



30 west superior street / duluth, minnesota 55802-2093 / fax: 218-723-3955 /www.allete.com

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
218-723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

October 29, 2012

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

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

Re: In the Matter of the Request by Minnesota Power for a
Certificate of Need for the Great Northern Transmission Line
Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163

Dear Dr. Haar:

Minnesota Power hereby electronically submits its Notice Plan for the Great Northern Transmission Line.

Please contact me at the number above should you have any questions related to this submission.

Yours truly,

David R. Moeller

kl
Attachments
c: Service List



STATE OF MINNESOTA)
) ss
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS)

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE VIA
ELECTRONIC FILING

Kristie Lindstrom of the City of Duluth, County of St. Louis, State of Minnesota, says that on the 29th day of October, 2012, she served Minnesota Power's Notice Plan regarding the Great Northern Transmission Line to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the Energy Resources Division of the Minnesota Department of Commerce via electronic filing. The remaining parties on the attached service list were served as so indicated on the list.

/s/ Kristie Lindstrom

Subscribed and sworn to before
me this 29th day of October, 2012.

/s/ Sheryl A Miskowski

Notary Public - Minnesota
My Commission Expires Jan. 31, 2015

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Julia	Anderson	Julia.Anderson@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	1800 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012134	Electronic Service	Yes	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Christopher	Anderson	canderson@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 558022191	Electronic Service	Yes	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 500 Saint Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	Yes	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Elizabeth	Goodpaster	bgoodpaster@mncenter.org	MN Center for Environmental Advocacy	Suite 206 26 East Exchange Street St. Paul, MN 551011667	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Burl W.	Haar	burl.haar@state.mn.us	Public Utilities Commission	Suite 350 121 7th Place East St. Paul, MN 551012147	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Margaret	Hodnik	mhodnik@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Lori	Hoyum	lhoyum@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Jodi	Johnson	jjjohnson@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 W. Superior St. Duluth, MN 55802	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
John A.	Knapp	jknapp@winthrop.com	Winthrop & Weinstine	Suite 3500 225 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, MN 554024629	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Michael	Krikava	mkrikava@briggs.com	Briggs And Morgan, P.A.	2200 IDS Center 80 S 8th St Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
James D.	Larson		Avant Energy Services	200 S 6th St Ste 300 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_Minnesota Power General Service List

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Douglas	Larson	dlarson@dakotaelectric.com	Dakota Electric Association	4300 220th St W Farmington, MN 55024	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
John	Lindell	agorud.ecf@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012130	Electronic Service	Yes	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Susan	Ludwig	sludwig@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Pam	Marshall	pam@energycents.org	Energy CENTS Coalition	823 7th St E St. Paul, MN 55106	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
David	Moeller	dmoeller@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 558022093	Electronic Service	Yes	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Andrew	Moratzka	apm@mcmlaw.com	Mackall, Crouse and Moore	1400 AT&T Tower 901 Marquette Ave Minneapolis, MN 55402	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Thomas	Scharff	thomas.scharff@newpagecorp.com	New Page Corporation	P.O. Box 8050 610 High Street Wisconsin Rapids, WI 544958050	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Ron	Spangler, Jr.	rlspangler@otpc.com	Otter Tail Power Company	215 So. Cascade St. PO Box 496 Fergus Falls, MN 565380496	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Eric	Swanson	eswanson@winthrop.com	Winthrop Weinstine	225 S 6th St Ste 3500 Capella Tower Minneapolis, MN 554024629	Electronic Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List
Karen	Turnboom	karen.turnboom@newpagecorp.com	NewPage Corporation	100 Central Avenue Duluth, MN 55807	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Laurance R.	Waldoch		Lindquist & Vennum	4200 IDS Center 80 South 8th Street Minneapolis, MN 554022274	Paper Service	No	GEN_SL_Minnesota Power_GEN_SL_Minnesot a Power_Minnesota Power General Service List

Jay Porter
American Transmission Company
PO Box 47
Waukesha, WI 53187

Heidi Hahn
4778 Chester Avenue
Webster, MN 55088

Christian Rieck
2819 167th Lane NW
Andover, MN 55304

Glen Skarbakka
Great River Energy
12300 Elm Creek Blvd
Maple Grove, MN 55369

Dana Slade
Avant Energy Services
200 South Sixth Street
Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Jenny Frost
Ulteig Engineers
5201 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55421

Rick Howden
Congressman Tim Walz
227 E Main Street
Suite 220
Mankato, MN 56001

Vickie Hessenius
69144 270th Street
Dexter, MN 55926

Jeff Vetsch
CERTs
112 Norwood St.
New London, MN 56273

Curt and Mary Pat Gohmann
35123 County Road 2
St. Joseph, MN 56374

Kris Henry
28441 Garrett Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057

Karen Hammel
Attorney General's Office
1400 Bremer Tower
445 Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Derek Brandt
Hartford Group Inc.
PO Box 46425
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Cal Dufault
14893 Wilds Pkwy. NW
Prior Lake, MN 55372

David Richardson
AMEC
Midwest Plaza Bldg. Suite 1200
800 Marquette Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Elling Olson
M A Mortenson Co.
700 Meadow Lane North
Minneapolis, MN 55422

Janet Straub
P. O. Box 43
Le Sueur, MN 56058

Paul Entinger
13821 300th St.
New Prague, MN 56071

Peter Bellig
207 Cedar Cliff Road
Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Joe Butner
The StressCrete Group
14503 Wallick Rd.
Atchison, KS 66002

Patrick Edwards
10006 305th Street West
Northfield, MN 55057

Brian Mitchell
Corval Group
1633 Eustis Street
St. Paul, MN 55108

Michael Pangborn
NextEra Energy Resources
14000 Sundial Ct
Eden Prairie, MN 55346

Emily Dalager
400 First Ave North
Suite 535
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Adam Sokolski
Iberdrola Renewables
701 4th Avenue South
Suite 1010
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Michael Dolan
6117 Scotia Drive
Edina, MN 55439

Steven Mittelstaedt
32097 Sanborn Dr
montgomery, MN 56069

Steven Swenson
Pipestone Publishing
115 2nd St. NE
Pipestone, MN 56164

James Voller
33038 102nd Ave
St. Joseph, MN 56374

Floyd Guajardo
PennWell Corporation
1455 West Loop South
Suite 400
Houston, TX 77027

Linda Hanson
W 1806 Wilson Rd
Hawkins, WI 54530

Guy Wolf
Board Member of Clean Wisconsin
N3421 Mohawk Valley Road
Stoddard, WI 54658

George Crocker
North American Water
PO Box 174
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

