

**NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD**

Issued: May 20, 2020

**In the Matter of an Inquiry into the Financial Effects of COVID-19 on Natural Gas and Electric Utilities**

**PUC Docket Number: E,G-999/CI-20-425**

**In the Matter of the Petition of the Minnesota Rate Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities<sup>1</sup> for Authorization to Track Expenses Resulting From the Effects of COVID-19 and Record and Defer Such Expenses into a Regulatory Asset**

**PUC Docket Number: E,G-999/M-20-427**

**Comment Period:** All Minnesota rate-regulated electric and gas utilities shall provide initial filings by **June 10, 2020 at 4:30pm**

Initial comments on the rate-regulated electric and gas utilities' initial filings and the topic and questions open for comment listed below are requested by **July 10, 2020 at 4:30pm**

Reply comments are requested **July 20, 2020 at 4:30pm**

Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

**Issue:** The financial effects of COVID-19 on Minnesota rate-regulated electric and gas utilities, the tracking of related expenses, revenues, grants and other offsets resulting from the effects of COVID-19, and the recording of such into a regulatory asset.

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<sup>1</sup> In their petition, the Minnesota Rate-Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities are identified as being, in alphabetical order: CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp., d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas, Dakota Electric Association, Great Plains Natural Gas Co., Greater Minnesota Gas, Inc., Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation, Minnesota Power, Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy and Otter Tail Power.

**All Minnesota Rate-Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities Shall Provide in their Initial Filings:**

An explanation of their proposed accounting methodology for tracking costs and revenues or grants incurred or received as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as any known and estimated costs and revenues, clearly identified within specific categories.

**Topic(s) Open for Comment:**

- Are the accounting methodologies proposed by the electric and gas utilities for tracking costs, revenues and grants incurred or received reasonable?
- Are cost and revenues clearly identified and clearly within specific categories? For example, what types of financial effects should be considered COVID-related, including cost increases and decreases, revenue increases and decreases, investments, as well as any concurrent or related off-sets.
- What additional actions should the Commission take, if any? For example, what type of additional information should be gathered, and what, if any, refinements should be made to the quarterly reporting requirements?
- On what dates should quarterly reports be filed?
- Are there any conditions or further caveats that should be considered related to the Commission's granting of authority to establish regulatory assets?
- Should the Commission request information on the financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the utilities?
- Are there other issues or concerns related to this matter?

**Background:** On April 20, 2020, the Rate Regulated Electric and Natural Gas Utilities, in Docket No. E,G-999/M-20-427, submitted their joint request for deferred accounting for incremental costs incurred as a result of COVID-19. The utilities proposed an effective date of March 13, 2020.

On May 7, 2020, at its meeting, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) voted to grant the Utilities' request for deferred accounting, and required the utilities to track costs and revenues or grants incurred or received as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Utilities were also required to make an initial filing of their accounting methodology and known and estimated costs and revenues within the specific categories in 21 days and quarterly thereafter.

In a related matter, in Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-425, the Commission voted to ask for (1) stakeholder input on what actions the Commission should take including what type of information to gather, if any; (2) input on how to identify the types of financial impacts that could be considered COVID-19-related, including cost increases and decreases, revenue increases and decreases, and investments, as well as what off-sets there may be; and, (3) request information on the financial effects on the utilities of the pandemic.

In both matters, the Commission voted to delegate authority to its Executive Secretary to modify and vary procedures and deadlines, including the procedures and deadlines in this and subsequent orders, for the duration of these proceedings.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A written order formalizing the Commission's actions in these matters will be issued.

In addition, the Commission voted to request information on the utilities near term, planned for, and prudent utility infrastructure investments and other programs that, if accelerated, could aid in Minnesota's economic recovery from COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> A separate notice will be issued in that matter.

**Filing Requirements:** Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are **required** to file documents using the Commission's electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select *eFiling*, and follow the prompts.

Submit Public Comments:

**Online:** Visit [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select Comment and follow the prompts  
**Email:** [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)  
**U.S. Mail:** Consumer Affairs Office  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul MN 55101

**Full Case Record:** See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website at [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (20) and the docket number (425) or (427) and select *Search*.

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**Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure?** Contact Commission staff, Jorge Alonso, at [Jorge.alonso@state.mn.us](mailto:Jorge.alonso@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2258; or Sundra Bender, at [sundra.bender@state.mn.us](mailto:sundra.bender@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2247.

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<sup>3</sup> *In the Matter of an Inquiry into Utility Investments that May Assist in Minnesota's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-492