



July 21, 2022

Will Seuffert  
Executive Secretary  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 350  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

RE: **Comments of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources**  
Docket No. E002/M-18-714

Dear Mr. Seuffert:

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

In the Matter of Xcel Energy's Compliance Filing Regarding a Cost Sharing Implementation Plan and Tariff Interconnection Standards for Distributed Generation

The Cost-Sharing Proposal was filed on May 27, 2022, by:

Jessica Peterson  
Manager, Program and Strategy  
Xcel Energy

The Department recommends approval of Xcel Energy's Cost-Sharing Proposal with additional reporting requirements and is available to answer any questions the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission may have.

Sincerely,

/s/ WILL NISSEN  
Public Utilities Rates Analyst

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## Before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

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

Docket No. E002/M-18-714

#### I. INTRODUCTION

On March 31, 2022, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued its ORDER MODIFYING PRACTICES AND SETTING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.<sup>1</sup> Order Point 10 required Xcel Energy (Xcel or the Company) to file an interconnection cost-sharing proposal for Xcel customers with less than 40 kW distributed generation projects within 60 days of the Order, for implementation by August 31, 2022. The Commission capped the level of individual upgrade costs at \$15,000.

On May 27, 2022, Xcel filed its cost-sharing proposal (Filing).

On June 3, 2022, the Commission issued a notice of comment period.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources (Department) provides the following analysis and recommendations.

#### II. SUMMARY OF THE COST SHARING PROPOSAL

Xcel proposed a cost sharing fee of \$200 per interconnection application on solar projects with less than 40 kW capacity. The funds generated by the cost sharing fee would be used by other customers with projects less than 40 kW to pay for project interconnection costs up to a total \$15,000 for an individual upgrade. In its filing, the Company provided a summary of the number of projects less than 40 kW that were interconnected in 2021, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Xcel 2021 Projects <40kW and Associated Fees**

	# of Applications	Upgrade Costs Assessed	Avg. Project Cost
<b>Total Deemed Complete</b>	1,960	N/A	N/A
<b>Supplemental Review</b>	272	\$54,400	\$200
<b>Distribution Upgrades</b>	63	\$249,543	\$3,960

<sup>1</sup> *In the Matter of Updating the Generic Standards for the Interconnection and Operation of Distributed Generation Facilities Established under Minn. Stat. §216B.1611, ORDER MODIFYING PRACTICES AND SETTING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS*, March 31, 2022, Docket E999/CI-16-521.

For 2021, Xcel had 1,960 interconnection applications for projects less than 40 kW that were deemed complete, of which 335 projects had a combined total of \$303,943 (\$54,400 + \$249,543) in upgrade costs. Spreading the upgrade costs across all projects less than 40 kW results in an application fee of \$155. Xcel stated it rounded the fee up to \$200 per application to help provide initial funding, account for inflationary costs and supply chain price fluctuation, and potential withdrawal and reapplication of projects with high interconnection costs.

Xcel stated the funds would be available on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event insufficient funds were available to pay for a customer's interconnection costs, the customer would be responsible for paying those costs. The Company proposed that the cost-sharing fee could be modified with a 30-day negative check-off process, should the need arise.

### **III. DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS**

The Department is generally supportive of Xcel's proposed cost-sharing plan to spread the cost of interconnecting small DG projects to its grid through a cost-sharing fee assessed on those smaller projects. The impetus for the cost-sharing arrangement was the result of a subset of smaller projects requiring costly distribution system upgrades to interconnect. By spreading the cost across all projects less than 40 kW, the costs are assigned to the subset of cost causers without unduly burdening any one interconnection customer.

The Department has some concerns with the Company's proposal to make funds available on a first-come, first-served basis until depleted, after which an interconnection customer would be responsible for their own interconnection costs. However, the Commission's Order did not contemplate start-up funds, and the Department is reluctant to require such funding from Xcel as it will increase the likelihood of spreading cost recovery to all Xcel ratepayers, instead of the subset of cost causers with projects less than 40 kW. The Department notes that in 2021, the assessment of a \$200 interconnection fee on all projects less than 40 kW would have resulted in a fund of \$392,200 ( $1,961 \times \$200$ ) and a net balance at year-end of \$88,259, thus reasonably covering the costs of all applicants and ensuring coverage of costs up to the \$15,000 cap for any one project. In addition, the Department notes that the cost-sharing fund is entirely funded by cost-causing projects less than 40 kW, the balance of the cost-sharing fund cannot go negative, and if the fund is empty any remaining costs are borne by the projects seeking interconnection.<sup>2</sup> The Department determines that non-participating ratepayers are adequately protected from bearing any costs associated with the proposal.

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<sup>2</sup> Filing. Page 9.

