STATE OF MINNESOTA OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of Xcel Energy's 2020- REPORT SUMMARIZING PUBLIC 2034 Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan

MEETINGS

On July 1, 2019, Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy (Xcel), filed its 2020-2034 Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission). On July 18, 2019, the Commission issued an Order referring this matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for the assignment of an administrative law judge to conduct "one or more public meetings" to alert the public regarding Xcel's IRP.1 The Commission requested that a summary of the public meetings be filed within 60 days of the final public meeting.² The final public meeting was held on October 30, 2019.

I. **Notice and Public Meeting Schedule**

The Commission required Xcel to provide individual written notice of the IRP to each Minnesota customer through a bill insert.3 Xcel was also required to submit its notice for approval by the Commission.⁴ On August 16, 2019, the Commission approved Xcel's public meeting notice.⁵ The notice indicated five public meetings would be held as follows:

Monday, October 21, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. Sabathani Community Center **Target Banquet Center** 310 East 38th Street Minneapolis, MN 55409

Monday, October 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. Sabathani Community Center **Target Banquet Center** 310 East 38th Street Minneapolis, MN 55409

¹ Order Requiring Bill Insert and Referring Matter to OAH for Public Meeting at 2 (July 18, 2019) (eDocket No. 20197-154464-01).

 $^{^2}$ Id

³ *Id*.

⁴ Id

⁵ Notice of Approval of Public Meeting Notice (Aug. 16, 2019) (eDocket No. 20198-155241-01).

Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. St. Cloud Holiday Inn & Suites Heritage Room 75 37th Avenue South St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301

Monday, October 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center Auditorium 800 Conway Street St. Paul, Minnesota 55106

Wednesday, October 30, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. Mankato Civic Center Reception Hall 1 Civic Center Plaza Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Consistent with the notice to customers, the Administrative Law Judge held five public meetings at the dates, times, and locations indicated.⁶

II. Public Meeting Attendance, Speakers, and Written Comments

At each public meeting, Commission staff used sign-in sheets to record meeting attendance and to permit individuals to indicate an interest in speaking.⁷ All five meetings were transcribed by a court reporter.8 Based upon the sign-in sheets and transcripts, the meeting attendance numbers and number of speakers for each meeting are as listed below. Additionally, the Administrative Law Judge collected written comments from persons attending the meeting, which were labeled as exhibits to the transcript.

On October 21, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in Minneapolis: 27 individuals signed in, 12 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge received 4 written comments.9

On October 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Minneapolis: 101 individuals signed in, 30 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge collected 15 written comments. 10

⁶ See Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. Public Hearing Transcript (Tr.) (Oct. 21, 2019); Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. Tr. (Oct. 21, 2019); St. Cloud Tr. (Oct. 23, 2019); St. Paul Tr. (Oct. 28, 2019); Mankato Tr. (Oct. 30, 2019); see also Scheduling Order (July 30, 2019) (eDocket No. 20197-154815-01).

⁷ See Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. sign-in sheet (Oct. 21, 2019); Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. sign-in sheet (Oct. 21, 2019); St. Cloud sign-in sheet (Oct. 23, 2019); St. Paul sign-in sheet (Oct. 28, 2019); Mankato sign-in sheet (Oct. 30, 2019).

⁸ See Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. Tr. (Oct. 21, 2019); Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. Tr. (Oct. 21, 2019); St. Cloud Tr. (Oct. 23, 2019); St. Paul Tr. (Oct. 28, 2019); Mankato Tr. (Oct. 30, 2019); ⁹ See Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. Tr. (Oct. 21, 2019); Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. sign-in sheet (Oct. 21, 2019);

Exhibits (Exs.) 1-4 (written comments).

On October 23, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in St. Cloud: 75 individuals signed in, 21 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge collected seven written comments.¹¹

On October 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in St. Paul: 86 individuals signed in, 29 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge collected 14 written comments.¹²

On October 30, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Mankato: 34 individuals signed in, 12 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge collected 7 written comments.¹³

Collectively at the five public meetings, 323 individuals signed in, 104 people spoke, and the Administrative Law Judge collected 47 written comments.

III. Statements from Commission Staff, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, and Xcel

At each public meeting, a member of the Commission's staff, a representative of the Department of Commerce (DOC), and a representative from Xcel spoke to the attendees.

