

## **DRAFT COMMENTS FOR MN-MRPC CONSIDERATION 10/16/23**

RE: Northland Reliability Project, PUC Docket No 22-415/416

The Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MN-MRPC) has authorized the comments below regarding the Northland Reliability Project's current proposed route. Our comments focus on the mission of the MN-MRPC and National Scenic Byway Intrinsic Qualities as defined by the Federal Highway Administration.

As established under Minnesota Statute 161.1419, the MN-MRPC's mission is to promote, preserve and enhance the resources of the Mississippi River Valley and to develop the highways and amenities of the Great River Road, which holds All-American Road status. The Great River Road has achieved the esteemed designation of an All-American Road because it possesses characteristics of national significance demonstrating intrinsic qualities in at least two of the following areas – archaeological; cultural; historic; natural; recreational; and scenic. We are charged with protecting the byway, its intrinsic qualities, and the river it celebrates for current and future byway travelers and residents.

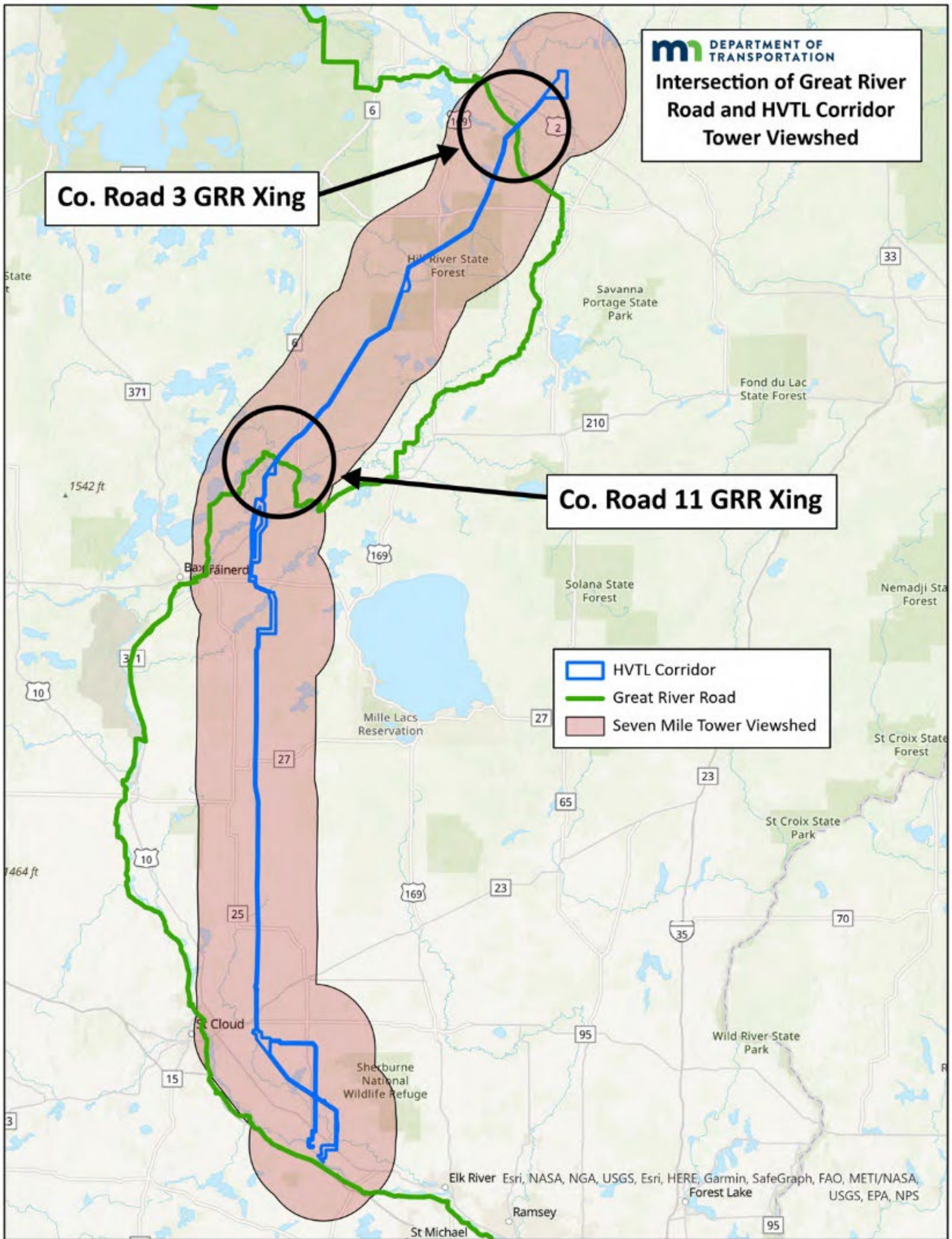
The Northland Reliability Project proposed route has potential impacts to the Minnesota Great River Road, which is part of an All-American Road and National Scenic Byway in ten states. Our initial review indicates that the proposed 345 kV power line route will alter intrinsic qualities of the Great River Road. We ask that decision makers and project applicants utilize all possible strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate any impact to the Great River Road and Mississippi River corridors; and exercise due diligence in assessing potential impacts to the Great River Road.

Specifically, the MN-MRPC requests the following:

- Less visible options such as underground lines in the areas crossing the Great River Road.
- A video/photo visual impact simulation of the proposed lines and associated vegetation impact where the proposed route crosses the Great River Road or is within 7 miles of the byway.
- Minimization of tree and vegetation removal.
- Restoration of disturbed areas with native/shrubby vegetation.
- Poles set back as far away from the road as practical.

A map is attached showing the proposed crossings of the Great River Road and a seven mile viewshed.




We appreciate your consideration and offer our commissioners and technical advisors to provide further information as the process continues. Please add the MN-MRPC to your stakeholder list for communications as this project continues and keep us informed of actions taken.



**mi** DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
**Intersection of Great River Road and HVTL Corridor Tower Viewshed**

**Co. Road 3 GRR Xing**

**Co. Road 11 GRR Xing**

-  HVTL Corridor
-  Great River Road
-  Seven Mile Tower Viewshed

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS