

August 29, 2018

Daniel P. Wolf
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

RE: **Comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources**
Docket No. G002/M-18-316

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Attached are the *Comments* of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Department) in the following matter:

2017 Annual Natural Gas Service Quality Report submitted by Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota Corporation (Xcel or the Company).

The *2017 Annual Natural Gas Service Quality Report* (Report) was filed on May 1, 2018 by:

Gail Baranko
Regulatory Manager
414 Nicollet Mall – 7th Floor
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Based on its review of Xcel's 2017 Report, the Department recommends that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) accept the Company's Report.

The Department is available to answer any questions that the Commission may have.

Sincerely,

/s/ DANIEL BECKETT
Public Utilities Rates Analyst

AB/ja
Attachment

Before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources

Docket No. G002/M-18-316

I. BACKGROUND

On April 16, 2009, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) opened an investigation into natural gas service-quality standards in Docket No. G999/CI-09-409. In its August 26, 2010 Order (09-409 *Order*), the Commission established uniform reporting requirements for all regulated Minnesota gas utilities. The 09-409 *Order* prescribed a list of indicators for which data for each calendar year are to be provided by each utility in an annual miscellaneous tariff filing to be made by May 1.

Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation (Xcel or the Company) was allowed to report commingled gas and electric statistics for mislocates and for answer times from its utility call centers. For its first report covering calendar year 2010, the Company was allowed to report a partial year of data covering October 1, 2010 and thereafter for mislocates, gas lines damaged, summaries of major events reportable to the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MnOPS), and customer-service-related operations and maintenance expenses. For events reportable to MnOPS, all utilities were ordered to notify the Commission and the Minnesota Department of Commerce (Department) simultaneously with their notice to MnOPS.

In addition to the requirements in the 09-409 *Order*, the Commission's March 6, 2012 Order (11-360 *Order*) in Docket No. G002/M-11-360 *et. al*, directed all regulated Minnesota gas utilities to, in future annual reports:

- Include data on average speed-of-answering calls, in addition to reporting on the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds or less;
- Explain, in their 2011 annual reports, whether the difference between the total percentage of meters (100%) and the percentage of meters read (by both the utility and customers) is equal to the percentage of estimated meter reads;
- Explain, beginning with their 2011 annual reports, the types of extension requests (such as requests for reconnection after disconnection for non-payment) they are including in their data on service extension request response times for both locations not previously served, as well as for locations that were previously served;

- Explain, beginning with their 2011 annual reports, the types of deposits (such as new deposits from new and reconnecting customers and the total number of deposits currently held) included in the reported number of “required customer deposits;” and
- Describe, beginning with their 2011 annual reports, the types of gas emergency calls included in their gas emergency response times, as well as the types of emergency calls included in their reports to the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety (MOPS). Provide an explanation of any difference between the reports provided to the Commission and to MOPS.

In the 11-360 *Order*, the Commission also specifically required Xcel to, beginning in its 2011 report, explain how its gas-related call center complaints correspond with the complaint categories contained in Minn. Rules, part 7826.2000.

Further, the Commission’s November 30, 2010 *Order* in Docket No. E,G002/M-09-224 and G002/CI-08-871 included the following order point:

Direct Xcel to file the following information with its annual electric service quality reports filed pursuant to Minn. Rules, Part 7826.0500 and its annual gas service quality reports established in Docket No. G999/CI-09-409 starting in 2013:

- Volume of Investigate and Remediate field orders;
- Volume of Investigate and Refer field orders;
- Volume of Remediate upon Referral field orders;
- Average Response Time for each of the above categories by month and year;
- Minimum days, maximum days, and standard deviations for each category; and
- Volume of excluded field orders.

The Commission’s April 7, 2014 *Order* in Docket No. E,G002/M-13-371 required Xcel to provide complete and accurate meter reading data with multiple reads excluded in future reports.

On May 1, 2018, Xcel filed its 2017 *Natural Gas Service Quality Performance Report* (Report). The Department provides its analysis of the 2017 Report below.

II. DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

Each year, the Department analyzes the information provided in the annual report in the context of past reports. Overall, the Department identified no major concerns regarding Xcel’s 2017 Report.

The Department provides further detail on each reporting metric by discussing each separately below.

