

**BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY DBA
XCEL ENERGY FOR AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS ELECTRIC RATES
DOCKET EL12-046**

**TESTIMONY & EXHIBITS OF JON THURBER
ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION STAFF
PUBLIC VERSION
NOVEMBER 15, 2012**

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1 **Q. Please state your name and business address for the record.**

2 A. Jon Thurber, Public Utilities Commission, State Capitol Building, 500 East Capitol Ave.,
3 Pierre, South Dakota, 57501.

4
5 **Q. By whom are you employed and in what position?**

6 A. I am a utility analyst for the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission ("Commission").

7
8 **Q. Please describe your education and work experience.**

9 A. I graduated summa cum laude from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point in
10 December of 2006, with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Managerial Accounting,
11 Computer Information Systems, Business Administration, and Mathematics.

12
13 In January of 2007, I started my employment with the State of South Dakota as an
14 auditor for the Department of Legislative Audit. In July of 2008, I joined the Commission
15 as a staff utility analyst. I have attended a number of seminars and workshops on utility
16 related matters during my employment with the Commission. Attached as Staff
17 Exhibit___(JPT-1) is a list of dockets and testimony I have prepared on behalf of
18 Commission Staff ("Staff").

19
20
21

1 **Q. Are you familiar with Northern States Power Company’s (“NSP” or “Company”)**
2 **application for an increase in electric rates in South Dakota, Docket EL12-046?**

3 A. Yes. I have reviewed the Company’s prefiled testimony, exhibits, working papers and
4 responses to data requests as it pertains to the issues that I am addressing.
5

6 **Q. What are your responsibilities in this rate proceeding?**

7 A. I have several responsibilities. First, I will introduce the other Staff witnesses in this
8 proceeding. Second, I will explain Staff’s approach to measuring NSP’s South Dakota
9 electric revenue requirement. Third, I will respond to policy issues raised by Mr. Kramer
10 and Ms. McCarten regarding known and measurable changes and the rate phase-in
11 statutes. Fourth, I have prepared exhibits and will express Staff’s opinion on specific pro
12 forma adjustments. Finally, I will respond to the concerns raised by Shetek Wind Inc.
13 (“Shetek”) regarding the contract that allows Prairie Rose Wind to use certain
14 interconnection rights associated with NSP’s Angus Anson plant.
15

16 **Q. Would you introduce the other Staff witnesses in this proceeding and briefly**
17 **identify the issues that their respective testimonies address?**

18 A. The following Staff witnesses provide testimony in this proceeding:

- 19 • Mr. Basil Copeland
 - 20 ▪ Capital Structure
 - 21 ▪ Return on Equity
 - 22 ▪ Rate of Return
- 23 • Mr. Dave Peterson
 - 24 ▪ Nuclear Plant Decommissioning Costs
 - 25 ▪ Steam Remaining Life - Sherco, Black Dog, Red Wing, and Wilmarth
 - 26 ▪ Other Production Remaining Life – Riverside and Inver Hills
 - 27 ▪ Remaining Life: Minnesota Valley
 - 28 ▪ Remaining Life: Blue Lake, Granite City, and Key City
 - 29 ▪ Docket EL11-019 Depreciation Adjustment
 - 30 ▪ SFAS 106 Pay Go
 - 31 ▪ Net Operating Loss
 - 32 ▪ Corporate Allocations
 - 33 ▪ Pension and Insurance
 - 34 ▪ Class Cost of Service – Spread of the Increase

- 1 ▪ Monthly Customer Service Charge
- 2 • Ms. Brittany Mehlhaff
- 3 ▪ Weather Normalization
- 4 ▪ Fuel Lag
- 5 ▪ Production Tax Credits
- 6 ▪ Margin Sharing
- 7 ▪ Wholesale Billing
- 8 ▪ Weather Normalized Allocator
- 9 ▪ EL11-019 Outcome
- 10 ▪ Transmission Cost Recovery (TCR) Rider Removal
- 11 ▪ Environmental Cost Recovery (ECR) Rider Removal
- 12 ▪ Riverside/Black Dog One-Time Expenses
- 13 ▪ Margin Sharing Lag
- 14 ▪ Rider Amortization
- 15 ▪ Rounding
- 16 ▪ Rate Design
- 17 • Mr. David Jacobson
- 18 ▪ Incentive Compensation
- 19 ▪ Interest on Customer Deposits
- 20 ▪ Union Wage Adjustment
- 21 ▪ Eliminated Positions
- 22 ▪ Cash Working Capital
- 23 • Mr. Patrick Steffensen
- 24 ▪ Vegetation Management
- 25 ▪ Storm Damages
- 26 ▪ Claims and Injury Compensation
- 27 ▪ Docket EL12-046 Rate Case Expense
- 28 ▪ Employee Expense Reduction
- 29 ▪ Aviation Adjustment
- 30 ▪ Private Fuel Storage
- 31 ▪ SO2 Emissions
- 32 • Mr. Matthew Tysdal
- 33 ▪ Advertising
- 34 ▪ Lobbying

