431

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Jessica Seibert,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

This Project will help support the reliability of the grid and customer needs as utilities continue to shift their supply toward more renewable energy sources and reduce carbon emissions. Minnesota Power and Great River Energy are in the early planning stages. Developing this Project will include a comprehensive permitting process that includes applying for a certificate of need and route permit with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. Additional permitting processes and consultations will occur with agencies and other jurisdictions.

The route has not been determined, but we will look at routing opportunities, including using existing transmission line corridors, and constraints and evaluate their feasibility. As we start initial planning, we wanted to make you aware of this Project and start gathering information helpful to determine potential routing corridors and any permitting constraints or considerations. We would like to request a meeting to begin early regulatory consultation through individual or multi-agencies meetings to present the proposed Project and understand potential issues as early in the routing and siting process as possible. Feel free to reach out to Dan Schmidt by phone (763.278.5928) or email (dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com) to schedule a virtual or in-person meeting during a date and time that works best for you and your group.

We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

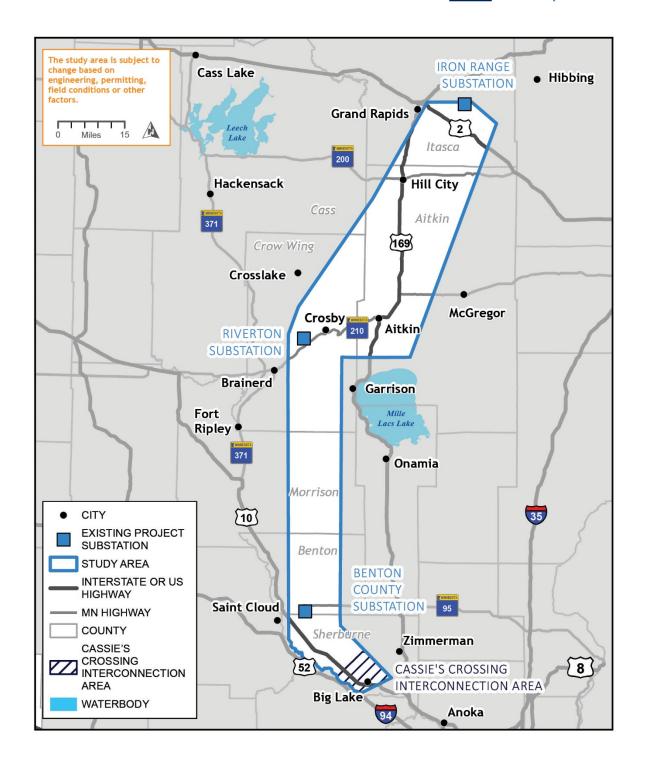
Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>











Montgomery Headley County Administrator Benton County P.O. Box 129 Foley, MN 56329

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Montgomery Headley,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power <u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u> Dan Lesher





Josh Stevenson County Administrator Cass County PO Box 3000 Walker, MN 56484-3000

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Josh Stevenson,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Timothy J. Houle County Administrator Crow Wing County 326 Laurel Street Suite 13 Brainerd, MN 56401

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Timothy J. Houle,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Brett Skyles County Administrator Itasca County 123 NE 4th Street Grand Rapids, MN 55744

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Brett Skyles,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power <u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u> Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Matt Leblanc County Administrator Morrison County 213 1st Avenue SE Little Falls, MN 56345

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Matt Leblanc,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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We look forward to hearing from you and starting our discussion about this new Project. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Bruce Messelt County Administrator Sherburne County 13880 Business Center Drive NW Suite 100 Elk River, MN 55330-4668

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Bruce Messelt,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher





Cheryal Lee Hills Executive Director Region 5 Development Commission 200 1st Street NE Suite 2 Staples, MN 56479

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Cheryal Lee Hills,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power jbatkinson@allete.com Dan Lesher

Manager, Transmission Permitting and Land Rights Great River Energy <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>





Don Niemi Aitkin County Board- Vice Chair Arrowhead Regional Development Commission 221 West First Street Duluth, MN 55802

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Don Niemi,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power <u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u> Dan Lesher





Terry Snider Itasca County Board Arrowhead Regional Development Commission 221 West First Street Duluth, MN 55802

#### **RE: Northland Reliability Project**

Dear Terry Snider,

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy plan to co-own, construct, maintain and operate a new approximately 150-mile-long high-voltage transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project. This Project will connect Minnesota Power's existing Iron Range substation, located east of Grand Rapids, and Great River Energy's existing Benton County substation, located east of St. Cloud, and then replace an existing Great River Energy transmission line from Benton County to a new substation in Sherburne County. The Sherburne County substation, currently named Cassie's Crossing, will be built as part of a separate project. A Project overview map is included on the reverse side of this letter.

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Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson

Environmental and Real Estate Manager Minnesota Power <u>jbatkinson@allete.com</u> Dan Lesher

**County Correspondence** 

**Aitkin County** 

From: Kyle Larson (MP) < KPLARSON@mnpower.com>

Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 3:09 PM

To: Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>

Cc: 'Schmidt, Dan' <Dan.Schmidt@hdrinc.com>

Subject: Aitkin County Board Meeting

# Aitkin County Board Meeting Tuesday 14 March 2023

- Zach G. presenting
- Kicked off by Aitkin County Board Chair J. Mark Wedel
- Paul Vold from KKIN Radio on virtually
- Question from Commissioner Laurie Westland regarding starting point of the line and major "hubs", answered by Kyle Larson.
- Meeting presentation and questions ~10 minutes

**Kyle Larson** 

kplarson@mnpower.com

218-355-2454

218-591-9451 Mobile

#### Bring, Jennifer

From: Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2023 3:55 PM

To: Hawkins, Rebecca; Bring, Jennifer; Hyland, Emily

**Subject:** Aitkin County Board Meeting

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Jenny and Becky,

Here are some notes for the Aikin County Board meeting.

6/13/2023 12:30-2:00 pm

Aitkin County Government Center, Aitkin, MN

- Introduction to the project was already completed at previous meetings.
- Zach Golkowski gave brief overview of the project
- Shared new maps with the entire board in hard copy format for their viewing
  - Walked through maps and shared how we came up withh the "Route Corridor" that we have.
  - Explained that the route corridor was what we were planning on sending to the PUC
- Let the board know about our stake holder and landowner outreach
  - Gave them a brief rundown of the previous workshops and let them know that we had great attendance.
  - Passed along hard copies of project overview handouts
- Asked the board if they have heard from any of their constituents about the project. Answer was NO.
- Board asked about who would be contracted to do the work for the project and if it would be local
  - I let them know that we would hire contractors as regional as possible and there could potentially be around 100 workers in the area when construction starts
  - o Board was happy with local labor.
- Board asked about where the power was coming from
  - I responded that it was not from any one generation source in particular but rather from a large range of generation sources.

