



Issued: June 19, 2015

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, STATE PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS AND FEDERAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

In the Matter of the Route Permit and Presidential Permit Applications by Minnesota Power for the Great Northern Transmission Line Project and Associated Facilities in Beltrami, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Roseau Counties

**PUC Docket Nos. ET015/TL-14-21
DOE/EIS 0499**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) have released the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the proposed Great Northern Transmission Line (GNTL) project in the counties of Beltrami, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Roseau counties. The Department and DOE will conduct joint public information meetings at the following locations and times to provide opportunities for public comment on the DEIS:

COUNTY	CITY	MEETING LOCATION	DATE AND TIME
Roseau	Roseau	Roseau Civic Center 121 Center Street E	Wednesday, July 15, 2015 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Lake of the Woods	Baudette	Lake of the Woods School 236 15 th Ave SW	Wednesday, July 15, 2015 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Koochiching	Littlefork	Littlefork Community Center 220 Main St	Thursday, July 16, 2015 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Koochiching	International Falls	AmericInn 1500 Hwy 71	Thursday, July 16, 2015 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Beltrami	Kelliher	Kelliher Old School Center 243 Clark Avenue N (Highway 72)	Tuesday, July 21, 2015 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Itasca	Bigfork	Bigfork School 100 Huskie Blvd	Tuesday, July 21, 2015 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm
Itasca	Grand Rapids	Timber Lake Lodge 144 SE 17th Street	Wednesday, July 22, 2015 11:00 am – 3:00 pm
Itasca	Grand Rapids	Timber Lake Lodge 144 SE 17th Street	Wednesday, July 22, 2015 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Department and DOE staff will make a brief introductory statement at each meeting. Following this, members of the public will have an opportunity to provide comments to the Department and DOE on the DEIS. Each meeting will offer the same information and opportunity to comment.

Comments are sought on information that needs to be clarified in the DEIS to ensure that the final EIS is complete and accurate. Comments received on the DEIS will be used by the Department and DOE to prepare a final EIS for the project.

The Department and DOE will accept written comments on the DEIS through **Monday, August 10, 2015**. Please include the PUC docket number TL-14-21 and the DOE number EIS-0499 on all comments.

Comments on the DEIS should be mailed, emailed or faxed to:

William Cole Storm, Environmental Review Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101
Fax: 651-539-0109 | bill.storm@state.mn.us

Comments on the DEIS and the DOE Presidential permit decision should be mailed, emailed or faxed to:

Julie Ann Smith, PhD, Federal Document Manager
DOE Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC, 20585
Fax: 202-586-1472 | juliea.smith@hq.doe.gov

Comments can also be submitted electronically at: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities> and/or <http://www.greatnortherneis.org>.

The Department and DOE are sharing all comments received on the DEIS by the means delineated above, so comments only need to be submitted once to either the state environmental review manager or the DOE federal document manager via fax, phone, mail, email or submitted on either website provided above.

The DEIS can be viewed on the Department's energy facility permitting website: <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/Docket.html?Id=34161>, as well as on the DOE EIS website <http://greatnortherneis.org>.

The DEIS can also be viewed through the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's website: www.puc.state.mn.us, select "Search eDockets," enter the year ("14") and the docket number ("21), and select "Search."

The DEIS will be available for viewing at the following public libraries:

- Baudette Library, 110 1st Street SW, Baudette
- Blackduck Public Library, 72 1st Street SE, Blackduck
- Bovey Public Library, 402 2nd Street, Bovey
- Calumet Library, 932 Gary Street, Calumet

- Coleraine Public Library, 203 Cole Street, Coleraine
- Duluth Public Library, 520 W Superior Street, Duluth
- Grand Rapids Public Library, 140 NE 2nd Street, Grand Rapids
- Greenbush Public Library, PO Box 9, Greenbush
- International Falls Public Library, 750 4th Street, International Falls
- Marble Public Library, 302 Alice Avenue, Marble
- Northome Public Library, 12064 Main Street, Northome
- Roseau Public Library, 121 Center Street E, Suite 100, Roseau
- Warroad Public Library, 202 Main Avenue NE, Warroad
- Williams Public Library, 350 Main Street, Williams

Review copies of the DEIS, as well as a limited number of electronic copies (on CD), will be available at the public information meetings.

Project Description. Minnesota Power has proposed to construct an approximately 220 mile long, 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would cross the international border in Roseau County, and depending on final route, would cut across Beltrami, Koochiching and Lake of the Woods counties and terminate at the Blackberry Substation near Grand Rapids in Itasca County.

The project also includes a substation upgrade and other associated facilities.

Federal Review Process. Transmission lines that cross an international border require a Presidential permit from the DOE. DOE's National Electricity Delivery Division, in the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE), is responsible for issuing Presidential permits for electric transmission facilities.

State of Minnesota Review Process. In order to construct the proposed transmission line project, Minnesota Power must obtain from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) HVTL a Route Permit.

Environmental Review. Department Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) staff is responsible for conducting environmental review for route permit applications submitted to the Commission. Because the potential issuance of a Presidential permit for the GNTL project constitutes a major Federal Action, DOE must consider the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, and a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In order to avoid duplication, DOC EERA and the DOE have prepared a single DEIS to comply with the environmental review requirements under both the State and Federal regulations.

The EIS evaluates the potential human and environmental impacts of Minnesota Power's proposed project and possible mitigation measures, including route alternatives. The EIS analyzes and compares potential impacts and mitigation measures such that citizens, local governments, agencies, and the Commission can work from a common set of facts. The EIS is issued in draft form so that it can be improved through public comment.

State Route Permit Public Hearings. The Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) will conduct Public Hearings on Minnesota Power’s route permit application. These hearings are anticipated to be held in the project area the weeks of August 3rd and 10th, 2015, and will be presided over by Administrative Law Judge Ann C. O’Reilly from the OAH. Notice of the hearings will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons on the project mailing list. Interested persons will have an opportunity at the hearings to ask questions, provide comments, submit evidence, and advocate for the route(s) that they believe are most appropriate for the project.

Judge O’Reilly will submit a report to the Commission that includes findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommendations on Minnesota Power’s application. The Commission will use the report in deciding whether to grant a route permit, and to select the appropriate route for the project.

Project Mailing List. To sign up for the project mailing list, contact the state or federal environmental review or document manager or state public advisor (see below).

Subscribe to the Docket. In addition to the project mailing list, interested persons can receive email notification every time new documents are filed in the route permit docket for this project by signing up at: www.puc.state.mn.us, select “Subscribe to a Docket,” and follow the prompts. Note – subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

State Project Contacts. If you have questions or would like more information, contact environmental review manager Bill Storm (651-539-1844 or 1-800-657-3794, bill.storm@state.mn.us) or public advisor Tracy Smetana (651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782, consumer.puc@state.mn.us).

Federal Project Contact. If you have questions or would like more information about the federal NEPA process and the DOE’s Presidential permit program, contact federal document manager, Julie A Smith, PhD (202-586-7668; juliea.smith@hq.doe.gov).

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651-539-1530.

