

From: MN Wild Rice Council <wr@mnwildrice.org>
Sent: Friday, October 25, 2013 12:24 PM
To: #PUC_Public Comments
Subject: Great Northern Transmission Line Comments
Attachments: Great Northern Transmission Comments.pdf

October 25, 2013

Burl Haar, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

Re: *Installation of the Great Northern Transmission Line*

Dear Mr. Haar:

As President of the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council I would like to express concern regarding the proposed route of the Great Northern Transmission Line immediately east of Upper Red Lake near Waskish, MN. This route holds the potential to disrupt one of the major cultivated wild rice production areas of the state of Minnesota and we feel strongly that more prudent alternatives exist.

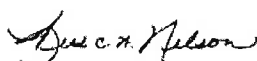
Minnesota has three major cultivated wild rice growing regions: Deer River/Aitkin, Clearbrook/Gonvick, and Waskish/Kelliher. The Waskish/Kelliher area lies directly in the path of one of the proposed routes of the Great Northern Transmission Line. If chosen, this route stands to negatively impact area farming and cultivated wild rice production in a number of ways.

Because much of the land in the proposed Waskish/Kelliher area is not suitable for cultivation, available farmland is at a premium. Every acre of land that is utilized for the construction of transmission towers is an acre that is not in production. As one of the 10 poorest counties in Minnesota, Beltrami County relies heavily on the economic output generated by every acre of agricultural production. Additionally, if transmission lines are located on or near tillable land it constitutes a deadly hazard for aerial applicators which are required to apply certain crop protection tools for proper agronomic management.

We believe a more prudent alternative to the proposed Waskish route would be the Littlefork route which would greatly reduce the impact on production agriculture, reduce the dangers posed to aerial applicators, and run parallel to an existing line.

If you should have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Sincerely,



Beth Nelson
President

Jon Dockter, Associate Director



Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

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