

**GREAT RIVER ENERGY
And
WRIGHT-HENNEPIN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC
ASSOCIATION**

APPLICATION TO THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
FOR
CERTIFICATE OF NEED

AND
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

**PLYMOUTH-MAPLE GROVE
LARGE HIGH VOLTAGE
TRANSMISSION LINE**



November 14, 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	1
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Background	3
1.2 Justification of Project	3
1.3 Summary of Alternatives Considered	6
1.3.1 Recommended Project (Transmission Option 1 – 115 kV Conversion)	6
1.3.2 Upgrade of Existing 69 kV Transmission System (Transmission Options 2 through 4)	8
1.3.3 Generation (Option 5)	10
1.3.4 Underground Lines	14
1.4 Environmental Analysis	14
1.5 Certificate of Need Criteria	15
1.5.1 Denial Would Have Adverse Effect	15
1.5.2 No More Reasonable and Prudent Alternative Exists	18
1.5.3 The Proposed Project Benefits Society and is Environmentally Compatible	20
1.5.4 Project Complies with Other Policies and Statutes	22
1.6 Items Exempted From Application Requirements	22
1.6.1 Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0220	22
1.6.2 Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0270	22
1.6.3 Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0280	23
1.6.4 Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0290	23
1.7 Completeness Checklist and Filing Summary	23
2. NEED SUMMARY	29
2.1 Overview of Major Factors	29
2.2 Socially Beneficial Uses	33
2.3 Effect of Promotional Practices on Creating Need	34
2.4 Effect of Proposed Facility on Inducing Future Development	34

3. PROPOSED LINE AND ALTERNATIVES	35
3.1 Introduction	35
3.2 Proposed Project (Option 1)	36
3.2.1 General	36
3.2.2 Design Voltage	38
3.2.3 Conductors	38
3.2.4 Line and Substation Losses	39
3.2.5 Length	39
3.2.6 Substation Locations	39
3.2.7 Counties Affected	40
3.2.8 Summary of Advantages of Proposed Project	40
3.3 Alternatives to Recommended Facility	44
3.3.1 Upgrades of Existing Transmission Lines or Existing Generating Facilities	44
3.3.2 Generation (Option 5)	52
3.3.3 Variations on Recommended 115 kV Line	57
3.3.4 Alternate Endpoints and Served Substations	58
3.3.5 Double Circuiting	60
3.3.6 DC Line	60
3.3.7 Underground Line	61
3.3.8 Combinations of 3.3.1 through 3.3.7	68
3.4 Other Relevant Information Concerning Need	68
4. COST AND EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS	69
4.1 Cost and Other Factors for Recommended and Alternative Facilities	69
4.2 Effect on Rates	70
4.3 Efficiency Factors	71
4.4 Assumptions Made in Cost Analysis	72

5. SYSTEM CAPACITY	74
5.1 Introduction	74
5.2 Transmission Planning Programs – Standards and Criteria	74
5.2.1 North American Electric Reliability Council	74
5.2.2 National Electric Safety Code	75
5.3 Regional Planning Under MAPP	75
5.4 Modeling	78
5.5 GRE’s Independent Application of Programs, Criteria and Modeling	79
5.6 Ability of Present System to Meet Demand	80
5.7 System Capacity with Proposed 115 kV Line Project	82
6. PEAK DEMAND / ANNUAL CONSUMPTION FORECAST	83
6.1 Introduction	83
6.2 Definition of Service Area and System	83
6.3 Forecast Methodology	
6.3.1 Overall Methodological Framework	84
6.3.2 Specific Analytical Techniques	85
6.3.3 Application of Specific Analytical Techniques	85
6.4 Content of Forecast	90
6.4.1 Customer Categories and Annual Consumption	91
6.4.2 Estimated Peak Demand/Customer Category Breakdown	99
6.4.3 Estimated Peak Demand by Month	102
6.4.4 Annual Revenue Requirement per kWh	104
6.4.5 Estimated Average Weekday Load Factor by Month	104
6.4.6 Forecast Confidence Intervals and Range of Accuracy	107
6.4.7 Analysis of Methodology Used	109
6.4.8 Discrepancies Between Current Forecast and Previous Forecasts	110
6.5 Databases for Forecasts	111
6.5.1 List and Description of Datasets	111
6.6 Assumptions and Special Information	112

