

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: September 26, 2017

In the Matter of a Commission Investigation into Parameters for Competition among Natural Gas Utilities Involving Duplication of Facilities and Use of Promotional Incentives and Other Payments

PUC Docket Number: G-999/CI-17-499

Comment Period: All natural gas utilities shall provide initial filings by **October 31, 2017**.

Comments on the natural gas utilities' initial filings and the topics and questions open for comment listed below are requested by **November 30, 2017**.

Reply Comments are requested by **December 29, 2017**.

All comment periods in this notice may be varied by the Commission upon request for good cause, pursuant to Minnesota Rules, Chapter 7829.1275.

Comments must be received by 4:30pm on the close date.

Comments received after comment period closes may not be considered.

All Natural Gas Utilities Shall Provide in their Initial Filings:

- A description of the process each natural gas utility uses to identify opportunities to extend service beyond its existing service borders to new areas or customers.
- A description of the promotional incentives or other payments each natural gas utility offers when extending service to areas or customers outside its existing service area, including to future retail customers, property developers, and property managers, providing an explanation of the circumstances and conditions under which the incentives and payments are offered and provided. For each type of incentive and payment, identify where in the utility's tariffs it can be found, or if non-tariffed, under what authority is it offered?

Topics Open for Comment:

- How should the Commission evaluate and set the parameters of inter-gas-utility competition consistent with the provisions of Minn. Stat. § 216B.01?

- What criteria should the Commission use to evaluate whether there is unnecessary duplication of facilities as contemplated by Minn. Stat. § 216B.01? In addition, how should the Commission determine whether increased costs occur to existing customers, for both the utility proposing to construct duplicate facilities and the utility whose facilities are duplicated?
- How should the Commission regulate the use of promotional incentives and other tariffed and non-tariffed payments provided by utilities to extend their service to new areas or customers outside their existing service area?
- What should be considered as other non-tariffed payments, e.g., co-sponsored advertising arrangements?
- Should all natural gas utilities be required to file with the Commission copies of all their existing and new competitive service agreements (or similar agreements) with customers?
- Any other issue or topic relevant to this matter.

Docket Background: On July 12, 2017, the Commission issued its ORDER DISMISSING COMPLAINT, REQUIRING FILINGS, AND OPENING INVESTIGATION (“July 12, 2017 Order”), in this docket, and, In the Matter of Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation’s Complaint Against Northern States Power Company, Docket No. G-011, 002/C-17-305. On September 25, 2017, the Commission issued its ORDER DENYING RECONSIDERATION in Docket No. G-011, 002/C-17-305.

In the July 12, 2017 Order, the Commission opened this docket to review and investigate the parameters of inter-gas-utility competition that involves the duplication of existing facilities and the use of promotional incentives and other payments in offering natural gas services.

The Commission further required Xcel to file its Vikings’ Competitive Agreement in its entirety as a public document in this docket, as well as all other existing competitive service agreements, and all future agreements upon execution. Because MERC was a party to the complaint, in Docket No. G-011, 002/C-17-305, the Commission also required MERC to file copies of all of its existing and future competitive agreements in this docket.

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!* find this docket, and add your comments to the discussion.

- *If you wish to include an exhibit, map or other attachment, please send your comments via U.S. Mail.*

Send U.S. Mail to Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul MN 55101. Please include the Commission’s docket number in all communications.

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission’s website - mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (17) and the docket number (499), select *Search*.

Subscribe to receive email notification when new documents are filed in this docket at mn.gov/puc, select *Subscribe*, and follow the prompts.

Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure? Contact Commission staff, Bob Brill, at bob.brill@state.mn.us or 651-201-2242; or Jason Bonnett at jason.bonnett@state.mn.us or 651-201-2235.

Change your mailing preferences: Email docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call 651-201-2204

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