

The Commission met on **Thursday, February 20, 2020** with Chair Sieben and Commissioners Means, Schuerger, and Tuma present.

The following matters were taken up by the Commission:

IP-7006/WS-19-394

In the Matter of the Application of Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC for a Site Permit for the 109 MW Large Wind Energy Conversion System in Lincoln and Pipestone Counties

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Issue the draft site permit proposed by the Department of Commerce; and
2. Authorize Commission staff to modify the draft site permit to correct typographic and formatting errors, improve consistency, and ensure agreement with the Commission's final order in the matter.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-002/MC-19-758

In the Matter of the Application for a Minor Alteration of Xcel Excel Energy Transmission Line 5702

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Authorize the minor alteration requested and require the additional permit conditions proposed by EERA as set forth below:
 - a. **Best Management Practices.** Xcel Energy shall take precautions to avoid the spread of invasive plants by heavy equipment during construction and maintenance activities; use wildlife-friendly erosion control materials (<http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/wildlife-friendly-erosion-control.pdf>) to reduce mortality to small nongame species; work with landowners to preserve, wherever possible, low-growing shrub species that can provide wildlife habitat; and use only native seed mixes where reseeding of vegetated areas is needed.
 - b. **Complaint Procedures.** Prior to the start of construction, Xcel Energy shall submit to the Commission the procedure that will be used to receive and respond to complaints. The procedure shall be in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Commission's standard complaint handling procedures.

- c. **Notification to Landowners.** Xcel Energy shall provide all affected landowners with a copy of the Commission's order authorizing a minor alteration. Xcel Energy shall also provide all affected landowners with a copy of the complaint procedure upon contacting landowners to begin construction.
 - d. **Notification to Commission.** At least three days before the line is to be placed into service, Xcel Energy shall notify the Commission of the date on which the line will be placed into service and the date on which construction was complete. Within 60 days after completion of construction, Xcel Energy shall submit to the Commission geo-spatial information for all above ground structures associated with the project.
 - e. **Plan and Profile.** At least 30 calendar days before right-of-way preparation for construction begins on any segment or portion of the project, Xcel Energy shall provide the Commission with a plan and profile of the right-of-way and the specifications and drawings for right-of-way preparation, construction, structure specifications and locations, cleanup, and restoration for the transmission line. The documentation shall include maps depicting the plan and profile including the right-of-way, alignment, and structures in relation to the route and alignment approved. Xcel Energy may not commence construction until the 30 days has expired or until the Commission has advised Xcel Energy in writing that it has completed its review of the documents and determined that the planned construction is consistent with the authorized minor alteration. If Xcel Energy intends to make any significant changes in its plan and profile or the specifications and drawings after submission to the Commission, it shall notify the Commission at least five days before implementing the changes.
 - f. **Field Representative.** At least 14 days prior to commencing construction, Xcel Energy shall advise the Commission in writing of the person or persons designated to be the field representative. The field representative's address, phone number, emergency phone number, and email shall be provided to the Commission and shall be made available to affected landowners, residents, public officials and other interested persons.
2. The Commission will also require the following modification:
When Xcel submits its Plan and Profile to the Commission it shall also submit proof of right-of-way acquisition. Xcel shall notify owners of land that the transmission line crosses these filings.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-002/M-19-721

In the Matter of Xcel's Transmission Cost Recovery Rider

Commissioner Means moved that the Commission take the following action:

Approve the Company's proposed transmission cost recovery rider rates provisionally, as indicated on the Company's December 20, 2019 letter, assuming a February 1, 2020 implementation date, and with the understanding that a final decision will be made following the comment period in August.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-002/M-19-663

In the Matter of a Petition Requesting Approval of the Amended Agreement with Liberty Paper, Inc. and Approval of Accounting and Rat Treatment

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Require Xcel to provide, in any filing under Laws of Minnesota 2017, chapter 5, section 1, a breakdown of the forecasted costs between those necessary for electric service and those necessary to support the updated agreement.
2. Require Xcel, for the duration of the LPI steam sales, to provide testimony in its initial filings in rate proceedings outlining the services provided to LPI and demonstrating the reasonableness of Xcel's proposed cost allocations to the LPI steam sales in future rate proceedings.
3. Require Xcel to report annually, in the April 1 filings required under Minn. R. 7825.2200, all of the services, associated costs and cost assignments between the utility and the part of the corporation that provides steam services to LPI.
4. Approve the petition.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-015/D-19-534

