

## NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: March 29, 2019

**In the Matter of an Inquiry into Exemptions for Small Gas Utility Franchises Under Minn. Stat. § 216B.16, Subd. 12, for Gorham's Inc., Northwest Natural Gas, LLC, Northwest Natural Gas of Murray County, Inc., and Northwest Natural Gas of Cass County LLC.**

**PUC Docket Number(s): G-6278, G-6279, G-6280/CI-18-770**

**Comment Period:** Gorham's Inc., et al, shall provide its response to the Commission's questions described below in the topics section of this notice by April 30, 2019 at 4:30pm

Initial comment period closes May 31, 2019 at 4:30pm

Reply comment period closes June 10, 2019 at 4:30pm

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

**Issue:** What actions should the Commission take to ensure Gorham's Inc., Northwest Natural Gas, LLC, Northwest Natural Gas of Murray County, Inc., and Northwest Natural Gas of Cass County, LLC are in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 216B.16, Subd, 12, or, in the alternative, should the companies be collectively regulated as a non-exempt public utility?

### **Topic(s) Open for Comment:**

- What is the customer count for each of the companies listed and the relationship of the companies to each other for purposes of the exemption under Minn. Stat. § 216B.16, subd. 12 (a)?
- What is the status of all the municipal franchise agreements with municipalities served by the companies and the related City Council resolutions for purposes of the exemption under Minn. Stat. § 216B.02, subd. 4, and § 216B.16, subd. 12(a)?
- Are the companies serving any incidental load outside of the municipalities requiring exemption pursuant to § 216B.16, subd. 12(b)?
- Have the companies met their obligations under Minn. Stat. § 216B.16, subd. 12(c) for reporting of their tariffs?
- Have the companies met their obligations for cold-weather disconnection, including how the disconnection notice was communicated and the date of communication (Minn. Stat. § 216B.096, Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule)?

- Have the companies submitted utility disconnection reports to the municipalities as required by Minn. Stat. § 216B.0976?
- Do each of the companies maintain notice forms to send to customers who are in arrears pursuant to the utility's obligation under Minn. Stat. § 216B.098, along with any policy not clearly identified in the tariffs regarding budget billing plans, payment arrangements, and undercharge repayment?
- Have each of the companies filed their Annual Minnesota Natural Gas Utility information with the Department under Minn. R. 7610.0800-.0860 on or before July 1, 2018?
- Are there other issues or concerns related to this matter?

**Background:** On March 14, 2019, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued its ORDER APPROVING PETITION AND INITIATING INVESTIGATION.<sup>1</sup> The Commission investigation is to determine what actions, if any, need to be taken to ensure that Gorham's Inc., Northwest Natural Gas, LLC, Northwest Natural Gas of Murray County, Inc., and Northwest Natural Gas of Cass County, LLC are in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 216B.16, Subd, 12, the Exemption For Small Gas Utility Franchise statute, or to determine if the companies should be collectively regulated as a non-exempt public utility.

**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](http://mn.gov/puc), select *eFiling*, and follow the prompts.

**Submit Public Comments:** Visit [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select *Speak Up!* to find this docket, and add your comments to the discussion or email your comments to [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us).

**Full Case Record:** See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website at [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc), select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (18) and the docket number (770), select *Search*.

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

**Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure?** Contact Commission staff, Eric Bartusch, at [eric.bartusch@state.mn.us](mailto:eric.bartusch@state.mn.us) or (651) 201-2259.

**Change your mailing preferences:** Email [docketing.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:docketing.puc@state.mn.us) or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Matter of the Petition of Great Minnesota Transmission, LLC (GMT) for Approval of a Firm Gas Transportation Agreement with Northwest Natural Gas of Cass County, LLC, Inc., Docket No. PL-6580/M-18-465

PUC Docket Number G-6278, G-6279, G-6280/CI-18-770

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us) for assistance.