

MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPING MEETING**

In the Matter of the Application of Great River Energy for a Route Permit to Rebuild the Existing 69kV ST-WW Transmission Line to 115kV in Stearns County, Minnesota

PUC Docket Number: ET-2/TL-22-235

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) and Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) will hold a public information and environmental assessment scoping meeting on the route permit application of Great River Energy (GRE) for its proposed transmission line rebuild project in the city of St. Joseph and in St. Joseph and St. Wendell townships in Stearns County, Minnesota.

The purpose of the meeting is to: (1) provide information to the public about the proposed project and the state's high-voltage transmission line route permitting process; and (2) provide members of the public an opportunity to participate in developing the scope of the environmental assessment. This includes commenting on issues or concerns related to the proposed project and proposing alternatives for consideration. GRE will be filing supplemental information about the project by November 23, 2022. This information will be available on eDockets and on the project webpage (<https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/eera/web/project/14925>).

There will be two public meetings in this matter: a WebEx (Online) Meeting and an In-Person Meeting. The information presented will be the same at both meetings.

WebEx (Online) Meeting

Date: December 7, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

WebEx (Webinar) Link:

<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/j.php?MTID=m45c5e64eefd06c6691543990e10fd37b>

Webinar Number: 2497 368 5485

Webinar Password: jRTt3mku5C3 (57883658 from phones)

Join by Phone: 1-855-282-6330 Toll Free

Access Code: 249 736 85485

If you are joining the meeting by WebEx and would like to ask a question or make a comment during the designated portion of the meeting, use the chat function to send a message to the meeting moderator. If you are joining the meeting by phone, press *3 on your phone. When it is your turn to speak, your line will be unmuted, and you will be able to ask questions and provide comments.

Additional information and instructions are available at:

<https://mn.gov/puc/activities/meetings/webex/>

In-Person Meeting

Date: December 8, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Millstream Park Meeting Facility

725 County Road 75 W

St. Joseph, Minnesota, 56374

Link to Google Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/KscEgwuRMLaZsyss7>

To find out if a meeting is canceled due to bad weather or other call 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Written Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **December 30, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.** Please include the docket number in all communications. Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Please focus your comments on information that will help answer the following questions:

- What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the environmental assessment?
- Are there any methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the environmental assessment?
- Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered to address potential impacts associated with the proposed project?
- Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed route or the project that should be considered?

Comments may be submitted:

Online: <https://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>

Email: jamie.macalister@state.mn.us

U.S. Mail: Jamie MacAlister
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101

Important. Comments will be made available to the public via the Commission’s website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission and the Department do not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Project Description

The proposed transmission line rebuild project would include:

- Removing approximately 3.2 miles of an existing 69-kilovolt transmission line and structures between the West St. Cloud, Westwood, and Le Sauk substations and replacing those facilities with a new overhead 115-kilovolt transmission line and structures.
- Extending the transmission line approximately 170 feet northwest near the Le Sauk Substation to tap into a new switch to be added on GRE’s existing 115-kilovolt transmission line and add a new switch near the existing Westwood Substation.
- Expanding the existing West St. Cloud Substation by approximately 6,500 square feet to accommodate facility upgrades and additions.

GRE has indicated that the distribution lines owned by Stearns Electric Association and Xcel Energy that are currently underbuilt on the existing 69-kilovolt transmission line will be placed underground.

Review Process

Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minn. Stat. ch. 216E), a route permit from the Commission is required to construct a high-voltage transmission line. The project will be reviewed under the alternative permitting process because it is a high-voltage transmission line between 100 and 200 kilovolts. The statutes (Minn. Stat. § 216E.04) and rules (Minn. R. 7850.2800 to 7850.3900) detailing the alternative permitting process may be viewed at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov>.

Environmental Review. The Minnesota Department of Commerce is tasked with preparing an environmental assessment for the Commission on high-voltage transmission line projects filed under the alternative permitting process. The environmental assessment will contain information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and of any alternative routes identified. The environmental assessment will identify and address mitigating measures for all routes considered.

Public Hearing. When the environmental assessment is complete, a public hearing will be held in the project area. The hearing will be presided over by an administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings. At the hearing, members of the public will have an opportunity to make an oral presentation, present evidence, and ask questions of the applicant and staff.

Upon completion of the public hearing process, the Commission will make a final decision on whether to issue a route permit. If issued a route permit by the Commission, GRE may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire land for this project pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216E.12.

Additional Information

Filing Requirements. Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are required to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants, and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *Go to eDockets* and follow the prompts.

Full Case Record. See all documents filed in this matter via the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc/edockets, select *Go to eDockets*, enter the year (22) and the docket number (235), and select *Search*.

Subscribe to the Docket. To receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter visit: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>, select *Subscribe to Dockets* and follow the prompts.

