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Lori Hoyum Policy Manager 218-355-3601 <u>lhoyum@mnpower.com</u>

August 15, 2013

VIA E-FILING Dr. Burl W. Haar Executive Secretary Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, MN 55101-2147

> Re: In the Matter of the Implementation of Solar Energy Standards Pursuant to 2013 Amendments to Minnesota Statutes, Section 216B.1619

Dear Dr. Haar:

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") issued a Notice of Request for Filings from Electric Utilities on Customers Excluded from the Solar Energy Standard and Opportunity to Comment on Filings ("Notice") on July 25, 2013, in the above referenced docket. Minnesota Power respectfully submits its Compliance Report and Comments in response to the Notice. Please note that there are both public and trade secret versions of this filing.

Please contact me at the number provided above with any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,

Sori Hoyum

Lori Hoyum

Attachment cc: Service List



STATE OF MINNESOTA BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Implementation of Solar Energy Standards Pursuant to 2013 Amendments to Minnesota Statutes, Section 216B.1619 Docket No. E-999/CI-13-542 MINNESOTA POWER'S COMPLIANCE REPORT AND COMMENTS

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") issued a Notice of Request for Filings from Electric Utilities on Customers Excluded from the Solar Energy Standard and Opportunity to Comment on Filings ("Notice") on July 25, 2013 (Docket No. E-999/CI-13-542). Minnesota Power respectfully submits its Compliance Report and Comments in response to the Notice.

Through this response Minnesota Power outlines its effort in providing the Company's Solar Energy Standard exemptions. This initial effort contains values that may evolve over time as the utilities receive clarification and guidance from the Commission regarding the method of calculating the exemptions. Minnesota Power began by calculating the Company's total retail sales, which amounted to 9.4 million MWh in 2012¹. This Retail sales amount differs from the amount reported in Minnesota Power's 2012 Renewable Energy Standard ("RES") compliance filing (E-999/PR-13-186). The retail sales amount of 10,230,183 MWh reported in the RES compliance filing is larger as it includes both Retail and Resale customer sales per the requirements of the RES. Both the Retail and Resale calculations are represented in Table 1 on Page 2.

¹ In response to request Number 1 of the Notice

	2012 Retail Sales
	(kWh)
Residential	1,043,281,136
Commercial	1,237,386,232
Industrial	7,037,843,297
Lighting	15,953,810
Pub Auth	54,073,671
Total Retail	9,388,538,146
	2012 Minnesota
	Resale Sales
	(kWh)
Resale	841,645,000

Table 1: 2012 Retail and Resale Totals

As shown in Table 2 on Page 2, there is potential for 140 to 153 million kWh of required solar energy depending on which customers are ultimately included into the mandate requirements.

Solar Mandate Based on 2012 Retail Customer Sales (kWh)							
1.5 Percent	140,828,072						
10% of 1.5 Percent	14,082,807						
Solar Mandate	Based on 2012	Retail and Res	sale Customer Sales (kWh)				
1.5 Percent	153,452,747						
10% of 1.5 Percent	15,345,275						

Table 2: Estimation of Solar Mandate Based on 2012 Retail and Resale Sales

Once excludable sales were identified, the amount was then subtracted from 2012 retail energy sales to obtain total sales subject to the Solar Energy Standard. Table 3 on Page 3 and Table 4 on Page 4 outline the total sales possible for exclusion².

The amounts were obtained by querying the Company's Customer Information System ("CIS") database for 2012 Retail sales³ possible for exclusion from the Solar Energy Standard. The Company determined the customer exclusion categorizations through the North American Industry Classification System ("NAICS") codes within the Company's CIS database⁴. The NAICS codes utilized by Minnesota Power to identify possible customer exclusions are listed in Table 5 on Page 4.

