



The Commission met on **Thursday, August 18, 2022**, with Chair Sieben and Commissioners Means, Schuerger, Sullivan, and Tuma present.

The following matters were taken up by the Commission:

G-008/GR-21-435

In the Matter of the Application by CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas for Authority to Increase Natural Gas Rates in Minnesota

G-008/MR-21-436

In the Matter of CenterPoint Energy Resources Corporation's Filing to Establish a New Base Gas Cost Filing (PGA Zero-Out) for Interim Rates in CenterPoint Energy's General Rate Filing

Commissioner Means moved that the Commission:

1. Accept the Offer of Settlement and adopt the Administrative Law Judge's Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation to Approve Settlement.
2. Require CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas (CenterPoint Energy) to make a compliance filing that reflects the Commission's final decision and provides revised schedules of rates and charges reflecting the revenue requirement and the rate design decisions herein, along with the proposed effective date, and including the following information:
 - a. Breakdown of Total Operating Revenues by type.
 - b. Schedules showing all billing determinants for the retail sales (and sale for resale) of natural gas. These schedules shall include but not be limited to –
 - i. Total revenue by customer class;
 - ii. Total number of customers, the customer charge and total customer charge revenue by customer class;
 - iii. For each customer class, the total number of commodity and demand related billing units, the per unit of commodity and demand cost of gas, the non-gas margin, and the total commodity and demand related sales revenues;

- iv. Revised tariff sheets incorporating authorized rate design decisions; and
 - v. Proposed customer notices explaining the final rates, the monthly basic service charges, any and all changes to rate design and customer billing, and date of implementation of final rates.
- 3. Require CenterPoint Energy to make the following compliance filings within 30 days of the date of the final order in this docket:
 - a. A revised base cost of gas, supporting schedules, and revised fuel adjustment tariffs to be in effect on the date final rates are implemented.
 - b. A summary listing of all other rate riders and charges in effect, and continuing, after the date final rates are implemented.
 - c. A computation of the CCRC based upon the decisions made herein for inclusion in the final Order.
 - d. A schedule detailing the CIP tracker balance at the beginning of interim rates, the revenues (CCRC and CIP Adjustment Factor) and costs recorded during the period of interim rates, and the CIP tracker balance at the time final rates become effective.
 - e. If final authorized rates are lower than interim rates, a proposal to make refunds of interim rates, including interest to affected customers.
- 4. Authorize comments on all compliance filings within 30 days of the date they are filed (although comments are not necessary on CenterPoint Energy's proposed customer notice).

The motion passed 5–0.

IP-7013/CN-19-408

IP-7013/WS-19-619

IP-7013/TL-19-621

In the Matter of the Applications of Big Bend Wind, LLC for a Certificate of Need, Site Permit for the 308 MW Large Wind Energy Conversion System, and Route Permit for the 161 kV Transmission Line in Cottonwood, Martin, and Watonwan Counties, Minnesota.

IP-7014/CN-19-486

IP-7014/GS-19-620

In the Matter of the Applications of Red Rock Solar, LLC for a Certificate of Need and Site Permit for the up to 60 MW Red Rock Solar Project in Cottonwood County, Minnesota.

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Approve and adopt the ALJ's Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Recommendation.
2. Determine that the Environmental Assessment and the record created in this matter address the issues identified in the Scoping Decision.
3. Grant a certificate of need for the up to 300 MW Big Bend Wind Project proposed in Cottonwood, Watonwan, and Martin Counties, Minnesota.
4. Issue a Site Permit incorporating the permit conditions adopted in the ALJ Report with the correction to Section 6.2 and the additional permit condition in Section 6.3 as proposed by DOC EERA with the following modifications:
 - a. The nameplate language recognizing that the combined facility is at 335 MW when coordinated with the Red Rock Solar facility clearly delineating the wind facility capacity and turbine number in this coordinated scenario; and
 - b. A variance of the wind access buffer setback for turbine locations A01 and A02 with the following conditions:
 - i. Amend LWECS Site Permit section 4.1 Wind Access Buffer Language to read:

The Commission authorizes a variance of the wind access buffer setback for the following turbine locations: A-01 and A-02. These variances are granted on the condition that the permittee shall extend a final offer to the remaining landowners for the same amount and terms agreed to by other landowners in similar circumstances or their last offer, whichever is higher. At least 14 days before the preconstruction meeting, the permittee must make a compliance filing describing in detail the results of the negotiation. If no wind rights agreement is reached, Permittee acknowledges that the affected landowners will not be foreclosed from installing wind turbine generators on their property at a later date, even if such turbine generators

cannot be installed on their property in compliance with the setbacks set forth in section 4.1 of site permit.

- c. Until the filing for a preconstruction meeting under the LWECS Site permit condition 10.1, the permittee shall file updates with the commission quarterly commencing within 30 days of the order containing the following information:
 - i. Proposed modifications to the turbine layout along with a detailed map of land control, roads, substations, power lines, receptors and other prominent landmarks (numbering of receptor should be consistent with that used in the application process);
 - ii. Update on Shadow Flicker Agreements;
 - iii. Update on turbine selection and related land acquisition;
 - iv. Update on interconnection status;
 - v. Update on any power purchase agreements; and
 - vi. Any estimates on proposed construction schedules.

