



August 1, 2022

—Via Electronic Filing—

Will Seuffert Executive Secretary Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: REPLY COMMENTS - COST SHARING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TARIFF

IMPLEMENTATION OF TARIFF ON INTERCONNECTION STANDARDS FOR

DISTRIBUTED GENERATION DOCKET NO. E002/M-18-714

Dear Mr. Seuffert:

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits the enclosed Reply Comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission into Comments submitted on July 21, 2022. We offer this Reply in response to questions and suggestions for implementation of our Cost Sharing Proposal submitted on May 27, 2022.

We have electronically filed this document with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and copies have been served on the parties on the attached service lists. Please contact Angela Smelser at <a href="mailto:angela.r.smelser@xcelenergy.com">angela.r.smelser@xcelenergy.com</a> or (612) 370-3447 if you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

/s/

JESSICA PETERSON MANAGER, PROGRAM AND STRATEGY

Enclosures c: Service Lists

# STATE OF MINNESOTA BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Katie J. Sieben Chair Joseph Sullivan Vice-Chair Valerie Means Commissioner Matthew Schuerger Commissioner John A. Tuma Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF XCEL ENERGY'S TARIFF REVISIONS UPDATING INTERCONNECTION STANDARDS FOR DISTRIBUTED GENERATION FACILITIES ESTABLISHED UNDER MINN. STAT. §216B.1611

E002/M-18-714

**REPLY COMMENTS** 

#### INTRODUCTION

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits this Reply in response to Comments filed by parties on or before July 21, 2022 on our Cost Sharing Proposal. The following parties provided Comments: Minnesota Department of Commerce, All Energy Solar, Fresh Energy, MnSEIA, Rick Grauger, and Solar United Neighbors, Vote Solar, The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the City of Minneapolis.

We appreciate the Department's recommended approval of our Cost Sharing Proposal. The Company also believes that this cost-causing approach limited to Distributed Energy Generation projects  $40~\rm kW_{AC}$  or less, will provide an additional option to customers facing high interconnection costs while guarding against further rate impact of Distributed Energy Resources (DER)to non-participating customers. The Company is not supportive of the proposals presented by Commenters but will provide continued reporting on the methodology presented so that we can continue to review and modify over time as necessary.

The Commission approved, in its March 31, 2022 Order (March 31 Order), direction to the Company for a cost sharing proposal for small DER, behind the meter projects intended to reduce risk to customers who have considered a small on-site DER solution that triggers a distribution upgrade, while also protecting all Xcel Energy

customers from costs associated with interconnection upgrades.<sup>1</sup> The approved proposal originated from Fresh Energy, All Energy Solar, and TruNorth Solar, as filed in Docket No. E999/CI-16-521 on August 25, 2021 (Original Proposal).<sup>2</sup> Using this Original Proposal as the starting point, the Company outlined details of a cost-sharing program that we could efficiently administer. We also continued discussions with Fresh Energy and All Energy Solar to further develop our implementation plan.<sup>3</sup> To vet our Proposal with a broader audience prior to filing, we also presented on our proposal at the Minnesota DER Working group, held on May 19, 2022. Through the course of all these conversations, as explained in our May 27, 2022 Cost Sharing Proposal (May 27 Filing) the Company felt that parties had reached general agreement on all but two issues on the Cost Sharing Proposal.

Commenters generally focus on five primary topics in their comments: (1) when and if the Cost Sharing Fee should be reimbursed, (2) seed funding, (3) transparency of interconnection costs, (4) clarification on the specific costs paid from the Cost Sharing Fund, and (5) additional reporting requirements. The remainder of this Reply focuses on these topics and provides further insight into long-term impact of this solution to enable small DER interconnections in constrained areas of our distribution system.

#### REPLY COMMENTS

## I. REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The Company has proposed that the Cost Sharing Fee be non-refundable, consistent with how MN DIP has described processing applications fees. In addition, our May 27 Filing describes how the Cost Sharing Fee balance cannot go below zero. A negative account would cause the Company to incur undue increased costs and increased administrative expense. Further, in adopting the Cost Sharing Fee concept, the Commission during questioning and deliberations re-iterated that no Company funds were to be at risk under this proposal and consistent with this, rejected a proposal from Xcel Energy to limit the overall size of the Cost Sharing program.<sup>4</sup> It is for these reasons, we do not support proposals to modify the Cost Sharing proposal to refund this fee.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> March 31, 2022 Order Modifying Practices and Setting Reporting Requirements, Docket No. E999/CI-16-521, Pg. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Fresh Energy's August 25, 2021 Initial Comments, Attachment 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Company had several conversations with this group including stakeholder discussions held on February 16 and May 9, 2022. TruNorth declined to participate in these conversations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> January 20, 2022 Commission Hearing at 3:38.30.

