



IN REPLY REFER TO

FWS/MNV

United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd E.
Bloomington, MN 55425

RECEIVED

OCT 16 2009

LAND RIGHTS

October 6, 2009

Scott Ek, Project Manager
Office of Energy Security
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198

Dear Mr. Ek:

Thank you for working with HDR Engineering Inc. to develop the meeting on October 5, 2009, with Great River Energy, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to review and clarify concerns on the CapX2020 Brookings County-Hampton Route Permit Application as outlined in letters of comment submitted to you by the MnDNR and USFWS on April 30, 2009.

During the meeting, you stated that the present working draft of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) does not include a description or analysis of an alternative north-south route segment near Arlington, Minnesota, west of the proposed LeSueur and Belle Plaine Minnesota River crossing locations. The natural resource concerns of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service relative to this area and a request for delineation of such a north-south segment were included in the April 30, 2009 letter to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. The USFWS continues to believe that identifying a route realignment option within this area would provide the additional flexibility necessary to avoid and minimize impacts to ecologically significant resources. Furthermore, identifying this segment explicitly as an alternative alignment option within the DEIS would facilitate a more complete public review and allow due process for those landowners that would be affected by this option.

If you have any questions regarding our recommendations please contact our Ecological Services Field Office at (612) 725-3548.

Sincerely,

Tony Sullins
Ecological Services
Field Supervisor

Charles Blair
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Refuge Manager

CC: Randall Doneen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Craig Poorker, Great River Energy