At all five public meetings, Hanna Terwilliger, an Analyst with the Commission, explained the Commission's process for review of the IRP, the methods available for submission of comments, and the extension of the comment period in this matter. She noted the availability of comment forms at the table at the entry. She encouraged attendees to share their views, and she explained that the Commission will consider all comments received, no matter the method of their submission.

The DOC was represented at the public meetings by either Jessica Burdette, Manager of the Energy Regulation and Planning Unit, or Susan Medhaug, Supervisor with the Energy Regulation and Planning Unit. At each meeting, Ms. Burdette or Ms. Medhaug explained the DOC's role in evaluating Xcel's IRP, the standards the DOC will use in its review, and that the DOC will be providing a recommendation regarding the IRP to the Commission in the future.

Finally, at each public meeting, Bria Shea of Xcel addressed the attendees to explain Xcel's IRP, including the IRP's geographic scope and the mix of energy sources Xcel plans to utilize to meet demand. In particular, Ms. Shea noted that Xcel plans to retire its coal plants a decade earlier than currently planned, add wind and solar renewables to achieve 50 percent of service from renewables by 2030, extend the life of

¹⁰ See Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. Tr. (Oct. 21, 2019); Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. sign-in sheet (Oct. 21, 2019); Exs. 5-19 (written comments).

¹¹ See St. Cloud Tr. (Oct. 23, 2019); St. Cloud sign-in sheet (Oct. 23, 2019), Exs. 20-26 (written comments).

¹² See St. Paul Tr. (Oct. 28, 2019); St. Paul sign-in sheet (Oct. 28, 2019), Exs. 27-40 (written comments).

¹³ See Mankato Tr. (Oct. 30, 2019); Mankato sign-in sheet (Oct. 30, 2019), Exs. 41-47 (written comments).

its nuclear plant in Monticello, Minnesota for an additional ten years, and revise its demand side management and response expectations.

IV. Summary of Comments

This report summarizes certain significant issues raised in comments at the public meetings, rather than reproducing all of the comments. For an extensive review of the comments made, the Administrative Law Judge refers the Commission to the transcripts and exhibits.

A. Comments In Favor and Opposed to the IRP Generally

Across all of the public meetings, numerous commenters expressed concerns about climate change, asserting that a climate crisis exists and requires action. These commenters generally asserted that Xcel's IRP is not aggressive enough to address this issue.

Michael Muellerleile explained that his 32-year-old daughter has told him she may not have children due to concerns about the environment, stating: "I think it's a disaster. To be even considering any more fossil fuel is crazy." Toya Lopez, who is affiliated with Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate, indicated: "I'm 24 and I'm committing the next ten years of my life to address this climate crisis, this health crisis, before it's too late, and I ask Xcel to do the same." Steve Dietz, of West Metro Climate Action, stated that he is not a scientist or policy expert, but that he wanted to speak for his children and the children of others, because he anticipates a "human crisis of unimaginable scale and consequences," due to fossil fuels. John Deitering is a township supervisor in Wright County and, with his wife, has owned and operated seven businesses in Wright County. He stated that "this is not a contest between a healthy planet and jobs," and indicated that "2050 is too late for carbon-free energy."

Shanda Waller is worried about climate change and the future of her grandchildren.¹⁹ She noted many steps she personally takes to reduce her energy use, but also that: "I am just one person and one household. No matter how much I do, I can't have the impact Xcel can."²⁰ Tom Lucy indicated that the climate crisis will impact all people, and that as a social worker in the St. Paul Public Schools, it breaks his heart to know the children and families he works with will be the most often displaced and severely impacted by the effects of climate change.²¹ Ken Wendinger said: "I have to say that we're dealing with a crisis, and I don't think this is a crisis plan."²² Ted Benson

¹⁴ Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. Tr. at 48 (Oct. 21, 2019).

¹⁵ *Id.* at 61-62.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 69-70.

¹⁷ St. Cloud Tr. at 53 (Oct. 23, 2019).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 54.

¹⁹ St. Paul Tr. at 35 (Oct. 28, 2019).

²⁰ *Id*.

²¹ *Id.* at 37-38.