	2012 Retail Sales (kWh)	2012 Exclusions (kWh)	2012 Sales After Exclusions (kWh)
Residential	1,043,281,136	0	1,043,281,136
Commercial	1,237,386,232	4,002,976	1,233,383,256
Industrial	7,037,843,297	6,542,061,610	495,781,687
Lighting	15,953,810	0	15,953,810
Pub Auth	54,073,671	0	54,073,671
Total Retail	9,388,538,146	6,546,064,586	2,842,473,560
	2012 Minnesota		
	Resale Sales	2012 Exclusions	2012 Sales After Exclusions
	(kWh)	(kWh)	(kWh)
Resale	841,645,000	Unknown	841,645,000

Table 3: Potential Exclusions Based on 2012 Sales (kWh)

² In response to request Number 5 of the Notice

³ In response to request number 2 of the Notice

⁴ In response to request number 4 of the Notice

Solar Mandate Based on 2012 Retail Customer Sales (kWh)								
1.5 Percent	42,637,103							
10% of 1.5 Percent	4,263,710							
Solar Mandate	Based on 2012	Retail and Res	sale Customer Sales (kWh)				
1.5 Percent	55,261,778							
10% of 1.5 Percent	5,526,178							

 Table 4: 2012 Solar Mandate Requirements after Exclusions

NAICS Code	NAICS Label
212210	Iron Ore Mining
321113	Sawmills
321114	Wood Preservation
321211	Hardwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing
321212	Softwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing
321113	Sawmills
321214	Truss Manufacturing
321219	Reconstituted Wood Product Manufacturing
321911	Wood Window and Door Manufacturing
321912	Cut Stock, Resawing Lumber, and Planing
321918	Other Millwork (including Flooring)
321920	Wood Container and Pallet Manufacturing
321991	Manufactured Home (Mobile Home) Manufacturing
322121	Paper (except Newsprint) Mills
322122	Newsprint Mills
322130	Paperboard Mills

Table 5: NAICS Codes Queried

Approximately 6.6 million MWh, representing sales to 60 customers, fit into the categories proposed to be excluded. These potential exclusions represent roughly 70 percent of the Company's total retail sales in 2012. Sixteen iron mining and paper mill customers make up 99.3 percent of the exclusions as evidenced in Table 6 on Page 5. The customers Minnesota Power ultimately excluded from the Solar Energy Standard calculations under Minn. Stat. 216B.1691, subd. 2f (d) (1) and (2) can be found in Table 6 on Page 5 and Table 7 on Page 6.⁵

⁵ In response to request number 3 of the Notice

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NAICS Code	NAICS Label	Customer Name	2012 kWh	Max KW Demand	Revenue Class		
212210	Iron Ore Mining				Industrial		
	11 Customers				Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Commercial		
		Trade Se	Trade Secret Data Excised				
322121	Paper (except Newsprint) Mills				Industrial		
	5 Customers				Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
					Industrial		
		Iron and Paper kWh 16 Customers	- 99.3% of Exclusions				
1		to Customers	99.3% OI EXClusions				

Table 6: 2012 Excludable Sales in Iron or Paper

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NAICS Code	NAICS Label	Customer Name	2012 kWh	Max KW Demand	Revenue Class
321113	Sawmills				Commercial
321113					
	9 Customers				Commercial
					Industrial
					Industrial
					Industrial
					Commercial
321114	Wood Preservation				Commercial
	2 Customers				Commercial
321211	Hardwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing				Commercial
	3 Customers				Commercial
					Commercial
221214	Truce Monufacturing				Commercial
321214	Truss Manufacturing				Commercial
321219	Reconstituted Wood Product Manufacturing		1		Industrial
	3 Customers		1		Industrial
			1		Industrial
321911	Wood Window and Door Manufacturing				Commercial
	2 Customers				Commercial
	2 Guatomera				commercial
					