7. ENERGY CONSERVATION AND LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS	113
7.1 Background	113
7.2 WHCEA and GRE Conservation Goals and Objectives	117
7.3 Existing Load Management and Energy Conservation Programs and Accomplishments	117
7.4 Other DSM Programs Considered	119
7.5 Future Load Management and Conservation Plans	119
7.6 Cost Comparison of Transmission Project to Conservation Programs	120
7.7 Effect of Programs	121
7.8 Ability to Meet Forecast Demand Through Conservation and Load Management Activities	122
8. CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY ON SYSTEM	123
8.1 Introduction	123
8.2 One Year Delay	124
8.3 Two Year Delay	125
8.4 Three Year Delay	126
8.5 Indefinite Delay	127
8.5.1 Lower Growth Rate	127
8.5.2 Expected Growth Rate	127
8.5.3 Upper Growth Rate	128
8.5.4 Effects on Neighboring Systems and the Power Pool	128

9. PHYSICAL, ELECTRICAL, AND HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSMISSION FACILITIES	129
9.1 Recommended Overhead Line and Overhead Alternatives	129
9.1.1 Schematic Diagrams	129
9.1.2 Electric/Magnetic Fields	129
9.1.3 Stray Voltage	141
9.1.4 Ozone and Nitrogen Oxide Emissions	141
9.1.5 Radio/TV Interference	142
9.1.6 Audible Noise	143
9.2 Underground Alternative	145
9.2.1 Cable Options	145
9.2.2 Underground Materials Required.....	147
9.2.3 Heat Released.....	147
9.3 Right of Way Requirements	148
9.3.1 General	148
9.3.2 Recommended Overhead Line and Overhead Alternatives	149
9.3.3 Underground Alternative	150
9.4 Construction Practices	150
9.4.1 Recommended Overhead Line and Overhead Alternatives	150
9.4.2 Underground Alternative	153
9.5 Operation and Maintenance Practices	156
9.5.1 Recommended Overhead Line and Overhead Alternatives	156
9.5.2 Underground Alternative	157
9.6 Work Force Requirements	157
9.6.1 Recommended Overhead Line and Overhead Alternatives	157
9.6.2 Underground Alternative	158
10. ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION	159
10.1 Project Corridor Map	159
10.2 Hydrologic Features	159
10.2.1 Lakes	159
10.2.2 Rivers and Creeks	162
10.2.3 Riparian Areas	162
10.2.4 Ground Water	162
10.2.5 Floodplain Encroachment	165
10.2.6 Wetlands	165
10.2.7 Potential Impacts	166

10.3	Natural Vegetation and Associated Wildlife	167
10.3.1	Vegetation	167
10.3.2	Wildlife	169
10.3.3	Potential Impacts	170
10.4	Physiographic Features	171
10.4.1	Topography	171
10.4.2	Geology	171
10.4.3	Soils	171
10.4.4	Prime Farmland and Additional Lands of Statewide Importance	173
10.4.5	Mineable Resources	175
10.4.6	Potential Impacts	177
10.5	Land Use	177
10.5.1	Undeveloped/Agricultural Land	177
10.5.2	Recreation	179
10.5.3	Zoning	181
10.5.4	Potential Impacts	183
10.6	Socioeconomics	183
10.6.1	Demographics	183
10.6.2	Economy	184
10.6.3	Potential Impacts	184
10.7	Cultural Resources	185
10.7.1	Historic Properties	185
10.7.2	Archaeological Resources	185
10.7.3	Potential Impacts	185
10.8	Buffer Areas	186
10.8.1	Parkers Lake Substation Buffer Area	186
10.8.2	Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	199
11.	ALTERNATIVE OF NO FACILITY	215
11.1	Operation of Existing Transmission and Generation Facilities	215
11.1.1	Operation at Lower Limit of Forecast Demand	216
11.1.2	Operation at Expected Level of Forecast Demand	217
11.1.3	Operation at Upper Limit of Forecast Demand	217

11.2	Changes to Resource Requirements for and Waste From Existing Facilities, at Lower, Expected and Upper Limits of Forecast Demand	217
11.3	Potential Mitigation Measures at Lower, Expected and Upper Limits of Forecast Demand	218
12.	SUMMARY	219
12.1	Satisfaction of Statutory Criteria	219
12.2	Satisfaction of Chapter 7849 Criteria	221
12.3	Closing Summary	221
13.	REFERENCES.....	223