All Energy Solar has suggested that the Cost Sharing Fee be reimbursed up until the time the project is Deemed Complete, if a project is withdrawn or cancelled.<sup>5</sup> It argues that this would make the approach here consistent with the Company's policy on how it refunds interconnection application fees. However, the Company's MN DIP tariff sheet 10-213 specifically notes that the \$100 simplified application fee is non-refundable. The Company's Cost Sharing proposal in fact aligns with the non-refundable nature of the interconnection application fee. If applications are fully vetted and submitted with the intent of moving through the interconnection queue, then the Cost Sharing Fee should be treated as being accrued once they are paid to the Company and deposited into the Cost Sharing Fund. Holding these fees in limbo until such time as a project is Deemed Complete creates unnecessary administrative complexity and expense.

The Company understands and acknowledges that this process may become more complex in the event that the Solar\*Rewards program is fully allocated, and a project joins a waitlist for Solar\*Rewards funding. For context, the Solar\*Rewards applications first go through a program process before being officially submitted to the MN DIP process for interconnection. The Cost Sharing Fee would not be due until such time as the project was allocated Solar\*Rewards incentive funding and moved into the MN DIP process. Even after this time, it will be up to the interconnection applicant to determine when to submit this fee (as well as other fees) to move the application forward. Once the Cost Sharing fee is submitted, no refund should be expected.

The Company's proposal requires that the Cost Sharing Fee is paid as a requirement for the application to be Deemed Complete. MN DIP at 1.5.2 requires the Interconnection Customer to submit appropriate information to be Deemed Complete 10 business days after receiving notice from the Area EPS Operator a listing of all information that is missing from the application. Even then, several applications receive in serial fashion several 10-day notices as they fail to address all required items from the prior 10-day notice. If an Interconnection Customer wants to proceed with a project, it should pay the Cost Sharing Fee and not expect a refund. If an Interconnection Customer does not want to proceed with a project, then it should not pay the Cost Sharing Fee. Customers should not submit interconnection applications that are uncertain and not thoroughly vetted.

In addition, Solar United Neighbors, Vote Solar, The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the City of Minneapolis requested to remove income-qualified projects from the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> All Energy Solar Comments, In the Matter of Northern State Power d/b/a Xcel Energy's Cost Sharing Implementation Plan and Tariff on Interconnection Standards for Distribution Generation, Docket No. E002/M-18-714, July 20, 2022, pg. 1.

group of customers that pay into the Cost Sharing Fee.<sup>6</sup> We believe that those benefiting from the Cost Sharing Fee should pay into the fund itself. However, if the Commission determines these customers should be exempt from payment, we believe that over time this will increase the Cost Sharing Fee paid by the remaining pool of small DER customers. Further, before we could implement this new proposal, we would need some additional time to set up a process, align IT resources and separately identify certain eligible customers.

#### II. WAITLIST

All Energy Solar, MnSEIA and Fresh Energy have requested the Company to create a "waitlist of projects" for interconnection customers to place themselves on hold until funding may become available under the Cost Sharing option. We believe this proposal goes against the Commission's clear guidance to remove on hold practices and do not support creating a waitlist for these projects within the MN DIP process.

The Commission's March 31, 2022 Order modified several interconnection practices to move projects more quickly through the interconnection queue and find ways to eliminate barriers for interconnection. The March 31 Order, at page 4, states that "To address these delays, the Commission will require Xcel Energy to phase out the practice of placing projects on hold and instead adopt practices to expedite the review process."

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While the Company does have waitlisting option as part of our Solar\*Rewards program as discussed above, the process and intent of that waitlist differs from what is being requested by Commenters. The Solar\*Rewards waitlist is utilized as part of the process to allocate a set amount of incentive funding available annually for the program. Since projects that have been awarded funding may later drop out of the program, we are then able to reallocate funding to projects on the waitlist. The Solar\*Rewards waitlist is only available in the year in which an application is submitted and projects on the waitlist are cancelled every year on December 31, as a new annual funding cycle begins the following year. Another distinguishing feature is that a project is placed on the Solar\*Rewards waitlist prior to the project's application moving into the MN DIP process and prior to establishing a queue position. However, under the proposed "wait list of projects" for Cost Sharing, the projects to be placed on hold would have advanced well into the MN DIP process. These projects would have an established queue position and likely have projects behind them in queue.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Solar United Neighbors, Vote Solar, The Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the City of Minneapolis Comments, In the Matter of Northern State Power d/b/a Xcel Energy's Cost Sharing Implementation Plan and Tariff on Interconnection Standards for Distribution Generation, Docket No. E002/M-18-714, June 21, 2022, pg. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The Solar\*Rewards program funding is allocated based on Minn. Statute 116C.7792.