Dale Fredrickson
12406 347th Street
Lindstrom, MN 55045

Kim Lindquist
City of Rosemount
2875 145th Street W
Rosemount, MN 55068

Eric Swanson
Winthrop and Weinstine P.A.
225 South Sixth Street
Suite 3500
Minneapolis, MN 55102

Huck Finn
API construction Company
1100 Old Hwy 8 N.W.
New Brighton, MN 55112

Todd Sherman
Dept. of Transportation
Wateres Edge
1500 W. Co. Rd. B2
Roseville, MN 55113

Emily Ulmer
Sierra Club
85 Second Street
2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Jeremy Duehr
Malcolm Pirnie Inc
924 Vista Ridge Lane
Shakopee, MN 55379

Forum Communications
Pressroom B12C
State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Eric Hansen
Pinnacle Engineering Inc.
11541 95th Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN 55369

SaGonna Thompson
Xcel Energy
414 Nicollet Mall
5th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Stoei Rivesllp
33 South 6th Street
Suite 4200
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Wanda Davies
Navitas Energy
3001 Broadway St. NE
Suite 695
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Kristen Eide-Tollefson
429 SE 14th Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Michelle Bissonnette
HDR
701 Xenia Avenue South
Suite 600
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Angela Piner
HDR
701 Xenia Avenue South
Suite 600
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Hadley Davis
Sierra Club
85 Second St.
San Francisco, CA 94105

Tony Sullins
USFWS
4101 American Blvd. E.
Bloomington, MN 55425

Ledy Dunkle
Aldridge Electric Inc.
844 East Rockland Road
Libertyville, IL 60048

Randy and Rose Haseleu
420 South Hoyt
Springfield, MN 56087

Bret Eknes
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

Deb Pile
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Suite 500
85 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Bill Storm
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Suite 500
85 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Kate O'Connell
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Suite 500
85 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Steve Rakow
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Suite 500
85 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Sharon Ferguson
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Suite 500
85 7th Place East
St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Residential Small Business Utilities Div.
Attorney General
445 Minnesota Street
Suite 900
St. Paul, MN 55103-2127

Kyle MacLaury
212 3rd Avenue North
Suite 560
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Michelle Bouta
323 West Schleiman Avenue
Appleton, MN 56208

kari_krause@yahoo.com; karensouthern@hotmail.com; scott.johnson@ci.medina.mn.us;
suzz@visi.com; mmm123usa@gmail.com; vtwwtv@gmail.com; twodogdeb@aol.com;
noofdog@gmail.com; bcbbwca@gmail.com; balm38@yahoo.com; lonabrams@yahoo.com;
TPORTER@REYNOLDSINC.COM; john@nationalpoleandstructure.com;
jthayer@rockfordconstruction.com; ttadych@atcllc.com; bruce@ranww.org;
tscriven@rvtcorp.com; bbfaif@frontiernet.net; cftownship@frontiernet.net;
michellemcmorrow@yahoo.com; rickscherping@hotmail.com; peteadelmann@yahoo.com;
jcardozo@mobilemini.com; marshman1@hotmail.com; dbpasse@embarqmail.com;
nicolairepair@embarqmail.com; be682@msn.com; reneyd@msn.com; mariner@eldinc.com;
charles_koen@msn.com; mike@scrupleshaircare.com; msp@sei.cmu.edu;
dimiller55@means.net; bettyz@means.net; ljvorwerk@yahoo.com;
ru4longboarding@yahoo.com; o_hogwash@yahoo.com; barbara@powersys.com;
overland@legalelectric.org; LCrum@lisacrumlaw.com; cynat@bevcomm.net; ninjette@msn.com;
org49ero@yahoo.com; david.birkholz@state.mn.us; cheryl.olsen@metc.state.mn.us;
tricia.debleeckere@state.mn.us; kate.oconnell@state.mn.us; jim.larsen@metc.state.mn.us;
ruccolo@fresh-energy.org; swnyhus@flaherty-hood.com; garletz@mncounties.org;
pmaccabec@visi.com; melissa.doperalski@state.mn.us; tkaufman@wellingtonmgt.com;
karen.kromar@state.mn.us; becky.coates@psiusa.com; andrew.koebrick@state.mn.us;
stacy.kotch@state.mn.us; elise.doucette@pca.state.mn.us; jamie.schrenzel@state.mn.us;
billheaney@billheaney.com; hartman.larry@gmail.com; pjholman@frontiernet.net;
elfe0012@umn.edu; p.griese@mchsi.com; tb3bars69@yahoo.com; smccurry@visi.com;
stevebubb@gmail.com; denoonan20@msn.com; cjbljb@gmail.com; rhenry@tcwr.net;
goffwe@earthlink.net; timhunstad@hotmail.com; ehlen@mchsi.com;
dale.beckmann@westwoodps.com; dgorshe@iret.com; kevsuealex@aol.com;
dhickeymn@yahoo.com; callis2@embarqmail.com; bambrose@grenergy.com;
MStrohfus@GREnergy.com; msteckelberg@grenergy.com;
bschultz@houstonengineeringinc.com; virginiaantony@edinarealty.com;
brian.r.zelenak@xcelenergy.com; kmaclaury@mncee.org; adina.r.florea@xcelenergy.com;
brown.andrew@dorseylaw.com; jdrawz@fredlaw.com; brian.meloy@leonard.com;
james.bertrand@leonard.com; vherring@briggs.com; shirleymidtownphillips@msn.com;
cesia.kearns@sierraclub.org; tedebearmark@msn.com; matthias@projectresources.net;
kswenson@windpower.com; dgerber@cleanwater.org; dmorris@ilsr.org;
ward06counciloffice@ci.minneapolis.mn.us; fignat@comcast.net;
scottw@wagnergreenhouses.com; gmarkegard@ci.bloomington.mn.us; brian.long@ulteig.com;
jgale@fpdpower.com; pbartell@volco.net; rminer@marcyconstruction.com;
bhegerle@marcyconstruction.com; mvezina@muellersales.com;
barbarab@acornenvironmental.com; joshua.bird@ge.com; sindust1@msn.com; jlee@barr.com;
lsegroves@barr.com; justin@geronimowind.com; chuckh@electrotech-inc.com;
hdrider4710@aol.com; wooder59@yahoo.com; aemahan@me.com; jafgol@gmail.com;
jamie.s.nickel@comcast.net; themoellers_2@hotmail.com; m.raquet@comcast.net;
danders542000@gmail.com; lselingerx@aol.com; stuelpner@comcast.net;
ajbuckalew@yahoo.com; cdlee1@comcast.net; shawbad@msn.com; jjeisenmann@comcast.net;
pamroge@gmail.com; annciardelli@gmail.com; lorapinetree@gmail.com;
shaneske@hibbing.k12.mn.us; tswafford@umsi.us; kjp@ibew160.org; drohl24057@aol.com;
james_9mm@yahoo.com; jmkocer@myclearwave.net; maebowman@aol.com;
chad@ibewlocal343.org; wcook@rpu.org; jmalwitz@yahoo.com; niftyfarm@myclearwave.net;