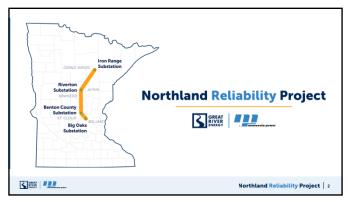
Over all the meeting went well with very few questions or comments about the project. They were appreciative of the new maps and the overview of where things were at and when we would be submitting the application to the PUC. Seems as though they were a proponent of the project.

Meeting

Thank you,

Zach Golkowski Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist Minnesota Power/ALLETE, Inc. 30 W. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802 **Benton County** 





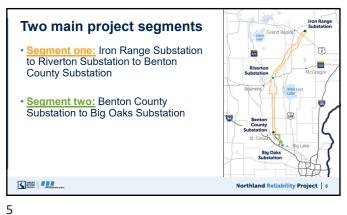
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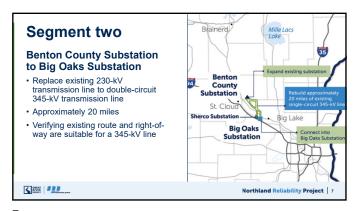


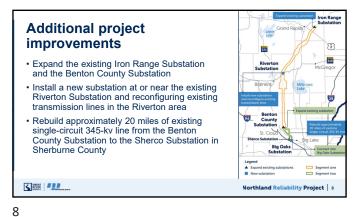
Fulfilling a need Strengthen resiliency Provide system Increase flexibility support capacity Safely and reliably deliver more clean energy from where it's produced to where it's consumed by utility customers and power cooperative members Meet future energy needs by enabling transfer of many types of power generation to many Improve ability to withstand more frequent extreme weather events Provide support to the energy grid as more renewable energy is brought online and coal operations cease at existing power plants S SHEAT IN THE SHEAT Northland Reliability Project | 4

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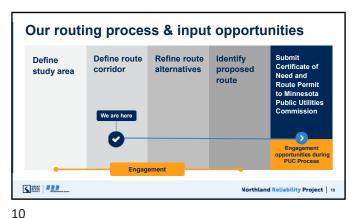


Segment one Iron Range Substation to **Riverton Substation to** (2) **Benton County Substation** 210 New double-circuit 345-kV transmission line · Approximately 130 miles · Opportunities to route near existing transmission lines · Connect into new Riverton Substation GREAT RIVER

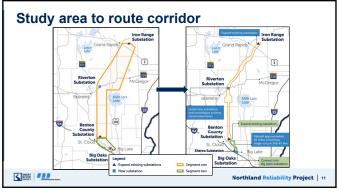








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Routing process considerations

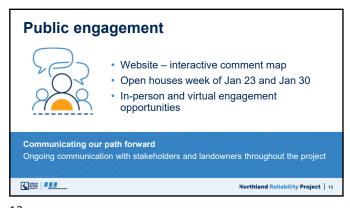
The criteria for route selection is set by Minnesota statute and guides our routing process.

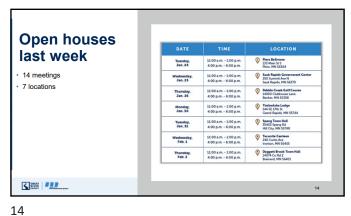
To route a project, we consider:

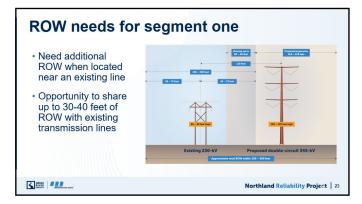
Opportunities

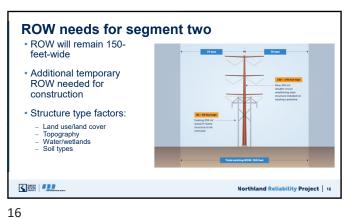
Constraints

Engineering and construction considerations









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Appendix M Page 248 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

Questions	
STATE STATE OF THE	Northland Reliability Project 19

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 16, 2023 12:26 PM

**To:** Schmidt, Dan; Bentz, Nick; Greene Guentzel, Amanda

**Cc:** Hyland, Emily; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP)

**Subject:** NRP - Benton County Meeting Notes

#### Hello -

This morning, I presented a recap of the Northland Reliability Project need, route development, preliminary route, and estimated right-of-way to the Benton County Board. The Board was appreciative of the information and presentation. Commissioners asked two questions, as follows:

- What is the estimated project cost?
- Can this line store energy?

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

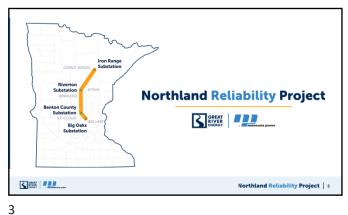
Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com





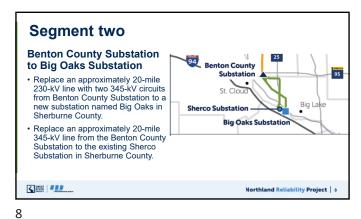


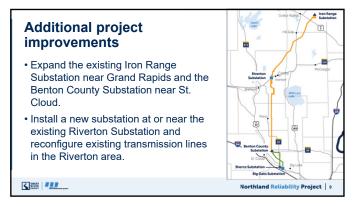
Fulfilling a need Maintaining reliability Strengthening resiliency Enhancing flexibility Enabling clean energy Provide system support as energy esources continue to S SHEAT STATE SHEAT Northland Reliability Project | 4 4

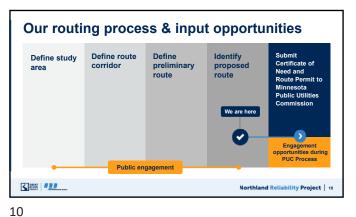


Two main project segments • Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton **County Substation** • Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation GREAT RIVER Northland Reliability Project

