

January 29, 2020

Ryan Barlow Acting Executive Secretary Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: Reply Comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources
Docket No. E015/M-19-684

Dear Mr. Barlow:

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

Minnesota Power's 2019 Integrated Distribution Plan

As discussed in the attached comments, the Department provides its response to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) November 15, 2019 Notice of Comment Period on Minnesota Power's 2019 Integrated Distribution Plan.

The Department recommends that the Commission accept Minnesota Power's IDP Report, and offers certain amendments to the Commission's *Minnesota Integrated Distribution Planning Requirements for Minnesota Power*. The Department is available to respond to any questions the Commission may have on this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ MATTHEW LANDI Rates Analyst

ML/ar Attachment



Before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Reply Comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources

Docket No. E015/M-19-684

I. BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) has investigated utility distribution system planning and the modernization of the electric grid as it pertains to investor-owned utilities generally in Docket No. E999/CI-15-556 (Grid Modernization docket). The Grid Modernization docket was discussed at the Commission's April 19, 2018 agenda meeting, in which the Commission reviewed the draft Integrated Distribution Plan (IDP) filing requirements developed through a Commission-led stakeholder process and heard party comments. The proposed requirements direct utilities to file plans addressing: long-term distribution system modifications and investments, considerations used in related planning processes, and long-term distribution system future outlooks, among other requirements.

On February 20, 2019, the Commission issued its *Order Adopting Integrated Distribution Plan Filing Requirements* in Docket No. E017/CI-18-253, E015/M-18-254, and E111/CI-18-255 (the Order) establishing IDP filing requirements and deadlines for Otter Tail Power Company, Minnesota Power (MP, or the Company), and Dakota Electric Association, respectively. The Order directed the utilities to file their first IDPs by November 1, 2019.

MP subsequently filed its first IDP as required in this proceeding. On November 15, 2019, the Commission issued a *Notice of Comment Period* (Notice). The notice reaffirmed the purpose of the Commission's Integrated Distribution Plan (IDP) filing requirements:

- Maintain and enhance the safety, security, reliability, and resilience of the electric grid, at fair and reasonable costs, consistent with the state's energy policies;
- Enable greater customer engagement, empowerment, and options for energy services;
- Move toward the creation of efficient, cost-effective, accessible grid platforms for new products, new services, and opportunities for adoption of new distributed technologies;
- Ensure optimized utilization of electricity grid assets and resources to minimize total system costs; and
- Provide the Commission with the information necessary to understand the utility's short-term and long-term distribution-system plans, the costs and benefits of the specific investments, and a comprehensive analysis of ratepayer cost and value.

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The Commission's Notice also included the following topics open for comment:

- 1. Should the Commission accept or reject Minnesota Power's Integrated Distribution Plan (IDP)?
- 2. Does the IDP filed by Minnesota Power achieve the planning objectives in the filing requirements approved in the Commission's February 20, 2019 Order?
- 3. What IDP filing requirements provided the most value to the process and why?
- 4. Are there filing requirements that are not informative and/or should be deleted or modified, and why?
- 5. Are there other issues or concerns related to this matter?

On or before January 15, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Department), Clean Energy Economy Minnesota (CEEM), and the Office of the Attorney General—Residential Utilities Division (OAG) submitted Initial Comments in this proceeding.

II. DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

The Department responds to Initial Comments from CEEM and the OAG regarding an issue that is important to address: that "approval" of MP's 2019 IDP is not a finding of reasonableness of any proposed system modifications or investments nor a determination of prudence for any proposals contained within the IDP.¹

The Department agrees with both CEEM and the OAG that the Commission's approval or acceptance of MP's IDP should not be understood as pre-approval nor an advanced determination of prudence for any proposals contained within MP's IDP. Such proposals require detailed review on a case-by-case basis before those determinations can be made.

CEEM also encouraged the Commission "to use the IDP process to create communities of practice" so that the stakeholder community, the Commission, and utilities "all learn with and from each other as IDP evolves." The Department agrees that this could be a worthwhile goal, as it could: address the informational asymmetry between stakeholders, regulators and utilities, enable more transparent planning processes and expenditures of ratepayer funds, and help all involved learn best practices and share lessons learned.