²² St. Cloud Tr. at 46 (Oct. 23, 2019).

became a grandfather for the first time earlier this year, but panic about climate change kept him up at night as he wondered: "[w]hat kind of future would there be for this child?"²³

Henry Padgett referred to himself as a "trifecta," because he is an Xcel shareholder who receives power from Xcel, and he also sells Xcel power from the solar array on his roof.²⁴ He stated: "I feel like I am Fred Flintstone riding in a bus with a bunch of other people, and we're headed for the cliff, and we all need to put the brakes on."²⁵ Chelsea Dearmond, with St. Paul 350, indicated that Xcel's IRP "comes at a crossroads," and that Xcel's mix of sources will impact the ability of local governments to meet their commitments to reduce emissions.²⁶ Patty O'Keefe, of the Sierra Club, thanked Xcel for its decision to retire its coal pants, but noted the group's concerns about other aspects of the plan, including its lack of support for community and rooftop solar, Xcel's reliance on a new fracked gas plant, and its extension of the life of the Monticello nuclear plant.²⁷ Ms. O'Keefe indicated that the Sierra Club is providing critical feedback because it recognizes that Xcel is taking important steps with this IRP and Xcel's actions will become the standard across the region and the country, necessitating the most aggressive plan possible.²⁸

Other commenters generally supported the IRP. For example, Randy Farrow, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mankato Clinic Health Care System, spoke in support of the IRP, noting that the health system has about ten facilities and that the system has received reliable and affordable service from Xcel.²⁹ Mr. Farrow stated that he believes the proposed IRP is aggressive and will be good for customers.³⁰

Gerry McCarter, a certified public accountant and community activist in St. Cloud, expressed that the Xcel plan was aggressive, but realistic.³¹ He noted the there are no easy answers, and that coal, natural gas, and nuclear energy generation both have pros and cons.³²

Mike Bull, Policy Director for the Center for Energy and Environment, applauded Xcel for their "momentous commitment" to lead the nation in transitioning to clean energy "at the pace and scale the climate science says we need to." In particular, Mr. Bull expressed support for Xcel's agreement to a new method for calculating efficiency goals, based on data from the DOC's Statewide Efficiency Potential Study, that will nearly double the amount of cost effective energy and displace more expensive

²³ St. Paul Tr. at 61 (Oct. 28, 2019).

²⁴ St. Cloud Tr. at 51 (Oct. 23, 2019).

²⁵ *Id.* at 52.

²⁶ St. Paul Tr. at 43-44 (Oct. 28, 2019).

²⁷ St. Cloud Tr. at 63-66 (Oct. 23, 2019).

²⁸ *Id.* at 66-67.

²⁹ Mankato Tr. at 28-29 (Oct. 30, 2019).

³⁰ Id. at 29.

³¹ St. Cloud Tr. at 43-44 (Oct. 23, 2019).

³² Id.

³³ Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. at 32 (Oct. 21, 2019).

supply-side investments, increasing the cost-effectiveness of the plan.³⁴ He further noted that the IRP was not perfect, but that it was among the best plans he had seen in his 25 years of experience in this area.³⁵

B. Monticello Nuclear Plant Extension

Xcel's plan to extend the life of the Monticello nuclear plant received positive and negative comments. Rose Thelen spoke of her experience living within the 10-mile evacuation zone around the Monticello facility.³⁶ She is concerned about the safety of the facility, and expressed that she does not believe the facility is sufficiently profitable to justify its continued operation when the same money could be spent on renewables.³⁷ Elizabeth Dickinson is "unutterably opposed to nuclear."³⁸

Tracy Bertram, the mayor of Becker, Minnesota, spoke in favor of Xcel's extension of the Monticello plant, noting impacts on Becker's economy. Oakley Biesanz stated that "perhaps we need to hold onto nuclear for a little while longer if we do need that for dependable electric infrastructure. Sara Bancroft, a veterinarian and scientist, indicated that nuclear power is the most reliable clean energy source available to us, and she opposes the premature closure of nuclear plants.

C. Gas Fracking Plant

Many commenters expressed concerns about Xcel's plan to build a fracked gas plant in Becker, Minnesota. Among them, Noa Shavit-Lonstein of Minnesota 350, stated: "It's simply irresponsible in the midst of a climate crisis to be building a new fossil fuel infrastructure." Jessica Garraway noted that she is a member of the "extinction rebellion," and that the goal should be zero fossil fuel sources by 2025. She asserted that protests will result if Xcel ignores opposition to the fracked gas plant and that "we have the right to put our bodies on the line to block them."