A. *CALL CENTER RESPONSE TIME*

Xcel reported the percentage of calls to call centers answered within 20 seconds in Attachment A of its Report, as required by the 09-409 *Order*. As the 09-409 *Order* permitted, the information reflects both natural gas and electric customer calls placed to the call centers.

As shown in Table 1 below, Xcel was able to answer 80 percent, or more, of calls within 20 seconds, with an average of 91.1 percent of calls being answered within 20 seconds in 2017.¹

Table 1: Call Center Response Time

Year	12 Mo. Avg.	Avg. Speed (Seconds)	# of calls
2010	83.0%	n/a	3,833,374
2011	86.2%	20	3,783,176
2012	89.4%	19	3,682,314
2013	89.0%	26	4,009,067
2014	90.0%	20	3,758,280
2015	90.9%	18	3,743,635
2016	89.9%	21	3,579,038
2017	90.1%	21	3,222,187

The Department notes that, in its November 2, 2017 *Order Approving Tariff Modifications and Granting Variance* in Docket No. E,G002/M-17-553, the Commission approved Xcel's proposed change to call center hours for non-emergency calls, and required the Company to "submit two years annual compliance review in its annual service quality reports for 2018 and 2019. The Company stated the following regarding compliance with the Commission's November 2, 2017 Order in Docket No. E,G002/M-17-553:²

On January 1, 2018 we changed our hours of operation for non-emergency calls to Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call Center Representatives continue to be available to interact with customers calling regarding electric and natural gas outage and emergency calls 24/7. We have not encountered any technical or other issues.

As could be expected, Xcel noted that there was a 5 percent increase in Interactive Voice Response (IVR) use, which was likely caused by the call center hours change.

¹ Source: Attachment A of the 2017 Report, lines 26, 31 and 22.

² Page 2 of Xcel's 2017 Report.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the requirements of the 09-409 and 11-360 *Orders*, as well as the Commission's Order in Docket No. E,G002/M-17-553.

B. METER-READING PERFORMANCE

Xcel reported the following metrics for meter-reading performance in Attachment B of its Report, and included meter reading data as required by the Commission's April 7, 2014 *Order* in Docket No. E,G002/M-13-371:³

- A. the number and percentage of customer meters read by Company personnel;
- B. the number and percentage of customer meters self-read by customers;
- C. the number and percentage of customer meters that have not been read by Company personnel for periods of six to 12 months and for periods of longer than 12 months, and an explanation as to why they have not been read; and
- D. data on Company monthly meter-reading staffing levels, by work center or geographical area.

Xcel reported that an annual average of 96.71 percent of customer meters were read by utility personnel in 2017, while 0.0005 percent were read by the customer in 2017.⁴

Xcel provided the number of meters unread in 2017 for 6 to 12 months and for more than 12 months for its Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Other customer classes.⁵ "No Reading Returned" was the most common reasons across all customer classes for failure of meters to be read.

Table 2 summarizes the number of meters not read by utility personnel for more than 12 months according to Xcel's current and past annual reports.

³ Xcel's meter reading performance reporting includes both electric and natural gas meters.

⁴ The Department's calculations are based on data provided in Tables A and B, Attachment B, page 1 of the 2017 Report.

⁵ Source: Table C-2, Attachment B, pp. 5-7 of the 2017 Report.

Table 2: Meters Not Read for Longer than 12 Months

Year	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Other	Total
2010	1,149	366	263	71	1,849
2011	637	403	181	94	1,315
2012	661	450	112	89	1,312
2013	602	335	131	64	1,132
2014	620	304	92	68	1,084
2015	764	310	134	90	1,298
2016	551	240	109	63	963
2017	531	260	135	48	974

The Department appreciates Xcel's continued efforts in reducing the number of meters not read for longer than 12 months.

Table 3 summarizes the number of meters not read by utility personnel for periods of six to 12 months according to Xcel's current⁶ and past annual reports.

Table 3: Meters Not Read for Periods of 6 to 12 Months

Year	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Other	Total
2010	3,506	1,076	338	100	5,020
2011	2,346	967	244	183	3,740
2012	3,967	1,232	248	106	5,553
2013	2,600	822	177	79	3,678
2014	5,237	1,178	260	123	6,798
2015	2,508	942	387	113	3,950
2016	2,268	772	167	75	3,282
2017	1,938	1,118	306	50	3,412

Xcel provided its monthly staffing levels for its four work centers and for meter readers working in western Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.⁷ The Company averaged a total of 12.5 meter reading staff in 2017, compared to 13.5 in 2016.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the requirements of the 09-409, 11-360, and 13-371 *Orders* regarding meter-reading performance reporting.

