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NEWS

Great Northern Transmission Line draft Environmental Impact Statement released

Duluth, Minn.— State and federal agencies on June 19 released the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Great Northern Transmission Line, setting the stage for public meetings, comments and later hearings on the proposal by Minnesota Power to build a 500-kilovolt transmission line from the Canada-U.S. border to Minnesota's Iron Range.

Minnesota Power is proposing to build 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, ending at the company's Blackberry Substation near Grand Rapids in Itasca County.

Minnesota Power needs the line to deliver at least 383 megawatts (MW) of carbon-free hydro power to its customers by June 1, 2020, under power purchase agreements with Manitoba Hydro approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The cost of the project is estimated between \$560 million and \$710 million (in 2013 dollars). Minnesota Power is expected to have majority ownership of the line. The line is a critical component of the company's EnergyForward plan to diversify its energy mix from predominantly coal to a balance of one-third renewable, one-third natural gas and one-third coal.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) released the DEIS, which contains detailed information about the proposed route of the transmission line and the crossing of the Canada-U.S. border.

The DOC and DOE will conduct joint public information meetings July 15-16 and 21-22 at various locations along the proposed route to provide opportunities for public comment on the DEIS. Comments received on the DEIS by August 10, 2015 will be used to prepare a final EIS for the project which is expected to be released in late October. The EIS evaluates the potential human and environmental impacts of Minnesota Power's proposed project and possible mitigation measures, including route alternatives. The EIS is issued in draft form so that it can be improved through public comment.

The DEIS can be viewed and comments can be submitted through the Great Northern Transmission Line EIS website: <http://www.greatnortherneis.org> and will also be available at public libraries along the route.

The MPUC in May unanimously approved Minnesota Power's request for a Certificate of Need for the Great Northern Transmission Line. The Certificate of Need decision followed months of public meetings and hearings and the submission of numerous written comments and testimony.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 143,000 customers, 16 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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