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1	Great River Energy Service Territory	4
Figure 1-2	Distribution Substation Service Area	5
Figure 1-3	Option 1: 115 kV Conversion	7
Figure 1-4	Option 2: Upgrade Existing System	9
Figure 1-5	Option 3: 69 kV Split System	11
Figure 1-6	Option 4: 69 kV Additional Source	12
Figure 1-7	Option 5: Generation	13
Figure 2-1	Northwest Metro Transmission System	30
Figure 3-1	Option 1: 115 kV Conversion	37
Figure 3-2	Option 2: Upgrade Existing 69 kV System	45
Figure 3-3	Option 3: 69 kV Split System	47
Figure 3-4	Option 4: 69 kV Additional Source	50
Figure 3-5	Option 5: Generation	53
Figure 3-6	Magnetic Field Profile – Underground 115 kV Line – Option 1-2005.....	65
Figure 3-7	Magnetic Field Profile – Overhead 115 kV Line – Option 1- 2005.....	66
Figure 5-1	Monthly Adjusted Net Demand/Capability.....	82
Figure 6-1	Wright Hennepin Service Territory	84
Figure 6-2	Historic and Forecast Customers – Residential and Total	91
Figure 6-3	Annual Customer Growth Rates – Historic and Forecast	92
Figure 6-4	Historic and Forecast Energy – Residential and Total	94
Figure 6-5	Residential Share of Annual Energy	95
Figure 6-6	Annual Energy Growth Rates – Historic and Forecast	96
Figure 6-7	Use Per Customer Indexes by Customer Class	98
Figure 6-8	Historic and Forecast Demand – Residential and Total	101
Figure 6-9	Peak Demand Growth Rates – Historic and Forecast	102
Figure 6-10	Annual Load Factors – Historic and Forecast	106
Figure 6-11	WHCEA Summer Demand Scenarios (kW)	107
Figure 6-12	Comparison of Current and Previous Peak Demand Forecasts....	111
Figure 9-1	Schematic Diagrams of Potential Structures for Options 1-4	129
Figure 9-2	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 1 - 2005	131
Figure 9-3	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 1 - 2026	132
Figure 9-4	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 2 - 2005	133
Figure 9-5	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 2 - 2026	134
Figure 9-6	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 3 - 2005	135
Figure 9-7	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 3 - 2026	136
Figure 9-8	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 4 - 2005	137
Figure 9-9	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 4 - 2026	138

Figure 9-10	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 5 - 2005	139
Figure 9-11	Magnetic Field Profile – Option 5 - 2026	140
Figure 9-12	Cross Section of High Pressure Pipe Cable	145
Figure 9-13	Cross Section of Self Contained Fluid Filled Cable	146
Figure 9-14	High Voltage Extruded Dielectric Cable	147
Figure 9-15	Typical Right of Way Requirements	149
Figure 9-16	Cross Section View of Right of Way Requirements for the 115 kV Underground Line	150
Figure 9-17	Concrete Encased Conduit Duct Bank	154
Figure 9-18	Horizontal Direction Drilling (HDD) Method	155
Figure 10-1	Plymouth-Maple Grove Project Corridor	160
Figure 10-2	Hydrologic Features	161
Figure 10-3	Riparian Areas	163
Figure 10-4	Native Resource Sites	168
Figure 10-5	Soils	172
Figure 10-6	Prime Farmland	174
Figure 10-7	Mineable Resources	176
Figure 10-8	Land Use	178
Figure 10-9	Parks & Trails	180
Figure 10-10	Zoning	182
Figure 10-11	Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	187
Figure 10-12	Zoning – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	188
Figure 10-13	Land Use – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	189
Figure 10-14	Watersheds & Wetlands – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	190
Figure 10-15	Riparian Areas – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	192
Figure 10-16	Natural Resource Sites – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area ..	193
Figure 10-17	Parks & Trails – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	196
Figure 10-18	Soils – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	198
Figure 10-19	Prime Farmland – Parker's Lake Substation Buffer Area	200
Figure 10-20	Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	201
Figure 10-21	Zoning – Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	202
Figure 10-22	Land Use – Elm Creek Lake Substation Buffer Area	203
Figure 10-23	Watersheds & Wetlands – Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	205
Figure 10-24	Riparian Areas – Elm Creek Lake Substation Buffer Area	206
Figure 10-25	Natural Resource Sites – Elm Creek Lake Substation Buffer Area ..	208
Figure 10-26	Parks & Trails – Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	210
Figure 10-27	Soils – Elm Creek Lake Substation Buffer Area	211
Figure 10-28	Farmland – Elm Creek Substation Buffer Area	214