⁶ Source: Table C-1, Attachment B, pp. 2-4 of the 2017 Report.

⁷ Source: page 3 of Xcel's 2017 Report.

⁷ Source: page 3 of Xcel's 2017 Report.

C. INVOLUNTARY DISCONNECTIONS

The 09-409 *Order* required the Company to provide the involuntary disconnections data that it reports under Minn. Stat. § 216B.091 and § 216B.096 (Cold Weather Rule reports).⁸ Table 4 summarizes residential customer disconnection statistics reported by Xcel:

Table 4: Residential Customer Involuntary Disconnect Information

Year	Customers Receiving Disconnect Notice	Customers Seeking CWR Protection	Customers Granted CWR Protection	% Granted	Customers Disconnected Involuntarily	Customers Restored within 24 Hours
2010	1,218,073	173,440	173,440	100%	29,592	12,121
2011	1,282,576	188,091	188,271	100%	27,120	11,273
2012	1,207,842	121,393	121,393	100%	27,132	21,780
2013	1,217,049	126,477	126,477	100%	23,493	20,142
2014	1,168,975	105,561	105,561	100%	25,532	21,860
2015 ⁹	1,042,775	151,956	151,956	100%	26,657	22,452
2016	870,665	130,052	130,052	100%	20,584	17,352
2017	747,409	140,943	140,943	100%	19,212	13,182

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the involuntary disconnection information requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

D. SERVICE EXTENSION REQUEST RESPONSE TIMES

Xcel stated in its May 18, 2009 *Comments* in Docket No. G999/CI-09-409 that nearly all requests to connect natural gas service at a location previously served are from customers who have had their meter locked due to nonpayment issues, as it is otherwise uncommon to disconnect service between tenants. Therefore, the Company included all reconnection statistics, including service upgrades involving disconnection, and reconnections to a formerly vacant address, in its reporting of requests for new service.

As shown in Table 5, Xcel reported that the Company extended service to 1,585 new residential locations in 2017, compared to 1,760 in 2016, with an average completion time of 1.10 days.¹⁰ The total number of extensions to commercial locations was 196 in 2017, compared to 120 in 2016, with an average completion time of 1.9 days.¹¹

⁸ Docket Nos. E,G999/PR-10-02, E,G999/PR-11-02, E,G999/PR-12-02, E,G999/PR-13-02, E,G999/PR-14-02, E,G999/PR-15-2, E,G999/PR-16-2, E,G999/PR-17-2, and E,G999/PR-18-2.

⁹ The Department’s calculations for 2017 are based on monthly data provided in Attachment C of the 2017 Report.

¹⁰ Attachment D of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

¹⁰ Attachment D of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

¹¹ Source: *Id.*

Table 5: Service Extension Requests

Year	Residential		Commercial	
	# of Installations	Avg. # of Days to Complete	# of Installations	Avg. # of Days to Complete
2010	2,210	6.00	16	9.00
2011	1,625	3.92	140	2.83
2012	1,388	3.00	154	3.20
2013	1,582	0.80	130	0.70
2014	2,158	1.10	223	0.90
2015	1,406	0.50	149	1.20
2016	1,760	0.70	120	1.50
2017	1,585	1.10	196	1.90

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the requirements of the 09-49 and 11-360 *Orders* regarding service extension reporting.

E. CUSTOMER DEPOSITS

The reporting metric for customer deposits is the number of customers required to make a deposit as a condition of receiving service. Xcel reported 314 such accounts for both its natural gas and electric operations in 2017.¹²

Table 6: Customer Deposits

Year	Deposits	% Change
2010	657	n/a
2011	665	1.22%
2012	622	-6.47%
2013	652	4.82%
2014	606	-7.06%
2015	365	-39.77%
2016	561	53.70%
2017	314	-44.03%

Per the 11-360 *Order*, the utilities were required to explain the types of deposits included in the reported number of “required customer deposits.” Xcel stated that it requires deposits from residential customers that have filed for bankruptcy. The Company noted that it requests these deposits upon notification of the bankruptcy and not as a condition for reconnection of service. Xcel further stated that once customers file for bankruptcy, their service is begun anew and the deposit amount is included in their first bills.

¹² Source: page 5 of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the customer deposit information requirements of the 09-409 and 11-360 *Orders*.

F. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The metrics addressing customer complaints include:

- A. the number of complaints received;
- B. the number and percentage of complaints alleging billing errors, inaccurate metering, wrongful disconnection, high bills, inadequate service, and the number involving service-extension intervals, service-restoration intervals, and any other identifiable subject matter involved in five percent or more of customer complaints;
- C. the number and percentage of complaints resolved upon initial inquiry, within ten days, and longer than ten days;
- D. the number and percentage of all complaints resolved by taking any of the following actions:
 - a. taking the action the customer requested;
 - b. taking an action the customer and the utility agree is an acceptable compromise;
 - c. providing the customer with information that demonstrates that the situation complained of is not reasonably within the control of the utility; or
 - d. refusing to take the action the customer requested; and
- E. the number of complaints forwarded to the utility by the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office for further investigation and action.

As shown in Table 7, Xcel reported that 572 electric and natural gas complaints were handled by the Company's Customer Advocate Group (CAG) in 2017, 113 of which were forwarded by the Consumer Affairs Office (CAO).¹³ Data provided by the Company showed that 18 percent of complaints in 2017 handled by Xcel's Customer Advocate Group were resolved upon inquiry.

The most frequent complaint category was "inadequate service." Data provided by Xcel showed that 27.1 percent of complaints in 2017 were resolved by taking the action the customer requested, compared to 32.7 percent in 2016.

¹³ Source: Attachment E of Xcel's 2017 Report.

Table 7: Customer Complaints Handled by CAG

Year	# Handled by CAG	# Forwarded by CAO	% Resolved on Initial Inquiry	% Resolved by Taking Customer-Requested Action	Top Complaint Category
2010	693	124	17%	29.1%	Inadequate Service
2011	627	127	13.2%	28.2%	Inadequate Service
2012	613	101	18.6%	27.2%	Inadequate Service
2013	745	94	18.9%	38.3%	Inadequate Service
2014	770	115	16.8%	51.3%	Inadequate Service
2015	789	129	14.3%	29.5%	Inadequate Service
2016	547	102	16.3%	32.7%	Inadequate Service
2017	572	113	18.0%	27.1%	Inadequate Service

As shown in Table 8, Xcel also received 665,739 complaints in 2017, a relatively smaller number when compared to previous years.¹⁴ Approximately 96 percent of these complaints in 2017 were resolved by taking the action the customer requested. The complaint category with the largest volume of complaints for all customers was “billing errors” with “wrongful disconnect” and “inadequate service” additionally of significant concern to residential customers.

Table 8: Customer Complaints Handled by Xcel’s Call Centers

Year	# Handled by Xcel’s Call Centers	% Resolved by Taking Customer Action	Top Complaint Category
2011	877,097	95	Billing Errors
2012	806,506	96	Billing Errors
2013	802,754	96	Billing Errors
2014	796,982	96	Billing Errors
2015	797,237	96	Billing Errors
2016	736,308	97	Billing Errors
2017	665,739	96	Billing Errors

Per the 11-360 *Order*, Xcel provided a chart that aligned its customer complaint categories with the ones contained in Minn. Rules, part 7826.2000.¹⁵ The majority of Xcel’s complaint categories fell within the “Billing Error” and “Inadequate Service” categories in the Rules.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the customer complaint reporting requirements of the 09-409 and 11-360 *Orders*.

¹⁴ The complaint totals are sums of the monthly data provided in Attachment E of the 2017 Report.

¹⁵ Attachment E1 of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

G. EMERGENCY CALLS SPEED OF ANSWER

The Company reported its average speed of answering emergency line calls for natural gas emergencies by month and year for all its possible sources, including the general customer service line, Business Line, Electric Outage line, and Gas Emergency Line. Xcel also reported the same information for calls directed exclusively to the dedicated Gas Emergency Line. This information is summarized in Table 9.¹⁶

Table 9: Gas Emergency Calls

Year	# of Gas Emergency Calls	Average Response Time (seconds)	# of Gas Emergency Line Calls	Average Response Time (seconds)
2011	31,232	7	16,795	8
2012	26,046	8	15,013	8
2013	27,669	17	14,431	10
2014	25,426	8	15,754	8
2015	29,064	14	18,567	14
2016	35,921	11	7,146	14
2017	43,037	7	6,995	12

The number of gas emergency calls in 2017 were an all-time high since tracking from 2011. However, the Company transitioned to a different automated menu system for their Gas Emergency phone line. The Company stated the following regarding the change and increase in call volume for 2017:¹⁷

While we showed improvement over last year’s emergency gas call response time results during 2017, we continue to see an overall volume increase to our gas line. The menu change to our automated system, which became effective on May 19, 2016, continues to impact our total gas line call volume now that gas (vs. electric) is the first prompt on the main menu. In comparison, the volume levels to the toll-free “gas only” line continue to decrease.

