

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: January 2, 2019

In the Matter of a Commission Investigation into Natural Gas Utilities' Practices, Tariffs, and Assignment of Cost Responsibility for Installation of Excess Flow Valves and Other Similar Gas Safety Equipment

PUC Docket Number: G-999/CI-18-41

Comment Period: Initial comment period closes February 28, 2019 at 4:30pm
Reply comment period closes March 28, 2019 at 4:30pm

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

Issue: Approval of the natural gas utilities' customer meeting plans for potential installation of EFV's or manual service line shutoff valves and related safety matters.

Topics Open for Comment:

- Have the utilities complied with the Commission's August 20, 2018 Order?
- Does the information reported pursuant to ordering paragraphs 5 and 6 of the August 20, 2018 Order adequately address the Commission's concern about safety?
- Are the utilities' plans to meet with customers pursuant to ordering paragraph 7 of the August 20, 2018 Order acceptable?
- Are there other issues or concerns related to this matter?

Background: Excess flow valves (EFVs) are safety devices installed on natural gas distribution pipelines and have been a topic of recent federal legislation and regulations. EFVs can reduce the risk of explosions in distribution pipelines by automatically stopping excessive, unplanned gas flows. EFVs are installed where a service line that serves an individual home or business joins the distribution pipeline.

On August 20, 2018, the Commission issued its ORDER FINDING THAT EXCESS FLOW VALVES COMPLY WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND TAKING OTHER ACTIONS (August 20, 2018 Order).

In its August 20, 2018 Order, the Commission required the utilities, within 120 days, to:

- Report the status of EFV installation, per customer class, throughout their service territories. This report shall include an estimate of the percentage of the utility's service territory that has EFVs installed, and the utility's plan and timeline for completing the installation of EFVs for the remainder of the utility's service territory. (Ordering Paragraph 5)
- Report the status of curb valve or manual shut-off valve installation, per customer class, throughout their service territories. This report shall include an estimate of the percentage of the utility's service territory that has curb valves or manual shut-off valves installed and the utility's plan and timeline for completing the installation for the remainder of the utility's service territory. (Ordering Paragraph 6)
- Establish a plan to have face-to-face meetings with the decision-maker of the customers identified below regarding the purpose of EFVs and manual service line shutoff valves, along with the utility's installation policy, and estimated costs. At a minimum, these plans must identify all the following customers within its service territory that do not already have EFVs (and are eligible under the Federal standards) or manual shutoff valves and are not within an area the utility plans to upgrade by 2025:
 - K-12 public districts with school buildings in the utility's service territory;
 - K-12 non-public schools with school buildings in the utility's service territory;
 - Public and private universities and colleges;
 - Hospitals; and
 - Multi-unit residential and nursing facilities.(Ordering Paragraph 7a and 7b)
- The Commission authorized the utilities to propose alternatives for limiting the visits to non-public schools, universities and colleges, and multi-unit residential and nursing facilities based on a size metric and to propose a cost recovery mechanism for the additional requirements of the August 20, 2018 Order. (Ordering Paragraph 7c)

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: Visit 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.

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 (18) and the docket number (41), select *Search*.

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Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure? Contact Commission staff, Jason Bonnett, at jason.bonnett@state.mn.us or 651-201-2235.

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