cowguy@kmwb.net; lorrykzbag@hotmail.com; mary.greening@co.dodge.mn.us;
sgau@sleepyeyetel.net; lvscheffler@hotmail.com; beaukenedy@yahoo.com;
baertlein.cheryl@mayo.edu; rtlyke@pitel.net; muller.sharon@mayo.edu;
mdavidson@isd2899.k12.mn.us; josephmorse@hotmail.com; patrick.anderson@lee.net;
mapanorman@usfamily.net; stephanie.nyhus@state.mn.us; rschumacher@is-ea.com;
kristines@mvec.net; lorift@utplus.com; fcswcd@bevcomm.net; jahffmn@bevcomm.net;
benjamin.schaefer@dnr.state.mn.us; kevin.mixon@dnr.state.mn.us; slwithers@nfpinc.com;
pands@nobleswildblue.com; phydev@swrdc.org; michelle.bouta@umvrdc.org;
amsjoe350@yahoo.com; dplagge@fageneng.com; crude@mvtvwireless.com;
pat_stengel@hotmail.com; ddrusch@redred.com; rschroeder@frandsenbank.com;
julie@redwoodfalls.org; celtichand56@yahoo.com; darrenk@kenningoutsource.com;
fassettj@iemenergy.com; stvelisa9@aol.com; bmo2504@juno.com;
sjewell02@hamlineuniversity.edu; sjnotch@albanytel.com; cmueller@wildblue.net ;
jckueb@clearwire.net; llegal@yahoo.com; rothaus@trefoilcultural.com;
tom@nationalconductor.com; annetter@nationalconductor.com; wayne@wcif.org;
katstradley@gmail.com; naherzog@msn.com; toddmorse@cableone.net;
jacquijovonovich@gmail.com; jrwright@bemidji.k12.mn.us; kageb1@gvtel.com;
dmelvie@wiktel.com; keevinkellyn@swiftel.net; sswartz@braunintertec.com;
skdelong@polarcomm.com; mbates@dadco.com; amy@duraflexinc.com;
timothy_fehr@transcanada.com; marco.trivellizzi@kiewit.com; pkennon@acciona-na.com; mir-
mir-z@suddenlink.net; chad.galloway@arionenergy.com; masnd76@cox.net;
halicarlson@kmts.ca;

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Request by Minnesota
Power for a Certificate of Need for the Great
Northern Transmission Line

Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163

NOTICE PLAN

NOTICE PLAN: GREAT NORTHERN TRANSMISSION LINE

**Public Comments on this Notice Plan can be submitted to the Minnesota
Public Utilities Commission until 4:30 PM November 19, 2012**

**Replies to Comments can be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities
Commission until 4:30 PM December 10, 2012**

Introduction

Minnesota Power submits this Notice Plan for approval by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) pursuant to Minn. Rules 7829.2550. Minnesota Power, along with potentially several other participants, intends to file an application for a Certificate of Need (“CoN”) for the Great Northern Transmission Line (“Project”) in early 2013. The Project includes high voltage connections between the province of Manitoba in Canada and the Arrowhead Substation in St. Louis County, Minnesota to enable additional deliveries from

Manitoba Hydro to meet existing and future energy needs. Minnesota Power is proposing to construct a 500 kV transmission line from the border that would terminate at the Blackberry Substation in Itasca County (approximately 225 to 300 miles) and a 345 kV double circuit transmission line between the Blackberry Substation and the Arrowhead Substation near Hermantown (approximately 50 to 70 miles).

The Great Northern Transmission Line is intended to provide delivery and access to power generated by Manitoba Hydro's hydroelectric stations in Manitoba, Canada. Minnesota Power needs this line to deliver at least 250 MW of energy and capacity by June 1, 2020 under a Power Purchase Agreement ("PPA") approved by the Commission in Docket No. E015/M-11-938. Several other items are driving the need for a new transmission line to be built from Manitoba, Canada to Minnesota Power's Arrowhead Substation. These include access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability. The Project is intended to facilitate increased imports from Manitoba of up to 1,100 MW to support the regional transmission system and to serve load.

The first step in the regulatory process is to establish a Notice Plan to provide potentially interested people the opportunity to participate in the CoN proceeding. A CoN is required under Minn. Stat. § 216B.243 for a high voltage transmission line ("HVTL") of the voltages and lengths contemplated for the Great Northern Transmission Line. Minn. Rules 7829.2550 requires that persons seeking a CoN for a HVTL must file a Notice Plan with the Commission three months before filing a CoN application.

The northern portion of the Notice Plan corridor begins at the Minnesota/Manitoba border and includes three potential international border crossings near US Highway 59 in Kittson

County, County State Aid Highway 24 along the Kittson/Roseau County border, and Minnesota Trunk Highway 89 in Roseau County. The extent of this portion of the Notice Plan corridor generally heads in a southeasterly direction, terminating at the Blackberry Substation in Itasca County. The western border of the Notice Plan corridor was selected by using changes in soil types that would make construction more difficult, and it extends to the south to Brooks. The southern border of the northern Notice Plan corridor runs between Clearbrook and Blackduck. The eastern edge of the northern Notice Plan corridor is generally along the existing Minnesota Power 230 kV transmission line near the St. Louis County boundary. This area will be the Notice Plan area for the 500 kV portion of the Project.

The southern portion of the Notice Plan corridor begins at the Blackberry Substation and terminates at the Arrowhead Substation in St Louis County. The corridor generally runs in a southeast direction generally bound on the west by US Highway 2 and on the east by US Highway 53. Both Notice Plan corridors contain many infrastructure sharing opportunities, including existing roadways, electric transmission lines, and gas pipelines.

With the exception of a few communities along the Iron Range, cities have been removed from the corridors. Large water bodies, Scientific & Natural Areas, and State Parks have also been removed from the corridors. Large areas of open wooded wetland were also removed from the corridors when there was not existing infrastructure nearby.