321912	Cut Stock, Resawing Lumber, and Planing				Industrial
	6 Customers				Commercial
					Commercial
		Trade S	Secret Data Excised		Commercial
					Commercial
					Commercial
321918	Other Millwork (including Flooring)				Industrial
	8 Customers				Commercial
					Commercial
					Commercial
					Industrial
					Commercial
					Industrial
					Commercial
321920	Wood Container and Pallet Manufacturing				Industrial
021020	9 Customers		1		Commercial
	0.000000000		1		
			1		Industrial
			1		Industrial
			1		Industrial
			1		
			1		Industrial
			1		Industrial
			1		Commercial
			1		
					Industrial
321991	Manufactured Home (Mobile Home) Manufacturing				Commercial
		All Other kWh	-	1	
			0.7% of Evolutions		
		44 Customers	0.7% of Exclusions]	
				1	
		Total (60 Customers)]	

Table 7: 2012 Excludable Sales in Wood Products

The Company requests guidance from the Commission on the definition of the term "wood products manufacturer" which is included in the exemption categories under the Solar Energy Standard. Based on Minnesota Power's initial review, various customers, such as small woodshops and cabinet manufacturers, are able to fit into this description. Whether these types of facilities are wood products manufacturers is a Commission determination since the Legislature did not provide a definition.

While the NAICS codes⁶ are data points that serve to provide a reasonable proxy for customers that would be excluded, these codes are self-reported by customers and involve a degree of subjectivity. If it is ultimately determined that NAICS codes are the best means for identifying customers for exclusion, an application and/or notification process for customers may be warranted before final determination of exclusions. Given that this would set the Solar Energy Standard level, there is no existing procedural framework for these customer exclusions, and this would be a new purpose for NAICS codes, utilities must be able to verify, with consistency and within reason, that each customer is classified appropriately. Further, a means for addressing new customers and customer reclassifications would likely need to be developed as part of this process.

⁶ NAICS was developed by the Office of Management and Budget to classify units according to their production function. NAICS results in industries that group units undertaking similar activities using similar resources but does not necessarily group all similar products or outputs. Its purposes are: (1) to facilitate the collection, tabulation, presentation, and analysis of data relating to establishments, and (2) to promote uniformity and comparability in the presentation and analysis of statistical data describing the North American economy. (http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/)

2020 Forecast:

The results of the customer exclusion analysis were extended to the 2020 forecast based on the Moderate Growth Scenario from Minnesota Power's 2013 Annual Electric Utility Forecast Report, as depicted in Table 8 on Page 8.⁷

The "Commercial total" value was calculated by applying the percentage of "Commercial total" sales excluded in 2012 to the 2020 forecast. The "Industrial total" value was obtained by subtracting the forecast of iron and paper from the total Industrial forecast. This may understate the exclusion since it does not include the "Wood Products" value, which accounted for 0.7 percent of the 2012 excludable sales.

Projected 2020 Utility Solar Mandate (kWh)								
	2020 Retail Sales	2020 Exclusions	2020 Sales after Exclusions					
Residential	1,198,677,770	0	1,198,677,770					
Commercial	1,456,330,143	4,711,265	1,451,618,878					
Industrial	7,650,196,086	6,659,356,773	990,839,313					
Lighting	16,609,976	0	16,609,976					
Pub Auth	64,875,658	0	64,875,658					
Total Retail	10,386,689,633	6,664,068,038	3,722,621,595					
	2020 Minnesota							
	Resale Sales							
Resale	1,811,525,587		1,811,525,587					
Retail Only								
1 1/2 Percent	155,800,344		55,839,324					
10% of 1 1/2 Percent	15,580,034		5,583,932					
Retail and Res	ale							
1 1/2 Percent	182,973,228		83,012,208					
10% of 1 1/2 Percent	18,297,323		8,301,221					

Table 8: 2020 Retail Sales Forecast, Sales after Exclusions, and 2020 Goal

⁷ In response to request number 6 in the Notice

Municipal (Resale) Discussion:

