

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Dan Lipschultz
Matthew Schuenger
Katie J. Sieben
John A. Tuma

Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

In the Matter of MERC's 2017 Annual Gas
Service Quality Report

ISSUE DATE: April 12, 2019

DOCKET NO. G-011/M-18-317

ORDER ACCEPTING REPORT,
REQUIRING COMPLIANCE FILING,
AND SETTING ADDITIONAL
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On May 1, 2018, Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (MERC) filed its 2017 Natural Gas Service Quality Report.

On July 16, 2018, the Department of Commerce (the Department) filed comments recommending that the Commission accept the report and file reply comments further addressing service interruptions and performance metrics.

On August 29, 2018, MERC filed reply comments addressing the issues raised by the Department.

On September 5, 2018, the Department filed response comments recommending that the Commission allow MERC to retain its performance incentive level for 2017 and continue reporting on metrics as clarified in MERC's reply comments.

On February 28, 2019, the report came before the Commission.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In 2010, the Commission established service quality reporting requirements for natural gas utilities.¹ The requirements are modeled after the electric utility standards contained in Minn. R. 7826.

¹ *In the Matter of a Commission Investigation into Gas Utility Service Quality Standards*, Docket No. G-999/CI-09-409, Order Setting Reporting Requirements (August 26, 2010).

The reporting requirements address the following:

- call center response times
- meter reading performance
- involuntary service disconnections
- service extension request response times
- customer deposits
- customer complaints
- telephone answer times to gas emergency line calls
- mislocates (i.e., the number of times a gas line is damaged due to a mismarked or unmarked line)
- damaged gas lines
- service interruptions
- notification of reportable incidents (using data from the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety, or MnOPS)
- gas emergency response times
- customer service related operations and maintenance expenses

The Department conducted a thorough analysis of MERC's report, and subsequent comments, and recommended that the Commission accept the report.

The Commission concurs with the Department's recommendation and will accept the report. The Commission also concurs with the Department that MERC is in compliance with all applicable reporting requirements and that the Company has satisfied the 2017 Improved Customer Experience (ICE) project benchmarks. The Commission will authorize MERC to retain the \$500,000 ICE performance incentives level of 2017 and will direct MERC to continue reporting, in its 2018 service quality report, on ICE metrics, as clarified in MERC's August 29 reply comments.

The Commission will also direct MERC to file, within 60 days, a compliance filing that:

- identifies the maximum customer service window of no more than 8 hours.
- documents communications between customers and customer service representatives reflecting the maximum customer service window.
- identifies all other measures the utility is undertaking, contemplating, or could undertake, to reduce the maximum customer service window to a timeframe of less than the 8-hour maximum.

Finally, the Commission will establish additional reporting requirements related to emergency response data, as set forth in the ordering paragraphs below.

ORDER

1. The Commission hereby accepts MERC's 2017 Annual Gas Service Quality Report.
2. MERC must continue reporting, in its 2018 service quality report, on ICE metrics. The Commission also authorizes MERC to retain the \$500,000 ICE performance incentive levels of 2017.

3. Within 60 days, MERC must file a compliance filing that:
 - a. identifies the maximum customer service window of no more than 8 hours.
 - b. documents communications between customers and customer service representatives reflecting the maximum customer service window.
 - c. identifies all other measures the utility is undertaking, contemplating, or could undertake, to reduce the maximum customer service window to a timeframe of less than the 8-hour window.

4. In its 2018 Annual Gas Service Quality Report, MERC must file:
 - a. the utility's filing under 49 CFR 192.1007 (e): integrity management plan performance measures; monitoring results; and evaluation of effectiveness in a manner to establish a baseline for ongoing reporting.
 - b. a summary of any 2018 emergency response violations cited by MNOPS along with a description of the violation and remediation in each circumstance.
 - c. the number of violation letters received by the utility from MNOPS during the year in question.
 - d. a discussion of how to provide ongoing monitoring and metrics towards the deployment of Excess Flow Valves and manual service line shutoff valves pursuant to the Commission's order in Docket No. G-999/CI-18-41.

5. This order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION



Daniel P. Wolf
Executive Secretary



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