As reported last year, we predicted the new menu structure would continue to create a higher than normal call volume to our gas line due to callers choosing option 1 either in error, out of habit or with the expectation of having their calls answered quickly for faster assistance. With the change in operational hours, which became effective January 1, 2018, customers who prompt into the gas emergency line with non-electric outage or non-gas related issues during business hours those calls will continue to be handled by our

¹⁶ Source for 2017 data: Attachment G of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

¹⁷ Page 6 of the 2017 Report.

Agents. During non-business hours, customers will be immediately notified that the gas line needs to be kept open for gas related emergencies and will then be redirected. We expect that over time this procedural change will eventually affect customer actions toward selecting the appropriate prompt options, which will help reduce the number of “miss-prompt calls” from the volume totals.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the gas emergency calls reporting requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

H. EMERGENCY GAS RESPONSE TIMES

The Company also reports the response time associated with emergencies requiring a physical presence at the site of the emergency. This metric is the length of time from the initial notification of an emergency to the point that qualified emergency response personnel arrived at the location of the incident. Xcel reported emergency response times by job code and total calls, by calls responded to within one hour or less, and calls responded to in more than one hour. Xcel also provided the average number of minutes necessary for response to an emergency. The Company’s emergency gas response time data are summarized in Table 10.¹⁸

Table 10: Gas Emergency Response Times

Year	# of Gas Emergency Calls	Average Response Time (minutes)	% of Calls Answered in an Hour or Less
2010	18,557	51.77	76%
2011	16,417	44.88	80%
2012	11,028	40.30	84%
2013	13,801	41.73	83%
2014	14,548	40	85%
2015	13,587	38.13	87%
2016	12,811	36.82	88%
2017	13,230	38.35	87%

In the 11-360 *Order*, all gas utilities were required to describe the types of gas emergency calls included in their gas emergency response times, as well as the types of emergency calls included in their reports to MnOPS. The utilities were also required to provide an explanation of any difference between the reports provided to the Commission and those provided to MnOPS. Xcel has included the MnOPS Emergency Response Reporting Form for 2017 in Attachment H of its Report, which was supplemented on August 21, 2018. In 2017, there were 10,582 calls that were reportable to MnOPS.¹⁹

¹⁸ Source for 2017 data: page 1 of Attachment I of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

¹⁹ Source: page 1 of Attachment H of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the gas emergency response time reporting requirements of the 09-409 and the 11-360 *Orders*.

I. MISLOCATE RATE

The mislocate rate refers to the number of times that a gas line is damaged due to a line being mismarked or unmarked. The required reporting metric is the total number of mislocates. The Company also provided the number of locate tickets and the number of mislocates per 1,000 locate tickets. Xcel’s mislocate data are summarized in Table 11.²⁰

Table 11: Mislocates

Year	# of Mislocates	# of Locate Tickets	Mislocates per 1,000 Tickets
2012	54	160,832	0.34
2013	57	155,531	0.37
2014	43	167,578	0.26
2015	46	179,362	0.26
2016	41	171,455	0.24
2017	44	177,703	0.25

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the mislocate reporting requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

J. GAS SYSTEM DAMAGES

The metric concerning gas system damage indicates the number of incidents caused by Company employees and contractors, or other sources. Xcel’s gas system damage data are summarized in Table 12.²¹

Table 12: Damaged Gas Lines

Year	Damage by Xcel	Damage by Others	Total	Miles of Main	Damage/100 Main Miles
2011	27	308	335	8,785	3.81
2012	81	254	335	8,924	3.75
2013	87	253	340	8,942	3.80
2014	77	238	315	8,942	3.52
2015	91	229	320	9,238	3.46
2016	71	271	342	9,292	3.68
2017	66	170	236	9,374	2.52

²⁰ Source for 2017 data: Attachment J of Xcel’s 2017 Reports.

