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Xcel Energy Information Request No. 5

Docket No.: E,G999/PR-24-2

Response To: Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Requestor: Sally Anne McShane & Tera Dornfeld

Date Received: January 29, 2025

Question:

Per Minnesota Statute § 216B.096, prior to the annual Cold Weather Rule period and prior to disconnection, public utilities must provide residential customers with a “summary of rights and responsibilities” which, includes Subd. 2.(h) (6) an explanation of the customer's right to appeal a determination of income by the utility and the right to appeal if the utility and the customer cannot arrive at a mutually acceptable payment agreement. More, Subd. 8. (a) A utility must provide the customer and any designated third party with a commission-approved written notice of the right to appeal:

- 1) a utility determination that the customer's household income is more than 50 percent of state median household income; or
 - 2) when the utility and customer are unable to agree on the establishment or modification of a payment agreement.
- (b) A customer's appeal must be filed with the commission no later than seven working days after the customer's receipt of a personally served appeal notice and then,
- (c) the Commission makes a determination on that appeal.

Further, per Minnesota Statute § 216B.091, during the months of October through April, each public utility must report the number of Right to Appeal notices mailed to customers.

Staff thus requests an answer which will help to understand how, upon review of the regular filings made in docket no. PR-YR-2, and in comparison to a utility of a relatively similar size and with a relatively similar service territory, CenterPoint Energy (CPE), Xcel Energy has reported so many fewer Right to Appeal notices sent.

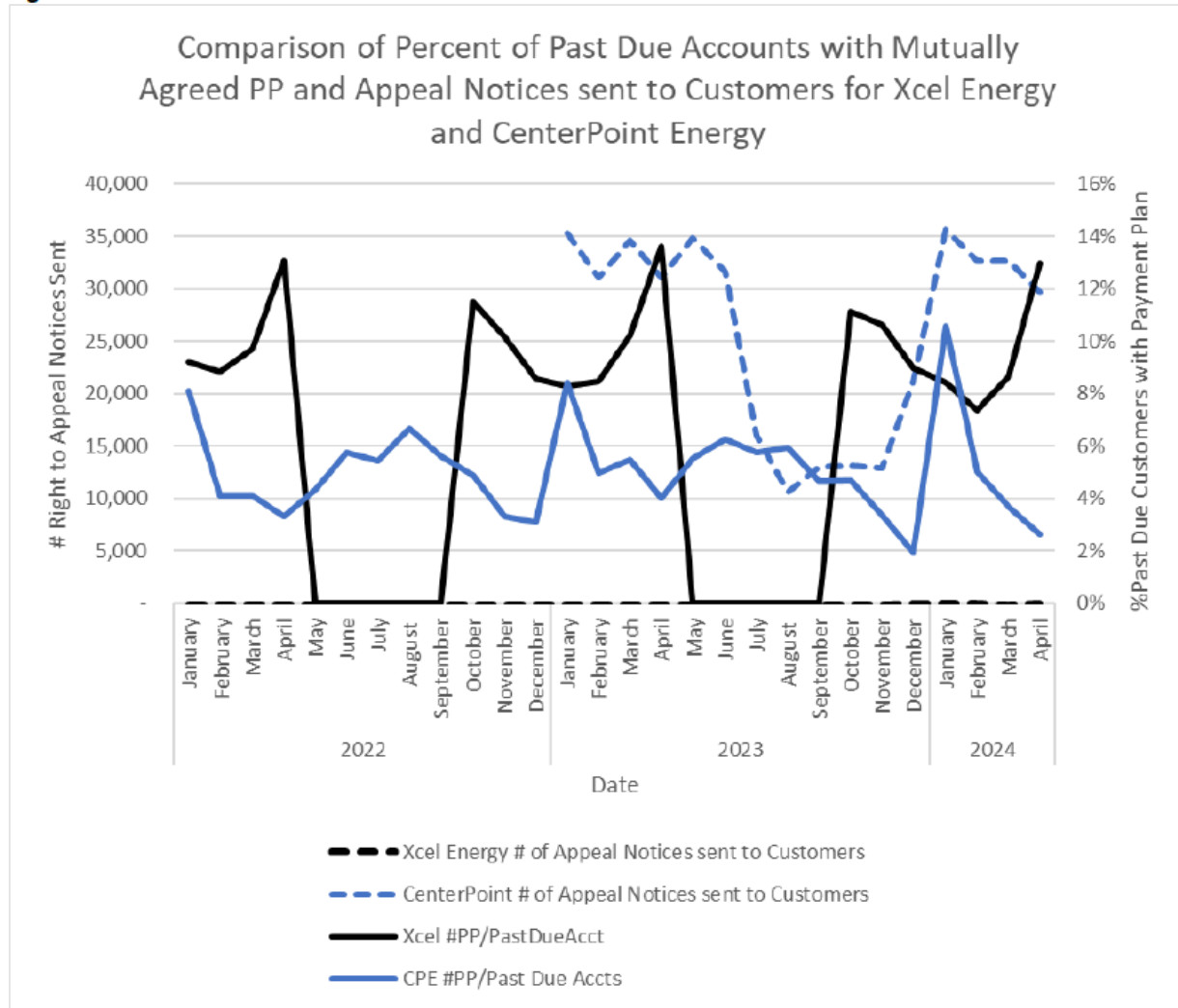
Table 1. Right to Appeal Notices Sent

| For year 2023 | CenterPoint | Xcel |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| # of appeal notices sent to customers | 285,149 | 2 |
| CAO CWR Appeals Received | 152 | 26 |

| # of appeal notices sent to customers | CenterPoint | Xcel |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Year 2023 | 285,149 | 2 |
| Year 2024 | 130,625 | 5 |

Part of the utility's response may include how despite a relatively similar proportion of mutually agreed upon payment plans, shown below as a proportion of customers with past due balances, Xcel reports sending fewer Right to Appeal Notices than CPE. Please see Figure 1 on the next page.

Figure 1.



Response:

The Company asserts that our two-step negotiations process with customers allows the Company and its representatives additional opportunities to work with customers in determining an agreeable payment plan. The additional information that representatives provide to customers regarding eligibility for energy assistance often mitigates the financial strain a past due balance may represent. The Company also

believes that there are likely instances when a customer agrees to a payment plan and may later change their mind or run into additional financial circumstances they may not have anticipated when their payment arrangement was set.

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Date: February 7, 2025