

The Commission met on **Thursday, December 19, 2019** with Chair Sieben and Commissioners Means, Schuerger, and Tuma present.

The following matters were taken up by the Commission:

G-004/M-19-366

In the Matter of Great Plains Natural Gas Co.'s Evaluation of its Gas Affordability Program

G-008/M-19-367

In the Matter of CenterPoint Energy's Evaluation of its Gas Affordability Program

G-011/M-19-369

In the Matter of Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation's Evaluation of its Gas Affordability Program

G-002/M-19-380

In the Matter of Xcel Energy's Evaluation of its Gas Affordability Program

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Grant Great Plains request for a waiver of the requirement in its tariff that it provide a Discounted Cash Flow analysis evaluating the GAP's cost-effectiveness;
2. Require Great Plains to amend its tariff language to include the following:
 - A. The GAP shall be evaluated for the years 2019 through 2021 with an evaluation filed with the Commission by May 31, 2023.
 - B. The financial evaluation will include GAP cost-effectiveness analysis from a ratepayer perspective comparing the total GAP costs, which includes the Affordability component, Arrearage forgiveness component, and total company incurred administration costs to 2) the total net savings including cost reductions on utility functions such as the impact of the GAP on write-offs, service disconnections, and reconnections and collections activities.
3. Allow Great Plains' GAP Surcharge to remain at the current level of \$0.01393 per dekatherm and require Great Plains to continue assessing the GAP surcharge to firm residential and general service customers;
4. Accept Great Plains' 2019 GAP Evaluation Report;

5. Accept CenterPoint Energy's 2019 GAP Evaluation Report and require CenterPoint Energy to communicate regularly with payment-troubled customers by directing them to financial resources for assistance and reporting on LIHEAP outreach activities starting on March 1, 2020, every quarter thereafter;
6. Direct that in the next report, CenterPoint Energy shall provide a detailed description on how they have enhanced GAP outreach efforts to customers with past due amounts, customers receiving service disconnection notices, and current LIHEAP customers;
7. Accept MERC's 2019 GAP Pilot Evaluation Report;
8. Require MERC to continue its GAP program with no expiration date and make the Program permanent;
9. Require MERC to submit an evaluation report every 3 years, beginning May 31, 2022 covering Program years 2019-2021;
10. Require MERC to provide data to allow evaluation of the Company's GAP using the pre-program baseline method for future GAP Evaluations;
11. Accept Xcel Energy's 2019 GAP Evaluation Report; and
12. Require each utility company in this docket to file its next GAP Evaluation Report in three years on May 31, 2022.

The motion passed 4-0.

G-022-M-19-633

In the Matter of Greater Minnesota Gas, Inc.'s Conservation Improvement Program Conservation Cost Recovery Adjustment Tariff

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission approve a CCRA of \$0.000 per Dth, to be effective the first day of the month following the Commission's order in this matter.

The motion passed 4-0.

E-017-N-19-411

In the Matter of Otter Tail Power Company's Petition for Approval of the Annual Update to its Renewable Resource Cost Recovery Rider rate under Otter Tail Power's Rate Schedule 13.04

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Approve Otter Tail's proposed revenue requirement of \$122,506,339, as proposed in the Company's September 30, 2019 Reply comments;
2. Approve Otter Tail's proposed rate factors to become effective January 1, 2020:
 - (a) \$0.464 per kW and \$0.00350 per kWh for Large General Service customers and
 - (b) \$0.00525 per kWh for all other customers, as proposed in the Company's September 30, 2019 Reply Comments;
3. Approve Otter Tail's proposed rate design, as presented in Revised Attachment 5 of the Company's September 30, 2019 Reply Comments;
4. Approve Otter Tail's proposed customer notification language (updated as needed to include the correct implementation date and revisions to the rate factors), to be included with customer bills in the month that new rate factors are implemented;
5. Require Otter Tail to submit as compliance filings (1) the Company's revised tariff sheet 13.04 and (2) the Company's customer notice, updated with any newly approved RRCRR rate factors, within 10 days following Commission's order approving new RRCRR rate factors;
6. Approve Otter Tail's proposal to use a flow-through methodology to account for future Merricourt Production Tax Credit;
7. For projects in service, require Otter Tail to discontinue all rider collections and roll all rider costs and related PTCs (if any) into base rates once interim rates become effective, with subsequent PTC true-ups in future riders. Require the Company to roll in all rider costs at the beginning of the rate case.