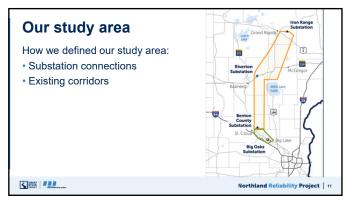




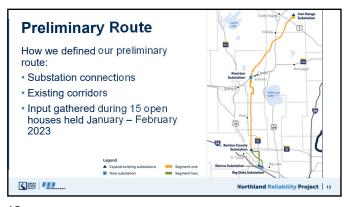




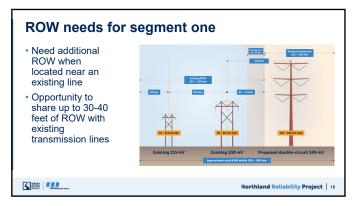
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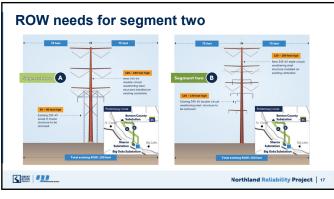


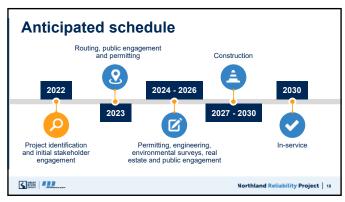
ROW needs for segment one

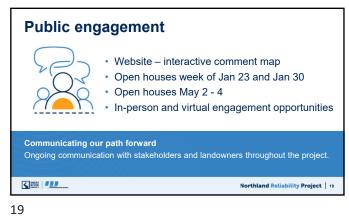
• Need additional ROW when located near an existing line
• Opportunity to share up to 30-40 feet of ROW with existing transmission lines

Existing 230-bV Proposed double-circuit 345-bV Proposed double-circuit 345-bV Proposed double-circuit 345-bV

15 16









**Itasca County** 

From: Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 15, 2023 9:10 AM

To: Schmidt, Dan; Hunker, Brian GRE-MG; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hyland, Emily

**Cc:** Jim Atkinson (MP); kyle larson **Subject:** Itasca County Board meeting

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello all,

Yesterday we had the privilege of meeting with the Itasca County Board of commissioners, all of whom were present. Jim, Kyle and myself represented the NRP team and I felt it went really well.

I gave an overview of the project using the slide deck which was very easy for everyone to follow along. They had it all prompted and ready to go. Jim handed out Itasca county maps with the proposed route corridor to all commissioners. They were very appreciative of the maps and found them beneficial. I would suggest printing maps for these meetings as all the commissioners were happy to receive them and said they would be a great reference in the future.

After the presentation, there were a few questions from the commissioners mostly regarding the expansion of the Iron Range Substation, how much more land would be needed for the expansion, where we intended to hook up to the existing 230 kV ROW and keeping us apprised to the wetlands within that area. There were also some great accolades given to the Great Northern Transmission Line (Kyle and Jim) and how successful/beneficial that project was to the community with mention of regional union labor being used.

There was also a comment about Harvey and Sandra Wahlquist and their property across the street to the north of the substation. A commissioner informed us that they have talked with the Wahlquists and let us know that they had some concerns. It seemed comforting to the commissioners when they found out that Jim and I have already talked with Sandra and Harvey at the open house event and we filled them in with our conversations. I also mentioned that I emailed the couple yesterday as a follow up to the kind open house comment form they sent in.

Needless to say, the board meeting was a success and our presence in the community seems to be well known! I don't think the commissioners will have any surprises due to the project and we can be proud of the engagement that has happened thus far.

Jim/Kyle, please chime in if I missed anything here.

Nice work everyone!

Thank you,

Zach Golkowski Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist Minnesota Power/ALLETE Inc. zgolkowski@mnpower.com

M: 218-428-5582 O: 218-355-3366 **Morrison County** 

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 9:35 AM

**To:** Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-

MG; Bentz, Nick; Zach Golkowski (MP); Hyland, Emily; Schmidt, Dan; Haas, Meredith; Jim

Atkinson (MP); Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Lawler, Steve GRE-MG

**Subject:** NRP - Morrison County Meeting Summary

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

#### Hello –

Tuesday, 3/7, I presented a Project overview to the Morrison County Commissioners. The County Commissioners and Administrator commended the Project for their outreach efforts and willingness to meet. They encouraged the Project to continue meeting with landowners and provide the County with updates throughout construction.

#### Action items:

- Commissioner Kasper asked that the Project follow-up with the following landowners to inquire if their questions have been addressed and if they would like a meeting:
  - Britz, David & Bridget, Chad Britz, and Nathan & Ashley Britz
    - Attended the open house in Pierz, MN and provided a comment
    - Follow-up conversation with Britz Family on February 28
  - o Athman, Lyle
    - Attended the open house in Pierz, MN
  - o Kimman, Neal
    - Attended the open house in Dagget Brook Township
- Commissioner Winscher had questions regarding noise and the ability for solar generation to connect to the grid
  - Commissioner Winscher stated that he may want a meeting
  - o After the meeting, I emailed Commissioner Winscher asking if he would like to meet

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 8:27 AM

**To:** Randyw@co.morrison.mn.us

Cc: Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-

MG; Bentz, Nick

**Subject:** NRP - Presentation Follow-up

Hello Commissioner Winscher -

Thank you for your time yesterday to learn about the Northland Reliability Project at the County Commissioner's Board Meeting. I wanted to follow-up with you to inquire if your questions were addressed at the meeting? Would you like to meet (either in-person or virtually) to discuss the project? Otherwise, would you like any follow-up information?

Thank you, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

Transmission Permitting, Project Manager Great River Energy 12300 Flm Creek Boulevard

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Bobby Kasper <BobbyK@co.morrison.mn.us>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:40 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

**Cc:** Zach Golkowski (MP); Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Jim Atkinson

(MP); Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP; kyle larson

**Subject:** RE: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up **Flag Status:** Flagged

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Thank you Mr. Hunker, I will let the land owners know and I look forward to meeting with you folks. God bless

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>
<br/>bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 11:32 AM

To: Bobby Kasper <BobbyK@co.morrison.mn.us>

Cc: Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG <mhagelin@GREnergy.com>; Lesher,

Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>; Northland Reliability

Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>; kyle larson

<kplarson@mnpower.com>

Subject: RE: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

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Hello Commissioner Kasper –

I would like to confirm that we will meet with Britz's, Athman's, and Kimman's landowners on Monday, 3/20 at 9am. We will meet at the driveway of Nate Britz house - 29075 173<sup>rd</sup> St, Pierz, MN 56364.