To study an interconnection application, we need to know existing load characteristics, plus the locations and operating characteristics of DER connected to the feeder and substation along with the physical make-up of our network. Additionally, we need to know the locations and operating characteristics of the DER ahead in queue that is not yet in commercial operation along with all changes to our network that we are planning to implement in order to accommodate the DER ahead in queue. Allowing projects to be put on a waitlist within MN DIP would essentially create an on-hold process that could potentially cause prolonged delays for other projects behind in queue and go against the recent direction from the Order to phase out the practice of placing projects on hold.

## III. SEED FUNDING

The Company does not support the creation of a seed fund to implement our Cost Sharing Proposal. While we agree with the Department's concern regarding fund availability on a first-come, first-served basis, the proposal originally submitted by Fresh Energy, All Energy Solar and TruNorth Solar (and later approved by the Commission) did not contemplate a seed fund. This was also confirmed during the January 20, 2022 Hearing, where Fresh Energy at about 3:36:45 stated that its cost sharing proposal, "requires no contributions from Xcel or ratepayers." During Commission deliberations on Decision Option 27 which ties to the Fresh Energy Cost Sharing proposal, there was discussion that the Cost Sharing fund would be basically funded by the interconnection customer. The Department was correct that a seed fund would ultimately impact all customers regardless of their participation in solar. By Fresh Energy's own testimony, their proposal did not contemplate a seed fund and therefore such an option was not approved by the Commission.

We note that the Company also made a proposal to cover the cost of interconnection for small DER, up to a certain project-specific dollar cap and a total annual dollar cap. However, this proposal was ultimately not approved by the Commission, due to concern that all Xcel Energy customers would have been contributing to fund small DER interconnection upgrades.

#### IV. COVERAGE FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS

All Energy Solar suggested that the Cost Sharing Fund itself should cover any potential insufficient funds from the prior year and that Xcel Energy should temporarily cover the costs when there are insufficient dollars in the Cost Sharing Fund. This is another version of the seed fund concept and should be rejected as

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See, September 2, 2021 proposed *Amendment to Solar\*Rewards Customer Contract Regarding Distribution Upgrade Costs*, Docket Nos. E002/M-13-1015 & E002/M-16-222.

explained above.

Additionally, All Energy Solar's proposal would only work if the cumulative surplus of funds received versus funds spent in year two at least covers the cumulative deficit from the prior year. Otherwise, the fund would continue to run in the negative.

All Energy Solar also requests that regardless of fund availability, projects paying the Cost Sharing Fee should not be charged the supplemental review fee. However, if the Cost Sharing Fund does not have sufficient funds, there are no additional dollars set aside to pay these review fees. It would be an administrative nightmare to try to track each individual Cost Sharing Fee paid and not accrue that fee to be deposited in the Cost Sharing Fund until we know for each project that there will be no supplemental review fee, as that would be the only way of making sure that there would be sufficient funds available for the supplemental review fee. Further, the suggestion that somehow the review fee can just not be paid conflicts with MN DIP which requires payment of these fees.

We believe these suggested options from All Energy Solar are unacceptable given the administrative burden this would cause, that this is another version of the seed fund concept, and as the Department notes that this would impose DER costs to non-participating customers.

# V. ORDER POINT 12

Order Point 12 of the March 31, 2022 Order requires the Company to "provide a detailed report of the costs incurred and technical rationale for each upgrade should Xcel Energy seek cost recovery for Distribution Upgrades." As noted in our May 27 Filing, after discussion with Fresh Energy and other stakeholders there was common understanding that this Ordering Point was in reference to the Company's original proposal to pay upgrade costs for Solar\*Rewards projects. This Ordering Point does not apply to the current Cost Sharing Proposal, as it is solely funded by the interconnection customers and therefore the Company will not seek cost recovery for any Distribution Upgrades. However, it was also agreed that there would be benefits to provide ongoing reporting with additional detail. We specified at pages 9-10 of our Cost Sharing Proposal filing the type of reporting that we believed would be appropriate. Additionally, we modify our reporting commitments based on input from the Department.