- 1 ▪ Economic Development
- 2 ▪ Association Dues
- 3 ▪ Charitable Contributions
- 4 ▪ Economic Development Labor Adjustment
- 5 ▪ Foundation Administration Costs
- 6 ▪ Conservation/DSM Cost Removal
- 7

8 **Q. What revenue requirement issues will you address in testimony?**

9 A. I will address the following pro forma adjustments in this proceeding:

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- Black Dog Combustion Turbine Exhaust Replacement
- Monticello Fire Model Project
- Monticello Appendix R Cable Replacement Project
- Prairie Island ZE Piping Replacement Project
- Prairie Island TN 40 Casks
- Prairie Island Receiving Warehouse
- Prairie Island Fire Model Project
- Prairie Island H Line Protection Replacement Project
- Monticello Extended Power Uprate/Life Cycle Management (EPU/LCM)
- Prairie Island Steam Generator
- Sherco 3 Plant transferred from Held For Future Use
- Sherco 3 Cooling Towers
- Black Dog Write Off Amortization
- Fines
- Lawrence Creek Substation Land Sale
- Interest Synchronization
- Docket EL11-019 Rate Case Expense

1 **SUMMARY OF NSP'S CASE**

2
3 **Q. What is NSP requesting in Docket EL12-046?**

4 A. NSP is requesting a pro forma revenue requirement of approximately \$187,420,000.¹
5 This includes a requested rate of return on common equity of 10.65%.² More
6 importantly, this represents a rate increase of approximately \$19,368,000³ to its South
7 Dakota electric service base rates that were established in Commission Docket EL11-
8 019 in June 2012. This equates to an approximate 11.53% overall increase in test year
9 pro forma revenue.⁴

10
11 **Q. What is NSP's approach to measuring its revenue requirement in this case?**

12 A. Generally speaking, NSP starts with a twelve-month historic test year ending 12/31/11.
13 NSP then adjusts the historic test year with fifty-seven operating income pro forma
14 adjustments and twenty-eight additional rate base pro forma adjustments.

15
16 **Q. What are NSP's pro forma adjustments based on?**

17 A. For the most part NSP's adjustments are based on known and measurable changes
18 however a few adjustments exceed those parameters. They will be discussed
19 individually by various Staff witnesses.

20
21 **SUMMARY OF STAFF'S CASE**

22
23 **Q. What was Staff's approach to measuring NSP's revenue requirement in this case?**

24 A. As in previous rate cases, Staff is measuring NSP's South Dakota electric revenue
25 requirement on a recent historical twelve-month period (test year) basis. Staff's analysis
26 of the South Dakota electric operations reflects a number of adjustments to NSP's
27 revenues, expenses, and investments for that test year. These adjustments are made
28 with the objective of conforming the test year to emulate normal, ongoing conditions, and
29 to reflect cost and operational changes which are known and reasonably measurable.

30

¹ Statement N, page 11, line 22, column South Dakota Retail Electric

² Statement N, page 11, line 4, column Rate

³ Statement N, page 11, line 19, column South Dakota Retail Electric

⁴ Statement N, page 11, line 23, column South Dakota Retail Electric

1 **Q. Has Staff prepared an exhibit which summarizes Staff's positions?**

2 A. Yes. Staff Exhibit__(BAM-1), Schedule 3 lists Staff's positions on the specific issues
3 relating to NSP's South Dakota electric operating income while Staff Exhibit__(BAM-2),
4 Schedule 2 lists Staff's positions on specific issues relating to NSP's South Dakota
5 electric rate base. Staff Exhibit__(BAM-1), Schedule 2 and Staff Exhibit__(BAM-2),
6 Schedule 1 summarize these positions, while Staff Exhibit__(BAM-1), Schedule 1
7 calculates Staff's position on NSP's total revenue deficiency and revenue requirement.

8
9 **Q. Based on analysis performed, has Staff found NSP's request for approximately**
10 **\$19,368,000 of additional revenue to be justified?**

11 A. No. Staff's case indicates that the Company's request exceeds its requirement for
12 additional revenue from South Dakota electric customers. Specifically, Staff determined
13 a rate increase of approximately \$6,359,000⁵ allows the Company to recover its ongoing
14 costs and allows for the opportunity to earn a reasonable and fair return on utility
15 investment. Staff's recommendation includes an allowable rate of return on common
16 equity of 8.75%⁶, and supports the refund of spent nuclear fuel storage proceeds from
17 the Department of Energy as previously ordered by the Commission in Docket EL11-
18 023.

