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December 10, 2013

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING AND U.S. MAIL

Hon. Eric L. Lipman
Administrative Law Judge
State of Minnesota, Office of Administrative Hearings
PO Box 64620
St. Paul, MN 55164-0620

Re: *In the Matter of the Route Permit Application for the Hollydale 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Cities of Plymouth and Medina, Hennepin County, Minnesota*
PUC Docket No. E002/TL-11-152
OAH Docket No. 8-2500-22806-2

In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of Need for the Hollydale 115 kV Transmission Line Project in the Cities of Plymouth and Medina
MPUC Docket No. E002, ET2/CN-12-113
OAH Docket No.: 8-2500-23147-2

Dear Judge Lipman:

Enclosed please find Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, and Great River Energy's Petition to Withdraw Pending Certificate of Need and Route Permit Applications filed today through www.edockets.state.mn.us. A copy of this filing is also being served via e-mail or mail upon the persons on the Official Service Lists. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mara Koeller'.

Mara N. Koeller

cc: Service Lists

STATE OF MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE
MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Beverly Jones Heydinger
David Boyd
Nancy Lange
J. Dennis O'Brien
Betsy Wergin

Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
OF NORTHERN STATES POWER
COMPANY, A MINNESOTA
CORPORATION, AND GREAT RIVER
ENERGY, A NOT-FOR-PROFIT
COOPERATIVE, FOR A ROUTE PERMIT
FOR THE HOLLYDALE 115 KV
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT IN THE
CITIES OF PLYMOUTH AND MEDINA,
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

MPUC Docket No. E002/TL-11-152
OAH Docket No. 8-2500-22806-2

MPUC Docket No. E002,ET2/CN-12-113
OAH Docket No. 8-2500-23147-2

**PETITION TO WITHDRAW
PENDING CERTIFICATE OF NEED
AND ROUTE PERMIT APPLICATIONS**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR THE
HOLLYDALE 115 KV TRANSMISSION
LINE PROJECT IN THE CITIES OF
PLYMOUTH AND MEDINA

INTRODUCTION

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, on behalf of itself and its co-applicant Great River Energy, a cooperative corporation, (collectively the Applicants), respectfully submits this Petition to Withdraw the pending Certificate of Need and Route Permit applications for the Hollydale Project in the above-referenced dockets. As these dockets progressed, we received feedback from our customers in the project area and other key stakeholders expressing concern over our preferred route alternative. While we should have foreseen the concerns of our stakeholders, we now appreciate that our preferred route is very problematic. With that said, we believe there remains a need for additional infrastructure that will allow us to continue to reliably serve our customers, but there may be better alternatives to meet that need. Because additional time is needed to develop those alternatives and, more

importantly, to build a consensus around a solution that can be supported by more of our stakeholders, we submit this request to withdraw our initial petitions.

Withdrawal will allow time for the Applicants to work collaboratively with residents and other stakeholders on an infrastructure solution and route for this community. After this public outreach and broader acceptance of a solution is complete, we intend to seek the necessary regulatory approvals, which we believe, at this time, would involve submitting new Certificate of Need and Route Permit applications.

This past year the Hollydale Law, 2013 Minn. Laws Chapter 57 Section 2, which is applicable to our currently pending applications, was passed. While the law, as currently written, would not apply to the new applications, we fully intend to comply with the intention of the law by carrying forward in our new Certificate of Need application all the system alternatives, including distribution alternatives, which were developed during this proceeding. We believe this will allow a robust examination of numerous distribution alternatives and will address the concerns implicated by the Hollydale Law.

We respectfully request that the Administrative Law Judge suspend the procedural schedule and certify this withdrawal petition to the Commission for decision pursuant to Minn. R. 1400.7600. It is appropriate to certify this petition to the Commission because granting the Applicants' withdrawal request will result in termination of these two proceedings. Minn. R. 1400.7600(B).

