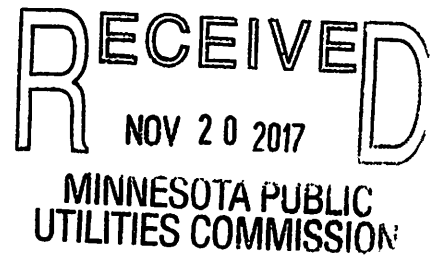


**Tom Dimond**  
2119 Skyway Drive  
Saint Paul, MN 55119



November 19, 2017

Daniel P. Wolfe  
Executive Secretary  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place East #350  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

RE; PUC Docket Number: E-002/ M-17-712 - Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund (RDF) Annual Report, Tracker Account True-up and Request for 2018 Rider Factor

Dear Mr. Wolfe,

Over the years, I have been active in neighborhood and park efforts along the Mississippi River. I have been honored to be appointed by the United States Secretary of the Interior to serve as a Commissioner for the National Park. I served on the Saint Paul City Council and Chaired the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Many of our efforts to enhance the livability and economic vitality of our City and Region are based on a renewed appreciation and understanding of the direct link between protection and enhancement of the Mississippi River Corridor and the protection and enhancement of our neighborhoods and economy.

Sixteen years ago, Crown Hydro received a grant from the Renewable Development Fund. The project has long been opposed by the City of Minneapolis and concerned neighbors of the river. The State of Minnesota has recognized the regional and state significance of the river corridor with its' designation as a State Critical Area. Its designation as a National Park recognizes the federal significance of this stretch of the river. Saint Anthony Falls is the only water falls on the Mississippi River. The Falls is of great historical and natural resource significance. The Falls is of great importance to the tourism economy of the area. The Falls is a valuable publicly owned amenity.

The proposal, as I understand it, is to authorize the diversion of water from the Falls and the diminishment of this valued public resource for private purposes. Years ago, the Falls was nearly destroyed by an attempt to exploit the Falls. The State and Federal significance of the river corridor and the importance of the Falls to the vitality of the region call for restoration of the Falls to its former glory instead of further diminishment.

In the past, a significant amount of the water has been diverted from the falls. This has significantly diminished the falls. We also used to dump our sewage directly into the river. With an enhanced understanding and appreciation of protecting and enhancing the Mississippi River for the benefit of all, it is incumbent that we reconsider past practices such as what we dump in the river and the dewatering of the Falls. Current diversions limit the flow over the Falls at times to not much more than a trickle. Additional dewatering will further diminish the

awe inspiring thundering sound, churning, and spray of the Falls to a whimper. The Parks Board and public have called for a restoration of flow, not a further diminishment of flow. Considering that Saint Anthony Falls is the only water falls on the Mississippi River and is in the heart of a National Park and State Critical Area, the protection of the water source for Saint Anthony Falls is paramount to a river focused National Park.

As I understand it, changes by the Minnesota Legislature call for accounting of grants awarded more than five years before the effective date of the adopted legislation that failed to obtain control of the site, failed to secure all necessary permits or approvals, and construction has not begun. The Legislation calls for transfer of unexpended grant funds to the clean energy advancement fund account. Funding would require a new application process. It appears the previously approved grant has been revoked by the Minnesota Legislature. If my reading of the Legislation is correct, it would seem appropriate, if not required, that this project grant be closed out in the Renewable Development Fund Annual Report since it is no longer an ongoing grant.

I attended a recent public meeting regarding Crown Hydro. As I understand it, no site has been secured in spite of assurances over 16 years. When asked if the plan was to purchase or lease publicly owned land in a National Park, what the anticipated cost would be, and if they had secured funding, the answer as I understood it was they hoped to have answers in the near future.

I have had the good fortune to participate in many community meetings that have resulted in the adoption of State Rules for the protection and enhancement of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and local area plans for the river. I encourage the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to take into account the extensive work on the National, State and local level to plan for and fund the protection and enhancement of the River Corridor. I encourage the Commission to consider public concerns raised on how this proposal conflicts with plans for the area. I encourage the Commission to consider the viability of this project. If after 16 years a grant recipient has not started construction, has not obtained control of the a site, has not secured all necessary permits or approvals, is this a viable project?

Legislation approved by the Legislature and Governor provides guidance that the funding should return to the grant program making the funds available to other proposals. I encourage the Commission to provide clear guidance to Xcel on transfer of grant funds to the clean energy advancement fund account and recovery of unused assets purchased with grant funds.