Summary of Plan

The Notice Plan for the Great Northern Transmission Line includes a number of steps to inform and collect information from local governments, landowners and the general public of the proposed project. These steps include:

- Outreach with local, state, and federal agencies:

- Minnesota Power hosted consultation workshops with local units of government, planning officials, tribal representatives and non-government organizations in August 2012 across the notice area in this submitted Notice Plan.
 - Introduction meetings occurred with multiple state and federal agencies in July and August 2012.
 - Monthly agency update webinars are scheduled to occur during Commission permitting activities.
- Voluntary public open house meetings in the area of the potential corridors are scheduled for late October and early November 2012. Landowners within the identified corridors or within one-mile of the identified corridors (affected area), local units of government, and resource agencies, tribal representatives and identified stakeholders will be sent direct mail notice of the open house meetings, and notice of each open house will be published in local newspapers and available on the project website (www.greatnortherntransmissionline.com).
 - A direct mail notice will be sent to landowners, tribal and local governments, and the General List once the CoN application is filed.
 - Notices will be placed in local newspapers throughout the project area once the CoN application is filed.
 - Ongoing project updates at www.greatnortherntransmissionline.com and in accordance with applicable rules and public meetings.

This general philosophy of proactive outreach to stakeholders is planned to be carried through the routing phase of the project, prior to the route permit application. In addition to the

outreach at the route phase, the Great Northern Transmission Line will also require several regulatory outreach steps related to the National Environmental Policy Act, providing the public ample opportunities to provide comments on the Project.

Notice Proposal

A. Direct Mail Notice to Landowners – Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 3(A).

Minnesota Power proposes to provide direct mail notice to all landowners whose property is located within the boundaries of or within one mile of the shaded corridor areas on the maps attached to the draft Notice Plan. Minnesota Power will attempt to identify every landowner in the proposed corridors. In addition, Minnesota Power will attempt to identify every landowner on the Minnesota side within one mile of the potentially affected border crossings and substations. Minnesota Power will obtain the names and addresses of the landowners located within the proposed corridors from the records of the relevant County Auditors' offices and other resources that are applicable.

B. Direct Mail Notice to Mailing Addresses – Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 3(B).

Minnesota Power also proposes to provide direct mail notice to all commercial and residential mailing addresses located within and/or adjacent to the shaded areas on the maps attached to the draft Notice Plan. In addition, Minnesota Power will attempt to identify every landowner within one mile of the potentially affected border crossings and substations. Minnesota Power intends to obtain the names and addresses of the mailing addresses located within the proposed corridor from the records of the relevant County Auditors' offices and other resources that are applicable.

Sections of the corridor that contain Scientific & Natural Areas, State Parks, City boundaries, or Reservations have been carved out, though exceptions include cities on the Iron Range and cities that contain a Project substation.

C. Direct Mail Notice to Tribal and Local Governments – Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 3(C).

Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 3(C) requires applicants to provide direct mail notice to tribal governments and to governments of towns, statutory cities, home rule charter cities, and counties who jurisdictions are reasonably likely to be affected by a proposed HVTL. Minnesota Power will provide direct mail notice to the following state/federal elected officials, tribal and local governments.

State/Federal Elected Officials¹

State Senators	State Representatives	Federal Senators and Representatives
Sen. Tom Bakk	Rep. Tom Anzelc	Rep. Chip Cravaack
Sen. John Carlson	Rep. David Dill	Rep. Collin Peterson
Sen. Tony Lourey	Rep. Kent Eken	Sen. Al Franken
Sen. Tom Saxhaug	Rep. Dan Fabian	Sen. Amy Klobuchar
Sen. Rod Skoe	Rep. David Hancock	
Sen. Leroy Stumpf	Rep. Bill Hilty	
Sen. David Tomassoni	Rep. Debra Kiel	
	Rep. Carolyn McElfratrick	
	Rep. Carly Melin	
	Rep. Mary Murphy	
	Rep. John Persell	
	Rep. Tom Rukavina	

¹ This list will be revised after the results of the November 6, 2012 election are certified.

Tribal Governments

Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Red Lake Nation

State Parks

Lake Bronson State Park
Hayes Lake State Park
Franz Jevne State Park
Big Bog State Recreation Area
Scenic State Park
Hill Annex Mine State Park

Minnesota Local Governments

Counties	Cities	Townships
Beltrami	Blackduck Funkley Kelliher Tenstrike	Alaska Benville Birch Cormant Durand Hagali Hines Hornet Kelliher Langor Lee Maple Ridge Nebish O'Brien Quiring Roosevelt Shooks Shotley Summit Taylor Waskish Woodrow Buzzle Liberty

Counties	Cities	Townships
		Battle Turtle Lake
Carlton	Cloquet Scanlon	Thomson
Clearwater	Clearbrook Gonvick Leonard	Clover Dudley Eddy Greenwood Hangaard Leon Pine Lake Sinclair Winsor Holst
Itasca	Bigfork Bovey Calumet Cohasset Coleraine Effie Grand Rapids Keewatin La Prairie Marble Nashwauk Taconite Warba	Alvwood Arbo Ardenhurst Balsam Bearville Bigfork Blackberry Carpenter Feeley Goodland Grattan Greenway Harris Iron Range Lawrence Liberty Lone Pine Moose Park Nashwauk Nore Pomroy Sago Stokes Trout Lake Wabana Wawina

Counties	Cities	Townships
Kittson	Halma Karlstad Lake Bronson Lancaster	Arveson Cannon Caribou Clow Davis Deerwood Granville Hampden Hazelton Jupiter Klondike McKinley Norway Pelan Percy Poppleton Richardville Spring Brook St. Joseph Tegner Thompson
Koochiching	Littlefork Mizpah Northome	[all townships are unincorporated]
Lake of the Woods	Baudette Roosevelt Williams	[all townships are unincorporated]
Marshall	Grygla Holt Middle River Newfolden Strandquist Viking	Agder Augsburg Cedar Como East Park East Valley Eckvoll Espelie Excel Grand Plain Holt Huntly Lincoln

Counties	Cities	Townships
		Linsell Marsh Grove Moose River Moylan Nelson Park New Folden New Maine New Solum Rollis Spruce Valley Valley Veldt Viking Wanger West Valley Wright
Pennington	Goodridge St. Hilaire Thief River Falls	Bray Clover Leaf Deer Park Goodridge Hickory Highlanding Kratka Norden North Numedal Reiner Rocksbury Sanders Silverton Smiley Star Black River Wyandotte River Falls Mayfield
Polk	Gully Trail	Brandsvold Chester Eden Gully

Counties	Cities	Townships
		Johnson Queen Lessor Badger Hill River
Red Lake	Brooks Plummer Oklee	Gervais River Poplar River Emardville Equality Lambert Garnes
Roseau	Badger Greenbush Roosevelt Roseau Strathcona Warroad	Barnett Barto Beaver Cedarbend Deer Dewey Dieter Enstrom Falun Golden Valley Grimstad Hereim Huss Jadis Lake Laona Lind Malung Mickinock Moose Moranville Nereson Palmville Pohlitz Polonia Reine Ross Skagen