²¹ Attachment K of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

The Company reported a rate of 0.70 damage incidents caused by Xcel or contractors per 100 miles of main and 1.81 damage incidents from other causes per 100 miles of main in 2017.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the gas system damage information requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

K. NATURAL GAS SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

The reporting metrics for natural gas service interruptions are the number of firm customers that experience an unplanned service interruption and the average duration of the unplanned service disruptions. Unplanned service interruptions are those due to Xcel employees and contractors, or other unplanned causes. Xcel’s gas service interruptions data are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Gas Service Interruption

Year	Number of Homes Affected	Number of Incidents Caused by Xcel	Average Duration of Outages Caused by Xcel (hours:minutes)	Number of Incidents Caused by Others	Average Duration of Outages Caused by Others (hours:minutes)
2011	2,130	31	5:39	249	3:50
2012	473	25	2:30	254	1:46
2013	621	26	1:43	238	2:00
2014	1,023	18	2:29	248	2:22
2015	715	32	1:55	263	1:57
2016	606	25	1:34	252	1:50
2017	401	19	0:58	161	1:39

A total of 401 homes were affected by 180 gas service interruptions in 2017.²² 19 outages were caused by Xcel employees and contractors, affecting 23 homes, while 161 outages affecting 378 homes occurred due to other causes in 2017.

The average duration of gas-service interruptions in 2017 was 58 minutes for outages associated with Xcel employees and contractors, and 1 hour 39 minutes for the outages due to other causes. 2017 was the third consecutive year of decreases in service interruption instances and average durations.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the natural gas service interruption data requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

²² Attachment L of Xcel’s August 7, 2018 supplemental filing to its Report.

L. MnOPS SUMMARIES

The Company is required to summarize major events that require a report being made to the MnOPS. These summaries include the ten items that the MnOPS requires in its incident reports. They are:

- the location;
- when the incident occurred;
- how many customers were affected;
- how the company was made aware of the incident;
- the root cause of the incident;
- the actions taken to fix the problem;
- what actions were taken to contact customers;
- any public relations or media issues;
- whether the customer or the company relighted; and
- the longest any customer was without gas service during the incident.

Xcel reported 23 such major events during 2017.²³ The Company provided a table of data concerning major incidents, which includes all ten items required by MnOPS.

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the requirements of the 09-409 *Order* regarding major events reported to MnOPS.

M. CUSTOMER-SERVICE-RELATED EXPENSES

The customer-service-related expenses reporting metric is the total operation and maintenance (O&M) expenses incurred related to customer service. The 2017 Report included expenses for operations in Xcel's Minnesota jurisdiction, as well as the total for Northern States Power Company (which includes North Dakota expenses). Table 14 below summarizes Xcel's reported customer-service expenses for its Minnesota jurisdiction.²⁴

²³ Source: Attachment M of Xcel's 2017 Report.

²⁴ Source: Attachment N of Xcel's 2017 Report.

Table 14: Customer-Service Expenses: Minnesota Jurisdiction

Year	FERC 901 and 903	Associated Payroll & Tax Benefits	Total
2010	\$5,612,215	\$396,149	\$6,008,364
2011	\$5,927,900	\$391,843	\$6,319,743
2012	\$5,896,206	\$436,123	\$6,332,329
2013	\$5,799,728	\$431,478	\$6,231,206
2014	\$5,617,750	\$374,554	\$5,992,304
2015	\$5,424,808	\$388,260	\$5,813,068
2016	\$5,317,939	\$381,388	\$5,699,327
2017	\$5,034,393	\$388,921	\$5,423,314

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the O&M expense reporting requirements of the 09-409 *Order*.

N. COMMISSION ORDER IN THE MATTER OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO XCEL’S INACCURATE GAS METERS, RECALCULATION OF BILLS, AND RELATED ISSUES (DOCKET G002/CI-08-871)

As indicated above, Xcel is required to provide certain data regarding meter repair field orders, which has traditionally been provided for both electric and gas service in Xcel’s annual electric service quality dockets. Xcel’s meter equipment malfunction data are summarized in Table 15.²⁵

Table 15: Meter Equipment Malfunction

Year	# of Orders for Gas Meter Equipment Malfunctions	Average Days to Resolve	# of Exclusions for Meter Access issues
2012	2,891	2.97	365
2013	3,286	3.07	608
2014	3,376	3.43	613
2015	2,956	2.94	533
2016	3,966	3.36	399
2017	3,638	3.67	466

The Department acknowledges that Xcel has fulfilled the requirements of the 08-871 *Order*.