Fresh Energy suggests in their comments that Order Point 12 is applicable as it was described in their original Interconnection Sharing Proposal, which requested that Xcel Energy develop a Cost Guide document, record distribution upgrades, record initial and final cost estimates, and make it clear if applications that fail screens what

project size (and inverter settings) would allow the project to connect without construction of distribution facilities.<sup>9</sup> We believe it is important to note that the plain language of Order Point 12 does not require any of the detailed audit-like review listed in the original Interconnection Sharing Proposal. In fact, the Commission declined to accept any of these items proposed by Fresh Energy, as identified in the January 19, 2022 Briefing Papers under Decision Options 29 and 39. These Decision Options that were not adopted by the Commission at the January hearing, state:

- 29. Require Xcel to have the Facilities Study include itemized costs for distribution and network upgrades and interconnection facilities, as well as an indication if a smaller system size would avoid major upgrades. To be implemented within 60 days of the order. (Fresh Energy AES, IREC, Department, NES, Nokomis, MnSEIA, the City, ILSR)
- 39. Require all rate-regulated utilities to develop and publish on their websites a cost guide for typical DER upgrades within 30 days of this Order, update it as needed, and notify the Commission in this docket whenever the guide has been updated. (Fresh Energy, IREC, MnSEIA, the City, Nokomis, NES, AES, ILSR)

Instead, the Commission adopted the Revised Decision Option 37, which forms the basis of Ordering Point 12, which stated:

37. (Revised). Require Xcel to provide a detailed report of the costs incurred and technical rationale for each upgrade should the Company seek cost recovery for distribution upgrades from a fee to certain DER customers to cover interconnection upgrades. (Fresh Energy AES, IREC, Department)

We disagree with Fresh Energy's argument that Order Point 12 also includes the requirements from Decision Options 29 and 39. As explained above, Order Point 12 was related to the Company's original proposal to pay upgrade costs for Solar\*Rewards projects, which was not adopted. Further, it is clear from being based on Decision Option 37 that Order Point 12 only relates to reporting. The Department was a cosponsor of this reporting request, and our position here aligns with the type and extent of reporting being requested by the Department. Additionally, Fresh Energy's position also differs from our understanding of prior communications with them on this issue, as reflected in our May 27 Filing.

We, however, agree with All Energy that it is important to provide transparency into the costs and payments provided under the Cost Sharing Fund. Accordingly, we have modified our reporting commitment, as described below in Section VIII.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See, Fresh Energy Comments, In the Matter of Northern State Power d/b/a Xcel Energy's Cost Sharing Implementation Plan and Tariff on Interconnection Standards for Distribution Generation, Docket No. E002/M-18-714, July 20, 2022, pg. 3.

# A. Challenges with Additional Requests on Itemization

We are not supportive of providing an itemized breakdown of costs, as requested by All Energy Solar and Fresh Energy, outside of what is already provided as part of active compliance filings. Not only do our system and tools not track itemization such as this (many invoices we receive will include various activities lumped together by our vendors), but our contractual obligations and pricing between hired vendors is non-public data that cannot be provided to other developers who also look for cost competitive pricing. Such practices could harm our ability to maintain the prices we have today.

We already provide several details to interconnection customers and identify costs, including:

- Details regarding the technical rationale and costs to be incurred for interconnection applications that require a supplemental review (under MN DIP 3.4) and/or Facilities Study (MN DIP 4.4); and
- Scope of Work provided to small DER interconnections for estimated interconnections.

We also answer questions and explain charges on individual invoices. However, answering questions at a granular level is different than answering questions about why we used a 16-inch bolt instead of a 12-inch bolt, which is the level of detail we sometimes receive questions on. That said, in addition to the contractual considerations, the fact that the Company is acting in the public interest in the way that it designs, constructs, and operates its system, providing unit-level detail would be administratively burdensome and likely lead to disputes – distracting resources whose time is better spent on furthering the public interest by focusing on expedient and safe connection of additional DER to our system. Accordingly, it is not in the public interest for the Commission to adopt the recommendations of All Energy and Fresh Energy on this issue.

