



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 14, 2015

Carol Overland
1110 West Avenue
Red Wing, MN 55066

SUBJECT: Invitation to Consult on the Proposed Great Northern Transmission Line Project

Dear Ms. Overland,

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Energy's (DOE's or the Department's) review of the proposed Great Northern Transmission Line (GNTL) project under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). DOE is contacting you because you submitted comment(s) related to cultural resources during the open NEPA public scoping period for the proposed GNTL project.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and 36 CFR Part 800, "Protection of Historic Properties," the DOE is initiating the Section 106 consultation process on the proposed GNTL project to determine any potential adverse effects on historic properties and cultural resources. The Department is meeting its obligations under the NHPA concurrently with the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) pursuant to NEPA.

As you are aware, Minnesota Power, an operating division of ALLETE, Inc., has applied to DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability for a Presidential permit to construct, operate, maintain, and connect an electric transmission line across the U.S.-Canada border. The proposal comprises an approximately 220-mile, overhead, single-circuit 500 kV AC transmission line between the Minnesota - Manitoba border crossing northwest of Roseau, Minnesota, and terminating at the existing Blackberry 230/115 kV Substation near Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Minnesota Power's proposal includes associated substation facilities and transmission system modifications at the Blackberry Substation site, and construction of a new 500 kV Series Compensation Station (a structure which will house the 500 kV series capacitor banks necessary for reliable operation and performance of the proposed transmission line). A new Blackberry 500 kV Substation would be required for the proposed Project and would be constructed adjacent to and east of the existing Blackberry 230/115 kV Substation.

Minnesota Power is also seeking federal authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – St. Paul District (USACE) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), both cooperating agencies to DOE in the preparation of the above mentioned EIS. DOE is acting as the lead federal agency for purposes of compliance with Section 106 for the NEPA cooperating agencies (per 36 CFR § 800.2(a)(2)).

Under Section 106 of the NHPA, the DOE must identify and consider the potential effects of its actions on historic properties through a collaborative framework (consultation) to identify historic properties potentially affected by the proposed project, assess its effects, and seek ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects to historic properties (36 CFR §800.1(a)). In addition to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Indian tribes, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), Section 106 consulting parties may include certain individuals and

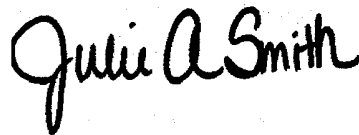
organizations with a demonstrated interest in the undertaking due to the nature of their legal or economic relation to the undertaking or affected properties, or their concern with the undertaking's effects on historic properties (36 CFR §800.2). General information about the Section 106 process is available through the ACHP website www.achp.org.

If you would like to participate in the Section 106 consultation process, please confirm your interest in this invitation within 30 calendar days of the date of this letter, by sending a response letter that indicates your interest to act as a Section 106 consulting party for the proposed GNTL project as an attachment to an email at Juliea.Smith@hq.doe.gov, or by postal mail to 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20585. Please also include information about your demonstrated legal or economic relation to the undertaking or to properties potentially affected by the proposed GNTL project in your response letter. If no response is received from you within the time specified, the DOE will remove you from consideration as a Section 106 consulting party for this project.

For information on DOE's NEPA review and preparation of the EIS, please visit the DOE GNTL EIS website at <http://www.GreatNorthernEIS.org>. The GNTL Presidential permit application (including an initial cultural resources study as "Appendix G" to the application), and the *Great Northern Transmission Line Scoping Summary Report* (November 2014) can be viewed on this website. Future information from the DOE, relevant to the Section 106 consultation (once underway), will also be posted to this webpage.

Please feel free to contact me at the above email address or (202) 586-7668 with any other questions or concerns.