19
20 The precise revenue requirement value of the following adjustments cannot be
21 determined until the Commission makes a final determination on the various issues in
22 this proceeding: Net Operating Loss, Cash Working Capital, Tax Collections Available,
23 Weather Normalized Allocators, and Interest Synchronization. These adjustments will
24 need to be recalculated to reflect Commission approved adjustments to rate base,
25 operating income, and rate of return.

26
27 **POLICY**

28
29 **Q. Referring to Mr. Kramer's direct testimony, page 45, lines 1 through 7, do you**
30 **agree that the Company is permitted by statute to recover revenue requirements**
31 **associated with four projects with 2013 planned in-service dates?**

⁵ Staff Exhibit__(BAM-1), Schedule 1, column b, line 10

⁶ Testimony of Basil L. Copeland Jr. and Staff Exhibit__(BLC-1), Schedule 1

1 A. No. The fact that a plant addition has a planned in-service date within 24 months after
2 the end of the test year does not, in and of itself, justify a rate case adjustment. In
3 response to data request 2-9, the Company clarified that Mr. Kramer was referencing
4 administrative rule 20:10:13:34:
5

6 **20:10:13:44. Analysis of system costs for a 12-month historical test year.** The
7 statement of the cost of service shall contain an analysis of system costs as
8 reflected on the filing utility's books for a test period consisting of 12 months of
9 actual experience ending no earlier than 6 months before the date of filing of the
10 data required by §§ 20:10:13:40 and 20:10:13:43 unless good cause for extension is
11 shown. The analysis shall include the return, taxes, depreciation, and operating
12 expenses and an allocation of such costs to the services rendered. The information
13 submitted with the statement shall show the data itemized in this section for the test
14 period, as reflected on the books of the filing public utility. Proposed adjustments
15 to book costs shall be shown separately and shall be fully supported, including
16 schedules showing their derivation, where appropriate. *However, no adjustments*
17 *shall be permitted unless they are based on changes in facilities, operations, or*
18 *costs which are known with reasonable certainty and measurable with*
19 *reasonable accuracy at the time of the filing and which will become effective*
20 *within 24 months of the last month of the test period used for this section and*
21 *unless expected changes in revenue are also shown for the same period.*
22 *(emphasis added)*
23

24 While the rule allows the Commission to consider adjustments within 24 months of the
25 last month of the test period, no adjustments shall be permitted unless they are based
26 on changes in facilities, operations, or costs which are known with reasonable certainty
27 and measurable with reasonable accuracy (“known and measurable”) and expected
28 changes in revenue are also shown for the same period (“matching principle”). There
29 are other fundamental ratemaking principles not specifically identified in ARSD
30 20:10:13:44 that should also be considered when evaluating a plant adjustment. For
31 example, one regulatory standard to consider is whether the plant is used and useful.
32 Other standard ratemaking principles include reviewing the investment for prudence,
33 reasonableness, and necessity for the rendition of electric service.
34

35 **Q. Please provide further definition of the used and useful principle.**

36 A. Plant is considered used and useful and should be included in rate base if it is currently
37 providing or capable of providing service to customers. The costs for plant that is not
38 actually in service should not be borne by current ratepayers, but instead should be

1 borne by future ratepayers at the time the plant is ultimately dedicated to service since it
2 is then that the ratepayer benefits from the use of the plant.

3
4 **Q. Do you apply the same standard for making an adjustment for a known and**
5 **measurable change related to a capital project that Mr. Kramer described in his**
6 **Direct Testimony beginning on page 37, line 21, through page 38, line 4?**

7 A. No. I would not adjust the test year to include a capital project based on a projected in-
8 service date. Projected in-service dates that post-date the ratemaking analysis are not
9 known with reasonable certainty. There are no assurances that a project will actually be
10 constructed, let alone be completed and placed in service by the projected date. A
11 known change in facilities is a facility that has already been placed in service or will
12 definitely be placed in service at a specific time in the near future. In my opinion, the
13 mere inclusion of a project in a capital budget does not qualify it as a known and
14 measurable change.