## B. Cost Guides

Fresh Energy also suggests that the Company should provide interconnection cost

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> As we have explained previously, the exact costs we pay our suppliers are commercially sensitive and part of confidential contracts Xcel Energy has negotiated with each supplier. These contracts are not specific to materials needed to exclusively support the interconnection of DER projects. Rather, they are our overall supply contracts for all the work we do on Xcel Energy infrastructure enterprise wide. These same suppliers are used by other utilities and, we expect, at least some of the Developers for the work that they do. Revealing our pricing would violate our contractual arrangements – and even under non-disclosure agreements, has the potential to harm our suppliers and any preferential pricing we have secured, potentially resulting in higher costs to not only Developers, but our entire customer base.

guides, such as one that is provided by our operating company affiliate Public Service Company of Colorado (PSCo).<sup>11</sup> As we have explained previously in Docket No. E999/CI-16-521, cost guides, by their nature, are generalized to cover a range of costs that might be applicable to many types of projects and are likely to vary from actual estimates prepared as part of specific studies. The PSCo cost guide noted in Fresh Energy's Comments is intended to provide an idea of what costs may be, because cost estimates are not included in Colorado SIS study. Under the Colorado interconnection process, indicative cost estimates are not provided with the SIS results; instead, the SIS results just describe the work that needs to be done to accommodate the project and the developer can then look at the price list to perform their own indicative cost estimate. In Minnesota, we provide much more specific indicative cost details in the SIS, as required in the MN DIP. We believe providing average upgrade costs that are not at all consistent with location is unnecessary and distracting, given our more robust process in Minnesota. We further believe differences between highly generalized costs and actual study indicative cost estimate are inevitable and would be another source of disputes that would require resources from the Company, the Commission, and others to resolve.

## VI. REIMBURSED COSTS

MnSEIA has suggested that the Company limit the eligible costs that are paid out from the Cost Sharing Fund, stating that "tree trimming, traffic control, restoration, winter construction, etc." are outside the scope of the intent of these funds and are general costs incurred by the utility. For clarification, all costs associated with the interconnection of DER is assessed to the interconnection applicant as defined in MN DIP. All of these costs to be assessed would be "Interconnection Costs" as defined in Minn. R. 7835.0100, Subp. 12. Tree trimming can be an interconnection cost, for example, if a new line extension is required to allow for the interconnection of the DER and the path of this line extension requires tree trimming. Similarly, if a tree needs to be trimmed to replace or upgrade lines or if winter construction is assessed because of the timing of the work conducted, then these Interconnection Costs are assessed to the interconnection customer as they are a direct result of their project's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Public Service Company General Cost Outlines for Typical Distributed Resource System Updates available at: https://www.xcelenergy.com/staticfiles/xe-responsive/Working With Us/Renewable Developers/CostOutline-for-DER-Developers.pdf (January 3, 2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> "Interconnection costs" means the reasonable costs of connection, switching, metering, transmission, distribution, safety provisions, and administrative costs incurred by the utility that are directly related to installing and maintaining the physical facilities necessary to permit interconnected operations with a qualifying facility. Costs are considered interconnection costs only to the extent that they exceed the corresponding costs which the utility would have incurred if it had not engaged in interconnected operations, but instead generated from its own facilities or purchased from other sources an equivalent amount of electric energy or capacity. Costs are considered interconnection costs only to the extent that they exceed the costs the utility would incur in selling electricity to the qualifying facility as a non-generating customer.

interconnection. These activities are not needed to provide service to our retail customers, and the costs are only incurred to allow the DER to interconnect. MnSEIA's suggestion to remove these types of costs from the Cost Sharing Fund's coverage seems to be contradictory, because if the fund does not cover these costs then the Interconnection Customer would still need to pay these costs. Additionally, we note that this list of costs was vetted by Fresh Energy, All Energy and TruNorth as consistent with their original proposal.

#### VII. LAUNCH

All Energy Solar, MnSEIA and Fresh Energy suggested starting the Cost Sharing Fee in January of 2023. This would align with the opening of the 2023 program year for the Solar\*Rewards program. We agree that our proposed launch date of August 31, 2022, as set forth in our May 27 Filing and proposed tariff sheet, does not align with the need to have a Commission Order to approve our proposed tariff before we launch the Cost Share Fee. While we were attempting to meet the requirements of the Commission's March 31, 2022 Order, the Commission's Notice for Comments issued on June 3, 2022 on our Cost Sharing Proposal indicated to us that we need to await a Commission Order before we can launch our efforts.