DISCUSSION

We appreciate the thoughtful and thorough participation and evaluation of alternatives by the Department of Commerce, other parties, landowners, and stakeholders in both the Certificate of Need and Route Permit proceedings which began in mid-2011. Our initial filing included a preferred route for the new 115 kV line along an existing 69 kV transmission line corridor. In the years following that filing, we received comments from landowners and other interested stakeholders indicating their opposition to this route. Most recently, in November 2013, nearly 300 landowners and stakeholders attended public hearings to express their concerns about the project and our preferred route alternative.

In light of the input received to date and our updated load forecasts, we have reevaluated the transmission project submitted in the original applications. Based on that reevaluation, we continue to forecast a need for additional infrastructure to reliably serve our customers in the project area. Furthermore, we have concluded that

our original preferred route is not widely supported; meaning additional analysis and outreach is needed before we can present a more acceptable route alternative.

Withdrawal serves three distinct purposes. First, while developing new applications will take some time, we believe now is the appropriate time to take a step back and to work collaboratively with stakeholders. We appreciate that our withdrawal request may not be the preferred path forward for stakeholders who have already invested significant time and effort in the hearings, meetings, and filings that have already taken place in these dockets. However, we believe that without the time pressure presented in the current proceedings, we will have time to develop a new solution in collaboration with residents and other stakeholders to ensure the overall success of the project and acceptance by the community. Once we develop a more widely accepted solution, we intend to seek the appropriate regulatory approvals.

Second, due to the length of time these dockets have been pending and the numerous options that have been explored, we are concerned that the record may be unclear. Rather than developing and introducing a new solution into this record, we believe starting anew will facilitate review and assessment of the available options, including our preferred solution. As the information contained in the original applications assume a route along the existing 69 kV corridor, a withdrawal of the currently pending applications will promote a full and clear record.

Third, withdrawal of the original applications will also provide the Applicants the opportunity to update relevant information contained in the original applications. For example, since the filing of the Route Permit application in June 2011, many new housing developments have been constructed in the project area. A new application would allow us to analyze the impacts the project will have on these new residential developments. In addition, submission of new applications will allow the Applicants to update the engineering analysis of the transmission and distribution needs in the area based on the most current load data. Recent engineering analysis of the 2013 peak loads demonstrates a need in this area remains and supersedes much of the earlier engineering analysis that has been provided during the two year pendency of this proceeding.

In closing, both Xcel Energy and Great River Energy understand their obligation to provide safe and adequate service and will develop a plan to address the load-serving deficiencies in the Medina and Plymouth areas.

CONCLUSION

Xcel Energy and Great River Energy respectfully request that this Petition to Withdraw be granted and that the Administrative Law Judge issue an 11th Pre-Hearing Order suspending the contested case proceedings and certifying this Petition to the Commission for decision.

Dated: December 10, 2013

Northern States Power Company

Respectfully submitted by:

/s/ Mara Koeller
MARA KOELLER
ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY

IN THE MATTER OF THE ROUTE PERMIT
APPLICATION FOR THE HOLLYDALE 115 kV
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT IN THE CITIES OF
PLYMOUTH AND MEDINA, HENNEPIN COUNTY,
MINNESOTA

PUC DOCKET No. E002/TL-11-152
OAH DOCKET No. 8-2500-22806-2

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR A
CERTIFICATE OF NEED FOR THE HOLLYDALE
115 kV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT IN THE
CITIES OF PLYMOUTH AND MEDINA

PUC DOCKET No. E002, ET2/CN-12-113
OAH DOCKET No.: 8-2500-23147-2

Theresa A. Senart hereby certifies that on the 10th day of December, 2013, she filed a true and correct copy of Northern States Power Company and Great River Energy's **Petition to Withdraw Pending Certificate of Need and Route Permit Applications** by posting the same on www.edockets.state.mn.us in the above-referenced dockets. Said Petition to Withdraw is also served via U.S. Mail or e-mail as designated on the attached Official Service Lists on file with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the above-referenced dockets.

s/Theresa A. Senart
Theresa Senart

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