The Department recommends that the Commission approve Xcel's cost sharing proposal, including the 30-day negative check-off process for tariff modifications, and require that Xcel report on the status of the fund after its first year of operation. The report should include a summary of the number of applications, the amount of total fees received, the number of projects with interconnection costs and the costs of those projects, the number of projects for which funds were not available, the amount of the fund shortfall and whether a customer chose to withdraw the project or pay the remaining interconnection costs, and the number of projects reaching the cost cap of \$15,000. The Department further recommends that Xcel provide an assessment of whether an adjustment to the \$200 interconnection fee is warranted in the status report.

#### **IV. DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Department recommends that the Commission approve Xcel's interconnection cost sharing proposal for projects less than 40 kW, including the 30-day negative checkoff process for tariff modifications. The Department also recommends that Xcel provide the following information for the first year of operation of the cost sharing fund:

1. The number of interconnection applications less than 40 kW deemed complete;
2. the total amount of fees received;
3. the number of projects with interconnection costs paid by the fund, and the interconnection costs from those projects;
4. the number of projects for which funds were not available, either in whole or in part, the amount of the fund shortfall, and whether the customer chose to withdraw the project or pay the shortfall amount;
5. the number of projects reaching the cost cap of \$15,000; and,
6. an evaluation of whether an adjustment to the \$200 interconnection fee is warranted.

## **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**

**Comments**

**Docket No. E002/M-18-714**

Dated this **21<sup>st</sup>** day of **July 2022**

**/s/Sharon Ferguson**

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Natalie	McIntire	natalie.mcintire@gmail.com	Wind on the Wires	570 Asbury St Ste 201  Saint Paul, MN 55104-1850	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Dave	McNary	David.McNary@hennepin.us	Hennepin County DES	701 Fourth Ave S Ste 700  Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Thomas	Melone	Thomas.Melone@AllcoUS.com	Minnesota Go Solar LLC	222 South 9th Street Suite 1600 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55120	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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Derrick	Moe	derrick@mrea.org	Minnesota Rural Electric Association	11640 73rd Ave N Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
David	Moeller	dmoeller@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St Duluth, MN 558022093	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Dalene	Monsebroten	dalene.monsebroten@nmpagency.com	Northern Municipal Power Agency	123 2nd St W Thief River Falls, MN 56701	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Andrew	Moratzka	andrew.moratzka@stoe.com	Stoel Rives LLP	33 South Sixth St Ste 4200 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Ben	Nelson	benn@cmpasgroup.org	CMMPA	459 South Grove Street Blue Earth, MN 56013	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
David	Niles	david.niles@avantenergy.com	Minnesota Municipal Power Agency	220 South Sixth Street Suite 1300 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Michael	Noble	noble@fresh-energy.org	Fresh Energy	408 Saint Peter St Ste 350 Saint Paul, MN 55102	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Rolf	Nordstrom	rnordstrom@gpisd.net	Great Plains Institute	2801 21ST AVE S STE 220 Minneapolis, MN 55407-1229	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

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Samantha	Norris	samanthanorris@alliantenergy.com	Interstate Power and Light Company	200 1st Street SE PO Box 351  Cedar Rapids, IA 524060351	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Timothy	O'Leary	toleary@llec.coop	Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc	P.O. Box 639  Tyler, MN 561780639	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jeff	O'Neill	jeff.oneill@ci.monticello.mn.us	City of Monticello	505 Walnut Street Suite 1 Monticello, Minnesota 55362	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Russell	Olson	rolson@hcpd.com	Heartland Consumers Power District	PO Box 248  Madison, SD 570420248	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Wendi	Olson	wolson@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	215 South Cascade  Fergus Falls, MN 56537	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Bethany	Owen	bowen@mnpower.com	Minnesota Power	30 West Superior Street  Duluth, MN 55802	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Dan	Patry	dpatry@sunedison.com	SunEdison	600 Clipper Drive  Belmont, CA 94002	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jeffrey C	Paulson	jeff.jcplaw@comcast.net	Paulson Law Office, Ltd.	4445 W 77th Street Suite 224 Edina, MN 55435	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Dean	Pawlowski	dpawlowski@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	PO Box 496 215 S. Cascade St. Fergus Falls, MN 565370496	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Susan	Peirce	Susan.Peirce@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 Seventh Place East  St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