We support a January 2, 2023 launch date for this Cost Sharing Proposal if the Commission adopts a Cost Sharing structure that is closely aligned with what we have proposed, and if there is sufficient time (at least 4 months) between the Commission vote and the beginning of the new year. If the Cost Sharing plan, as ordered by the Commission, significantly differs from our proposal then the timeframe for launch will take additional time to adjust our system, tools, and communication efforts to incorporate any significant changes.

# VIII. ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Company agrees to provide additional reporting, as recommended by the Department, as part of our Annual Compliance filing submitted in Docket No. E999/CI-16-521 on March 1 of each year. These include the following:

- The number of interconnection applications 40  $kW_{AC}$  or less Deemed Complete;
- the total amount of fees received:
- the number of projects with interconnection costs paid by the fund, and the interconnection costs from those projects;
- 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;
- the number of projects reaching the cost cap of \$15,000; and,
- an evaluation of whether an adjustment to the \$200 interconnection fee is warranted.

The Company can also provide additional qualitative details regarding the type of upgrades paid for by the Company as well as additional learnings and challenges presented by the Cost Sharing Fund itself. We believe this responds to the concern to provide additional information on the type of upgrades being paid for and why they were necessary for interconnection.

We further note that any additional reporting on upgrade costs, outside our commitment here, could become an administrative burden. Most of the eligible projects for Cost Sharing will also be receiving Solar\*Rewards funding. Administration costs for the Solar\*Rewards program are subtracted from the funds available for incentive allocation. Increasing tracking of upgrade costs could require additional administration cost and reduce the funds available for the Solar\*Rewards program.

# IX. LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

Additionally, we realize that the Cost Sharing Fee is not without challenges and may not provide a long-term solution for interconnecting small DER in capacity constrained areas. In his Comments, Rick Grauger explains a real situation within the interconnection queue. His 7.8 kW rooftop project has recently benefited from our implementation of a "parallel review" process, moving his project forward out of the on-hold status. However, removing this project from the "on-hold" status will not resolve the cost of interconnecting to the PAT313 feeder. According to Xcel Energy's July 1, 2022 Public DER Queue Report<sup>13</sup>, the PAT313 feeder is on the capacity constrained list, meaning that the feeder has aggregate DER (in this case 18 MW of solar) that is greater or equal to the Daytime Minimum Load (DML) and will likely fail the initial review screens laid out as part of MN DIP and require supplemental reviews resulting in substantial upgrades. If the Cost Sharing Proposal is approved, this project likely would not be able to have its costs fully covered by the Cost Sharing Fund. It has yet to be determined as to whether capacity would even be available for the project under \$15,000. For any sized project in a capacity constrained area, upgrading a substation or feeder to provide even a little incremental DER capacity could cost millions of dollars.

As addressed in our August 25, 2021 Comments and October 1, 2021 Reply in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> https://mn.my.xcelenergy.com/s/renewable/developers/interconnection

Docket No. E999/CI-16-521, we have observed continued frustration by customers installing roof top solar: specifically, as a result of capacity constraints and larger upgrade costs driven by community solar on any number of given feeders. To-date, we have issued over 20 Phase II System Impact Study notices to small DER interconnections with anticipated upgrade costs that often exceed the \$15,000 cap included in the Cost Sharing Proposal. We continue to believe that Cost Sharing can be one of the solutions to continuing the growth of small solar, but until there are rules established by the Commission to reserve capacity for these retail rooftop customers, they will continue to compete for capacity space with other interconnections on a first-come, first-serve basis.

# X. OTHER ISSUES

Commenters raised various other issues that have no merit. For example, All Energy Solar does not want the Cost Sharing Fee to be a tariffed rate. We believe that it is best practice to include this rate in our tariff. This aligns with several statutes, including Minn. Stat. 216B.05 ("Every public utility shall file with the commission schedules showing all rates, tolls, tariffs, and charges which it has established and which are in force at the time for any service performed by it within the stated, or for any service in connection therewith or performed by any public utility controlled or operated by it.") If there is a need to change this tariffed Cost Sharing Fee, our proposal here is to use the 30-day negative check-off procedure. If there is any timely objection, then the Commission would need to issue a written order before the proposed change to the tariffed fee could be implemented.

All Energy Solar requests guidance as to under what circumstances we would ever charge a Facilities Study fee for any project  $40~\rm kW_{AC}$  or less. One potential example is if a Phase II study is performed to replace a substation transformer or to put in a new feeder to allow the interconnection of a specific project; the Facilities Study associated with this project would be charged a Facilities Study fee. While we expect that this would rarely happen, it is a possible scenario. However, we cannot provide a listing of all possible but unlikely scenarios where we would charge a Facilities Study fee for projects under  $40~\rm kW_{AC}$ .