Project representatives will be:

- Zach Golkowski, Minnesota Power, Senior Environmental Compliance Specialist
- Matt Hagelin, Great River Energy, Transmission Permitting
- Brian Hunker, Great River Energy, Land Rights

Thanks, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Bobby Kasper < Bobby K@co.morrison.mn.us>

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 8:18 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

**Cc:** Zach Golkowski (MP) < <u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG < <u>mhagelin@GREnergy.com</u>>; Lesher,

Dan GRE-MG <a href="mailto:dlesher@GREnergy.com">dlesher@GREnergy.com</a>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <a href="mailto:JBATKINSON@mnpower.com">JBATKINSON@mnpower.com</a>; Northland Reliability

Project <<u>connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</u>>; GRE NRP <<u>grenrp@GREnergy.com</u>>; kyle larson

<kplarson@mnpower.com>

Subject: RE: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

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Hello Brian,

How about we try for 8:30 on the 20<sup>th</sup> and I can get to a meeting in Little Falls by 12:00? It seems that should allow time to take a look at the situation and discuss possibilities. For your info it's about 20 minutes to my meeting sight. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 12:41 PM

To: Bobby Kasper < Bobby K@co.morrison.mn.us>

**Cc:** Zach Golkowski (MP) <<u>zgolkowski@mnpower.com</u>>; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG <<u>mhagelin@GREnergy.com</u>>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <<u>JBATKINSON@mnpower.com</u>>; Northland Reliability

Project <<u>connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</u>>; GRE NRP <<u>grenrp@GREnergy.com</u>>; kyle larson

<kplarson@mnpower.com>

Subject: RE: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

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Hi Commissioner Kasper -

Thank you for assisting us with setting up a landowner meeting. I would like Zach Golkowski and Matt Hagelin to participate in the meeting. Zach had the Feb 28<sup>th</sup> conversation with the Britz Family and Matt is a Land Rights Lead on the Project.

Could we tentatively plan for Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> or Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>?

Thanks, Brian

**Brian Hunker** 

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

Appendix M Page 261 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415

## BHunker@GREnergy.com

**From:** Bobby Kasper < <u>BobbyK@co.morrison.mn.us</u>>

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 10:40 AM

**To:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a> > **Subject:** RE: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

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Hey Brian,

I spoke with Lyle and asked him to contact Chad, Dave, Nate and Neal to set up a Monday meeting where you and I would meet them on sight to look at the possible issues and solutions. I don't know which Monday that will be but I will let you know as soon as I learn. Please call me to let me know if that is workable. My cell # is 320-360-6436. Thank you and God bless!

**From:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 9:25 AM

To: Bobby Kasper < Bobby K@co.morrison.mn.us >

**Cc:** Northland Reliability Project <<u>connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com</u>>; GRE NRP <<u>grenrp@GREnergy.com</u>>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <<u>dlesher@GREnergy.com</u>>; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG <<u>mhagelin@GREnergy.com</u>>; Bentz, Nick

< Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) < zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Hyland, Emily

<<u>Emily.Hyland@hdrinc.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u> <<u>dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com</u>>; Haas, Meredith

< Meredith. Haas@hdrinc.com >

Subject: NRP - Morrison County Presentation Follow-up

**Caution:** This message has originated from outside from an **External Source**. Please use proper judgment and caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email.

Hello Commissioner Kasper –

Thank you for your time yesterday to learn about the Northland Reliability Project at the County Commissioner's Board Meeting. I understand from the County's Board meeting that you're requesting that the Project follow-up with the landowners listed below.

- Britz, David & Bridget, Chad Britz, and Nathan & Ashley Britz
  - o Attended the open house in Pierz, MN and provided a comment
  - o Follow-up conversation with Britz Family on February 28
- Athman, Lyle
  - Attended the open house in Pierz, MN
- Kimman, Neal
  - Attended the open house in Dagget Brook Township

Please let us know if you need any additional project information or have any questions.

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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## Northland Reliability Project <northlandreliabilityproject@gmail.com>

## NRP - Morrison County Meeting Summary

1 message

### Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <br/>bhunker@grenergy.com>

Fri, Jul 7, 2023 at 3:51 PM

To: "Bentz, Nicholas" <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>, "Hyland, Emily" <Emily.Hyland@hdrinc.com>, Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>, "Zach Golkowski (MP)" <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>, "Greene Guentzel, Amanda" <Amanda.GreeneGuentzel@hdrinc.com>

Cc: "Jim Atkinson (MP)" <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>, "Lesher, Dan GRE-MG" <dlesher@grenergy.com>

Hello -

On Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to present to the Morrison County Board. I presented a recap of the Northland Reliability Project need, route development, preliminary route, and estimated right-of-way configurations. Discussion topics included:

- · Generation sources current and future
- Discussed meeting with Townships and the County Board was appreciative of meeting with the Townships
- Requested continued outreach throughout the PUC process and construction

Thank you, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

## **Transmission Permitting, Project Manager**

**Great River Energy** 

12300 Elm Creek Boulevard

Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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Appendix M Page 264 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 **Sherburne County** 

# **Northland Reliability Project**





## **Agenda**

Project:	Northland Reliability Project	
Subject:	Project Update Meeting	
Date:	Friday, January 20, 2023	
Location:	Microsoft Teams	
Attendees:	• Gina Hugo – Parks Coordinator, Public Works • Andrew Witter – Public Works Director • Tim Sime – Assistant County Attorney  Lower Sioux Indian Community • Cheyanne St. John – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe • Terry Kemper – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  Upper Sioux Indian Community • Samantha Odegard – Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	Great River Energy

## **Discussion**

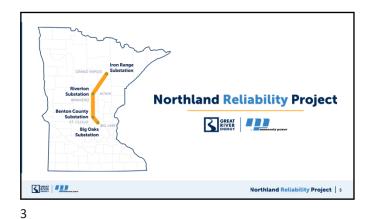
- Great River Energy (GRE) presented an overview of the Northland Reliability Project (project) (see PowerPoint presentation).
- Proposed Big Elk Lake Park Area there is an existing transmission line and easement that
  crosses a portion of the proposed park (part of Segment 2 of the project). Propose to replace
  the existing 230 kV line with 345 kV double-circuit line. There are approximately six (6) existing
  H-frame structures within the proposed park, which would be replaced with monopoles.
- Questions asked by participants:
  - Lower Sioux asked if there is a project website where there are maps or files to facilitate review.
    - GRE indicated there is a project website <a href="https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/">https://northlandreliabilityproject.com/</a>