Project Mailing List. Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate or change your mailing preference. Email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246 with the docket number (22-235), your name, mailing address, and email address.

Department of Commerce Website: <https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/eera/web/project/14925>

Project Contacts

Public Utilities Commission

Scott Ek, Energy Facilities Planner, scott.ek@state.mn.us or 651-201-2255

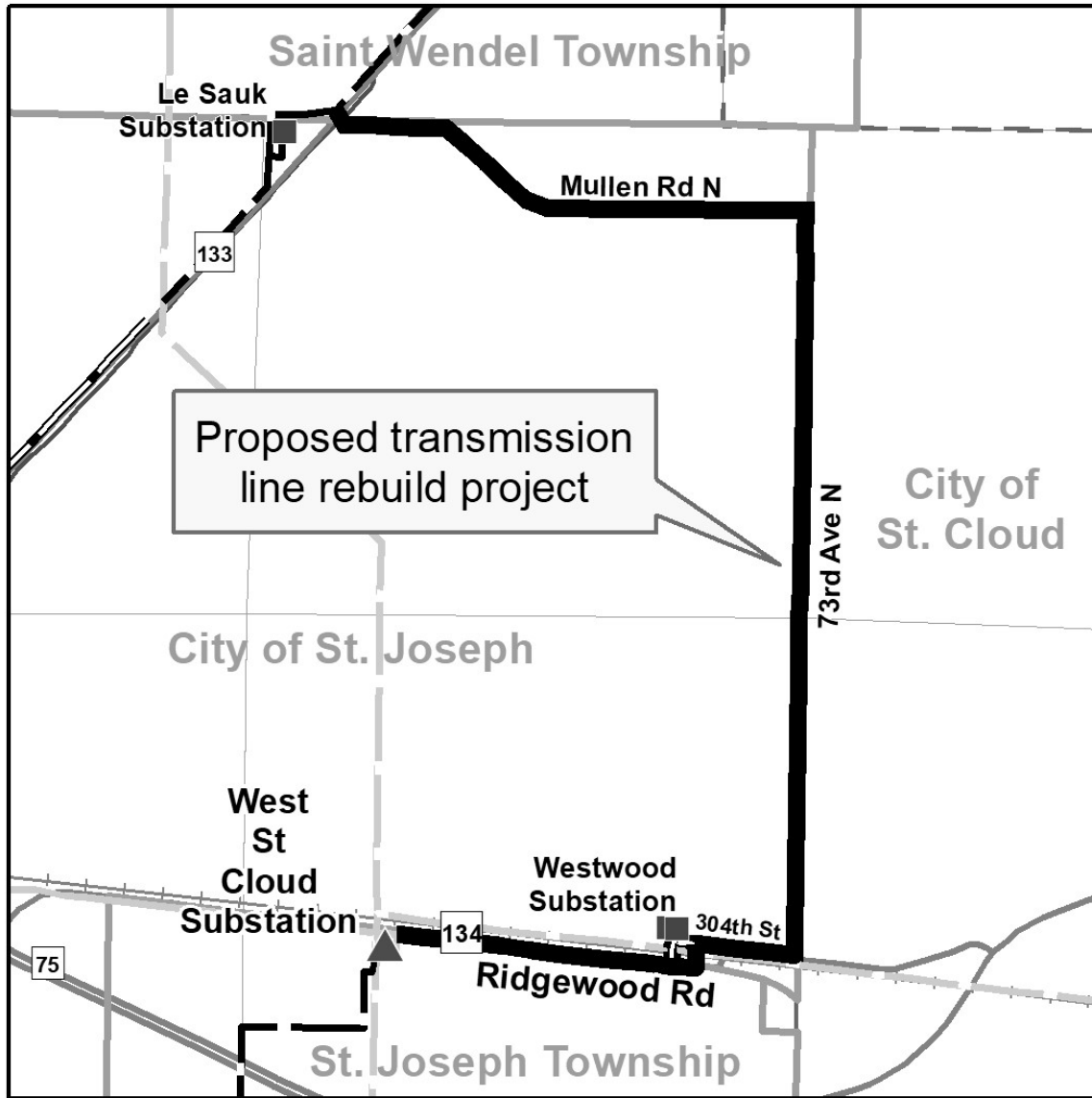
Department of Commerce

Jamie MacAlister, Environmental Review Manager, jamie.macalister@state.mn.us or 651-539-1775

Great River Energy

Mark Strohfus, Project Manager, MStrohfus@GREnergy.com, 763-445-5210

Proposed Project Site Map



If any reasonable accommodation is needed to enable you to fully participate in these meetings, please contact the Commission at 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the meeting. To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651-296-0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email consumer.puc@state.mn.us for assistance.