Counties	Cities	Townships
		Soler Spruce Stafford Stokes
St. Louis	Brookston Chisholm Duluth Floodwood Hermantown Hibbing Meadowlands Proctor	Alborn Arrowhead Balkan Brevator Canosia Cedar Valley Cotton Culver Ellsburg Elmer Fine Lakes Floodwood Fredenberg French Grand Lake Halden Industrial Kelsey Lavell McDavitt Meadowlands Midway Morcom Ness New Independence Northland Solway Stoney Brook Toivola Van Buren

D. Published Newspaper Notice – Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 3(D).

Minnesota Power intends to place a notice advertisement regarding the Great Northern Transmission Line in the following newspapers of general circulation:

<u>Outlet</u>	<u>Circulation</u>	<u>County</u>
The American	1,200	Beltrami
The Bemidji Pioneer	8,229	
Cloquet Pine Journal	5,700	Carlton
Bagley Farmers Independent	2,400	Clearwater
Richards Publishing Company, Inc.	5,300	
Grand Rapids Herald-Review	9,000	Itasca
Karlstad North Star News	1,490	Kittson
Kittson County Enterprise	1,800	
The Littlefork Times	500	Koochiching
Baudette Region	2,192	Lake Of The Woods
Warren Sheaf	2,500	Marshall
Thief River Falls Times, Inc.	28,250	Pennington
Erskine Echo	1,100	Polk
Fertile Journal	1,600	
Fosston Thirteen Towns	2,000	
Red Lake Falls Gazette	1,599	Red Lake
Roseau Times-Region	3,700	Roseau
Tribune	1,400	
Warroad Pioneer	1,600	
Duluth Budgeteer News	40,000	St. Louis
Floodwood Forum	900	
Hermantown Star	2,000	
Proctor Journal	1,800	
Duluth News-Tribune	40,933	
The Hibbing Daily Tribune	4,535	
Star Tribune	500,000	

Minn. Rules 7829.2500, subp. 5, requires that after a CoN application is filed that an applicant publish newspaper notice of the filing in newspapers of general circulation throughout the state. Given that under the proposed Notice Plan, Minnesota Power will publish newspaper notice of the CoN proceeding in newspapers of state, local and regional circulation identified above, Minnesota Power requests a waiver from this additional newspaper notice requirement.

E. Notice Time Frames - Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 6

Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 6, requires the applicant to implement the Notice Plan within 30 days of its approval by the Commission. Minnesota Power requests that the Commission modify the Notice Plan implementation requirement to allow notice to more closely coincide with the CoN application submittal. As the Department stated in its October 18, 2012 Comments in Docket E002,ET2/CN-12-1053, “The Commission has ordered a similar approach, typically a 30-day window, in several dockets.” Minnesota Power requests that the Commission direct the notices identified in this Notice Plan to occur within two to four weeks before the CoN filing. Minnesota Power would execute the plan using the Project description of the finally determined configuration and associated maps.

F. Voluntary Landowner Meetings.

In addition to the notices that will go out pursuant to this filing, Minnesota Power also intends to conduct voluntary informational, “open house” meetings as follows:

Date & Time	Venue Name & Address
Monday October 29th 5-7pm	Clear Waters Life Center 256 2nd Avenue SW Clearbrook, MN 56634

Date & Time	Venue Name & Address
Tuesday October 30th 11am-1pm	Centennial Hall 222 Central Avenue South Lancaster, MN 56735
Tuesday October 30th 5-7pm	Ralph Engelstad Arena Imperial Room 525 Brooks Avenue North Thief River Falls, MN 56701
Wednesday October 31st 11am-1pm	Roseau Civic Center 121 Center Street East Roseau, MN 56751
Thursday November 1st 11am-1pm	Littlefork Community Center 220 Main Street Littlefork, MN 56653
Thursday November 1st 5-7pm	VFW Post 723 204 International Drive NE Baudette, MN 56623
Friday November 2nd 11am-1pm	North Beltrami Community Center 220 East Main Street Kelliher, MN 56650

Date & Time	Venue Name & Address
Wednesday November 7th 11am-1pm	Hermantown Government Services Bldng Training Center 5105 Maple Grove Road Hermantown, MN 55811
Wednesday November 7th 5-7pm	Sawmill Inn – Blandin Rooms 2301 South Highway 169 Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Thursday November 8th 11am-1pm	Hibbing Memorial Building Arena Downstairs Dining Room 400 East 23rd Street Hibbing, MN 55746
Thursday November 8th 5-7pm	Meadowlands Community Center 7758 Western Avenue Meadowlands, MN 55765

Notices for these informational meetings is being published in area newspapers, and an open house meeting notification postcard has been mailed to landowners, local governments, and resource agencies, tribal representatives, and identified stakeholders in the affected area.

Content of Notice

Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 4 establishes the requirements for information that must be included in the notice that is mailed to those individuals on the various lists that are created. The notice will contain all the information required by those rules. A draft of the proposed notices, along with maps for the proposed notice corridors, are included with this Notice Plan as Exhibits A, B, C, and D. The maps attached to the draft notice show multiple potential corridors where the Project may eventually be routed, which includes both the Blackberry and Shannon substations as potential terminus points for the 500 kV line, though at this time Minnesota Power's preference is for the Blackberry Substation. The maps also identify existing transmission facilities, roads, and other relevant geographical features. However, at this time Minnesota Power has not done detailed routing work to identify specific routing proposals. Therefore, Minnesota Power is proposing a broad distribution of letters to landowners with property and other residents in these proposed corridors. Most of the persons receiving notification will, in the end, not be directly affected by the Project. Minnesota Power strongly believes that for this Project, broader distribution and notification is appropriate so that potentially affected persons will be able to fully participate in the Commission's process and so the Commission can develop the information required to make a decision whether to authorize construction.

Consistent with recent Commission orders approving notice plans for transmission lines, Minnesota Power will include in the notice the following:

- A description of general right-of-way requirements as well as a statement that Minnesota Power intends to acquire property rights.

- Minnesota Power will work with affected landowners to acquire easement rights for the Great Northern Transmission Line.
- Identification of any CoN filing requirements from which the Commission has granted Minnesota Power an exemption pursuant to Minn. Rules 7849.0200, subp. 6 and a link to a site where the Commission’s order may be found.
- A brief description that the Project requires a Presidential Permit to be issued by the United States Department of Energy since it will cross the United States-Canadian border.

