

The Commission met on **Thursday, May 13, 2021**, with Chair Sieben and Commissioners Means, Schuerger, and Tuma present.

The following matters were taken up by the Commission:

P-7047/M-21-26

In the Matter of the Application of Starlink Services, LLC for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier for Purposes of Receiving Rural Digital Opportunities Fund Support

P-999/C-21-86

In the Matter of a Notice to Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant Winners

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Find, based on the record before the Commission as of now, that the requirements for eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation have been met, and approve the petition of Starlink Services, LLC (Starlink) for ETC designation in the census blocks listed in its petition, subject to this Commission's ongoing jurisdiction to oversee ETC compliance as set forth in sections 214(e)(2) and 254(f) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service rules codified at 47 C.F.R. part 54, and the applicable FCC auction materials.
2. Direct Commission staff to provide notice for comment by July 1, 2021, to address the state's present and recommended authority over ETC companies and the role of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, and the Commission in overseeing ETCs.
3. So that state agencies and the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office may explain service expectations to customers in the affected census blocks, require Starlink, within 10 days of the order, to make a compliance filing explaining:
 - i. When Starlink is legally obligated to commence advertising and providing voice telephony and Lifeline services as required by the FCC under the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund order; and
 - ii. What additional benefits and services Minnesota customers living within the census blocks will receive from Starlink different from customers outside of the census blocks.
4. Request that Starlink meet with Minnesota Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications Network staff to describe how its proposed voice telephony system

will connect and communicate with Minnesota's 911 system in accordance with state law, and require Starlink to make a compliance filing with the Commission in this docket discussing the progress of these conversations with the Department of Public Safety no later than July 1, 2021, or at another date established by the Executive Secretary.

5. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices and/or letters to the FCC, or any other entity, if necessary, to facilitate communication of the petitioners' ETC status as designated by this Commission.

The motion passed 4–0.

P-6995/M-21-133

In the Matter of a Petition of LTD Broadband LLC to Expand Its Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier

P-999/C-21-86

In the Matter of a Notice to Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant Winners

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Find, based on the record before the Commission as of now, that the requirements for eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation have been met, and approve the petition of LTD Broadband LLC (LTD) for ETC designation in the census blocks listed in its petition, subject to this Commission's ongoing jurisdiction to oversee ETC compliance as set forth in sections 214(e)(2) and 254(f) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service rules codified at 47 C.F.R. part 54, and the applicable FCC auction materials.
2. Direct Commission staff to provide notice for comment by July 1, 2021, to address the state's present and recommended authority over ETC companies and the role of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, and the Commission in overseeing ETCs.
3. So that state agencies and the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office may explain service expectations to customers in the affected census blocks, require LTD to do the following:
 - i. Within 10 days of the order, make a compliance filing explaining when LTD is legally obligated to commence advertising and providing voice telephony and Lifeline services as required by the FCC under the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund order; and

- ii. As a part of the compliance filing, explain the comments at page 7 of LTD’s petition where it states that LTD “is committed to providing the supported services throughout the Service Area to all customers who make a request for such services *if service can be provided at a reasonable cost by constructing network facilities,*” and explain how that is in compliance with the FCC’s Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Report and Order (FCC 20-5), particularly paragraph 6 of the order.
4. Require LTD to provide in its 2021 ETC recertification filing a detailed explanation of when it is obligated under the FCC rules and FCC Connect America Fund Phase II orders to commence offering voice telephony and Lifeline services upon deployment of LTD’s Connect America Fund Phase II broadband.
5. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices and/or letters to the FCC, or any other entity, if necessary, to facilitate communication of the petitioners’ ETC status as designated by this Commission.

The motion passed 4–0.

P-7051/M-21-53

In the Matter of the Petition of Savage Communications for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier

P-999/C-21-86

In the Matter of a Notice to Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant Winners

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Find, based on the record before the Commission as of now, that the requirements for eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation have been met, and approve the petition of Savage Communications for ETC designation in the census blocks listed in its petition, subject to this Commission’s ongoing jurisdiction to oversee ETC compliance as set forth in sections 214(e)(2) and 254(f) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended, the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Universal Service rules codified at 47 C.F.R. part 54, and the applicable FCC auction materials.
2. Direct Commission staff to provide notice for comment by July 1, 2021, to address the state’s present and recommended authority over ETC companies and the role of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, and the Commission in overseeing ETCs.
3. So that state agencies and the Commission’s Consumer Affairs Office may explain service expectations to customers in the affected census blocks, require Savage

Communications, within 10 days of the order, to make a compliance filing explaining when it is legally obligated to commence advertising and providing voice telephony and Lifeline services as required by the FCC under the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund order.

4. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices and/or letters to the FCC, or any other entity, if necessary, to facilitate communication of the petitioners' ETC status as designated by this Commission.

The motion passed 4–0.

P-7049/M-21-31

In the Matter of the Application of AMG Technology Investment Group, LLC d/b/a NextLink Internet for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier

P-999/C-21-86

In the Matter of a Notice to Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant Winners

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Find, based on the record before the Commission as of now, that the requirements for eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation have been met, and approve the petition of AMG Technology Investment Group, LLC d/b/a NextLink Internet (NextLink) for ETC designation in the census blocks listed in its petition, subject to this Commission's ongoing jurisdiction to oversee ETC compliance as set forth in sections 214(e)(2) and 254(f) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service rules codified at 47 C.F.R. part 54, and the applicable FCC auction materials.
2. Direct Commission staff to provide notice for comment by July 1, 2021, to address the state's present and recommended authority over ETC companies and the role of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, and the Commission in overseeing ETCs.
3. So that state agencies and the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office may explain service expectations to customers in the affected census blocks, require NextLink, within 10 days of the order, to make a compliance filing explaining when it is legally obligated to commence advertising and providing voice telephony and Lifeline services as required by the FCC under the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund order.

4. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices and/or letters to the FCC, or any other entity, if necessary, to facilitate communication of the petitioners' ETC status as designated by this Commission.

The motion passed 4–0.

P-7055/M-21-161

In the Matter of the Application of Cable One VoIP LLC for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in the State of Minnesota to Receive Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (Auction 904) Support for Voice and Broadband Services and to Receive Federal Lifeline Support

P-999/C-21-86

In the Matter of a Notice to Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Grant Winners

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Find, based on the record before the Commission as of now, that the requirements for eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designation have been met, and approve the petition of Cable One VoIP LLC (Cable One) for ETC designation in the census blocks listed in its petition, subject to this Commission's ongoing jurisdiction to oversee ETC compliance as set forth in sections 214(e)(2) and 254(f) of the Federal Communications Act of 1934 as amended, the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Universal Service rules codified at 47 C.F.R. part 54, and the applicable FCC auction materials.
2. Direct Commission staff to provide notice for comment by July 1, 2021, to address the state's present and recommended authority over ETC companies and the role of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, and the Commission in overseeing ETCs.
3. So that state agencies and the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office may explain service expectations to customers in the affected census blocks, require Cable One, within 10 days of the order, to make a compliance filing explaining when it is legally obligated to commence advertising and providing voice telephony and Lifeline services as required by the FCC under the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund order.
4. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices and/or letters to the FCC, or any other entity, if necessary, to facilitate communication of the petitioners' ETC status as designated by this Commission.

The motion passed 4–0.

E-015/M-21-60

In the Matter of Minnesota Power's Compliance Report on Rate Design for Large Light and Power Customers

E-015/M-21-61

In the Matter of Minnesota Power's Compliance Report on Rate Design for Large Power Customers

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission:

1. Accept Minnesota Power's compliance filing on rate design for the Company's Large Light and Power customers.
2. Accept Minnesota Power's compliance filing on rate design for the Company's Large Power customers.

The motion passed 4-0.

E-015/M-19-440

Minnesota Power In the Matter of Minnesota Power's Request for Approval of its 2019 Transmission Factors under its Transmission Cost Recovery Rider

Chair Sieben moved that the Commission:

1. Accept Minnesota Power's December 10, 2020 compliance filing.
2. Require Minnesota Power to provide testimony in its next rate case addressing how the Company has ensured that the overall classification of expenses is appropriate and consistent with FERC requirements, which Minnesota has adopted.

The motion passed 4-0.

E-015/PA-20-675

In the Matter of the Petition by Minnesota Power for Approval of Land Sales

The Commission tabled this matter.