- The Study Area has been narrowed down to a Route Corridor (orange and green areas on the PowerPoint maps). The process was informed by review of available data as well as outreach with stakeholders.
- GRE and Minnesota Power (MP, project partner) are analyzing constraints and potential routes within the Route Corridor. A shapefile of the Route Corridor can be provided to facilitate review.
- GRE and MP want to engage with stakeholders as early and often as possible. It is important to gather as much information to be aware of routing opportunities and potential concerns/constraints. Information gathered from engagement will inform a proposed route that will be included in a Certificate of Need (CON) and Route Permit Application (RPA).
- Lower Sioux inquired regarding the type and size/depth of foundations for the new monopoles.
  - GRE indicated the new poles will be on concrete foundations, on average 30 ft deep and 6-10 feet in diameter.
- Upper Sioux asked if there are options if the poles need to be moved. Three of the existing poles may have impacted resources when originally constructed.
  - GRE indicated it is preferred to use the existing easement in this area, but there
    is likely some flexibility within the existing 150 ft right-of-way regarding pole
    placement.
  - The current Route Corridor is larger than the existing 150 ft right-of way.
- Sherburne County asked if there is an opportunity to minimize the number of poles within the park.
  - GRE indicated there is probably an opportunity to have longer spans than currently but, the wider the span, the wider the right-of-way that's required. GRE can look at expanding the span but stay within the 150 ft right-of-way.
- o Mille Lacs asked who the current easement is with?
  - GRE indicated the easement is with the land
  - Mille Lacs indicated the County is now the landowner.
- The County is currently working with their partners regarding designation/listing of a traditional cultural landscape and a potential National Heritage Area, which would require additional consideration. A tribal cultural property survey is in progress and should be complete in June 2023.
- The park is planned to be developed in 3 phases over the next 15 years.
- Sherburne County indicated their intent to rehabilitate the prairie, which includes prescribed burning every 3-5 years. Burning is not feasible under the current wood structures; is it feasible under the monopoles?
  - GRE will confirm and follow up.
- Sherburne County asked about the process of woody vegetation management within the right-of-way. The Park's mission is to provide opportunity for people to connect with nature – clearing for transmission line removes some of the tree cover.
  - GRE indicated that woody vegetation is often removed or cut back within right-ofway.
- Lower Sioux indicated that additional information requested to inform review of the project would be the span of the structures and alternative routing options, if needed.

- Mille Lacs indicated that there is a separate meeting coming up and other items can be discussed during that meeting.
- Lower Sioux indicated that they did not respond to the letter sent out in August; however, they would also be interested in meeting. GRE indicated Dan Lesher (GRE), Jim Atkinson (MP), and Jenny Bring (HDR) are contacts to set up a future meeting.
- It was determined that a follow-up call would be scheduled after the individual meetings with Mille Lacs and Upper Sioux.







MISO-approved project:
part of a regional plan
Learn more at misoenergy.org

Northland Reliability Project 1

4

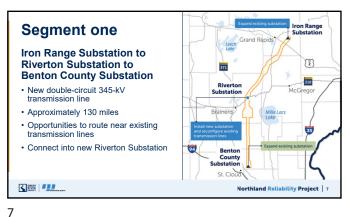


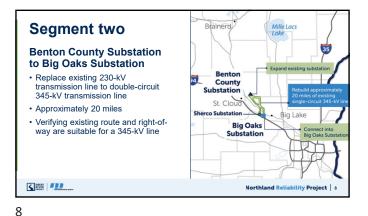
Two main project segments

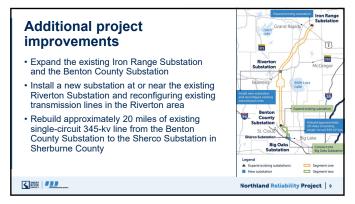
• Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation

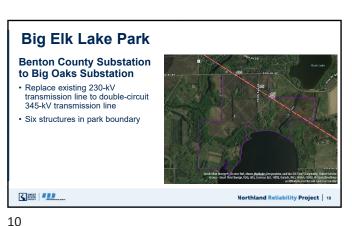
• Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation

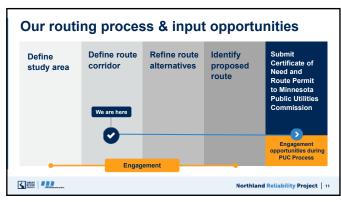
• Northland Reliability Project 6

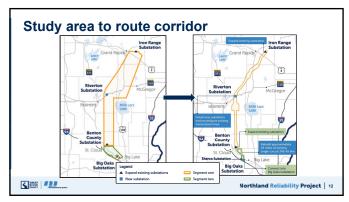


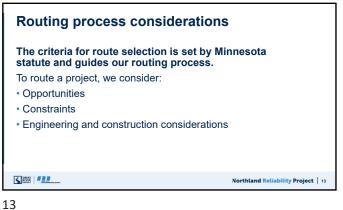






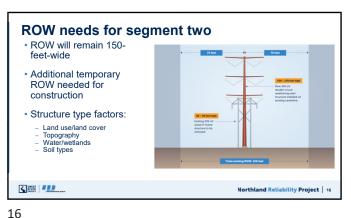










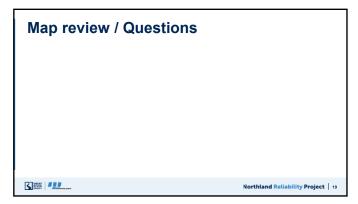






17 18

> Appendix M Page 271 of 294 Docket No. E015,ET2/CN-22-416 Docket No. E015,ET2/TL-22-415



From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 4:03 PM

**To:** Gina Hugo; Terry Kemper; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; Cheyanne St.

John; Andrew Witter; Tim Sime; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Solis, Joshua; Schmidt, Dan;

Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Haley Waller Pitts; Bring, Jennifer

**Cc:** Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP

**Subject:** RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Attachments: NRP Sherburne County Project Update Mtg Notes 01202023.docx; NRP RouteCorridor

20230122.zip; NRP\_Elk\_Lake\_Meeting\_Presentation\_Updates\_1.20.2023.pdf

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#### Good afternoon -

Thank you very much for meeting last week. We really appreciate your time and insight on the Northland Reliability Project (NRP). Please find the following attached your review and use:

- Meeting notes
- PDF of the PowerPoint
- Shapefile of the Route Corridor

I'm checking with GRE's Vegetation Management team regarding controlled burns for maintenance. I'll let you know next week.