15
16 **Q. Are the costs known and measurable for a plant addition that has not been placed**
17 **in service?**

18 A. No. Since the plant addition is not completed and placed in service, we do not know the
19 actual final construction cost of the project. As a result, the Company proposes to adjust
20 the test year using the construction budget for the project. Construction budgets are
21 based upon estimates that are developed using a number of assumptions. These
22 assumptions include historical trends, cost projections, and a significant amount of
23 judgment. Commission Staff does not have adequate time and resources, both financial
24 and informational, that are necessary to critically evaluate all of the assumptions and
25 projections used to develop construction budgets. Even if there was an agreement on
26 the reasonableness of the estimates, the estimates may not materialize as projected and
27 NSP would be either over-collecting or under-collecting through rates by reliance on
28 estimates. Ratepayers are not compensated if forecasts are later proven to be
29 inaccurate and result in overcharges. Forecasting errors, whether intentional or not, are
30 a legitimate concern when using budgets. NSP's use of estimates and projections is too
31 speculative to qualify as a known and measurable change. Budgets may be adequate
32 for planning, but lack sufficient precision for ratemaking.

33

1 Actual construction costs are accurate, reliable, and verifiable. While actual costs need
2 to be evaluated for prudence, reasonableness, and necessity, there is little debate over
3 whether actual costs are known and measurable.
4

5 **Q. Do you have any other concerns about making an adjustment for a projected plant**
6 **addition in 2013?**

7 A. Yes. Plant which is not used and useful by the time final rates go into effect should not
8 be included in rate base. On July 17, 2012, the Commission suspended the operation of
9 the schedule of rates proposed by NSP pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-14 for 180 days after
10 the application filing date of June 29, 2012. Staff anticipates a Commission decision in
11 this docket around January 1, 2013. NSP is proposing to include plant which they do not
12 expect to be placed in service until late in 2013. Customers should not have to pay for
13 facilities on or around January 1, 2013, that will not be serving them until late 2013.
14 Current ratepayers should only bear the cost of facilities that provide them a direct
15 benefit.
16

17 **Q. Does the Commission's past precedent support adjustments to the test year for**
18 **projected plant additions?**

19 A. No. In Docket F-3302, In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Gas Company to
20 Consolidate and Increase Rates for Gas Service based on Test Year Ended December
21 31, 1978, the Commission rejected projected plant adjustments as it found the
22 adjustments were not known and measurable changes (see Staff Exhibit____(JPT-2),
23 pages 1 through 3, for the applicable section of the Order). The Commission made the
24 following findings in rejecting projected plant adjustments:
25

26 The Commission finds that Minnegasco's proposed adjustments include a
27 number of items based on expenses to be incurred in 1979 plant in service. The
28 Commission finds that those adjustments are not known and measurable
29 changes. Further, the Commission finds that Minnegasco's filing in this regard
30 represents a 1979 projected test year. The Commission finds that not only is a
31 projected test year impossible to fully evaluate and scrutinize, but, moreover, a
32 projected test year based upon estimates is in total contravention of the rational
33 and sound ratemaking principle of utilizing a test year adjusted for known and
34 measurable changes. The Commission finds that utilization of an average actual
35 test year adjusted for known and measurable changes avoids the impossible task
36 of evaluating the reasonableness of all of the assumptions, projections and
37 estimates involved in such a test year as we as lessens the possibilities of

1 overcollection or undercollection by Minnegasco during the period the rates in
2 this proceeding will be in effect.

3
4 The Commission further finds that the fundamental ratemaking principle of
5 matching is violated by Minnegasco's proposed adjustments. The Commission
6 finds that Minnegasco's construction budget is an unreliable basis for
7 establishing rates in this proceeding. The flaws of such an approach have been
8 glaringly pointed out in this proceeding.
9

10 In Findings of Fact XXI, General Considerations, in Docket F-3302 (see Staff
11 Exhibit___(JPT-2), pages 4 and 5, for the applicable section of the Order), the
12 Commission described what it has found is the meaning of the terms known and
13 measurable:
14

15 Known and measurable changes do not relate to adjustments that cannot, by any
16 standard or criteria, be said to be known and measurable today or the time of
17 Minnegasco's filing. Known and measurable changes are exactly that. The
18 antithesis of known and measurable changes are adjustments that are based on
19 estimates, projections, or predictions which may be totally arbitrary or only
20 partially arbitrary. Known and measurable changes, on the other hand, are
21 exactly that: known and measurable.
22

23 **Q. Based on your interpretation of known and measurable changes, please describe**
24 **the type of plant adjustments that can be reflected in this docket.**

25 A. Generally, Staff is able to annualize plant placed in service through October 2012, a full
26 nine months after the end of the test year. As time progresses, NSP could offer
27 additional known change adjustments prior to the Commission Order. Per SDCL 49-
28 34A-8.4, NSP has the burden to account for known and measurable changes. A historic
29 test year adjusted for known and measurable changes should make the test year
30 reasonably reflective of conditions at the time new rates become effective.
31

