

The Commission met on **Thursday, February 23, 2012**, with Commissioners Boyd, O'Brien, and Wergin present.

The following matters were taken up by the Commission:

ET-2/TL-08-1474

In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for a 345 kV Transmission Line from Brookings County, South Dakota to Hampton, Minnesota

Commissioner Wergin moved that the Commission:

1. Approve the permittees' requested minor alterations and issue a permit amendment authorizing:
 - The addition of maps CF1-CF5 depicting the 115 kV line route between Cedar Mountain Substation and Franklin Substation to the official map set.
 - The substitution of map LH22a in place of existing map LH22 to show the Prairie Island—Blue Lake 345 kV line connection and the correct area and location of the Hampton substation.
 - A revision to the route permit text to clarify that the maximum area required for the new Hampton Substation is 15 acres and that it will be located in the southeast corner of the property directly adjacent to 215th Avenue on the south and State Highway 52 on the east. The space used will be minimized to the extent possible without compromising safety or the integrity of the substation.
 - An addition to the route permit text allowing the installation of six conductors at the span across Interstate 35 in Dakota County.

The motion passed 3 – 0.

IP-6824/WS-09-830

In the Matter of the Site Permit Application for a 20 Megawatt (MW) Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) in Stevens County, Minnesota

Commissioner Wergin moved that the Commission:

1. Grant the petition for amendment by West Stevens Wind, LLC and amended its large wind energy conversion system site permit as provided in the attached amendment.
2. Adopt the OES recommendation, with the additional following provision:

SHADOW FLICKER

At least 14 days prior to the pre-construction meeting, the Permittee shall provide data on shadow flicker exposure on each residence of non-participating landowners and participating landowners. Information shall include the results of modeling used, assumptions made, and the anticipated levels of exposure from turbine shadow flicker on each residence. The Permittee shall

provide documentation on its efforts to avoid, minimize and mitigate shadow flicker exposure.

The motion passed 3 – 0.

E-004/M-11-838

In the Matter of a Petition by Great Plains Natural Gas Company for a Variance to Minnesota Rules, part 7820.4000

Commissioner O'Brien moved that the Commission:

1. Approve Great Plains' request for a variance to Minnesota Rules, part 7820.4000 and a one-time modification to its Minnesota Gas Rate Schedule.

The motion passed 3 – 0.

E-002/M-11-1101

In the Matter of a Petition by Excel Energy for Approval of a Financial Performance Incentive for Qualifying Solar Projects Under Minn. Stat. § 216B.241, Subd. 5a

Commissioner Wergin moved that the Commission:

1. Approve Xcel's proposed solar incentive plan with a flat payment of \$0.035 for every kWh of solar energy produced during the first year of operation of systems installed under Xcel's Solar*Rewards program.
2. Establish that the incentive plan applies to solar energy generated after the date of the Order and expires on December 31, 2015 unless extended by the Commission.
3. Require Xcel, in its April 1 petition seeking approval of its annual solar incentive award, include the Solar*Rewards program reporting requirements from:
 - a. Docket No, E-002/M-10-1278, Order issued June 30, 2011, Order ¶¶ 7(a) – (c); and
 - b. The CIP Status Reports on the program.
4. Require Xcel, on or before February 1, 2015, to file an evaluation report analyzing the effectiveness of its solar incentive plan from its start through December 31, 2014. Among other concerns, the evaluation must address the need for an ongoing solar incentive, provide support for the appropriate level of an incentive, and use well-developed and verifiable cost numbers for the alternative solar projects.
5. Require Xcel to ask the Department to review and report on Xcel's evaluation and to make a recommendation to the Commission on the future of the incentive within a timeline that will allow the Commission to make a decision by May 1, 2015.

The motion passed 3 – 0.

G-008/GR-08-1075

In the Matter of an Application by CenterPoint Energy for Authority to Increase Natural Gas Rates in Minnesota

Commissioner O'Brien moved that the Commission:

1. Decline the bill adjustment proposal of CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Gas (CenterPoint) and approval an alternative or modified bill adjustment plan instead.
2. Allocate the cost of the bill adjustment plan to ratepayers, and require CenterPoint to proportionally allocate the cost of recovering the bill adjustments between Residential and Commercial/Industrial "A" and "B" (i.e., the small, firm) customer classes when filing its September 1, 2012 Annual Automatic Adjustment (AAA) report and true-up filings.
3. Find that bill adjustments and refunds to former customers shall only be made for customers who received one or more bills for a billing period longer than 32 days, and be calculated for each eligible bill based, in part, on an estimate of the amount of gas used during the "elongated" part of the billing period by multiplying the estimate of the customer's average daily gas consumption by the number of days in the billing period in excess of 32 days.
4. Grant eligibility for a bill adjustment to customers who received at least one elongated bill in any month during which the Inverted Block Rate pilot program was in effect (*i.e.*, the billing date occurred and the bill was rendered between July 1, 2010 and October 13, 2011).
5. Require CenterPoint to issue refunds to customers who have left CenterPoint's system if they are owed more than \$2.00.
6. Require CenterPoint to post adjustments on current customer bills and issue refunds to former customers within 60 days of the Commission's order.
7. Require CenterPoint to generally apply the process used to determine eligibility for an interim rate refund to these bill adjustment, and if required, the refunds to former customers.
8. Require CenterPoint to submit a report (compliance filing) summarizing the bill adjustments, by month and by class, no later than 10 days after the completion of all bill adjustments and refunds to former customers.

The motion passed 3 – 0.

E-015/M-11-806

In the Matter of a Petition by Minnesota Power for Approval of a Rider for Facilities Franchise Fee

Commissioner Wergin moved to reaffirm the Commission's Order Finding Jurisdiction, Approving Rider and Notice, and Requiring Filings (October 12, 2011) .

The motion passed 3 – 0.

E, G-999/CI-11-851

In the Matter of the Review of Utility Practices Regarding Establishment of and Changes in Responsibility for Utility Bill Payment

The Commission took no action.

IP-6701/WS-08-1233

In the Matter of the Application of AWA Goodhue, LLC for a 78 Megawatt Large Wind Energy Conversion System in Goodhue County, Minnesota

Commissioner O'Brien moved that the Commission:

1. Deny approval of the AWA Goodhue revised avian and bat protection plan.
2. Require AWA Goodhue to conduct the bat monitoring required under the site permit.
3. Require AWA Goodhue shall conduct an additional season of acoustic bat monitoring in 2013 from July 1 to October 15 using the methods specified in site permit condition 13.1.2.

The motion passed 2-1, with Commissioner Boyd voting against the motion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION: April 11, 2012



Burl W. Haar, Executive Secretary