Please let us know of any questions. Note that the NRP team will be at open house meetings this week and next week, therefore we may have delayed replies to emails.

We look forward to our next meeting. Thank you, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

----Original Appointment----

From: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us>

Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 9:56 AM

**To:** Gina Hugo; Terry Kemper; samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov; Cheyanne St. John; Andrew Witter; Tim Sime; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Solis, Joshua; dschmidt@hdrinc.com; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Subject: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

When: Friday, January 20, 2023 2:15 PM-3:15 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Thank you all for helping to coordinate a time for this meeting. See meeting link and call-in information below.

Sincerely,



## Gina M. Hugo

Sherburne County Public Works - Parks Coordinator

Work: (763) 765 – 3308 www.co.sherburne.mn.us

www.facebook.com/SherburneCountyMN

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## Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device Click here to join the meeting

Meeting ID: 244 288 033 297

Passcode: 38JtU4

Download Teams | Join on the web

## Or call in (audio only)

+1 469-998-6602,,343935381# United States, Dallas

Phone Conference ID: 343 935 381#

Find a local number | Reset PIN

<u>Learn More</u> | <u>Meeting options</u>

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 12:03 PM

To: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us >

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Hi Gina -

I tried to resend the email with attachments to the meeting participants. I get an undeliverable message from Sherburne County's server. I've added the attachments to this email. Please find a SharePoint link - NRP Big Elk Lake Park — that contains the attachments.

I'll email the THPOs separately.

Can you forward to Tim and Andrew?

Thanks, Brian

### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us >

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 11:11 AM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

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Hi Brian,

Thanks for checking in. I did not receive this email.

Could you resend the attachments?



## Gina M. Hugo

Sherburne County Public Works – Parks Coordinator

Work: (763) 765 – 3308 www.co.sherburne.mn.us

www.facebook.com/SherburneCountyMN

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 11:07 AM

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 2:09 PM

To: Bentz, Nick; Haas, Meredith; Northland Reliability Project

Cc: GRE NRP; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Hyland, Emily; Jim Atkinson (MP)

**Subject:** Sherburne County Board Meeting

Hello -

On Tuesday, 2/21, I provided the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners with an update of the Northland Reliability Project. I provided a project overview in PowerPoint and gave the Commissioners a hardcopy of the PowerPoint and county maps.

The Commissioners were very appreciative of the presentation and maps.

After the presentation, Commissioner's questions and comments related to:

- Center pivot systems and agricultural impacts
- Span lengths
- Big Elk Lake Park
- Agency and tribal engagement
- Generation is received from other areas, when wind doesn't blow and sun doesn't shine in our area
- How does this Project relate to Gov Walz's 2040 carbon free bill?

Two questions require additional follow-up:

- Status of all of the MISO Tranche 1 projects
- What weather events would affect this type of line? Wind speeds and miles of ice loading?

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com





MISO-approved project:

regional plan
Learn more at
misoenergy.org

part of a



Northland Reliability Project | 3

Fulfilling a need

2



3

## Two main project segments

- Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation
- Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation



Northland Reliability Project | 5

Segment one

4

Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton County Substation

- New double-circuit 345-kV transmission line
- Approximately 130 miles
- Opportunities to route near existing transmission lines
- · Connect into new Riverton Substation



6

3 m | 111

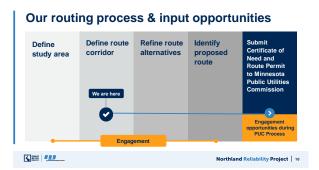




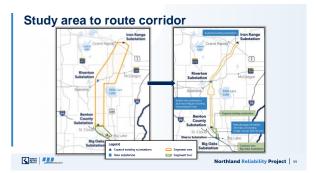
Northland Reliability Project 8

8





9 10



## **Routing process considerations** The criteria for route selection is set by Minnesota statute and guides our routing process. To route a project, we consider: Opportunities Constraints · Engineering and construction considerations Sim III Northland Reliability Project | 12

## **Public engagement**



- · Website interactive comment map
- Open houses week of Jan 23 and Jan 30
- In-person and virtual engagement opportunities

Communicating our path forward

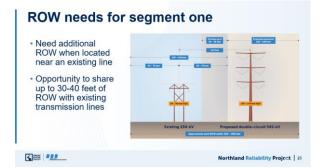
Ongoing communication with stakeholders and landowners throughout the project

Northland Reliability Project | 13

**Open houses** Pierz Ballroom 133 Main St S Pierz, MN 56364 14 meetings Sauk Rapids Governm 250 Surrent Ave N Sauk Rapids, MN 56375 Wednesday Jan. 25 7 locations Thursday, Jan. 26 11:00 am. + 1:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. + 6:00 p.m. Timberlake Lodge 144 SE 17th St Grand Rapids, MN 55744 Monday, Jan. 30 Tuesday, Jan. 31 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Spang Town Hall 35402 Spang Rd Hill Cov. MN 55749 Wednesday, Feb. 1 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Teconite Canteen 260 Curtis Ave Ironton, MN 56455 Daggett Brook Town 14074 Co Rd 2 Brainerd, MN 55401 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. 

14

13



ROW needs for segment two

ROW will remain 150-feet-wide

Additional temporary ROW needed for construction

Structure type factors:

Land useland cover
Topography
Water/wellands
Soil types

Northland Reliability Project | 16

15 16







From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 2:38 PM

**To:** Dan.Weber@co.sherburne.mn.us; Keisha.erickson@co.sherburne.mn.us

Cc: Haas, Meredith; Hyland, Emily; Bentz, Nick; Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP;

Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP)

**Subject:** NRP - Sherburne County Commissioner Follow-up Questions

Hello Dan and Keisha -

Thank you very much for your assistance with having the Northland Reliability Project on the Sherburne County Board of Commissioner's February 21 meeting agenda. In addition, we thank the County Commissioners and staff for their time at the meeting.

At that meeting, Commissioner Felber and Commissioner Hulse asked two questions that required follow-up. Could you assist me with providing the following responses to the County Commissioners as I'm not sure of the appropriate communication channels?