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Jeff M	Peters	jeff.peters@mrenergy.com	Missouri River Energy Services	3724 W Avera Dr PO Box 88920 Sioux Falls, MN 57109-8920	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Donna	Pickard	dpickardgsss@gmail.com	Genie Solar Support Services	1215 Lilac Lane  Excelsior, MN 55331	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
David G.	Prazak	dprazak@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	P.O. Box 496 215 South Cascade Street Fergus Falls, MN 565380496	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Mark	Rathbun	mrathbun@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Blvd  Maple Grove, MN 55369	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Michael	Reinertson	michael.reinertson@avante nrgy.com	Avant Energy	220 S. Sixth St. Ste 1300  Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
John C.	Reinhardt	N/A	Laura A. Reinhardt	3552 26th Ave S  Minneapolis, MN 55406	Paper Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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_18-714_M-18-714
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_18-714_M-18-714
Heidi	Ries	hries@umn.edu	University of Minnesota	Institute on the Environment ,	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Darla	Ruschen	d.ruschen@bcrea.coop	Brown County Rural Electric Assn.	PO Box 529 24386 State Highway 4  Sleepy Eye, MN 56085	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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Richard	Savelkoul	rsavelkoul@martinsquires.com	Martin & Squires, P.A.	332 Minnesota Street Ste W2750  St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kenric	Scheevel	Kenric.scheevel@dairylandpower.com	Dairyland Power Cooperative	3200 East Ave S PO Box 817 La Crosse, Wisconsin 54602	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jacob J.	Schlesinger	jschlesinger@keyesfox.com	Keyes & Fox LLP	1580 Lincoln St Ste 880  Denver, CO 80203	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jeff	Schoenecker	jschoenecker@dakotaelectric.com	Dakota Electric Association	4300 220th Street W  Farmington, MN 55024	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kay	Schraeder	kschraeder@minnkota.com	Minnkota Power	5301 32nd Ave S  Grand Forks, ND 58201	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Ronald J.	Schwartau	rschwartau@noblesce.com	Nobles Cooperative Electric	22636 U.S. Hwy. 59  Worthington, MN 56187	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Christine	Schwartz	Regulatory.records@xcelenergy.com	Xcel Energy	414 Nicollet Mall FL 7  Minneapolis, MN 554011993	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Rob	Scott Hovland	rob.scott-hovland@mrenergy.com	Missouri River Energy Services	3724 W Avera Dr PO Box 88920 Sioux Falls, SD 571098920	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Dean	Sedgwick	Sedgwick@ItascaPower.com	Itasca Power Company	PO Box 455  Spring Lake, MN 56680	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

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Doug	Shoemaker	dougs@charter.net	Minnesota Renewable Energy	2928 5th Ave S  Minneapolis, MN 55408	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Felicia	Skaggs	fskaggs@meeker.coop	Meeker Cooperative Light & Power	1725 US Highway 12 E Suite 100 Litchfield, MN 55355	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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Trevor	Smith	trevor.smith@avantenergy.com	Avant Energy, Inc.	220 South Sixth Street Suite 1300 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Rafi	Sohail	rafi.sohail@centerpointenergy.com	CenterPoint Energy	800 LaSalle Avenue P.O. Box 59038 Minneapolis, MN 554590038	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Beth H.	Soholt	bsoholt@windonthewires.org	Wind on the Wires	570 Asbury Street Suite 201  St. Paul, MN 55104	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Marcia	Solie	m.solie@bcrea.coop	Brown County Rural Electrical Assn.	24386 State Hwy. 4, PO Box 529  Sleepy Eye, Minnesota 56085	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Robyn	Sonstegard	robyn.s@northstarelectric.coop	North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc.	PO BOX 719  Baudette, MN 56623	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

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Eric	Swanson	eswanson@winthrop.com	Winthrop & Weinstine	225 S 6th St Ste 3500 Capella Tower Minneapolis, MN 554024629	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Sherry	Swanson	sswanson@noblesce.com	Nobles Cooperative Electric	22636 US Highway 59 PO Box 788 Worthington, MN 56187	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Bryant	Tauer	btauer@whe.org	Wright-Hennepin	6800 Electric Dr Rockford, MN 55373	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Peter	Teigland	pteigland@mnseia.org	Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association	2288 University Ave W Saint Paul, MN 55114	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Pat	Treseler	pat.jcplaw@comcast.net	Paulson Law Office LTD	4445 W 77th Street Suite 224 Edina, MN 55435	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jeff	Tripplett	triplettj@powersystem.org	MREA	10710 Town Square Dr NW St 201  Minneapolis, MN 55449	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Adam	Tromblay	atromblay@noblesce.com	Nobles Cooperative Electric	22636 US Hwy. 59 P.O. Box 788 Worthington, MN 56187-0788	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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_18-714_M-18-714
Craig	Turner	cturner@dakotaelectric.com	Dakota Electric Association	4300 - 220th Street West  Farmington, MN 550249583	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

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Sarah	Walinga	swalinga@solarcity.com	Energy Freedom Coalition	3055 Clearview Way  San Mateo, MN 94402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Robert	Walsh	bwalsh@mnvalleyrec.com	Minnesota Valley Coop Light and Power	PO Box 248 501 S 1st St Montevideo, MN 56265	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Roger	Warehime	roger.warehime@owatonnautilities.com	Owatonna Municipal Public Utilities	208 S Walnut Ave PO BOX 800 Owatonna, MN 55060	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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Elizabeth	Wefel	eawefel@flaherty-hood.com	Flaherty & Hood, P.A.	525 Park St Ste 470  Saint Paul, MN 55103	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
John	Williamson	John.Williamson@state.mn.us	Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry	443 Lafayette Rd N  St. Paul, MN 55155-4341	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Danielle	Winner	danielle.winner@state.mn.us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place East Suite 500 Saint Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Robyn	Woeste	robynwoeste@alliantenergy.com	Interstate Power and Light Company	200 First St SE  Cedar Rapids, IA 52401	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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