32 **Q. Please refer to Ms. McCarten's direct testimony on pages 19 – 21 regarding the**
33 **phase-in rate plan authorized by SDCL 49-34A-73 through 49-34A-78. Could NSP**
34 **use a rate phase-in plan to recover future capital investments?**

35 A. Yes. Ms. McCarten stated the Company estimates investing approximately \$5.9 billion
36 during the 5 year period of 2012 – 2016, averaging approximately \$1.18 billion per year.
37 Based on NSP's current capital expenditure plan, the rate phase-in plan seems like the
38 appropriate mechanism for cost recovery. Regardless of the Commission's decision in
39 this case, Ms. McCarten also indicated it was likely that the Company will file another

1 rate case in 2013. A rate phase-in plan could alleviate the need to file frequent rate
2 cases during a major capital investment cycle.

3
4 **Q. Please explain how NSP could be allowed cost recovery for projected plant
5 additions even though the changes are not known and measurable.**

6 A. Unlike a traditional application to increase rates, SDCL 49-34A-75 allows for an annual
7 review of rates under the rate phase in plan and rates can be adjusted as necessary:

8
9 49-34A-75. Review of reasonableness of rates under phase in rate plan--
10 Adjustment. At any time prior to one year after the conclusion of a phase in rate
11 plan, the commission, upon its own motion or upon petition of the electric utility,
12 may examine the reasonableness of the utility's rates under the plan, and adjust
13 rates as necessary. Any phase in rate plan is subject to annual review. The
14 electric utility shall file annually an abbreviated cost of service analysis showing
15 that year's revenues, costs and revenue requirements, and a report of the
16 progress of the construction or acquisition of the plant additions showing
17 accumulative construction or acquisition costs for the year and updated cost
18 projections to complete the plant additions.
19

20 Therefore, cost forecasts and projected in-service dates can be reconciled with actual
21 conditions on an annual basis.

22
23 **Q. Do you think it is necessary to deviate from past Commission precedents on its
24 finding of known and measurable changes when NSP has the ability to file for cost
25 recovery of projected plant additions under the rate phase-in plan?**

26 A. No, I do not. The statutory authority already exists for NSP to recover its costs.
27 However, NSP must make the appropriate filing and comply with the appropriate
28 statutes to fairly balance the interests of customers and shareholders.

29
30 **BLACK DOG COMBUSTION TURBINE EXHAUST REPLACEMENT**

31
32 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Black Dog Generating Facility.**

33 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit____(JPT-3), page 3, the Company's response to data request 2-
34 1, the exhaust cylinder on Unit 5 has experienced cracking requiring extended outage
35 time for repairs. According the Company, this problem is a known industry issue for
36 Siemens 501 CTs. Following the manufacturer's recommendation, NSP is replacing the

1 entire exhaust cylinder assembly to avoid failure of the combustion turbine. The project
2 was expected to be in service September 2012.

3
4 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Black Dog Generating Facility
5 adjustment?**

6 A. The replacement of the exhaust cylinder assembly appears needed for the reliable
7 operation of Unit 5. The Company's total project cost was based on estimated costs and
8 an estimated in-service date. The project went into service on August 15, 2012. I
9 recommend accepting the adjustment related to the cylinder replacement to reflect the
10 most recent actual costs. The detail for this adjustment can be found on Staff
11 Exhibit__(JPT-3), page 11.

12
13 **MONTICELLO FIRE MODEL TOOL**

14
15 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Monticello Fire Model Tool.**

16 A. The Monticello Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA) Tool for fire protection was
17 developed to evaluate compliance with regulation NFPA 805 as promulgated by the
18 Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Although NSP ultimately decided against transitioning
19 to NFPA 805, NSP stated that the tool was needed to gain an understanding of the costs
20 and benefits of transitioning to NFPA 805, and was used in the decision to terminate the
21 transition to NFPA 805 for the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant. The Company also
22 indicated that the tool will be used to evaluate issues regarding fire protection
23 compliance in the future. The NRC staff accepted NSP's withdrawal of their intent to
24 adopt NFPA 805 on October 22, 2010.

25
26 **Q. What is your recommendation regarding the Company's adjustment for the
27 Monticello Fire Model Tool?**

28 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit__(JPT-4), page 1, the Company has revised its estimated in-
29 service date from December 2012 to October 2013. As a result, I recommend rejecting
30 the adjustment because the project is not completed at the time of this writing and the
31 change is not known and measurable. The fire model tool is not used and useful, and
32 should not be included in rate base.