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1	Actual Peak and Forecast Peak, 1990-2002.....	16
Table 1-2	Completeness Checklist.....	24
Table 2-1	Expected Electrical Growth (MW) by Substation	31
Table 2-2	Population Growth in Plymouth and Maple Grove	31
Table 2-3	WHCEA Customer Growth in the Plymouth-Maple Grove Area by Substation, 1998-2002	31
Table 3-1	Options Summary	35
Table 3-2	System Losses at Peak Load	43
Table 3-3	System Losses at Average Load	43
Table 3-4	Required Generation or DSM	52
Table 4-1	Cost and Efficiency Factors for Options 1-5	69
Table 4-2	Effect on GRE Member Rates	71
Table 4-3	Effect on WHCEA Member Rates	71
Table 4-4	System Losses at Peak Load	73
Table 4-5	System Losses at Average Load	73
Table 5-1	Steady-State Loadings for Maximum Thermal Loading	80
Table 5-2	Steady-State Load Serving Substation Voltage Limits	80
Table 5-3	Maximum Voltage Change for Switched Capacitor Banks	80
Table 5-4	Monthly Adjusted Net Demand/Capability.....	81
Table 6-1	Number of Customers by Class – 1988 to 2019	93
Table 6-2	Annual Energy by Class (MWh) – 1988 to 2019	97
Table 6-3	Annual Peak Demand by Class (MW) – 1988 to 2019	100
Table 6-4	Monthly Peak Demand (MW) – 1988 to 2017	103
Table 6-5	Revenue Requirement per kWh	104
Table 6-6	Historic Monthly Average Weekday Load Factor	105
Table 6-7	WHCEA Summer Demand Scenarios (MW)	108
Table 6-8	Comparison of WHCEA Summer Demand to Scenarios (MW)	108
Table 6-9	Comparison of Actual and Forecast Data for 2001	110
Table 7-1	WHCEA DSM Summer Peak kW Load Reductions Including Distribution and AC Losses (kW)	118
Table 7-2	WHCEA Program Participants	118
Table 7-3	WHCEA Cost Comparison of Transmission Project to Conservation and Load Management Programs	121
Table 7-4	Summary of Average kW Reduction per Participant of Conservation and Load Management Programs	122

Table 8-1	Possible Line Overloads – Lower Growth Rate	124
Table 8-2	Possible Line Overloads – Expected Growth Rate	124
Table 8-3	Possible Line Overloads – Upper Growth Rate	124
Table 8-4	Possible Line Overloads – Lower Growth Rate	125
Table 8-5	Possible Line Overloads – Expected Growth Rate	125
Table 8-6	Possible Line Overloads – Upper Growth Rate	125
Table 8-7	Possible Line Overloads – Lower Growth Rate	126
Table 8-8	Possible Line Overloads – Expected Growth Rate	126
Table 8-9	Possible Line Overloads – Upper Growth Rate	127
Table 9-1	Common Noise Levels	143
Table 9-2	Rule 7030.0040 Noise Area Classifications	144
Table 9-3	BPA Program Results – Heavy Rain Case	144
Table 10-1	Land Use in the Riparian Areas	164
Table 10-2	Wetlands in the Project Corridor Using NWI and Aerial Photography	166
Table 10-3	Significant Natural Resource Sites Within the Project Corridor for the City of Plymouth	169
Table 10-4	Rare Plants and Animals Within One Mile of the Project Corridor	170
Table 10-5	Significant Natural Features Within One Mile of the Project Corridor	170
Table 10-6	Highly Erodible Land	173
Table 10-7	Prime Farmland	175
Table 10-8	Additional Lands of Statewide Importance	175
Table 10-9	Land Use in the Project Corridor	179
Table 10-10	Cities in the Parkers Lake Buffer Area	194
Table 10-11	2000 Population by Race in the Parkers Lake Buffer Area	195
Table 10-12	Highly Erodible Land in the Parkers Lake Buffer Area	197
Table 10-13	Prime Farmland in the Parkers Lake Buffer Area	199
Table 10-14	Additional Lands of Statewide Importance	199
Table 10-15	Cities in the Elm Creek Buffer Area	207
Table 10-16	2000 Population by Race in the Elm Creek Buffer Area	209
Table 10-17	Highly Erodible Land in the Elm Creek Buffer Area	212
Table 10-18	Prime Farmland in the Elm Creek Buffer Area	213
Table 10-19	Additional Lands of Statewide Importance	213
Table 11-1	Required Load Shed (MW) for Single Contingency	216
Table 11-2	Required Load Shed (MW) for System Intact	216

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APPENDIX A – GRE and WHECA Conservation and Load Management Programs

