



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region

Exhibit A-i.



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
FWS/R6/NWRS  
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Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

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134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

**MAY 18 2016**

Al Koeckeritz, PE, PMP  
Project Management  
Otter Tail Power Company  
P.O. Box 496  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538-0496

Dear Mr. Koeckeritz:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reviewed your application letter dated January 8, 2016, submitted on behalf of Montana-Dakota Utilities Company and Ottertail Power Company for a 345 kilovolt electrical power transmission line with 150-foot wide right-of-way (ROW) project across 10 unique grassland easement contracts and 37 wetland easements administered by the Service in North Dakota and South Dakota.

The 10 grassland easements crossed would have permanent impacts from 33 proposed transmission line structures and one permanent access road. Approximately 2,512 square feet (0.058 acres) of grassland easements would be directly and permanently impacted by structures. Structure 620 and the permanent access road will result in 0.42 acres of impact to grassland easement. Thus the total impact to grassland easements is 0.48 acres for the life cycle of the line. Once the line reaches the end of its life cycle, the poles will be removed and the grass restored.

Of the 37 wetland easements crossed, five Service wetland easements would have the transmission line overhang the property with no structures present, and 32 wetland easements would have transmission line structures on the easement tract. On these properties only three structures would be in protected wetlands as shown in the table below. Thus the total impact to wetland easements is 0.005 acres for the life cycle of the line. Once the line reaches the end of its life cycle, the poles will be removed and the wetland restored.

We have determined that the project as described in the application letter, the draft Environmental Assessment dated November 2015 and the Compatibility Determination dated May 12, 2016, would have no long-term adverse effects on the interests for which the easements were acquired and a right-of-way permit from the Service will not be required in keeping with Code of Federal Regulations 50 Part 29.21-1(b).

We have no objection to the project, provided that there are no objections by any of the fee owners of those easement properties where impacts will occur.

While we have determined that a right-of-way permit will not be required, certain regulations pertaining to rights-of-way projects and specifically to projects involving electrical power transmission lines are still applicable (50 CFR 29.21-4 and 29.21-8; attached). We have no objection to the project provided so long as compliance with these regulations is maintained.

The proposed project traverses Service easements on these lands:

Landowner Name	Legal Description				Easement		
	State	Township	Range	Section	Type	Pole	Eas. Contract
Leslie W. and Loretta Dingwall	ND	129N	63W	9	Wetland	4	Dickey 90X-3
Cathryn M. Durham	ND	129N	63W	24	Wetland	24	Dickey 47X,1
Marina Onken	ND	129N	62W	20	Wetland	33	Dickey 493X,1
Daniel G. and Sheila G. Rajja	SD	127N	63W	6	Grassland	73, 74	Brown 449G,1
George A. and Donna M. Sumption	SD	127N	63W	7	Grassland	78, 78.1	Brown 458G-1
Zimmerman Real Estate Limited Partnership	SD	121N	59W	25	Grassland	379, 380	Day 561G
Eric and Myranda Becking	SD	120N	56W	13	Grassland	479	Day 530G,1
Kevin Berner Etux	SD	120N	55W	24	Grassland	512, 513	Day 557G
Frances L. Wohlleber & Wohlleber Brothers	SD	120N	52W	9	Grassland	559	Grant 89C,1
William J. and Gayle V. Klein	SD	120N	51W	15	Grassland	615	Grant 157G
William J. and Gayle V. Klein	SD	120N	51W	10	Grassland	616-623	same
William J. and Gayle V. Klein Land and Cattle II LLC	SD	120N	51W	10	Grassland	617	same
William J. and Gayle V. Klein Land and Cattle II LLC	SD	120N	51W	11	Grassland	624	same
Marlin F. and Shirley I. Schmidt	SD	120N	51W	11	Grassland	625	Grant 88C, 1-5
Clare Robert and Phyllis A. Alice Ollerich Family Trust	SD	120N	51W	11	Grassland	626-629	Grant 171G,1
Clare Robert and Phyllis A. Alice Ollerich Family Trust	SD	120N	51W	12	Grassland	630, 631	same
William R. and Margie A. Stewart Living Estate	SD	120N	50W	7	Grassland	636-638	Grant 42C
Marlin F. and Shirley I. Schmidt	SD	120N	50W	6	Grassland	641-643	Grant 88C, 1-5

If you need further information, please contact me at (303) 236-7920 or the Assistant Regional Director for the National Wildlife Refuge System in the Mountain-Prairie Region, Will Meeks, at (303) 236-4303.

Sincerely,



Acting Regional Director

Attachment: 50 CFR 29.21-4 and 29.21-8; attached