1 **MONTICELLO APPENDIX R CABLE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

2
3 **Q. Please describe the Company’s adjustment for the Monticello Appendix R Cable**
4 **Replacement Project.**

5 A. The Monticello Appendix R Cable Replacement Project addresses areas of vulnerability
6 at Monticello for fire induced circuit faults. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has
7 indicated that NSP must complete corrective actions associated with non-compliance by
8 November 2012. The Company indicated that once this modification is completed,
9 Monticello will be able to ensure that Containment Over Pressure is maintained and that
10 the plant can be safely shut down post fire as required by 10 CFR 50 Appendix R. The
11 original scope of the Appendix R project was installed in September 2011, with
12 additional measures necessary to document fire protection requirements expected to be
13 completed by November 2, 2012.

14
15 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Monticello Appendix R Cable**
16 **Replacement Project?**

17 A. The project was necessary to comply with federal regulations. I recommend annualizing
18 the investment based on actual in service costs incurred to date, which would include
19 the original scope of the project installed in September 2011. See Staff Exhibit____(JPT-
20 5), pages 31 – 41, for details of the adjustment. The additional plant expected to be
21 completed by November 2012 has not been placed in service at the time of this writing.
22 The Company may supplement its application when these changes become known and
23 measurable.

24
25 **PRAIRIE ISLAND ZE PIPING REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

26
27 **Q. Please describe the Company’s adjustment for the Prairie Island ZE Piping**
28 **Replacement Project.**

29 A. The Company stated that the Prairie Island ZE Piping Replacement Project is required
30 because there is inadequate cooling to critical equipment in the Auxiliary Building. NSP
31 indicated that the pipe appears to be blocked by river silt, resulting in a significant
32 reduction or a total loss of water flow, damaging the pipe and causing leakage. The
33 Company claims that this project was pursued to ensure proper cooling is provided for

1 worker safety and to prolong the life of plant equipment in the Auxiliary Building. The
2 piping was replaced in December 2011.

3
4 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island ZE Piping
5 Replacement Project?**

6 A. Prairie Island has been operating for approximately 40 years. In order to continue use of
7 the facility for the next 20 years, it is necessary to replace equipment over the life of a
8 plant due to performance degradation. This project seems to restore the plant to its
9 intended operation performance. I recommend accepting the adjustment related to the
10 ZE piping replacement to reflect the most recent actual costs. The detail for this
11 adjustment can be found on Staff Exhibit__(JPT-6), pages 31 - 37.

12
13 **PRAIRIE ISLAND TN 40 CASKS**

14
15 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Prairie Island TN 40 Casks.**

16 A. In order to support the continued operation of Prairie Island, the Company indicated it
17 will need additional on-site used fuel storage capability. The Nuclear Regulatory
18 Commission license for the Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI)
19 authorizes the use of 48 dry casks. There are currently 29 dry casks loaded and sitting
20 on the concrete storage pad in the ISFSI. NSP plans to load 9 additional casks to
21 provide room for used fuel discharged from the reactor during refueling outages. The
22 project had an expected in-service date of August 2012.

23
24 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island TN 40 Casks?**

25 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit__(JPT-7), page 11, the Company's response to data request
26 2-1 (b), the estimated in-service date has been postponed from August 2012 to May
27 2013. In the Company's response to data request 5-3 (a & c), or Staff Exhibit__(JPT-
28 7), page 12, NSP intends to load and place in service 6 of the 9 casks in 2013, with the
29 remaining three casks to be loaded in 2014. As a result, I recommend rejecting the
30 adjustment because the project is not complete at the time of this writing and the change
31 is not known and measurable. The casks are not used and useful, and should not be
32 included in rate base.

1 **PRAIRIE ISLAND RECEIVING WAREHOUSE**

2
3 **Q. Please describe the Company’s adjustment for the Prairie Island Receiving**
4 **Warehouse.**

5 A. NSP plans to construct a new warehouse and receiving facility at Prairie Island.
6 According to the Company, the new facility is needed to free up space for other projects
7 and allow for a more efficient scheduling of security inspections. As noted in Staff
8 Exhibit__(JPT-8), pages 12 and 13, the Company’s response to data request 6-4, the
9 new warehouse was necessary to comply with Nuclear Electrical Insurance Limited
10 requirements and NRC Security Requirements. The project had an expected in-service
11 date of August 2012.

12
13 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island Receiving**
14 **Warehouse?**

15 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit__(JPT-8), page 1, the Company’s response to data request 2-
16 6 (b), the project was placed in service on July 31, 2012. The receiving warehouse
17 appears necessary to comply with insurance and regulatory requirements, and also
18 improves warehousing efficiencies. I recommend accepting the adjustment related to
19 the receiving warehouse to reflect the most recent actual costs. The detail for this
20 adjustment can be found on Staff Exhibit__(JPT-8), pages 15 - 25.