Dr. Laalitha Surapaneni, an internal medicine physician at the University of Minnesota, expressed strong opposition to the gas fracking plant, noting that her patients already experience substantial negative health impacts, including from asthma and allergies, due to climate change and air pollution.⁴⁵ She noted that natural gas was "implemented to be a bridge fuel and we are at the end of that bridge now."⁴⁶ Hazen

³⁴ *Id.* at 33-34.

³⁵ *Id.* at 34.

³⁶ St. Cloud Tr. at 28 (Oct. 23, 2019).

³⁷ *Id.* at 29-31.

³⁸ St. Paul Tr. at 72 (Oct. 28, 2019).

³⁹ St. Cloud Tr. at 47, 49-50 (Oct. 23, 2019).

⁴⁰ St. Paul Tr. at 64 (Oct. 28, 2019).

⁴¹ *Id.* at 65-66.

⁴² Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. at 30 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁴³ Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. at 30 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 31.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 43-44.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 45.

Pratt expressed concerns about the cost of \$1 billion for the new gas fracking plant, noting that this money could be spent on renewables instead.⁴⁷

The gas fracking plant also received support from some commenters. Brian Brunette, a member of Minnesota Laborers Union Local 563, said he knows that some people do not support Xcel's reliance on natural gas, but be believes that those persons have never worked in an industrial facility.⁴⁸ He expressed support for a wide range of energy sources, including natural gas, stating that "if you've ever been in a chemical plant or a factory or refinery, a power outage isn't just an inconvenience. It can be a disaster."⁴⁹

D. Community and Rooftop Solar

Many commenters at the meetings expressed that Xcel should do more to foster and integrate community and rooftop solar, as well as battery capacity, and put ownership of energy infrastructure into the hands of Minnesotans. For example, Charissa Verdoorn, of Minnesota Energy Power & Light, indicated that she felt compelled by her faith to speak to the Commission to ask it to require Xcel to support community solar to increase equity and access to and ownership of renewable energy. 50

Meghan Hassett, the Midwest Campaign Coordinator for the Union of Concerned Scientists, referenced scientific studies showing the impact to Minnesota of changing climate conditions, including an increase in high heat index days.⁵¹ Among other concerns, Ms. Hassett noted that Xcel's IRP lacks investment allowing community rooftop solar, which is preferable to investment in natural gas infrastructure.⁵² Genna Mastellone noted that she is a renter, and that Xcel's plan keeps low income persons and renters from participating in obtaining energy from renewable sources.⁵³

However, Tony Wicken expressed concerns about community and rooftop solar development.⁵⁴ He stated he does not have a problem with rooftop solar, but he does not believe that "the working person" should be required to pay for it, and that large scale solar and wind installations are a better and less expensive option.⁵⁵ He indicated that "if we're really serious about climate change, we should let Xcel invest in large renewables instead of paying two or three times as much as someone's pet solar project."⁵⁶

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 74.

⁴⁸ St. Paul Tr. at 32-33 (Oct. 28, 2019).

⁴⁹ Id at 33

⁵⁰ Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. at 39 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁵¹ *Id.* at 48-50.

⁵² *Id.* at 50-51.

⁵³ Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. Tr. at 39 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁵⁴ Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. Tr. at 27-28 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁵⁵ *Id*.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 28.

E. Labor Union Concerns

Kevin Pranis, representing the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), expressed that climate change is real, and that feasible action is needed now.⁵⁷ He noted that many LIUNA members have worked on energy facilities, including multi-generational families of energy workers, and that ensuring well-paying energy sector jobs is important to LIUNA members.⁵⁸ Mr. Pranis indicated that LIUNA's members need affordable service for themselves and require safe and reliable service for their work, leading to LIUNA's support for utilizing a diverse mix of sources including gas and nuclear, and specifically a need for gas capacity while the transition away from coal is underway.⁵⁹ Lucas Franco, echoed these comments, noting that many wind and solar industry jobs go to out-of-state workers, and that some jobs related to renewable sources are not the same quality as jobs in the conventional energy sector.⁶⁰ Mr. Franco supports Xcel's IRP because it prioritizes the use of local labor and commits to partnering with registered apprentice programs.⁶¹