The Department does not have any other issues or concerns related to this matter at this time.

OAG Initial Comments, dated January 15, 2020, at 1. CEEM Initial Comments, dated January 15, 2020, at 3.

² CEEM Initial Comments, at 6.

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III. DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on MP's 2019 IDP. The Department makes the following recommendations:

- The Department recommends that the Commission accept MP's IDP.
- The Department recommends that the Commission require Minnesota Power to discuss in future filings how the IDP meets the Commission's Planning Objectives, including:
 - A. An analysis of how the information presented in the IDP related to each Planning Objective,
 - B. The location in the IDP,
 - C. Analysis of efforts taken by the Company to improve upon the fulfillment of the Planning Objectives, and
 - D. Suggestions as to any refinements to the IDP filing requirements that would enhance Minnesota Power's ability to meet the Planning Objectives.
- The Department recommends that the Commission amend IDP Requirement 3.D.2 (xi) of Minnesota Power's IDP Requirements to read as follows:

For each grid modernization project in its 5-year Action Plan, require Minnesota Power to provide a cost-benefit analysis <u>based on the best information</u> it has at the time and include a discussion of non-quantifiable benefits. Minnesota Power shall provide all information to support its analysis.

The Department recommends that the Commission merge IDP Requirement 3.D.1 and 3.D.2 of Minnesota Power's IDP Requirements to read as follows: to read as follows:

Minnesota Power shall provide a 5-year Action Plan as part of a 10-year long-term plan for distribution system developments and investments in grid modernization based on internal business plans and considering the insights gained from the DER futures analysis, hosting capacity analysis, and non-wire alternatives analysis. The 5-year Action Plan should include a detailed discussion of the underlying assumptions (including load growth assumptions) and the costs of distribution system investments planned for the next 5-years (expanding on topics and categories listed above). Minnesota Power should include specifics of the 5-year Action Plan investments. Topics that should be discussed, as appropriate, include at a minimum:

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 Reply Comments

Docket No. E015/M-19-684

Dated this **29**th day of **January 2020**

/s/Sharon Ferguson

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Mary Beth	Peranteau	mperanteau@wheelerlaw.c	Wheeler Van Sickle & Anderson SC	44 E. Mifflin Street, 10th Floor Madison, WI 53703	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Jennifer	Peterson	jjpeterson@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street Duluth, MN 55802	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Hannah	Polikov	hpolikov@aee.net	Advanced Energy Economy Institute	1000 Vermont Ave, Third Floor Washington, DC 20005	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
David G.	Prazak	dprazak@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	P.O. Box 496 215 South Cascade S Fergus Falls, MN 565380496	Electronic Service treet	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Gregory	Randa	granda@lakecountrypower.	Lake Country Power	26039 Bear Ridge Drive Cohasset, MN 55721	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Mark	Rathbun	mrathbun@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Michael	Reinertson	michael.reinertson@avante nergy.com	Avant Energy	220 S. Sixth St. Ste 1300 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
John C.	Reinhardt	N/A	Laura A. Reinhardt	3552 26th Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55406	Paper Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684

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Generic Notice	Residential Utilities Division	residential.utilities@ag.stat e.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-RUD	1400 BRM Tower 445 Minnesota St St. Paul, MN 551012131	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Kevin	Reuther	kreuther@mncenter.org	MN Center for Environmental Advocacy	26 E Exchange St, Ste 206 St. Paul, MN 551011667	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Robert K.	Sahr	bsahr@eastriver.coop	East River Electric Power Cooperative	P.O. Box 227 Madison, SD 57042	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Richard	Savelkoul	rsavelkoul@martinsquires.c om	Martin & Squires, P.A.	332 Minnesota Street Ste W2750 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Thomas	Scharff	thomas.scharff@versoco.c om	Verso Corp	600 High Street Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Larry L.	Schedin	Larry@LLSResources.com	LLS Resources, LLC	332 Minnesota St, Ste W1390 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Christopher	Schoenherr	cp.schoenherr@smmpa.or g	SMMPA	500 First Ave SW Rochester, MN 55902-3303	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Kay	Schraeder	kschraeder@minnkota.com	Minnkota Power	5301 32nd Ave S Grand Forks, ND 58201	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Dean	Sedgwick	Sedgwick@Itascapower.co	Itasca Power Company	PO Box 455 Spring Lake, MN 56680	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684