In the Matter of Minnesota Power's 2019 Remaining Life Depreciation Petition

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve Minnesota Power's proposal to adjust the remaining lives of the Company's generation facilities and the assets in Account 390.0- Structures & Improvements downward by one year to reflect a one year passage of time.
2. Approve Minnesota Power's proposed salvage rates for all assets included in the instant filing as outlined in revised Petition Appendix A-1 and A-5.
3. Approve Minnesota Power's proposed effective date of January 1, 2019 for the Company's proposed depreciation parameters.
4. Require Minnesota Power to continue to provide in future depreciation filings a comparison of the remaining depreciable lives proposed in its depreciation filing and the remaining operating lives approved in the Company's most recent integrated resource plan, with an explanation of any difference.
5. Approve Minnesota Power's proposals to extend or reduce, by varying lengths, the remaining lives of all Account 390.0 assets for factors other than the passage of one year's time, as outlined in Petition, Appendix B.
6. Approve Minnesota Power's proposal to separate and independently depreciate twelve buildings in Account 390.0, while continuing to apply a group depreciation methodology to the remaining assets in Account 390.0 as outlined in Petition, Appendix B.
7. Require Minnesota Power to (a) establish a regulatory liability for the loader transfer from Laskin to Rapids, using the calculation methodology submitted by the Company in its reply comments attachment on November 14, 2019, and (b) address the resulting regulatory liability in its current rate case, in Docket No. Er-015/GR-19-442.
8. Require Minnesota Power to submit a compliance filing within 10 days of the Commission's order in this matter showing the Company's finalized calculation of any journal entries for the relevant regulatory accounts.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-002/M-19-568

In the Matter of Xcel Energy’s Petition for Approval of a Solar Energy Purchase with Elk Creek Solar, LLC for 80 MW of Solar Generation.

Commissioner Sieben moved that the Commission lay the agenda item on the table.

The motion passed 4—0.

E-002/CI-17-401

In the Matter of a Commission Investigation to Identify Performance Metrics, and Potentially, Incentives for Xcel Energy’s Electric Utility Operation

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve Xcel’s proposed methodology and reporting schedules, as detailed in the October 31, 2019 proposed methodologies and process filing and December 12, 2019 reply comments, with the following modifications:
 - a. Include megawatt hours per year in addition to megawatt hours for the demand response capacity available sub-metric and MW as well as MWh for the amount called sub-metric;
 - b. Change the “Calculation Proposed: Load factor or load net of variable renewable generation” to “Calculation Proposed: Load factor for load net of variable renewable generation;”
 - c. Provide data and examples of the shape and shift metrics to all interested parties, along with a timeline for implementing these future metrics;
 - d. Include a discussion of fugitive emissions of methane in the first annual report, including a proposed methodology for reporting fugitive emissions for methane in the “Carbon dioxide emissions avoided by electrification of buildings, agriculture, and other sectors” metric under environmental performance;
 - e. In direct consultation with interested stakeholders, explore and develop options to employ an online utility performance dashboard and present those options to the Commission in the first annual report, including a fair discussion of the costs involved;
 - f. In consultation with the Department and interested stakeholders, develop and file a demand response financial incentive for Commission consideration by the end of the first quarter of 2021;

- g. Work with stakeholders to develop evaluation criteria and benchmarks and file them at a later date; and
 - h. Use a standardization method consistent with the Commission's most recent Order in the Annual Service Quality, Safety, and Reliability docket in reporting their System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI), System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI), Customers Experiencing Long Interruption Duration (CELID), Customers Experiencing Multiple Interruptions (CEMI), and Average Service Availability Index (ASAI) within this docket.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to issue notices setting schedules for any follow up filings required as a part of this Order.

The motion passed 4—0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION: August 5, 2020



Will Seuffert, Executive Secretary