



Steven H. Taylor
County Administrator

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February 15, 2019

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

Re: *Petition by Northern States Power Company, d.b.a. Xcel Energy, for Approval of Contracts and Ratemaking Treatment for Provision of Electric Service to Google's Data Center Project*

PUC Docket No. E002/M-19-39

Dear Mr. Wolf:


Sherburne County appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed agreement to provide electric service to Google's data center project in Becker. This is an extremely important and exciting project, not just for Xcel and Google, but also for what it means to the economic vitality of Sherburne County and the City of Becker. We provide this comment to share with you some of the cooperative efforts that have gone into creating this opportunity and why we believe the petition and the proposed project will have a critical impact and a lasting benefit to both our local community and the State.

As you know, Xcel Energy intends to close two of the three coal units at the Sherco Generating Station by 2023 and 2026. This will result in a substantial number of job cuts and an extraordinary loss of tax base for the City, County and the Becker School District. For the County, the closing will mean the loss of 150 direct and 250 indirect and induced jobs in our area. Those 400 jobs have an annual impact of over \$200,000,000 on the regional economy. The loss of that economic impact is not something the City and the County can easily sustain.

Daniel P. Wolf
February 20, 2019
p. 3

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this project to our local community as we try to prepare for the eventual closing of Sherco coal units 1 and 2. At the same time, we recognize that Google's site selection process is highly competitive and can be dependent on local support and a reliable, affordable electric supply. On our end, there is strong support for this project. The proposed Google data center represents the culmination of our collective efforts to obtain a major capital investment in the new Becker business center. It can also serve as a catalyst to attract future growth, helping the County and the City as we transition away from a coal-based economy. We therefore support the petition and echo Xcel's statement that time is of the essence in considering this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steven H. Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Taylor" clearly legible.

Steven H. Taylor
Sherburne County Administrator