



Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

May 30, 2017

Sue Peirce
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East Suite 280
St Paul MN 55101-2198

Re: Docket No. E999/CI-17-284

In the Department's May 22, 2017 comments in the above referenced docket, the Department requested some clarifications of the DG Subcommittee process. Commission staff provides its responses to those questions in Attachment A to this letter for the Department's consideration in preparing its reply comments.

The attached responses are those of Commission staff and do not purport to reflect the views of Commissioners. The Commissioners will make the final decision on DG subcommittee structure and process.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Rebholz

Commission Staff

Attachment A: Staff Responses to DOC Questions

- 1. How will the process ensure that individual customer complainants can have their complaints heard without requiring them to hire an attorney or technical assistance?**

Staff response: The Consumer Affairs Office typically mediates customer complaints until an impasse is reached that the CAO cannot resolve. Staff anticipates that those complaints CAO cannot resolve will be a small subset of all DG complaints. Staff does not anticipate that complaining customers would need to hire an attorney or retain technical assistance to pursue their complaints with the CAO or the DG Subcommittee.

- 2. Will there be options for remote participation to facilitate access by consumers in Greater Minnesota?**

Staff response: Yes, staff contemplates remote participation will be allowed. Typically CAO complaints are handled by e-mail, telephone, and mail. Staff anticipates that the DG Subcommittee handling of complaints will be handled in person or by phone.

- 3. What will be the criteria and process to determine which issues to send to the DG Subcommittee or the full Commission?**

Staff response: Examples of possible work are listed at page 3 of the notice, and the proposed process is stated at page 4. Staff anticipates this could be an iterative process, with the criteria and process for resolving issues evolving with experience.

- 4. What will be the composition (Commissioners, Commission Staff, citizens, technical experts) and size of the DG Subcommittee?**

Staff response: Commission staff anticipates one or more Commissioners would be part of the subcommittee. Commission staff would support the subcommittee's work.

- 5. What will the Department and Commission Staff's roles will be in investigating and recommending solutions to complaints, and how would those roles impact any hearings of the complaint before the entire Commission.**

Staff response: Commission staff's role would be to support the work of the DG Subcommittee; staff does not see its support role as different from that in any other docket. As the notice

suggests, the DG Subcommittee could solicit comments on a disputed issue, and staff anticipates that the Department may choose to file comments. Staff anticipates that DG Subcommittee meetings to resolve complaints will be public, and any interested party would be free to attend as it would in other Commission dockets, and present comments as requested by the Subcommittee.

6. If complaints involving technical concerns are assigned to the DG Subcommittee, how will the DG Subcommittee obtain objective expertise to resolve technical concerns?

Staff response: The DG Subcommittee would work through the evidence presented by the disputing parties as the Commission does on any matter. Staff does not anticipate the Commission hiring technical assistance specifically for the DG Subcommittee.