Minnesota Power will also give notice of an impending CoN application to the public service commissions in North Dakota and Wisconsin and the Manitoba Hydro Electric Board.

Service on Other Parties and Procedural Matters

In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 216.17 and Minn. Rules 7929.2550, subp. 1, copies of the proposed Notice Plan, along with this filing, have been eFiled to the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Office of the Attorney General – Antitrust and Utilities Division, along with persons on Minnesota Power’s general service lists. Copies have also been served on all persons on the “General List of Persons Interested in Power Plants and Transmission Lines” as maintained by the Commission under Minn. Rules 7850.2100, subp. 1, item A.

Minnesota Power also provides the following information consistent with Minn. Rules 7829.1300 for miscellaneous filings:

Name, Address and Telephone Number of Utility (Minn. Rule 7829.1300, subp. 4(A))

Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 722-2641

Name, Address and Telephone Number of Utility Attorney (Minn. Rule 7829.1300, subp. 4(B))

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

Utility Employee Responsible for Filing (Minn. Rule 7829.1300, subp. 4(E))

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

Service List (Minn. Rule 7829.0700)

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(218) 723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(877) 657-9934
jbatkinson@allete.com

Comment Schedule

Minn. Rules 7829.2550, subp. 2 provides that interested parties have 20 days from the date of this filing to provide comments on the proposed Notice Plan. Reply comments must be made within 20 days of expiration of the period for initial comments.

Conclusion

Minnesota Power submits that the enclosed draft Notice Plan is consistent with the applicable rules and with Commission precedent. Accordingly, Minnesota Power respectfully requests that the Commission approve the proposed Notice Plan as submitted.

Dated: October 29, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David R. Moeller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218-723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

_____, 201_

**RE: Notice of Certificate of Need Application for the Great Northern Transmission Line
MPUC Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163**

Dear Stakeholder:

Minnesota Power, along with potentially several other participants, is proposing to construct high voltage transmission line facilities from the Manitoba-Minnesota border to the Arrowhead Substation in St. Louis County, (the “Great Northern Transmission Line”). The Great Northern Transmission Line is intended to provide delivery and access to power generated by Manitoba Hydro’s hydroelectric stations in Manitoba, Canada to the high voltage transmission system in Minnesota. Minnesota Power needs this line to deliver at least 250 MW of power by June 1, 2020, under a Power Purchase Agreement (“PPA”) approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) in Docket No. E015/M-11-938. In addition to the PPA, several other needs are driving the proposed project including access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability. This letter is intended to provide you with information on how you can participate in the Minnesota regulatory process.

The Great Northern Transmission Line project (“Project”) includes constructing a 500 kV transmission line approximately 225 to 300 miles in length from the Minnesota-Manitoba border to the Blackberry Substation located on the Iron Range. Minnesota Power is also proposing a 50- to 70-mile, 345 kV double-circuit, transmission line from the Blackberry Substation to the Arrowhead Substation in Hermantown, Minnesota. Modifications to the equipment and overall layout of the Blackberry Substation and the Arrowhead Substation will be necessary to accommodate the terminations of the Project segments. The area under consideration for the location for the Project is depicted in **Attachment 1**.

The Canadian portion of the Project will be permitted by Manitoba Hydro.

This notice is being provided to those who fall within one or more of the categories listed below as they relate to the area (“Notice Area”) shown on Attachment A:

- Landowners with property within the Notice Area;
- Residents living within the Notice Area;
- Local units of government in and around the Notice Area;
- Local and State elected officials; and
- State and local government agencies and offices.

Regulatory Process Overview

APPLICATIONS

For the Great Northern Transmission Line, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and where the Project should be located (Route Permit). Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must certify that the Project is needed. The

EXHIBIT A

certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, and Minnesota Rules Chapters 7829 and 7849, specifically Rules 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Minnesota Power has proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project. The Certificate of Need application, once submitted, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at www.puc.state.mn.us in Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163.

In addition to certifying the Project, the Commission must also grant a Route Permit for the Project. The routing of the Minnesota portion of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850. Information on the Route Permit application, once filed, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website in Docket No. E015/TL-13-____.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting staff ("EFP") will be responsible for preparing an environmental report for the Certificate of Need proceeding that will evaluate environmental impacts to resources within the Notice Area. Additionally, EFP will prepare an environmental impact statement for the Route Permit proceeding for the Project. In its application for a Route Permit, Minnesota Power will identify at least two routes and will identify one route which Minnesota Power prefers. Other routes can be proposed during the scoping process for the environmental review to be completed by EFP. As part of its analysis, EFP will evaluate the routes proposed by Minnesota Power in its application and other routes proposed during the scoping process that will aid in the Commission's decision on the Route Permit application.

COMMISSION DECISIONS ON THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED AND ROUTE PERMIT

The Commission will consider all information submitted through the Certificate of Need proceeding including the application, input from the public, testimony received during the administrative hearings, the environmental report, and a recommendation from an Administrative Law Judge to determine if the Project is of the appropriate size, type, and timing to meet the stated need. After considering all this information, the Commission may issue a Certificate of Need for the Project.

In making a determination as to the appropriate route for the Project in the Route Permit proceeding, the Commission will review the comments received from stakeholders, a report prepared by an Administrative Law Judge after hearings on the Project, and the environmental impact statement prepared by EFP. Although Minnesota Power will identify the route that it prefers for the Project, the Commission may determine that a route submitted by Minnesota Power, a route proposed during the scoping process, or some combination of such routes is the most appropriate route for the Project. Selection of a final route by the Commission will be based on evaluation of the routes guided by the factors identified in Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.03, Minnesota Rule 7850.4100, and stakeholder input received during the regulatory process.

INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING

To construct a transmission line across the international border between Manitoba and Minnesota, Minnesota Power will also need to obtain a Presidential Permit from the United States Department of Energy. Certain environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act will be completed by the federal agency prior to issuance of a Presidential Permit. More information on Presidential Permits can be obtained by visiting <http://energy.gov/oe/services/electricity-policy-coordination-and-implementation/international-electricity-regulation>.

Project Specifications

Minnesota Power is exploring a variety of structure types for the Project. Engineering studies are underway to identify structures to be used for the Project and updates on these studies will be available at greatnortherntransmissionline.com/resources by clicking on the “What will the transmission line look like?” link. Structures will likely be placed using spans of approximately 1,000 to 1,400 feet to maintain proper clearances for the 130- to 140-foot tall structures.

Minnesota Power anticipates that it will obtain a 200-foot wide permanent right-of-way for 500 kV portions of the Project and a 150-foot wide permanent right-of-way for 345 kV portions of the Project. Some easements may be required from landowners for access or maintenance purposes, even if the Project is not approved by the Commission to be located on their property. Before beginning construction, Minnesota Power will acquire property rights for the Project, typically through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel.