21
22 **PRAIRIE ISLAND FIRE MODEL PROJECT**

23
24 **Q. Please describe the Company’s adjustment for the Prairie Island Fire Model**
25 **Project.**

26 A. Similar to the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Prairie Island was also required to
27 develop a model to evaluate fire protection compliance with regulation NFPA 805. The
28 Company indicated that the Probabilistic Risk Assessment model is used as a tool to
29 identify cost-effective ways to reduce plant risk, and to resolve long standing fire
30 protection issues. NSP also noted that the models for each nuclear plant are unique
31 because the models incorporate plant-specific information such as location of
32 components within each fire compartment, making the models highly dependent on the
33 specific arrangement and geometry of the components and cables within the facility.
34 Unlike for the Monticello plant, NSP decided to implement NFPA 805 for Prairie Island,

1 and the fire model will be used to support the License Amendment Request. The project
2 had an expected in-service date of September 2012.

3
4 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island Fire Model Project?**

5 A. In response to data request 7-9, as shown on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-9), page 12, the
6 Company stated that the project was scheduled to be placed in service in late
7 September 2012. In response to both data request 2-7 and 7-9, the Company has been
8 unable to provide actual costs or confirmation that the model is in service. I recommend
9 rejecting the adjustment because the project is not complete at the time of this writing
10 and the change is not known and measurable. The tool is not used and useful, and
11 should not be included in rate base. The Company may supplement its application
12 when these changes become known and measurable.

13
14 **PRAIRIE ISLAND H LINE PROTECTION REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

15
16 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Prairie Island H Line Protection**
17 **Replacement Project.**

18 A. According to the Company, Foxboro H Line reactor protection equipment failures have
19 caused unplanned Limiting Conditions for Operations and one recent reactor trip. NSP
20 indicated that the reactor trip resulted in the development of a plan for Improvement of
21 the Reactor Protection system in accordance with 10 CFR 50.65 a(1). Under this rule,
22 NSP is required to develop a plan to prevent future reactor trips for the same reason.
23 The Foxboro replacement project is the corrective action plan to remove the Reactor
24 Protection System from a(1) status. The Company noted that Foxboro has stopped
25 manufacturing the equipment and providing support, so refurbishment is not an option
26 due to obsolescence of sub-components and degradation. The project had an expected
27 in-service date of November 2012.

28
29 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island H Line Protection**
30 **Replacement Project?**

31 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit___(JPT-10), page 1, the Company's response to data request
32 2-8 (b), the Prairie Island H Line Protection Replacement Project has been delayed from
33 November 2012 to January 2013. As a result, I recommend rejecting the adjustment
34 because the project is not complete at the time of this writing and the change is not

1 known and measurable. The equipment is not used and useful, and should not be
2 included in rate base.

3
4 **MONTICELLO EXTENDED POWER UPRATE/LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT (EPU/LCM)**

5
6 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Monticello EPU/LCM Project.**

7 A. The Company stated that the adjustment is for the plant additions necessary to operate
8 the Monticello facility for the next 20 years and support increased generation capacity at
9 the unit. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved a life extension of the plant
10 through 2030, and NSP anticipates approval of the license amendment for the extended
11 power uprate in 2013. In the Settlement Stipulation approved in NSP's previous rate
12 case, Docket EL11-019, the Commission allowed cost recovery of the revenue
13 requirements related to 2011 Monticello EPU/LCM plant additions. This adjustment
14 annualizes the previously approved Monticello EPU/LCM plant additions, and requests
15 cost recovery of the plant additions that will be completed during the 2013 refueling
16 outage. Mr. Kramer indicates in testimony that the project has planned in-service dates
17 throughout 2013.

18
19 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Monticello EPU/LCM Project?**

20 A. As noted in Staff Exhibit__(JPT-11), page 13, the Company's response to data request
21 6-6 (g), Attachment A, Revised Work Paper PF 24-8, no major plant additions have been
22 placed in service for this project in 2012. The Company forecasts the next major plant
23 addition to occur in May 2013. I recommend annualizing the plant previously approved
24 in Docket EL11-019 and reflecting actual costs incurred to date in 2012. The plant
25 additions forecasted to be completed in 2013 do not qualify as known and measurable
26 changes. The 2013 forecasted plant additions are not used and useful, and should not
27 be included in rate base. The detail for this adjustment can be found on Staff
28 Exhibit__(JPT-11), pages 10 - 17.