Commissioner Hulse asked about the status of the other MISO projects? -

Each of the 18 MISO Tranche 1 projects are in the pre-regulatory phase i.e., public engagement, conducting studies to support required state regulatory filings, and/or identifying the transmission developer (for a subset of the projects). The 18 MISO Tranche 1 projects span nine Midwest states; each with unique regulatory requirements, processes, and timelines. Each of the 18 projects, including the Northland Reliability Project, have a required in-service date no later than 2030.

Commissioner Felber asked about design criteria for the transmission line? –

The engineering design criteria is in discussion and development. The specific criteria will not be finalized for a few more years.

Please let me know of any additional questions.

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Transmission Permitting, Project Manager** 

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 2:43 PM

To: Dan Weber

**Subject:** Re: NRP - Sherburne County Commissioner Follow-up Questions

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 23, 2023, at 2:40 PM, Dan Weber < Dan. Weber@co.sherburne.mn.us> wrote:

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Thanks Brian! I'll make sure it gets forwarded to the County Commissioners.

Dan

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 2:37:49 PM

To: Dan Weber <Dan.Weber@co.sherburne.mn.us>; Keisha Erickson

<Keisha.erickson@co.sherburne.mn.us>

**Cc:** Haas, Meredith < Meredith. Haas@hdrinc.com>; Hyland, Emily < Emily. Hyland@hdrinc.com>; Bentz, Nick < Nicholas. Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project

<connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG
<dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson (MP)
<JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>

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Brian Hunker

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Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Friday, April 28, 2023 9:08 AM

To: Gina Hugo

Cc: Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Zach Golkowski (MP); Jim Atkinson (MP); Schmidt, Dan; Bring,

Jennifer; Northland Reliability Project; GRE NRP

Subject:RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission LineAttachments:NRP\_PrelimRoute\_IntendedCenterlineROW.zip

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Gina -

As a follow-up to our earlier meetings, we wanted to let you know that the preliminary route is updated as attached shapefiles and on the Project's website (<a href="www.northlandreliabilityproject.com">www.northlandreliabilityproject.com</a>). In addition, the website shows an intended right-of-way and centerline within the preliminary route (shapefiles attached). HDR has shared these shapefiles and information with the County's Tribal partners on the Park.

For your information on the mapped project features, a transmission line route is the path that a transmission line may follow. Under Minnesota Statute 216E, subd. 8, the route may have a variable width of up to 1.25 miles.

The preliminary route is the area within which the right-of-way will be placed. The route width is typically wider than the right-of-way to provide flexibility to address engineering, human (landowner preferences), and environmental concerns that arise after the permit has been issued.

The intended right-of-way is a representation of the physical land area within a route that is needed to construct and operate the transmission line; usually represented as the required easement.

The intended centerline is a representation of the location of the transmission line within the right-of-way. In many cases, the poles would be placed in the center of the right-of-way, but in some areas, such as along roads, poles may be offset to account for road geometrics, topography, or waterbodies, etc

The preliminary route, intended right-of-way, and intended centerline are subject to change based on comments, engineering, permitting, field conditions or other factors.

Next week, the Project is hosting public open house meetings from May 2-4. The open house schedule as follows:

- Tuesday, May 2 10 a.m. noon at the Spang Town Hall, 35402 Spang Road, Hill City, MN 55748
- Tuesday, May 2 4 6 p.m. at the Taconite Canteen, 240 Curtis Ave., Ironton, MN 56455
- Wednesday, May 3 10 a.m. noon at the Daggett Brook Town Hall, 14074 County Road 2, Brainerd, MN 56401
- Wednesday, May 3 4 6 p.m. at the Pierz Ballroom, 133 Main St. S., Pierz, MN 56364
- Thursday, May 4 10 a.m. noon at the Sauk Rapids Government Center, 250 Summit Ave. N., Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
- Thursday, May 4 4 6 p.m. at the Palmer Township Hall, 4180 105th Ave., Clear Lake, MN 55319

Please let us know of any questions and/or if you would like another meeting.

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us>

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 12:13 PM

To: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Hi Brian – thanks for the alternative. Yes, I will forward to Tim and Andrew.



## Gina M. Hugo

Sherburne County Public Works – Parks Coordinator

Work: (763) 765 – 3308 www.co.sherburne.mn.us

www.facebook.com/SherburneCountyMN

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From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG < <a href="mailto:bhunker@GREnergy.com">bhunker@GREnergy.com</a>>

Sent: Friday, January 27, 2023 12:05 PM

To: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us>

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Hi Gina -

I tried to resend the email with attachments to the meeting participants. I get an undeliverable message from Sherburne County's server. Please find a SharePoint link - NRP Big Elk Lake Park — that contains the attachments.

I'll email the THPOs separately.

Can you forward to Tim and Andrew?

Thanks, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

To: Gina Hugo < Gina. Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us >

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Hi Gina -

Did you receive the email below with attachments? I understand that my initial email may have not been received by all participants.

Thank you for confirming.

Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

From: Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 4:03 PM

**To:** Gina Hugo <<u>Gina.Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us</u>>; Terry Kemper <<u>terry.kemper@millelacsband.com</u>>; <a href="mailto:samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov">samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov</a>; Cheyanne St. John <<u>cheyanne.stjohn@lowersioux.com</u>>; Andrew Witter <Andrew.Witter@co.sherburne.mn.us>; Tim Sime <Tim.Sime@co.sherburne.mn.us>; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG

<<u>mhagelin@GREnergy.com</u>>; Solis, Joshua <<u>Joshua.Solis@hdrinc.com</u>>; <u>dschmidt@hdrinc.com</u>

<an.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <allerdam, Compared to the compare

< <u>HWallerPitts@fredlaw.com</u>>; Bring, Jennifer < <u>Jennifer.Bring@hdrinc.com</u>>

Cc: Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>

Subject: RE: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

Good afternoon -

Thank you very much for meeting last week. We really appreciate your time and insight on the Northland Reliability Project (NRP). Please find the following attached your review and use:

- Meeting notes
- PDF of the PowerPoint
- Shapefile of the Route Corridor

I'm checking with GRE's Vegetation Management team regarding controlled burns for maintenance. I'll let you know next week.

Please let us know of any questions. Note that the NRP team will be at open house meetings this week and next week, therefore we may have delayed replies to emails.