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYMS	
AC	Alternating current
ACSR	Aluminum conductor steel reinforced
ACSS	Aluminum conductor steel supported
ATV	All-terrain vehicle
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
Btu/kW	British Thermal Units per kilowatt
CFL	Compact fluorescent lights
C/I-A	Commercial/Industrial-Agriculture
CIP	Conservation Improvement Program
CP	Cooperative Power Association
CTs	Combustion turbines
dB(A)	Decibel
DC	Direct current
DSM	Demand Side Management
EMF	Electromagnetic fields
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPR	Ethylene-propylene rubber
ETS	Electric thermal storage
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
G	Gauss
GAP	Generator Assistance Program
GRE	Great River Energy
GSHP	Ground-source heat pumps
HDD	Horizontal directional drilling
HEL	Highly erodible soils
kV	Kilovolt
KVA	Kilovolt-ampere
kW	Kilowatt
kWh	Kilowatt hour
LHVTL	Large high voltage transmission line
LRLF	Long-Range Load Forecast
MAPP	Mid-Continent Area Power Pool
MBWG	Modeling Building Working Group
MEQB	Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
MG	Milligauss
MHz	Megahertz
MnDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
MSL	Mean sea level
MVARS	One million voltamp reactance

ACRONYMS	
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hour
NAC	Noise area classifications
NAERO	North American Electric Reliability Organization
NERC	North American Electric Reliability Council
NESC	National Electric Safety Code
NOx	Nitrogen Oxides
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
ppm	Parts per million
PRS	Power Requirements Study
Regional Plan	Regional Transmission Plan
RTC	Regional Transmission Council
RUS	Rural Utilities Service
SO ₂	Sulfur Dioxide
SPGS	Sub-Regional Planning Groups
TCTT	Twin Cities Tree Trust
TPSC	Transmission Planning Subcommittee
UPA	United Power Association
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
V/M	Volts per meter
VARS	Voltamp reactance
VHF	Very high frequency
WHCEA	Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association
XLPE	Cross-linked polyethylene

Application for a Certificate of Need for a Large High Voltage Transmission Line to Support Increased Load Growth in the Plymouth - Maple Grove Area

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216B.243 and Minn. Rules pt. 7849.1020, Great River Energy (GRE) hereby makes application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a Certificate of Need for a large high voltage transmission line (LHVTL) in Hennepin County, Minnesota to meet the electrical needs of one of GRE's member cooperatives, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WHCEA), for WHCEA customers located in the Plymouth – Maple Grove area.

The Application is divided into 13 sections as follows:

1. **INTRODUCTION** – provides background information on GRE and WHCEA, a brief justification for the project, a summary of alternatives considered, and information regarding statutory requirements.
2. **NEED SUMMARY** – describes the need for the proposed project as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0240.
3. **PROPOSED LINE AND ALTERNATIVES** – provides a detailed description of the proposed project and the alternatives considered as required by Minn. Rules pts. 7849.0260, subp. A and B, and 7849.0320
4. **COST ANALYSIS** – discusses costs of the proposed project and alternatives and other information required under Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0260, subp. C.
5. **SYSTEM CAPACITY** – provides information on transmission planning programs and criteria (Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0280, subp. A) and a graph depicting monthly adjusted net demand and monthly adjusted net capability (Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0280, subp. H).
6. **PEAK DEMAND/ANNUAL CONSUMPTION FORECAST** – contains data concerning peak demand and annual electrical consumption in the WHCEA service area, forecast, and forecast methodology as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0270.

7. **ENERGY CONSERVATION AND LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS** – describes energy conservation and load management programs of GRE (generally) and WHCEA (specifically) as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0290.
8. **CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY ON SYSTEM** – discusses anticipated consequences to the transmission system if the proposed project were delayed (Minn. Rules pt. 7949.0300).
9. **PHYSICAL, ELECTRICAL AND HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSMISSION LINES** – provides information on health and safety issues, right of way requirements, and construction, operation, and maintenance practices for the overhead and underground alternatives considered as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7949.0330, subp. A-F.
10. **ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION** – provides a narrative description of the major environmental features between the endpoints of the proposed transmission system and the area within three miles of the endpoints as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7949.0330, subp. G.
11. **ALTERNATIVE OF NO FACILITY** – provides information for the alternative of no facility as required by Minn. Rules pt. 7849.0340.
12. **SUMMARY** – summarizes the key elements of the Certificate of Need Application.
13. **REFERENCES** – a list of documents referenced in the Application.