²⁵ Source for 2017 data: Attachment O of Xcel’s 2017 Report.

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Analyst assigned: Daniel W. Beckett

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III. DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review of Xcel's 2017 *Annual Natural Gas Service Quality Report*, the Department recommends that the Commission accept the 2017 Report.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Sharon Ferguson, hereby certify that I have this day, served copies of the following document on the attached list of persons by electronic filing, certified mail, e-mail, or by depositing a true and correct copy thereof properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States Mail at St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Minnesota Department of Commerce
Comments**

Docket No. G002/M-18-316

Dated this 29th day of August 2018

/s/Sharon Ferguson

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Christopher	Anderson	canderson@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 558022191	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Ryan	Barlow	Ryan.Barlow@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	445 Minnesota Street Bremer Tower, Suite 1400 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
John	Coffman	john@johncoffman.net	AARP	871 Tuxedo Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63119-2044	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Generic Notice	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	445 Minnesota Street Suite 1800 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Corey	Conover	corey.conover@minneapolismn.gov	Minneapolis City Attorney	350 S. Fifth Street City Hall, Room 210 Minneapolis, MN 554022453	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
George	Crocker	gwillc@nawo.org	North American Water Office	PO Box 174 Lake Elmo, MN 55042	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Carl	Cronin	Regulatory.records@xcelenergy.com	Xcel Energy	414 Nicollet Mall FL 7 Minneapolis, MN 554011993	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Ian	Dobson	residential.utilities@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012130	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Sharon	Ferguson	sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place E Ste 280 Saint Paul, MN 551012198	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Edward	Garvey	edward.garvey@AESLconsulting.com	AESL Consulting	32 Lawton St Saint Paul, MN 55102-2617	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Todd J.	Guerrero	todd.guerrero@kutakrock.com	Kutak Rock LLP	Suite 1750 220 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, MN 554021425	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Annete	Henkel	mui@mutilityinvestors.org	Minnesota Utility Investors	413 Wacouta Street #230 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Michael	Hoppe	il23@mtn.org	Local Union 23, I.B.E.W.	932 Payne Avenue St. Paul, MN 55130	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Linda	Jensen	linda.s.jensen@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	1800 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota Street St. Paul, MN 551012134	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Richard	Johnson	Rick.Johnson@lawmoss.com	Moss & Barnett	150 S. 5th Street Suite 1200 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Sarah	Johnson Phillips	sarah.phillips@stoel.com	Stoel Rives LLP	33 South Sixth Street Suite 4200 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Michael	Krikava	mkrikava@briggs.com	Briggs And Morgan, P.A.	2200 IDS Center 80 S 8th St Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Peder	Larson	plarson@larkinhoffman.com	Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren, Ltd.	8300 Norman Center Drive Suite 1000 Bloomington, MN 55437	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Eric	Lipman	eric.lipman@state.mn.us	Office of Administrative Hearings	PO Box 64620 St. Paul, MN 551640620	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Peter	Madsen	peter.madsen@ag.state.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	Bremer Tower, Suite 1800 445 Minnesota Street St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
Pam	Marshall	pam@energycents.org	Energy CENTS Coalition	823 7th St E St. Paul, MN 55106	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
David	Moeller	dmoeller@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 558022093	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Andrew	Moratzka	andrew.moratzka@stoel.com	Stoel Rives LLP	33 South Sixth St Ste 4200 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
David	Niles	david.niles@avantenergy.com	Minnesota Municipal Power Agency	220 South Sixth Street Suite 1300 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Richard	Savelkoul	rsavelkoul@martinsquires.com	Martin & Squires, P.A.	332 Minnesota Street Ste W2750 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Zeviel	Simpser	zsimpser@briggs.com	Briggs and Morgan PA	2200 IDS Center80 South Eighth Street Minneapolis, MN 554022157	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
James M.	Strommen	jstrommen@kennedy-graven.com	Kennedy & Graven, Chartered	470 U.S. Bank Plaza 200 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Cam	Winton	cwinton@mnchamber.com	Minnesota Chamber of Commerce	400 Robert Street North Suite 1500 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316
Daniel P	Wolf	dan.wolf@state.mn.us	Public Utilities Commission	121 7th Place East Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 551012147	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_18-316_M-18-316