F. Impact of Decommissioning Energy Resources

Becker Mayor Tracy Bertram noted that Becker is transitioning away from a coalbased economy and that decommissioning of large power plants creates a significant economic impact for host communities.⁶² Steve Simones, a township supervisor, expressed concerns about decommissioning of solar facilities in the future and whether solar components could be recycled or reused.⁶³ He also noted, from the township's perspective, that it would be preferable to locate solar farms on marginal land rather than using productive acreage.⁶⁴

G. Comments Made by Youth Commenters

Ten-year-old Emily Christopher does not want Xcel to build a new gas fracking facility based on her experience living in New Mexico, and noting that people who live within one-half of a mile of fracking sites suffer serious health-related issues, that the sites are often on indigenous lands, that gas fracking wastes water, and that hazardous substances may leach into drinking water. She urged the Commission to understand that climate change is an emergency and that "[b]y fracking we are destroying our home."

⁵⁷ St. Cloud Tr. at 22-23 (Oct. 23, 2019).

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 22-24.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 23-25.

⁶⁰ Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. at 23-24 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁶¹ Id. at 25.

⁶² St. Cloud Tr. at 49-50 (Oct. 23, 2019).

⁶³ *Id.* at 68.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 69.

⁶⁵ Minneapolis 7:00 p.m. at 35 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 36.

Ten-year-old Mason Pape said that "[c]limate change poses the largest environmental threat ever known to humankind."67 He noted that climate scientists believe we have 12 years to keep the world from warming 1.5 degrees Celsius.⁶⁸ He spoke about where he and his brother will be in 12 years, wondering: "[W]hat kind of future will we have if we don't have a livable climate?"69 He noted his opposition to the planned gas fracking plant, stating that fossil fuels should be left in the ground.⁷⁰

Н. **Generally Favorable Comments About Xcel**

Several commenters at the public hearings expressed generally favorable views about Xcel related to matters other than the IRP. For example, commenter Pat Rooney stated that Xcel has been a good provider, and that when he "flipped the switch" that morning, the light came on.⁷¹ Dan Brady remarked that, though he does not work for Xcel currently, he worked for Xcel for "the better part of 20 years" and was a third generation employee.⁷² Mr. Brady noted that Xcel was a good and safe employer that provides middle class jobs.⁷³ Louise Dickmeyer, the CEO of the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota, praised Xcel for making five grants to the museum that funded STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) educational opportunities for thousands of children.74

Dated: December 18, 2019

dministrative Law Judge

⁶⁷ St. Paul Tr. at 46 (Oct. 28, 2019).

⁶⁸ *Id*.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 47.

⁷⁰ *Id*.

⁷¹ Minneapolis 2:00 p.m. at 23 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁷² *Id.* at 26.

⁷³ *Id.* at 26-27.

⁷⁴ Mankato Tr. at 24-25 (Oct. 30, 2019).

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December 18, 2019

See Attached Service List

Re: In the Matter of Xcel Energy's 2020-2034 Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan E-002/RP-19-368

OAH 71-2500-36249 MPUC E-002/RP-19-368

To All Persons on the Attached Service List:

Enclosed and served upon you is the Administrative Law Judge's **REPORT SUMMARIZING PUBLIC MEETINGS** in the above-entitled matter.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (651) 361-7888, at lisa.armstrong@state.mn.us, or via fax at (651) 539-0310.

Sincerely,

LISA ARMSTRONG

LISA Amistrong

Legal Assistant

Enclosure

STATE OF MINNESOTA OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS PO BOX 64620 600 NORTH ROBERT STREET ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55164

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

In the Matter of Xcel Energy's 2020-2034 Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan E-002/RP-19-368

OAH Docket No.: 71-2500-36249 MPUC E-002/RP-19-368

Lisa Armstrong certifies that on December 18, 2019, she served the true and correct **REPORT SUMMARIZING PUBLIC MEETINGS** by eService, and U.S. Mail, (in the manner indicated below) to the following individuals:

Please see attached service list.

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Generic Notice	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.st ate.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	445 Minnesota Street Suite 1800 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_19-368_19-368
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