Respectfully yours,



Julie Ann Smith, PhD
Principal NEPA Document Manager
National Electricity Delivery Division, OE-20
Office of Electricity Delivery and
Energy Reliability
U.S. Department of Energy

Enclosed:

- GNTL Project Regional Map (from GNTL Scoping Summary Report)

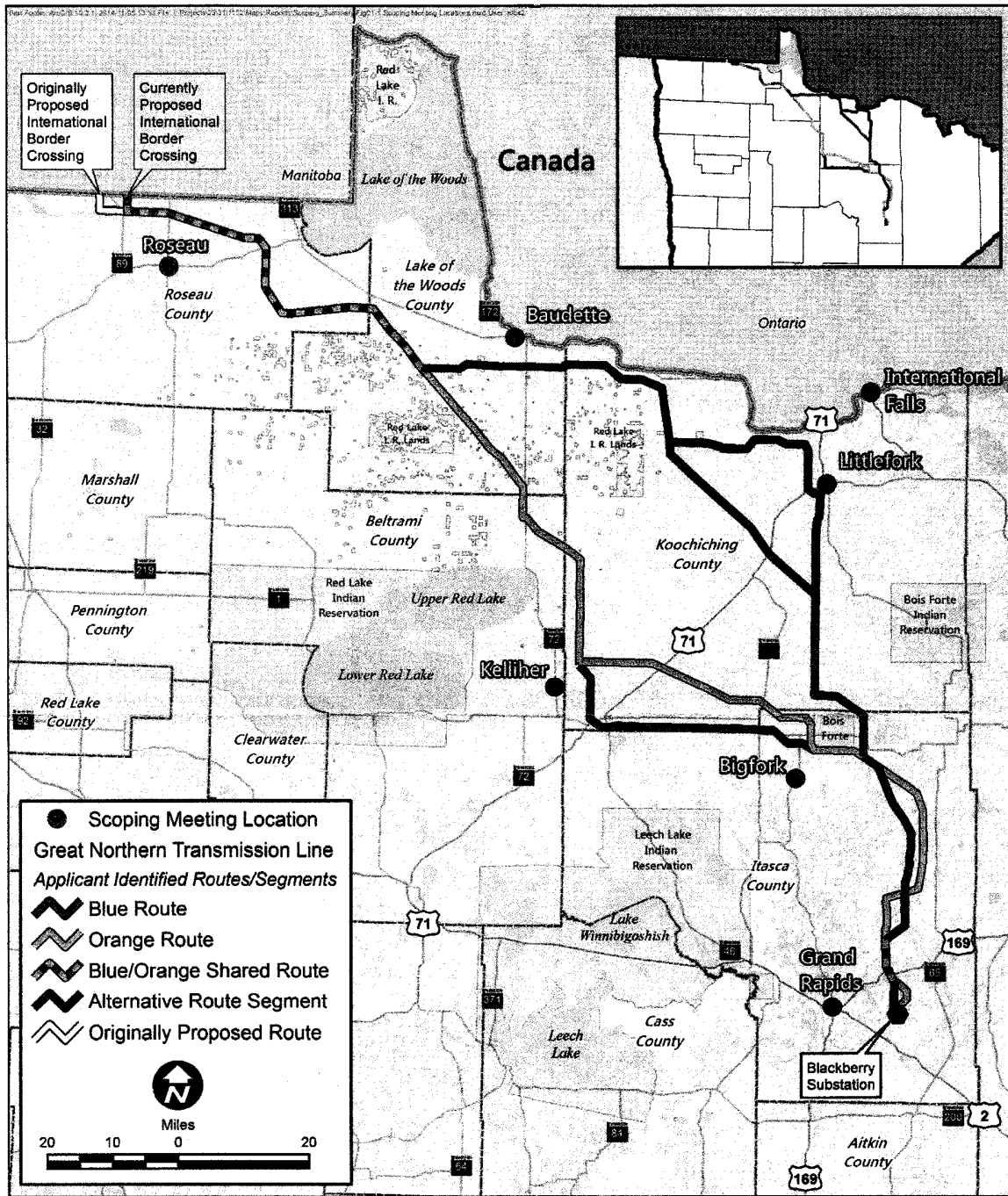


Figure 1-1 Project Regional Map