



414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

August 8, 2014

—Via Electronic Filing—

Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION – STATUS UPDATE
PLANNED OUTAGE CUSTOMER NOTICE
DOCKET NO. E,G002/CI-14-56

Dear Dr. Haar:

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission this status update on the actions we are taking to ensure we meet our obligation to provide timely notice to each impacted customer in advance of taking a planned outage.

Background

On February 6, 2014 the Company submitted its response to the Commission's January 24, 2014 NOTICE REQUIRING INFORMATION regarding our compliance with the Rules and Tariff provisions regarding customer notification of planned outages, and the steps we took with regard to the December 2013 planned outages to Laurel Estates at 5610 Laurel Avenue, Golden Valley, Minnesota.

Our response provided the information the Commission requested, observed that we had not met the Rule and Tariff obligations, and apologized for the inconvenience caused to our customers. We additionally conveyed the immediate actions we had taken to ensure that all employees with planned outage customer responsibilities are aware of their need to comply with the notice requirements, and outlined the 60-90-120 day actions we would be taking to further ensure we meet our obligation to provide timely notice to each customer in advance of taking a planned outage, that included:

- Development of internal policies and guidance to our employees;

- Review of the information systems involved in executing planned outages; and
- Bringing all of this together and training our existing employees, so that they have the tools they need to comply with the notice requirements of our Tariffs and the Rules.

The Department submitted comments on February 20, 2014 recommending that the Commission require the Company file status updates on its process improvements every 60 days, concluding with a final report when new practices and procedures are fully in place and training of current employees is complete. Although the Commission has not yet taken further action in this Docket, we submitted status updates on April 9, 2014 and June 9, 2014 to inform parties of the actions we have taken to improve our processes. We submit this third status update to discuss further progress and actions we have taken toward the plan we outlined in our initial response.

STATUS UPDATE

A. Summary of Previous Progress

We conducted meetings with all employees involved in carrying out planned outage customer notice processes where we reviewed and discussed the planned outage customer notice provisions of our tariff and Rule requirements. In addition, we:

- Identified and reviewed processes and information systems surrounding planned outage scheduling;
- Reviewed/updated existing customer communication forms;
- Developed specific procedures to execute system and personal/individual customer notifications;
- Drafted the Planned Outage Customer Notice policies and procedures;
- Developed training materials for employees in roles directly responsible for customer notice, and roles that are related, but not directly responsible for customer notice as part of the process;
- Trained approximately 130 employees in our Twin Cities Metro, Southeast, Northwest, Fargo and Sioux Falls regions; and
- Drafted the scope of work and executed a Request for Proposal for a third party consultant to perform a further review of our Planned Outage Customer Notice policies and procedures.

Development of our policies and procedures required that we:

- Identify and review the various processes that surround planned outage scheduling;
- Review existing customer communication forms, including our written customer

communication materials and call scripts, and either update them or develop new communication materials;

- Assess the information system implications associated with the data elements needed to provide proper notice to customers;
- Develop specific procedures for responsible individuals to execute system and personal customer notice, as appropriate; and
- Finalized the Planned Outage Customer Notice policies and procedures, which:
 - Clarify the responsibilities of all employees involved in the Planned Outage process, from the Regional Operations Vice President to field employees;
 - Define “customer” as it relates to planned outage communication expectations;
 - Detail the process for a planned outage that is expected to take less than 20 minutes; 20 minutes to 4 hours; more than 4 hours; and a cancellation and reschedule of a planned outage;
 - Outline the outbound letter and outbound call campaigns for the various expected outage lengths;
 - Specify the process for door-to-door/in-person door hangers for outages lasting less than 20 minutes;
 - Define the weather conditions that call for cancellation of a planned outage event;
 - Detail the steps to take when the expected duration of an outage or a postponement/cancellation/schedule change is necessary for planned outages; and
 - Include an internal self-audit of the proper application of the policies and procedures that we will also use to assess and adjust our training and written reference/job aid materials on an ongoing basis.

The employee training sessions lasted approximately 1.5 hours each and contained:

- Clear definition of our Customer Notice of Planned Service Interruptions tariff requirements;
- A message regarding the importance of customer communication for planned interruptions from Stephen Foss, Regional Vice President of Distribution Operations;
- Roles and responsibilities of the employees that are directly involved in the planned outage process (Supervisor I; Supervisor I, Vegetation Management; and Designers);
- Discussion and job aids conveying the communication processes and notice requirements based on the expected length of outage;
- Instructions on how to obtain a report of premises (and customers) that are expected to be impacted by the outage;

- The steps and requirements involved with the automated outbound letter and call Campaigns, and provision of the template letters and scripts; and
- The process to cancel or reschedule a planned outage.

B. Current Status Update

In the most recent 60 day period, our efforts have largely focused on employee training, the self-audit feature of our process, and getting the third-party consultant engaged. We outline these efforts below:

1. Employee Training

In our June 2014 Status Update, we noted that we expected we would be soon conducting our make-up training sessions, which we did June 12, 2014. We have also since completed the overview/awareness version of the training for employees in roles that are related, but are not directly responsible for customer notification as part of the process.

The last piece of our training is the “online” version that will be conducted through our Learning Management System. It will have required modules for both employees new to the Planned Outage process, and those who require an annual refresher session. We plan to have the online training program in place late 2014. In the interim, any employees hired or transferred into roles involved in the Planned Outage process will receive live training.

2. Internal Self Audit

We are progressing along a continuum that has us nearly at the point in our process where we perform an internal self-audit that will allow us to objectively assess the effectiveness of our processes, procedures, and training. We will use the results of these periodic, ongoing audits to coach employees, and assess and adjust our training and written reference/job aid materials. We expect to start the internal self-audit in late August.

3. Third Party Consultant

We issued a Request for Proposal in early May, seeking proposals from qualified contractors to aid us in reviewing the policies, procedures, training and customer communication materials we have developed, and to provide us insights into industry best practices with regard to planned outage communications. We selected Global Enterprise Managers LLC (GEM), and recently completed the contracting phase.

GEM is a privately held corporation that serves clients worldwide and specializes in the

areas of System Consulting, Systems Integration and Change Management and Training. We have previously worked with GEM on process review and development projects involving our Outage Management System, and our revenue cycle, or Meter to Mailbox processes.

We held a project kick-off call with GEM on August 4, 2014, and are in the process of gathering and providing foundational materials GEM has requested regarding our operations and processes. We are also setting-up a series of cross-functional working sessions for the week of August 18, in which GEM will seek to understand our scheduling, rescheduling, notice and other processes and supporting systems. We expect GEM's engagement to conclude in approximately 60 days, and hope to be in a position where we can summarize GEM's conclusions and outline any recommended actions in our next Status Update.

Over the next 60 days, we expect that our efforts will be focused on our work with GEM.

We have electronically filed this document with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and copies have been served on the parties on the attached service list. Please contact Jody Londo at jody.l.londo@xcelenergy.com or (612) 330-5601 or me at christopher.b.clark@xcelenergy.com or (612) 215-4593 if you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

/s/

CHRISTOPHER B. CLARK
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
RATES AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Enclosures
c: Service List

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Theresa M. Sarafolean, hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the foregoing document on the attached list of persons.

xx by depositing a true and correct copy thereof, properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at Minneapolis, Minnesota;

xx by email; or

xx by electronic filing.

MPUC Docket No.: E,G000/CI-14-056
CUSTOMER NOTICE OF PLANNED SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

Dated this 8th day of August 2014.

/s/

Theresa M. Sarafolean

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