



414 Nicollet Mall
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February 22, 2018

—Via Electronic Filing—

Daniel P. Wolf
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: ANSWER TO RECONSIDERATION REQUEST
PETITIONS TO TERMINATE THE PPA WITH BENSON POWER, LLC
AND THE PPA WITH LAURENTIAN ENERGY AUTHORITY
DOCKET NOS. E002/M-17-530 and E002/M-17-551

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits the enclosed Answer to petitions for rehearing and reconsideration submitted by parties regarding termination of Power Purchase Agreements with Benson Power, LLC and the Laurentian Energy Authority.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 216.17, subd. 3, we have electronically filed this document, and served copies on all parties on the attached service lists. If you have any questions regarding this filing, please contact Bria Shea at (612) 330-6064 or bria.e.shea@xcelenergy.com

Sincerely,

/s/

AAKASH CHANDARANA
REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, RATES AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Enclosures

c: Service List

STATE OF MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Nancy Lange
Dan Lipschultz
Matthew Schuerger
Katie J. Sieben
John A. Tuma

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF A PETITION FOR
APPROVAL TO TERMINATE THE BENSON
POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH
BENSON POWER, LLC, ACQUIRE THE
BENSON POWER BIOMASS PLANT, AND
CLOSE THE FACILITY

DOCKET No. E002/M-17-530

IN THE MATTER OF A PETITION FOR
APPROVAL TO TERMINATE THE POWER
PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH THE
LAURENTIAN ENERGY AUTHORITY

DOCKET No. E002/M-17-551

**ANSWER TO PETITION
FOR REHEARING AND
RECONSIDERATION**

ANSWER

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, respectfully submits this Answer to the petitions for rehearing and reconsideration submitted by parties on February 6, 9 and 12, 2018 to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The Commission may decide to reconsider an order when (1) new issues it has not considered are raised; (2) new and relevant facts are presented; (3) there are ambiguities in the Commission's order; or (4) the Commission is otherwise persuaded to reconsider an order.¹ The Company has reviewed the reconsideration petitions submitted by parties; because they have not met any of the criteria for granting a rehearing or reconsideration of the Commission's January 23, 2018 Order, the petitions for rehearing and reconsideration should be denied.

¹ Minn. Rule 7829.300, Subp. 2.

The Commission's approval of our petition to terminate the Benson Power and Laurentian Energy Authority power purchase agreements (PPAs) is entirely consistent with the governing standards established by the Minnesota Legislature.² The broader "public interest" standard cited by some parties—in their comments, during the Commission hearing and again in their petitions for reconsideration— applies only to the Company's request for a variance to the Fuel Clause Adjustment rules in order to flow certain transaction costs through the fuel clause. As the Commission correctly decided, that standard does not govern the Company's substantive proposal to terminate the PPAs which is expressly controlled by Minn. Stat. § 216B.2424, Subd. 9.

The other arguments advanced by the parties on reconsideration have similarly been considered by the Commission and rejected. For instance, North American Fertilizer repeats the same Minnesota Environmental Protection Act arguments that it advanced during the Comment period and again at the Commission. The same is true for the statutory arguments related to the 1994 legislation.

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above and based on the record in these two dockets, we believe the Commission should not approve the petitions for rehearing, reconsideration, or amending its January 23, 2018 Order.

Dated: February 22, 2018

Northern States Power Company

² The standards set by the legislature specify that the Commission may approve the transaction if it determines that: (1) all parties to the power purchase agreement, or their successors or assigns, as applicable, agree to the early termination of the power purchase agreement or the purchase and closure of the facility; and (2) the early termination of the power purchase agreement or the purchase and closure of the facility is in the best interest of the customers of the public utility subject to this section, taking into consideration any savings realized by customers as a result of the early termination of the power purchase agreement or the purchase and closure of the facility and any costs imposed on the customers under paragraph (e).

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Jim Erickson, hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the foregoing document on the attached list of persons.

xx by depositing a true and correct copy thereof, properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at Minneapolis, Minnesota

xx electronic filing

DOCKET Nos.: E002/M-17-530 AND E002/M-17-551

Dated this 22nd day of February 2018

/s/

Jim Erickson

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