The motion passed 4-0.

P-999/CI-19-539

In the Matter of Telephone Assistance Plan

Commissioner Sieben moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Accept the TAP Fund 6-month review submitted on September 10, 2019 for the six month period ending June 30, 2019; and

2. Require the Executive Secretary to monitor TAP enrollment, and refer the questions noticed by the Commission n Docket 18-112 to the TAP Lifeline Advisory Group with a schedule for returning the matter to a future Commission meeting if necessary.

The motion passed 4-0.

E-015/M-16-485

In the Matter of the Petition for Approval of Minnesota Power’s New Solar Sense Customer Solar Program

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission approve Minnesota Power’s request to extend the Solar Sense Customer Solar Program for an additional year and require future compliance filings to be submitted in Docket No. 16-485.

The motion passed 4-0.

E-015/M-18-250

In the Matter of Minnesota Power’s 2018 Annual Service and Reporting Standards

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission accept Minnesota Power’s Regulatory Compliance Assessment Report and direct the Company to file, as a compliance filing, modified tariff language that requires offering payment agreements to past due customers that have not yet been disconnected.

Commissioner Sieben moved that the Commission direct Minnesota Power to file as a compliance filing, within 30 days, a tariff amendment that requires offering payment agreements to disconnected customers during non-Cold Weather Rule months.

Both motions passed 4-0.

E-002/M-19-261

In the Matter of Xcel Energy’s Annual Report on Safety, Reliability, and Service Quality for 2018; and Petition for Approval of Electric Reliability Standards for 2019

E-017/M-19-260

In the Matter of Otter Tail Power Company’s 2018 Annual Safety, Reliability and Service Quality Report and Proposed SAIFI, SAIDI, and CAIDI Reliability Standards for 2019

E-015/M-19-254

In the Matter of Minnesota Power’s 2019 Safety, Reliability and Service Quality Standards Report

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Accept Xcel Energy's, Otter Tail Power's, and Minnesota Power's annual Safety, Service Quality, and Reliability reports for 2018.
2. Clarify the reporting requirements from the Commission's March 19, 2019 Order and delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to establish final report formatting and make minor clarifications where necessary.
3. In their 2019 reports, require utilities to discuss the feasibility of the following metric, and if the utility does not think the metric is feasible, provide an alternative:
 - a. Provide a comparison of the reliability (SAIDI, SAIFI, CAIDI, MAIFI, normalized/non-normalized) of feeders with grid modernization investments, such as AMI or FLISR, to the historic 5-year average reliability for the same feeders before grid modernization investments
4. In their 2019 reports, require utilities to discuss transitioning from a five year rolling average method of proposing SAIDI, SAIFI, and CAIDI standards, to standards that are similar to the second quartile rank of similarly sized investor owned utilities under either the IEEE benchmarking study or using EIA reliability data, and allow utilities to propose and discuss other alternatives.
5. Within 30 days, require utilities to make a compliance filing with additional data as follows:
 - a. For Minnesota Power and Xcel Energy, causes of sustained customer outages, by work center, from 2010 to 2018, as a spreadsheet (.xlsx).
 - b. CEMI (4+, 5+, 6+) and CELI historical data (6, 12, and 24 hours), both normalized and non-normalized, from 2010 to 2018, as a spreadsheet (.xlsx).
 - c. For Xcel Energy, a historic breakdown of FTE line workers versus office staff for each work center from 2010 to 2018.
 - d. For Xcel Energy, an explanation for the decline in staffing at its Southeast work center and a report on:
 - i. steps taken to increase FTEs at the Southeast work center in 2020,
 - ii. the number of contractors versus employees at the Southeast work center, and
 - iii. steps taken to improve reliability standards that are lagging at the Southeast work center.

