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GREATNORTHERNnews

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A Word from Minnesota Power

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) was published on October 30, 2015. The Final EIS provides environmental analyses of the Proposed Routes Minnesota Power submitted to the state in our Route Permit Application as well as additional Alternative Routes brought forth through the scoping process. The Final EIS, along with the recommendations from the Administrative Law Judge, will inform the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) decision about the location of the final route for the Great Northern Transmission Line. The Commission's decision is anticipated for March 2016.

This issue of Great Northern News contains an update on the state and federal regulatory processes, a brief update on Manitoba Hydro's progression through the Canadian regulatory process, and an introduction of activities that will commence in 2016.

As always, we hope you find this newsletter informative. If you still have questions about the Project's status, please visit our website or call our information hotline. You can also email the Project team if you have questions about the Project or suggestions for our newsletter.

Jim Atkinson
Environmental Siting and Permitting Manager
Minnesota Power

"Minnesota Power has been respectful of the Red Lake Nation's sovereignty, and has been diligent in recognizing and protecting Red Lake Cultural and Natural Resources." - Red Lake Tribal Council Resolution, 2015

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Visit our website:
www.greatnortherntransmissionline.com

Regulatory Process

State Review Process

Certificate of Need

The Certificate of Need (CN) determines if a project is reasonable and needed. The Great Northern Transmission Line CN was filed on October 21, 2013, and deemed complete six weeks later by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Environmental scoping meetings were held in February 2014; evidentiary hearings were held in fall 2014. The PUC issued an order on June 30, 2015, granting the CN.

Route Permit

Minnesota Power filed its Route Permit Application on April 15, 2014. In June 2014, the PUC unanimously deemed the application complete. The initial Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping meetings were held in July 2014. The Draft EIS was published in June 2015 and the state/federal public information meetings were held in July 2015. Evidentiary/public hearings were held in front of the Administrative Law Judge in August 2015. The Final EIS was published on October 30, 2015. A final decision by the PUC on the Route Permit is expected for March 2016. Visit our website to review the Draft and Final EIS documents.

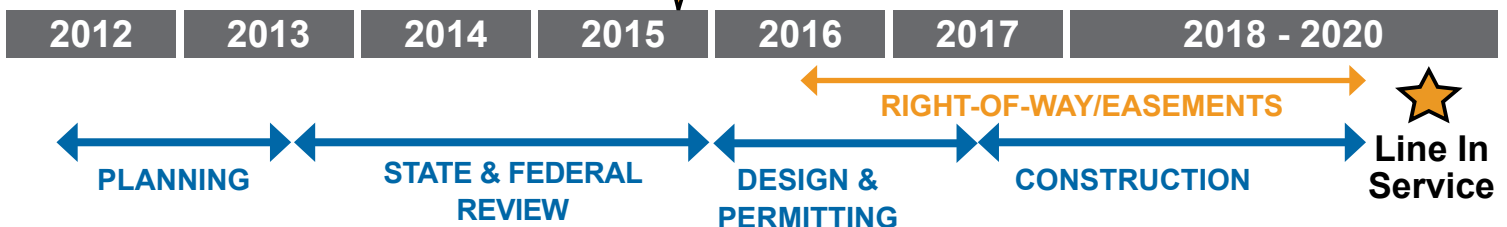
Federal Review Process

Presidential Permit

The Presidential Permit Application to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) was filed concurrently with the state Route Permit Application. The DOE published its Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on June 20, 2014, moving the Presidential Permit Application forward to the federal environmental review process. The DOE and the Minnesota Department of Commerce shared the same Draft and Final EIS documents and schedule. DOE anticipates granting a Presidential Permit after the PUC issues the Route Permit.

Project Schedule

We've almost completed the state and federal review processes for this Project. Right-of-Way acquisitions, field surveys, and design and permitting will occur in 2016.



Manitoba Hydro Update

Manitoba Hydro submitted a preferred route in their September 2015 Environmental Impact Statement. Their preferred route terminates at the Minnesota Power - Manitoba Hydro preferred border crossing. For more information on Manitoba Hydro's project and process, visit www.hydro.mb.ca/mmtp.



One of the eight public hearings for the Route Permit process held in August 2015.

ROW & Field Surveys

Once a final route has been approved by the PUC, Minnesota Power will start acquiring easements for the Right-of-Way (ROW) to construct and maintain the transmission line. ROW agents will contact individual landowners along the route to start discussing project ROW needs. Land values will be researched and fair market value offers will be made to affected landowners. You will be contacted if you own property within the final route.

Field crews will review the final route to gather design information and conduct surveys on wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and archaeological and historic resources. Field surveys will begin in April 2016. ROW agents will contact landowners to obtain access permission for these field surveys.