

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: August 12, 2020

In the Matter of an Inquiry into Utility Investments that May Assist in Minnesota's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

PUC Docket Number(s): E,G-999/CI-20-492

Comment Period: Utilities' filing of the first Tranche of Investments that will begin construction in spring of 2021 and will assist in Minnesota's economic recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic closes on September 15, 2020 at 4:30 PM

Initial comment period closes October 16, 2020 at 4:30pm

Reply comment period closes October 30, 2020 at 4:30pm

Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Issue: How should the Commission proceed in evaluating the Utilities' filings of Investments that may assist in Minnesota's economic recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic?

Topic(s) Open for Comment:

- What process should the Commission use to evaluate the filings by Utilities of investments that may assist Minnesota's economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic?
- What rate mitigation options are available that can reduce the impact on rate payers from the investments identified by the Utilities?
- Should the Commission evaluate facilities investments put forward in this docket under Minnesota Statute 216E.06?
- What process should the Commission use to evaluate facilities projects subject to the Power Plant Siting Act for purposes of evaluating need and siting/routing considerations?
- Are there other issues or concerns related to this matter?

Background On May 7, 2020, the Commission met to discuss Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-425, *In the Matter of an Inquiry into the Financial Effects of COVID-19 on Natural Gas and Electric Utilities*. During the hearing the Commission requested its Executive Secretary issue a notice requesting information from the regulated utilities to identify investments and utility projects that could assist Minnesota's economic recovery from COVID-19. The Notice, issued on May 20, 2020, requested that utilities identify investments that will:

- Provide significant utility system benefits;
- Be consistent with approved resource plans, approved natural gas distribution infrastructure or pipeline safety plans, triennial conservation plans, and existing Commission orders;
- Reduce carbon or other pollutant emissions in the power sector or across economic sectors;
- Increase access to conservation and clean energy resources for all Minnesotans;
- Create jobs or otherwise assist in economic recovery for Minnesotans; and
- Use women, veteran, or minority-owned businesses to the extent possible, which can be documented for verification purposes.

The Commission issued its Order Approving Accounting Request and Taking Other Action Related to COVID-19 Pandemic on May 22, 2020 in Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-425, which listed the same criteria identified above. Utilities filed reports on June 17, 2020 in Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-492 and the Commission held a planning meeting on July 29, 2020 to discuss next steps in its inquiry into utility investments that may assist in Minnesota’s economic recovery.

Staff offers the following guidance to the Utilities filing for approval of the tranche of investments on September 15, 2020. The first tranche of projects filed by the utilities should only include projects that will begin construction in 2021 and that will prioritize job growth. A description of how each project will meet the criteria in the Order, listed above, should also be included in the filing. Utilities should also provide a recommendation for how the Commission should process the first tranche of projects and propose a schedule that could be adopted for future tranches of investments.

Each utility filing should also include proposed rate mitigation strategies for the Commission’s consideration in this, and other proceedings – if applicable. Each Utility filing on September 15, 2020, will be assigned a new separate Docket, which will be subject to the same comment period noted above. The 20-492 docket will continue to be used to develop reporting metrics for all projects under consideration. Subsequent guidance on how utilities should report on the above criteria will be used to provide a uniform method of reporting across utilities.

Filing Requirements: Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are **required** to file documents using the Commission’s electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: mn.gov/puc, select *eFiling*, and follow the prompts.

Submit Public Comments:

Online: Visit mn.gov/puc, select Comment and follow the prompts

Email: consumer.puc@state.mn.us

U.S. Mail: Consumer Affairs Office

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul MN 55101

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website at mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (20) and the docket number (492), select *Search*.

Subscribe to receive email notification when new documents are filed in this docket at mn.gov/puc, select *Subscribe*, or click [HERE](#) and follow the prompts.

Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure? Contact Commission staff, Andy Bahn, at Andrew.Bahn@state.mn.us or 651-201-2249.

Change your mailing preferences: Email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246.

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