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William	Seuffert	Will.Seuffert@state.mn.us		75 Rev Martin Luther King Jr Blvd 130 State Capitol St. Paul, MN 55155	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
David	Shaffer	shaff081@gmail.com	Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Project	1005 Fairmount Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Patricia	Sharkey	psharkey@environmentalla wcounsel.com	Midwest Cogeneration Association.	180 N. LaSalle Street Suite 3700 Chicago, Illinois 60601	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Bria	Shea	bria.e.shea@xcelenergy.co m	Xcel Energy	414 Nicollet Mall Minneapolis, MN 55401	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Doug	Shoemaker	dougs@charter.net	Minnesota Renewable Energy	2928 5th Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55408	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Audra	Skalet	askalet@mienergy.coop	MiEnergy Cooperative	31110 Cooperative Way PO Box 626 Rushford, MN 55971	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Anne	Smart	anne.smart@chargepoint.c om	ChargePoint, Inc.	254 E Hacienda Ave Campbell, CA 95008	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Ken	Smith	ken.smith@districtenergy.c om	District Energy St. Paul Inc.	76 W Kellogg Blvd St. Paul, MN 55102	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
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Trevor	Smith	trevor.smith@avantenergy.	Avant Energy, Inc.	220 South Sixth Street Suite 1300 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Beth H.	Soholt	bsoholt@windonthewires.or g	Wind on the Wires	570 Asbury Street Suite 201 St. Paul, MN 55104	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
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Tom	Stanton	tstanton@nrri.org	NRRI	1080 Carmack Road Columbus, OH 43210	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Byron E.	Starns	byron.starns@stinson.com	STINSON LLP	50 S 6th St Ste 2600 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
James M	Strommen	jstrommen@kennedy- graven.com	Kennedy & Graven, Chartered	200 S 6th St Ste 470 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Eric	Swanson	eswanson@winthrop.com	Winthrop & Weinstine	225 S 6th St Ste 3500 Capella Tower Minneapolis, MN 554024629	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Thomas P.	Sweeney III	tom.sweeney@easycleane nergy.com	Clean Energy Collective	P O Box 1828 Boulder, CO 80306-1828	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684

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Stuart	Tommerdahl	stommerdahl@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	215 S Cascade St PO Box 496 Fergus Falls, MN 56537	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Pat	Treseler	pat.jcplaw@comcast.net	Paulson Law Office LTD	4445 W 77th Street Suite 224 Edina, MN 55435	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Lise	Trudeau	lise.trudeau@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place East Suite 500 Saint Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Karen	Turnboom	karen.turnboom@versoco.c om	Verso Corporation	100 Central Avenue Duluth, MN 55807	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Andrew	Twite	twite@fresh-energy.org	Fresh Energy	408 St. Peter Street, Ste. 220 St. Paul, MN 55102	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Lisa	Veith	lisa.veith@ci.stpaul.mn.us	City of St. Paul	400 City Hall and Courthouse 15 West Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55102	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Roger	Warehime	roger.warehime@owatonna utilities.com	Owatonna Public Utilities	208 South WalnutPO Box 800 Owatonna, MN 55060	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Jenna	Warmuth	jwarmuth@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 55802-2093	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684

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Thomas J.	Zaremba	TZaremba@wheelerlaw.co m	WHEELER, VAN SICKLE & ANDERSON	44 E. Mifflin Street, 10th Floor Madison, WI 53703	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684
Christopher	Zibart	czibart@atcllc.com	American Transmission Company LLC	W234 N2000 Ridgeview Pkwy Court Waukesha, WI 53188-1022	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_19-684_M-19-684