We look forward to our next meeting. Thank you, Brian

## **Brian Hunker**

**Great River Energy** 

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

**To:** Gina Hugo; Terry Kemper; <a href="mailto:samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov">samanthao@uppersiouxcommunity-nsn.gov</a>; Cheyanne St. John; Andrew Witter; Tim Sime; Hagelin, Matthew GRE-MG; Solis, Joshua; <a href="mailto:dschmidt@hdrinc.com">dschmidt@hdrinc.com</a>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG; Hunker, Brian GRE-MG

Subject: Big Elk Lake - Great River Energy Transmission Line

When: Friday, January 20, 2023 2:15 PM-3:15 PM (UTC-06:00) Central Time (US & Canada).

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

This email was sent by an external sender. Opening attachments or clicking links from untrusted sources may cause damage to you and Great River Energy.

Thank you all for helping to coordinate a time for this meeting. See meeting link and call-in information below.

Sincerely,



## Gina M. Hugo

Sherburne County Public Works – Parks Coordinator

Work: (763) 765 – 3308 www.co.sherburne.mn.us

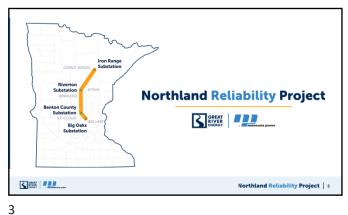
www.facebook.com/SherburneCountyMN

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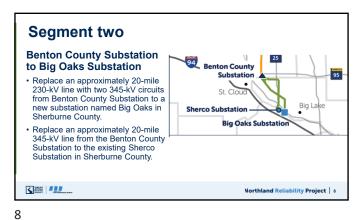


Fulfilling a need Maintaining reliability Strengthening resiliency Enhancing flexibility Enabling clean energy Provide system support as energy esources continue to S SHEAT STATE SHEAT Northland Reliability Project | 4

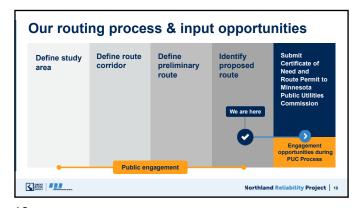


Two main project segments • Segment one: Iron Range Substation to Riverton Substation to Benton **County Substation** • Segment two: Benton County Substation to Big Oaks Substation GREAT INDIA Northland Reliability Project

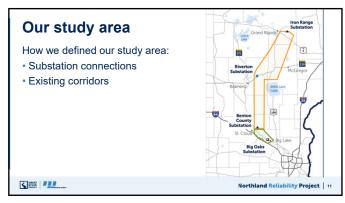


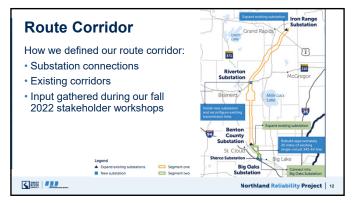


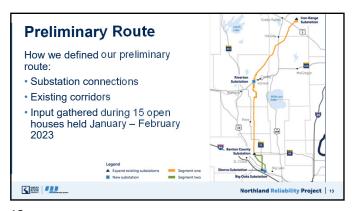




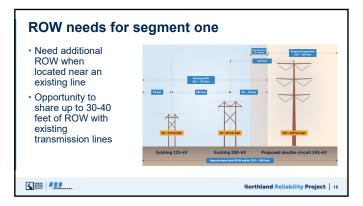
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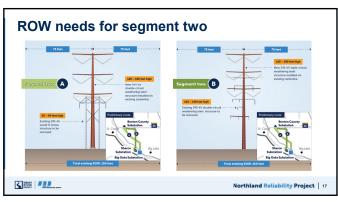


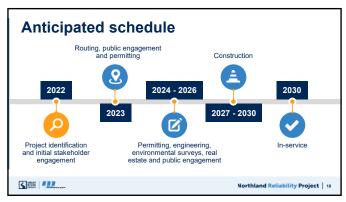






15 16









**Township Correspondence** 

**From:** Hunker, Brian GRE-MG <bhunker@GREnergy.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 9:03 AM

**To:** Schmidt, Dan <dan.schmidt@hdrinc.com>; Bentz, Nick <Nicholas.Bentz@hdrinc.com>; Greene Guentzel, Amanda <Amanda.GreeneGuentzel@hdrinc.com>; Northland Reliability Project <connect@northlandreliabilityproject.com>; GRE NRP <grenrp@GREnergy.com>

**Cc:** Hyland, Emily <emily.hyland@hdrinc.com>; Lesher, Dan GRE-MG <dlesher@GREnergy.com>; Zach Golkowski (MP) <zgolkowski@mnpower.com>; Jim Atkinson (MP) <JBATKINSON@mnpower.com>

**Subject:** NRP - Minnesota Association of Township Meeting Notes

CAUTION: [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello -

On Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, I presented about the Northland Reliability Project's need, route development, preliminary route, and estimated right-of-way to the Minnesota Township Board. The Board was appreciative of the information and presentation. Township Directors asked questions and comments, as follows:

- Townships are worried about their township roads and the affect NRP will have on them.
  - Brought up transportation plans for materials
  - Road use agreements
  - Road maintenance, grading, and addition of new gravel or materials
- GRE and MP made it clear that we would continue to work with the townships to come up with agreements and terms of maintenance
- Townships want to make sure we take care of maintenance issues well in advance to make sure their roads are taken care of and brought back to equal or better standards than preconstruction
- Creation of maps and transportation plans to provide townships with details on haul routes, egress, and ingress
- Townships asked about sources of generation
  - GRE and Minnesota Power spoke about the wide range of generation that the NRP would utilize
    - Wind, solar, coal, and natural gas
- Some townships are worried about solar project and affects to prime farmland
  - Impacts to farm lands and destruction of property
  - Township Director was not a proponent of large scale solar
- Is there a decommission bond, like solar projects
- Talked about the future of coal and renewable energy
  - Minnesota Power spoke to the current administration and the phasing out of coal generation. However, there is no set timeframe for when that will happen. NRP line will help alleviate problems when coal is offline in the future.

- Discussed the easement acquisition and the process of real estate
- Requested follow-up meetings with
  - District 8 in Crow Wing, Morrison, and Benton counties
  - District 7 in Sherburne County
  - District 11 in Itasca and Aitkin counties

Thank you, Brian

#### **Brian Hunker**

## **Transmission Permitting, Project Manager**

Great River Energy 12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 55369-4718

Tel: 763-445-5982 | Cell: 763-334-0577

BHunker@GREnergy.com

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