All Energy Solar also requests that the interconnection customer has a right, within reason, to request when the construction of facilities takes place, for example, to avoid more expensive winter construction. We note that the Company already offers this type of flexibility to customers who have executed and funded interconnection agreements and accommodates requests to delay construction so that winter conditions are avoided.

Solar United Neighbors, Vote Solar, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and the City of Minneapolis also argue that DER customers should not be solely responsible for

interconnection costs. However, this topic is out of scope for the current round of comments and also violates the cost causer rules that are core to how DER projects are interconnected. The Commission Notice limited the comment period to the Cost Sharing Proposal and comments should not be used to propose a fundamental change to the core regulatory principle of cost causation. This group also wants to make sure that Xcel Energy does not earn a profit on the DER interconnection costs it assesses to DER projects. This same issue has already been addressed at length in prior filings – Xcel Energy does not earn on the amount spent to interconnect DER where a third party pays for these interconnection costs. The net book value to us is zero in this situation. See, for example, our document "Accounting Treatment for Costs of Distribution Upgrades," submitted as part of Attachment D to our October 1, 2021 Reply Comments in Docket No. 16-521 (which in turn is a copy of that same document filed on February 22, 2019 in Reply Comments in Docket No. 18-714).

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Company appreciates the parties' Comments on our Cost Sharing Proposal and the opportunity to respond. We believe we have proposed an option that meets the fundamental criteria of the original proposal developed by Fresh Energy, All Energy Solar and TruNorth. While we are not supportive of creating a seed fund, we can agree to adjusted timing of the launch depending on the structure of the final Cost Sharing plan adopted by the Commission. We can also add additional reporting requirements as requested by the Department. We look forward to further discussion regarding the Cost Sharing Proposal and the future ability to utilize this option as one way to continue the growth of small DER interconnection but caution that Cost Sharing may not provide a solution for all small DER interconnections, especially in capacity constrained areas.

Dated: August 1, 2022

Northern States Power Company

#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

- I, Christine Schwartz, hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the foregoing document on the attached list of persons.
  - <u>xx</u> by depositing a true and correct copy thereof, properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at Minneapolis,
     Minnesota; or
  - <u>xx</u> by electronic filing.

Docket No.: E002/M-18-714

Dated this 1st day of August 2022.