The Solar Energy Standard applies only to "public utilities" and therefore exempts cooperative and municipal utilities. However, as previously ordered by the Commission, Minnesota Power's wholesale sales to municipal customers count towards the overall renewable energy standard under Minn. Stat. § 216B.1691.⁸ Minnesota Power does not seek to reconsider this prior Commission order, but does seek guidance on whether its wholesale sales to municipal customers should count toward the Solar Energy Standard given the that the Legislature specifically excluded cooperatives and municipal power agencies. With municipal utilities being included in the retail sales, and therefore, eligible to have the Solar Energy Standard costs passed onto them, this creates a competitive advantage for the cooperatives and municipal power agencies (or even public utilities that do not serve retail load in Minnesota). The customers who would be otherwise exempt, if not for being located within the municipal boundaries, will bear the burden of costs not being passed onto a similar customer inside Minnesota Power's (or any other public utility's) service territory. The municipality is under contract for electric service and therefore cannot provide any protection to said customer.

If the Commission deems it appropriate to exempt qualified customers within the municipalities' boundaries, the question then centers on how that exemption would be gained. Given the differences in federal and state ratemaking, the implementation of the cost allocation for such a customer would be a problematic undertaking. The public utility providing electric service to the municipality would somehow need to coordinate not only the exemption from the Company's retail sales but also the cost allocation to the customer. Furthermore, there are customers within Minnesota Power's municipal utilities that meet the exempt categories, as discussed above.

⁸ E999/M-10-989 - May 13, 2011 Order Finding Utilities In Compliance And Clarifying Requirements For Reporting Wholesale Electricity Sales

Topics Open for Comment on the Utility Filings:

Have the utilities provided reasonable estimates of their SES obligations?

Minnesota Power applied a reasonable estimate based on available data and understanding of customer operations. As outlined previously, the exemptions represent a bulk of the Company's load due to the nature of the customer base.

Should the Commission establish criteria to be used by utilities in determining customer exclusions, such as kW demand, kWh usage, NAICS codes?

The Solar Energy Standard did not provide a threshold for participation related to a customer's kW demand or kWh usage. The Company is in agreement, as stated earlier in the filing, that there should be some clarification surrounding the use of NAICS codes. Issues such as which codes should be used to determine exempt customers and corresponding verification of those customers is a concern.

Should the Commission establish procedures and/or require utilities to file tariffs relating to customer exclusions which address verification procedures, reporting requirements, customer petitions, or other related issues?

Minnesota Power is in agreement that the Commission, with the input of the Department and other stakeholders, should establish processes and procedures relating to customer exclusions and verification procedures, up to and including a rulemaking proceeding. Companies will need to know when and how periodic recalculation, reporting, applications, etc., will occur. Public utilities will also need guidance on the customer notification and application process.

The Company did encounter additional questions while working to comply with the Commission's requests within the Notice. These issues are also addressed within the text of these Comments. A summary of the issues that require clarification are as follows:

- The definition of "wood products" in relation to customer class exclusion.
- Whether sales to municipal utilities should be counted.
- NAICS code verification

Conclusion:

It is important to note that this is an initial effort at interpreting the impact of the customer exclusions from the Solar Energy Standard. The process will most likely take numerous revisions and be bolstered by guidance from the Commission and other stakeholders. Accordingly, Minnesota Power is open to recommendations and guidance from the Commission. The inclusion of a Solar Energy Standard and corresponding requirements will be a substantial undertaking for the utilities and regulatory bodies alike. There are many topics to address and unknown complications are likely to appear throughout the process. The Company compiled its best effort in outlining what it believes to be the correct course of action while also addressing issues yet to be resolved. Minnesota Power appreciates the opportunity to exchange dialogue on the implementation of this new requirement.

Dated: August 15, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

Sori Hoyum

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STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF RAMSEY))

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

SS

Roshelle Herstein of the City of White Bear Lake, County of Ramsey, State of Minnesota, says that on the 15th day of August, 2013, she served Minnesota Power's Public Compliance Report and Comment to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the Minnesota Department of Commerce via electronic filing.

/s/ Roshelle Herstein

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of August, 2013.

/s/ Jill N. Yeaman

Notary Public - Minnesota My Commission Expires January 31, 2016

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