Need for the Project

The Project is needed to deliver at least 250 MW of power by June 1, 2020, under a PPA approved by the Commission. In addition to the PPA, several other needs are driving the proposed Project including access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability.

Biennial Transmission Planning

Minnesota Statutes include a requirement that each electric transmission-owning utility in the state file a biennial transmission planning report with the Commission in the fall of odd years. These reports provide an excellent source of background information on the transmission planning process used by utilities in Minnesota. The 2011 Biennial Transmission Planning Report is available at www.minnelectrans.com.

Project Notifications

To **subscribe to the Great Northern Transmission Line Project Certificate of Need docket** and receive email notifications when information is filed that is related to the Certificate of Need for the Project, please visit www.puc.state.mn.us, click on the “Subscribe to a Docket” button, enter your email address and select “Docket Number” from the Type of Subscription dropdown

EXHIBIT A

box, then select “12” from the first Docket Number dropdown box and enter “1163” in the second box before clicking on the “Add to List” button. You must then click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page to confirm your subscription to the Project Docket. These same steps can be followed to subscribe to the Project Route Permit docket (E015/TL-13-____).

Please visit greatnortherntransmissionline.com for more information on the Project. If you have questions about the process, you may contact the Minnesota regulatory staff listed below:

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Bret Eknes 121 7 th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.7124 800.657.3782 bret.eknes@state.mn.us www.puc.state.mn.us	Minnesota Department of Commerce Bill Storm, State Permit Manager 85 7 th Place East, Suite 500 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.5089 800.657.3794 bill.storm@state.mn.us
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If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/TL-13-____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/, clicking on the “Transmission Lines” tab, selecting “Great Northern Transmission Line Project” from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the “Mailing List” heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above. Please be aware that the Great Northern Transmission Line Project Route Permit mailing list may not be available for online registration until the Route Permit application is submitted.

A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/CN-12-1163), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or robin.benson@state.mn.us.

EXHIBIT A

The Minnesota Power contact for questions about this Project is:

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(877) 657-9934
info@greatnortherntransmissionline.com

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power

_____, 201_

**RE: Notice of Certificate of Need Application for the Great Northern Transmission Line
MPUC Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163**

Dear Local Government Representative or Elected Official:

Minnesota Power, along with potentially several other participants, is proposing to construct high voltage transmission line facilities from the Manitoba-Minnesota border to the Arrowhead Substation in St. Louis County, Minnesota (the “Great Northern Transmission Line”). The Great Northern Transmission Line is intended to provide delivery and access to power generated by Manitoba Hydro’s hydroelectric stations in Manitoba, Canada to the high voltage transmission system in Minnesota. Minnesota Power needs this line to deliver at least 250 MW of power by June 1, 2020, under a Power Purchase Agreement (“PPA”) approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) in Docket No. E015/M-11-938. In addition to the PPA, several other needs are driving the proposed project including access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability. This letter is intended to provide you with information on how you can participate in the Minnesota regulatory process.

The Great Northern Transmission Line project (“Project”) includes constructing a 500 kV transmission line approximately 225 to 300 miles in length from the Minnesota-Manitoba border to the Blackberry Substation located on the Iron Range. Minnesota Power is also proposing a 50- to 70-mile, 345 kV double-circuit, transmission line from the Blackberry Substation to the Arrowhead Substation in Hermantown, Minnesota. Modifications to the equipment and overall layout of the Blackberry Substation and the Arrowhead Substation will be necessary to accommodate the terminations of the Project segments. The area under consideration for the location for the Project is depicted in **Attachment 1**.

The Canadian portion of the Project will be permitted by Manitoba Hydro.

This notice is being provided to those who fall within one or more of the categories listed below as they relate to the area (“Notice Area”) shown on Attachment A:

- Landowners with property within the Notice Area;
- Residents living within the Notice Area;
- Local units of government in and around the Notice Area;
- Local and State elected officials; and
- State and local government agencies and offices.

Because your constituents may have questions related to the Project, we wanted to inform you of our proposal and also how you and your constituents may get involved in the regulatory process for the Project.

Regulatory Process Overview**APPLICATIONS**

For the Great Northern Transmission Line, the Commission must determine whether the Project is needed (Certificate of Need) and where the Project should be located (Route Permit). Before the Project can be constructed, the Commission must certify that the Project is needed. The certification of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Section 216B.243, and Minnesota Rules Chapters 7829 and 7849, specifically Rules 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 and 7849.1000 to 7849.2100. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Minnesota Power has proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Project. The Certificate of Need application, once submitted, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website at www.puc.state.mn.us in Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163.

In addition to certifying the Project, the Commission must also grant a Route Permit for the Project. The routing of the Minnesota portion of the Project is governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216E and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7850. Information on the Route Permit application, once filed, can be obtained by visiting the Commission's website in Docket No. E015/TL-13-____.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Facility Permitting staff ("EFP") will be responsible for preparing an environmental report for the Certificate of Need proceeding that will evaluate environmental impacts to resources within the Notice Area. Additionally, EFP will prepare an environmental impact statement for the Route Permit proceeding for the Project. If the Commission decides that the two applications should be processed together, it can order that EFP prepare only an environmental impact statement in lieu of two separate environmental review documents. In its application for a Route Permit, Minnesota Power will identify at least two routes and will identify one route which Minnesota Power prefers. Other routes can be proposed during the scoping process for the environmental review to be completed by EFP. As part of its analysis, EFP will evaluate the routes proposed by Minnesota Power in its application and other routes proposed during the scoping process that will aid in the Commission's decision on the Route Permit application.

COMMISSION DECISIONS ON THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED AND ROUTE PERMIT

The Commission will consider all information submitted through the Certificate of Need proceeding including the application, input from the public, testimony received during the administrative hearings, the environmental report, and a recommendation from an Administrative Law Judge to determine if the Project is of the appropriate size, type, and timing to meet the stated need. After considering all this information, the Commission may issue a Certificate of Need for the Project.

EXHIBIT B

In making a determination as to the appropriate route for the Project in the Route Permit proceeding, the Commission will review the comments received from stakeholders, a report prepared by an Administrative Law Judge after hearings on the Project, and the environmental impact statement prepared by EFP. Although Minnesota Power will identify the route that it prefers for the Project, the Commission may determine that a route submitted by Minnesota Power, a route proposed during the scoping process, or some combination of such routes is the most appropriate route for the Project. Selection of a final route by the Commission will be based on evaluation of the routes guided by the factors identified in Minnesota Statutes Section 216E.03, Minnesota Rule 7850.4100, and stakeholder input received during the regulatory process.

INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING

To construct a transmission line across the international border between Manitoba and Minnesota, Minnesota Power will also need to obtain a Presidential Permit from the United States Department of Energy. Certain environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act will be completed by the federal agency prior to issuance of a Presidential Permit. More information on Presidential Permits can be obtained by visiting <http://energy.gov/oe/services/electricity-policy-coordination-and-implementation/international-electricity-regulation>.

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Minnesota Power is exploring a variety of structure types for the Project. Engineering studies are underway to identify structures to be used for the Project and updates on these studies will be available at greatnortherntransmissionline.com/resources by clicking on the “What will the transmission line look like?” link. Structures will likely be placed using spans of approximately 1,000 to 1,400 feet to maintain proper clearances for the 130- to 140-foot tall structures.

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Need for the Project

The Project is needed to deliver at least 250 MW of power by June 1, 2020, under a PPA approved by the Commission. In addition to the PPA, several other needs are driving the proposed Project including access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability.

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Minnesota Statutes include a requirement that each electric transmission-owning utility in the state file a biennial transmission planning report with the Commission in the fall of odd years. These reports provide an excellent source of background information on the transmission planning process used by utilities in Minnesota. The 2011 Biennial Transmission Planning Report is available at www.minnelectrans.com.

Project Notifications

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Please visit greatnortherntransmissionline.com for more information on the Project. If you have questions about the process, you may contact the Minnesota regulatory staff listed below:

<p>Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Bret Eknes 121 7th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.7124 800.657.3782 bret.eknes@state.mn.us www.puc.state.mn.us</p>	<p>Minnesota Department of Commerce Bill Storm, State Permit Manager 85 7th Place East, Suite 500 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.5089 800.657.3794 bill.storm@state.mn.us</p>
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If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/TL-13-____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/, clicking on the “Transmission Lines” tab, selecting “Great Northern Transmission Line Project” from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the “Mailing List” heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above. Please be aware that the Great Northern Transmission Line Project Route Permit mailing list may not be available for online registration until the Route Permit application is submitted.

A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/CN-12-1163), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or robin.benson@state.mn.us.

EXHIBIT B

The Minnesota Power contact for questions about this Project is:

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(877) 657-9934
info@greatnortherntransmissionline.com

Sincerely,

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power

NOTICE

Certificate of Need Application for the Great Northern Transmission Line

Minnesota Power is proposing to construct a high voltage transmission line from the Manitoba-Minnesota Border to Hermantown, Minnesota with an anticipated in-service date of mid-2020 (the “Great Northern Transmission Line”). The Great Northern Transmission Line (“Project”) includes a 500 kV transmission line approximately 225 to 300 miles long between the border and the Blackberry Substation in Itasca County, and a 345 kV transmission line approximately 50 to 70 miles long between the Blackberry Substation and the Arrowhead Substation in Hermantown.

Minnesota Power needs this line to deliver at least 250 MW of power by June 1, 2020, under a Power Purchase Agreement (“PPA”) approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) in Docket No. E015/M-11-938. In addition to the PPA, several other needs are driving the proposed Project including access to clean, renewable energy for Minnesota Power and the region, increased industrial load growth on the Iron Range, and strengthening regional reliability.

The Great Northern Transmission Line will require both a **Certificate of Need** and a **Route Permit** from the Commission. In the Certificate of Need proceeding, the Commission will analyze whether Minnesota Power has proposed the most appropriate size, type, and timing for the Great Northern Transmission Line. The Certificate of Need application can be obtained by visiting the Commission’s website at www.puc.state.mn.us in Docket No. E015/CN-12-1163. Information on the Route Permit application can be obtained by visiting the Commission’s website in Docket No. E015/TL-13-____.

At this time, there is not a specific route within the Notice Area that Minnesota Power has identified as its preferred route. The route for the Great Northern Transmission Line preferred by Minnesota Power will be identified in the Route Permit application. Selection of a final route will be made by the Commission during the Route Permit proceedings based on input from stakeholders.

To construct a transmission line across the international border between Manitoba and Minnesota, Minnesota Power will also need to obtain a Presidential Permit from the United States Department of Energy. Certain environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act will be completed by the federal agency prior to issuance of a Presidential Permit. More information on Presidential Permits can be obtained by visiting <http://energy.gov/oe/services/electricity-policy-coordination-and-implementation/international-electricity-regulation>.

Minnesota Power anticipates that the right-of-way for the 500 kV portion of the Project will be 200 feet and for the 345 kV portion of the Project will be 150 feet. Before beginning construction Minnesota Power will acquire property rights for the right-of-of-way or access, typically through an easement that will be negotiated with the landowner for each parcel.

EXHIBIT C

To **subscribe to the Great Northern Transmission Line Project Certificate of Need docket** and receive email notifications when information is filed that is related to the Certificate of Need for the Project, please visit www.puc.state.mn.us, click on the “Subscribe to a Docket” button, enter your email address and select “Docket Number” from the Type of Subscription dropdown box, then select “12” from the first Docket Number dropdown box and enter “1163” in the second box before clicking on the “Add to List” button. You must then click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page to confirm your subscription to the Project Docket. These same steps can be followed to subscribe to the Project Route Permit docket (E015/TL-13-____).

Please visit greatnortherntransmissionline.com for more information on the Project. If you have questions about the process, you may contact the Minnesota regulatory staff listed below:

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Bret Eknes 121 7 th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.7124 800.657.3782 bret.eknes@state.mn.us www.puc.state.mn.us	Minnesota Department of Commerce Bill Storm, State Permit Manager 85 7 th Place East, Suite 500 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 651.296.5089 800.657.3794 bill.storm@state.mn.us
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If you would **like to have your name added to the Project Route Permit mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/TL-13-____), you may register by visiting the Department of Commerce webpage at mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities, clicking on the “Transmission Lines” tab, selecting “Great Northern Transmission Line Project” from the listed projects, and then clicking the links next to the “Mailing List” heading. Alternately, you may contact Department of Commerce staff at the address above. Please be aware that the Great Northern Transmission Line Project Route Permit mailing list may not be available for online registration until the Route Permit application is submitted.

A separate service list is maintained for the Certificate of Need proceeding. To be **placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list** (MPUC Docket E015/CN-12-1163), mail, fax, or email Robin Benson at Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147, Fax: 651-297-7073 or robin.benson@state.mn.us.

Questions may also be directed to:

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Lead
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
(877) 657-9934
info@greatnortherntransmissionline.com