/s/

Christine Schwartz Regulatory Administrator

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John	Bailey	bailey@ilsr.org	Institute For Local Self- Reliance	1313 5th St SE Ste 303  Minneapolis, MN 55414	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Mark	Bakk	mbakk@lcp.coop	Lake Country Power	26039 Bear Ridge Drive  Cohasset, MN 55721	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Laura	Beaton	beaton@smwlaw.com	Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP	396 Hayes Street  San Francisco, CA 94102	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jeff	Benson	jbenson@southcentralelect ric.com	South Central Electric Association	PO Box 150 71176 Tiell Drive St. James, MN 56081	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
Sara	Bergan	sebergan@stoel.com	Stoel Rives LLP	33 South Sixth Street Suite 4200 Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Derek	Bertsch	derek.bertsch@mrenergy.c om	Missouri River Energy Services	3724 West Avera Drive PO Box 88920 Sioux Falls, SD 57109-8920	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
William	Black	bblack@mmua.org	MMUA	Suite 200 3131 Fernbrook Lane Plymouth, MN 55447	Electronic Service North	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kenneth	Bradley	kbradley1965@gmail.com		2837 Emerson Ave S Apt CW112 Minneapolis, MN 55408	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jon	Brekke	jbrekke@grenergy.com	Great River Energy	12300 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, MN 553694718	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kathleen M.	Brennan	kmb@mcgrannshea.com	McGrann Shea Carnival, Straughn & Lamb, Chartered	800 Nicollet Mall Ste 2600  Minneapolis, MN 554027035	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Mark B.	Bring	mbring@otpco.com	Otter Tail Power Company	215 South Cascade Street PO Box 496 Fergus Falls, MN 565380496	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Christina	Brusven	cbrusven@fredlaw.com	Fredrikson Byron	200 S 6th St Ste 4000  Minneapolis, MN 554021425	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Jessica	Burdette	jessica.burdette@state.mn. us	Department of Commerce	85 7th Place East Suite 500 St. Paul, MN 55101	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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Daniel T	Carlisle	todd- wad@toddwadena.coop	Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative	550 Ash Ave NE PO Box 431 Wadena, MN 56482	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Douglas M.	Carnival	dmc@mcgrannshea.com	McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb	N/A	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Pat	Carruth	pat@mnvalleyrec.com	Minnesota Valley Coop. Light & Power Assn.	501 S 1st St. PO Box 248 Montevideo, MN 56265	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kenneth A.	Colburn	kcolburn@symbioticstrategi es.com	Symbiotic Strategies, LLC	26 Winton Road  Meredith, NH 32535413	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Generic Notice	Commerce Attorneys	commerce.attorneys@ag.st ate.mn.us	Office of the Attorney General-DOC	445 Minnesota Street Suite 1400 St. Paul, MN 55101	Electronic Service	Yes	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Brooke	Cooper	bcooper@allete.com	Minnesota Power	30 W Superior St  Duluth, MN 558022191	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Curtis	Cordt	ccordt@mvec.net	Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative	125 Minnesota Valley Electric Drive Jordan, MN 55352	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
George	Crocker	gwillc@nawo.org	North American Water Office	PO Box 174  Lake Elmo, MN 55042	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Stacy	Dahl	sdahl@minnkota.com	Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.	5301 32nd Ave S  Grand Forks, ND 58201	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
David	Dahlberg	davedahlberg@nweco.com	Northwestern Wisconsin Electric Company	P.O. Box 9 104 South Pine Street Grantsburg, WI 548400009	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Lisa	Daniels	lisadaniels@windustry.org	Windustry	201 Ridgewood Ave	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
				Minneapolis, MN 55403			
James	Darabi	james.darabi@solarfarm.co m	Solar Farm, LLC	2355 Fairview Ave #101  St. Paul, MN 55113	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
James	Denniston	james.r.denniston@xcelen ergy.com	Xcel Energy Services, Inc.	414 Nicollet Mall, 401-8  Minneapolis, MN 55401	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Curt	Dieren	curt.dieren@dgr.com	L&O Power Cooperative	1302 S Union St  Rock Rapids, IA 51246	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Cheryl	Dietrich	cheryl.dietrich@nexteraene rgy.com	NextEra Energy Resources, LLC	700 Universe Blvd E1W/JB  Juno Beach, FL 33408	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Robin	Doege	Rdoege@stearnselectric.or g	Stearns Electric Association	PO Box 40 Melrose, MN 56352-0040	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Kristin	Dolan	kdolan@meeker.coop	Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Assn	1725 US Hwy 12 E. Ste 100 Litchfield, MN 55355	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Steve	Downer	sdowner@mmua.org	MMUA	3025 Harbor Ln N Ste 400  Plymouth, MN 554475142	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Renee	Doyle		Doyle Electric Inc.	PO Box 295 Amboy, MN 56010	Paper 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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R. Neal	Elliot	RNElliott@aceee.org	American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy	ACEEE 529 14th St NW Ste 6t Washington, DC 20045	Electronic Service 00	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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Betsy	Engelking	betsy@nationalgridrenewa bles.com	Geronimo Energy, LLC	8400 Normandale Lake Blvd Ste 1200 Bloomington, MN 55437	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
Oncu	Er	oncu.er@avantenergy.com	Avant Energy, Agent for MMPA	220 S. Sixth St. Ste. 1300  Minneapolis, MN 55402	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
John	Farrell	jfarrell@ilsr.org	Institute for Local Self-Reliance	2720 E. 22nd St Institute for Local Self- Reliance Minneapolis, MN 55406	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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Christine	Fox	cfox@itasca-mantrap.com	Itasca-Mantrap Coop. Electric Assn.	PO Box 192  Park Rapids, MN 56470	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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Dave	McNary	David.McNary@hennepin.u s	Hennepin County DES	701 Fourth Ave S Ste 700  Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842	Electronic Service	No	OFF_SL_18-714_M-18-714
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First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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Jeff	O'Neill	jeff.oneill@ci.monticello.mn .us	City of Monticello	505 Walnut Street Suite 1 Monticelllo, Minnesota 55362	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
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
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
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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

First Name	Last Name	Email	Company Name	Address	Delivery Method	View Trade Secret	Service List Name
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Michael	Reinertson	michael.reinertson@avante nergy.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 Sleepy Eye, MN 56085	Electronic Service 4	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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