G-008/GR-19-524

In the Matter of the Application by CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp., d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas for Authority to Increase Natural Gas Rates in Minnesota

Commissioner Means moved that the Commission:

1. Approve CenterPoint's compliance filing.
2. Approve CenterPoint's updated tariff sheets.
3. Approve CenterPoint's final rates bill insert.
4. Require CenterPoint to resubmit, within 10 days after the actual date final rates become effective, the CIP tracker account (including rates, revenues, expenses, and ending balance) based on actual data for the entire period that interim rates were in effect.
5. Require CenterPoint to submit a compliance filing, within 10 days of the completion of interim rate refunds, that separately shows the actual refunds and interest paid by rate class including supporting calculations.

The motion passed 4-0.

G-008/MR-21-182

In the Matter of a Petition by CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas (CenterPoint or the Company) to Establish a New Base Cost of Gas in Compliance with the Commission's Order in CenterPoint's General Rate Filing in Docket No. G008/GR-19-524

Chair Sieben moved that the Commission approve CenterPoint's new base cost of gas to coincide with the implementation of final rates in Docket G-008/GR-19-524.

The motion passed 4-0.

G-008/M-21-138

In the Matter of the Petition of CenterPoint Energy for Approval of a Recovery Process for Cost Impacts Due to February Extreme Gas Market Conditions

G-999/CI-21-135

In the Matter of a Commission Investigation into the Impact of Severe Weather in February 2021 on Impacted Minnesota Natural Gas Utilities and Customers

Chair Sieben moved that the Commission:

1. Deny CenterPoint's petition and decline to consolidate the petition with the Commission's investigation in Docket No. G-999/C-21-135.
2. Decline to refer this matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings for contested case proceedings.
3. Require CenterPoint to file in this docket all future filings made in Docket No. G-999/C-21-135. Authorize the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce to ask the Commissioner of Management and Budget for permission to incur costs for specialized technical professional investigate services to investigate CenterPoint's and the other impacted natural gas utilities' request for cost recovery in Docket Nos. G999/CI-21-135 and G-008/M-21-138 pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216B.62, subd. 8.

The motion passed 4-0.

G-004/M-21-235

In the Matter of the Petition by Great Plains Natural Gas Co., a Division of Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., for Approval of Rule Variances to Recover High Natural Gas Costs from February 2021

G-999/CI-21-135

In the Matter of a Commission Investigation into the Impact of Severe Weather in February 2021 on Impacted Minnesota Natural Gas Utilities and Customers

Chair Sieben moved that the Commission:

1. Deny the petition and declines to consolidate this docket with the Commission's general investigation in Docket No. G-999/CI-21-135.
2. Require Great Plains to file in this docket (Docket No. G-004/M-21-235) all future filings made in Docket No. G-999/C-21-135.

The motion passed 4-0.

G-008/M-20-889

In the Matter of an Inquiry into CenterPoint Energy's Investments that May Assist in Minnesota's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

G-008/M-21-48

In the Matter of an Inquiry into CenterPoint Energy's Request for Approval of its Advanced Metering Project

E,G-999/CI-20-492

In the Matter of an Inquiry into Utility Investments that May Assist in Minnesota's Economic Recovery From the COVID-19 Pandemic

Chair Sieben moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve CenterPoint's Accelerated Pipe Replacement Project.
2. Approve CenterPoint's Workforce Training and Development Project.
3. Approve CenterPoint's Research and Field Verification of Service Line Data Project.
4. Approve CenterPoint's Translation Project.
5. Order CenterPoint to separately track all costs associated with any approved projects.
6. For any approved projects, order CenterPoint to track, in this docket and in the 20-492 docket, and, on or before April 1, report annually on the following project-specific metrics and data until each project is completed:
 - a. General project information, including total spent on the project, the scope of work completed, the scope of work remaining to be completed, estimated remaining costs, and the proposed timeline for completion of the project;
 - b. Job creation, economic stimulus, and use of women, veteran, and minority- owned businesses, including the number of contractors and new employees hired and where possible, details regarding employee and contractor residency, union status, race/ethnicity, sex, disability status, and veteran status, apprentice hours worked (if applicable), use of certified MWBEs, including the amount spent and sex and race/ethnicity of ownership details, and indirect economic benefits;
 - c. Environmental benefits including estimated greenhouse gas emissions reductions and the method used to calculate such reductions; and

- d. Customer and system benefits including reporting on reduced gas leaks and improved system reliability.

The motion passed 4-0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION: November 3, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Seuffert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Will Seuffert, Executive Secretary