6. Set Minnesota Power’s Reliability Standards for 2019 at the 2016 levels:

	SAIDI	SAIFI	CAIDI
2016 Standard	98.19	1.02	96.26

7. In their 2019 report, direct Minnesota Power to provide an update on the Colbyville 240 feeder, specifically to note whether any work on the feeder has made an improvement in reliability.
8. In future reports, request that Minnesota Power include specific number of calls received and calls answered within 20 seconds, both for business and non-business hours and by type, in accordance with Minnesota Rules 7826.1700 and 7826.1200.
9. Set Otter Tail Power’s Reliability Standards for 2019 at the 2013 levels:

Work Center	SAIDI	SAIFI	CAIDI
Bemidji	70.64	1.26	56.06
Crookston	69.33	1.19	58.26
Fergus Falls	66.97	1.11	60.33
Milbank	75.49	1.82	41.48
Morris	55.78	1.01	55.23
Wahpeton	57.24	1.13	50.65
All MN Customers	64.95	1.13	57.48

10. Set Xcel Energy’s Reliability Standards for 2019 at the following levels:

Work Center	SAIDI	SAIFI	CAIDI
Metro East	89.78	0.86	103.94
Metro West	82.08	0.82	100.37
Northwest	85.86	0.76	113.01
Southeast	94.82	0.76	122.04

11. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to put out for comment the staff proposal on locational reliability and equity in reliability.
12. Require utilities to consult with Commission staff to draft a brief summary of their annual service-quality and reliability metrics that is digestible and useable for general audiences and file it as an attachment to their next annual report due April 1, 2020.

The motion passed 4–0.

E-999/PR-19-9

In the Matter of Trade Secret Designation of 2019 Cogeneration and Small Power Production Reports

Commissioner Schuerger moved that the Commission accept the modified trade secret designations filed by Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power, and Xcel Energy on September 10, 2019, direct that the trade secret designations in those filings are appropriately classified for this year and in future years, and further require the following information to be filed as public in the annual cogeneration and small power production filings:

1. For all utilities:
 - a. Schedule A (estimated marginal energy costs (years 2-5))
 - b. Schedule B, subp. 2, items E–G (planned utility generating facility additions)
 - c. Schedule B, subp. 3, items D–E (planned firm capacity purchases)
2. For Otter Tail Power (other utilities currently treat this data as public):
 - a. Schedule B, subp. 2, items A–D (unit name, nameplate rating, fuel type, in-service date)
 - b. Schedule B, subp. 5 (net annual avoided capacity cost – results, not all units)

The motion passed 4–0.

E-002/WS-17-410

In the Matter of the Application of Northern States Power Minnesota for a Site Permit Amendment to the 84 MW Freeborn Wind Farm in Freeborn County, Minnesota

Chair Sieben moved to deny the motion of the Association of Freeborn County Landowners (AFCL) to require an environmental impact statement for the Freeborn Wind Farm.

The motion passed 4–0.

Chair Sieben moved to deny AFCL’s motion to refer the matter for contested case proceedings.

The motion passed 4–0.

Commissioner Tuma moved to do the following:

1. Grant the petition of Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy to amend the Freeborn Wind Farm Site Permit to reflect changes in turbine technology by amending Section 2.0 and 3.0, and by replacing the maps identified in Section 3.1.
2. Authorize staff to reissue the site permit reflecting these modifications.

The motion passed 4-0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION: January 22, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Barlow', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ryan Barlow, Acting Executive Secretary