The applicant shall also provide the updated compliance filings directly to the effected counties, townships, and tribal nations.

- 5. Issue a Route Permit that identifies the route proposed by Big Bend Wind for its 161 kV transmission line that includes specific requirements and conditions. along with the option to use the purple route as an alternative.
- 6. Issue the Proposed Site Permit attached to the briefing papers as the Site Permit for the up to 60-megawatt Red Rock Solar Project proposed in Cottonwood County, Minnesota with the following modifications:
 - a. The proposed changes to sections 2, 2.1, and 5.3 as proposed by staff in the briefing papers; and
 - b. Page 1, add the following:

The Permittee is authorized by this site permit to construct and operate an at least 50-megawatt and up to 60-megawatt alternating current nameplate capacity solar energy conversion system and associated facilities.

- c. Site Permit section 1, add the following:

This permit authorizes the Permittee to construct and operate an at least 50-megawatt and up to 60-megawatt alternating current nameplate capacity solar

energy conversion system and associated facilities in Midway Township, Cottonwood County, Minnesota, and as identified in the attached site maps, hereby incorporated into this document.

- d. Site permit section 2, add the following:
The Project is an at least 50-megawatt and up to 60-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) nameplate capacity solar energy conversion system and associated facilities in Midway Township, Cottonwood County, Minnesota.
- e. The nameplate language recognizing that the solar facility must be constructed at 50 MW or greater otherwise it is subject to local permitting and recognizing that the combined facility at 335 MW when coordinated with the Big Bend LWECS facility clearly delineating the wind facility capacity and turbine number in this coordinated scenario; and
- f. Until the filing for a preconstruction meeting under the Red Rock Solar site permit condition 8.1, the permittee shall file updates with the commission quarterly commencing within 30 days of the order containing the following information:
 - i. Update on Red Rock Solar and solar equipment procurement;
 - ii. Update on interconnection status;
 - iii. Update on any power purchase agreements; and
 - iv. Any estimates on proposed construction schedules.

The applicant shall also provide the updated compliance filings directly to the effected counties, townships, and tribal nations.

- g. Site permit section 4.3.15, add the following:

The Permittee shall implement site restoration and management practices that provide for native perennial vegetation and foraging habitat beneficial to gamebirds, songbirds, and pollinators; and that enhances soil water retention and reduces storm water runoff and erosion. The Permittee shall develop a vegetation management plan that incorporates, to the extent applicable and appropriate, the technical guidance and best management practices outlined in the ~~DNR's Prairie Establishment and Maintenance Technical Guidance for Solar Projects~~ Guidance for Developing a Vegetation Establishment and Management

Plan for Solar Facilities.¹ The vegetation management plan shall be filed at least 30 days prior to the pre- construction meeting.

To ensure continued management and recognition of beneficial habitat, the Permittee is encouraged to seek certification of the project by following guidance set forth by the Pollinator Plan provided by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. All documents required by Board of Water and Soil Resources for Habitat Friendly Solar Certification and maintenance of that certification should also be filed with the Commission.

7. Authorize Commission staff to modify the Proposed Site Permit to correct typographic and formatting errors, improve consistency, and ensure agreement with the Commission's final order in the matter.

The motion passed 5—0.

E-002/TL-21-189

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for a 3.2-mile, 345-kilovolt Transmission Line in Sherburne County

E-002/TL-21-190

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Route Permit for a 1.7-mile, 345-kilovolt Transmission Line in Sherburne County

E-002/GS-21-191

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Site Permit for the up to 460-megawatt Sherco Solar Energy Generating System in Sherburne County

Commissioner Tuma moved that the Commission:

1. Adopt the ALJ Report to the extent it is consistent with the Commission's final decisions.
2. Determine that the Environmental Assessment and the record created in this matter address the issues identified in the Scoping Decision.
3. Issue the Proposed Site Permit attached to the briefing papers as the Site Permit for the up to 460-megawatt Sherco Solar Project proposed in Sherburne County.

¹ https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/ewr/prairie_solar_tech_guidance.pdf. Guidance for Developing a Vegetation Establishment and Management Plan for Solar Facilities, March 2021. <https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/eera/web/project-file/11702>.

4. Issue the Proposed Route Permit attached to the briefing papers as the Route Permit for the 1.7-mile 345-kilovolt high-voltage transmission line for the East Block portion of the Sherco Solar Project proposed in Sherburne County.
5. Issue the Proposed Route Permit attached to the briefing papers as the Route Permit for the 3.2-mile 345-kilovolt high-voltage transmission line for the West Block portion of the Sherco Solar Project proposed in Sherburne County.
6. Authorize Commission staff to modify the ALJ Report and the proposed site and route permits to correct typographic and formatting errors, improve consistency, and ensure agreement with the Commission's final order in the matter.

The motion passed 5–0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION: September 7, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Seuffert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Will Seuffert, Executive Secretary