29
30 **PRAIRIE ISLAND STEAM GENERATOR**

31
32 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Prairie Island Steam Generator.**

33 A. As noted in the Company's application, Prairie Island Unit 2's steam generators are the
34 original plant equipment that has been operating for 39 years. According to the Nuclear

1 Project Authorization Form submitted in response to data request 2-11, as shown on
2 Exhibit___(JPT-12), page 5, 71% of the tubes in one of the steam generator and 50% of
3 the tubes in the other generator are defective/degraded. Unit 2's steam generators have
4 more defective/degraded tubes that Unit 1's steam generators did prior to replacement in
5 2004. NSP indicated that the replacement of the steam generators is necessary to keep
6 the plant operating through 2034 and support the extended power uprate. The project
7 has a planned in-service date of November 2013.

8
9 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Prairie Island Steam Generator**
10 **Replacement project?**

11 A. I recommend rejecting the adjustment because the project is not complete at the time of
12 this writing and the change is not known and measurable. The steam generator is not
13 used and useful, and should not be included in rate base. A planned in-service date of
14 November 2013 would also post-date this proceeding as it exceeds the statutory limit of
15 12 months to issue a final decision in this docket and maintain the ability to require a
16 refund of increased rates per SDCL 49-34A-17.

17
18 **SHERCO 3 PLANT TRANSFERRED FROM HELD FOR FUTURE USE**

19
20 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Sherco 3 Plant transferred**
21 **from Held For Future Use plant account.**

22 A. In 2011, the Company replaced turbine sections with a more efficient design that will
23 increase Sherco Unit 3's output by a total of 22 MWs. While ramping the unit up during
24 final testing, vibration levels registered well above normal causing NSP to shut the unit
25 down. The vibrations damaged many components of the generator and turbine, and
26 also caused a fire as a result of oil, hydrogen, and other materials released during the
27 event. Due to the incident, this project is not currently in use and will not be in use until
28 the unit returns to operation. The assets are currently in the Held for Future Use
29 account because the construction of this equipment was completed but not yet in service
30 and operational. NSP anticipates the Sherco 3 coming back online in the first quarter of
31 2013, and this project has a planned in-service date of March 2013.

32
33 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Sherco 3 Plant transferred from**
34 **Held For Future Use plant account?**

1 A. I recommend rejecting the adjustment because the project is not complete at the time of
2 this writing and the change is not known and measurable. Sherco 3 is not currently
3 operational. The project is not used and useful, and should not be included in plant in
4 service.
5

6 **SHERCO 3 COOLING TOWERS**
7

8 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Sherco 3 Cooling Tower.**

9 A. According to the Company, the existing wooden cooling tower is at the end of life and
10 needs to be replaced. In response to data request 2-13, as shown on Staff
11 Exhibit___(JPT-13), page 2, NSP indicated that the long outage expected for the repair
12 of Unit 3 has had a severe impact on the expected life of the existing wood structure.
13 The wood has now dried out and is weakened due to that fact and general wear over the
14 life of the tower. The Company proposes to replace the wood cooling tower with a
15 fiberglass cooling tower to restore the original design capability and eliminate the risk of
16 collapse. As noted on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-13), page 4, in the Company's response to
17 data request 8-1, the expected in-service date of the project has been moved back from
18 February 2013 to March 2013 to coincide with the expected return of Sherco 3.
19

20 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Sherco 3 Cooling Tower?**

21 A. I recommend rejecting the adjustment because the project is not complete at the time of
22 this writing and the change is not known and measurable. The cooling towers are not
23 used and useful, and should not be included in rate base.
24

25 **BLACK DOG WRITE OFF AMORTIZATION**
26

27 **Q. Please describe the Company's adjustment for the Black Dog Write Off
28 Amortization.**

29 A. In its 2010 Integrated Resource Plan, the Company proposed to replace the remaining
30 270 megawatts of coal-fired generating capacity at its Black Dog Generating Plant with
31 680 megawatts of natural gas generation. The Black Dog plant has been generating
32 power since 1952, and this proposed project was similar to NSP repowering its High
33 Bridge and Riverside plants from coal to natural gas. According to Mr. Kramer, slow
34 economic growth and the loss of municipal wholesale customers reduced NSP's

1 projection of customers' electricity demand, leading the Company to determine the Black
2 Dog Repowering project was no longer needed and the project would be evaluated in
3 future resource plan filings. The Company's adjustment is to recover its project
4 development costs, which it has determined have no future value, over a two year
5 period.
6

7 **Q. What is your recommendation in regard to the Black Dog Write Off Amortization?**

8 A. While I have not reviewed the Company's 2010 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) to
9 determine the reasonableness of its load forecast and whether the Black Dog
10 Repowering project was a prudent resource option, the Company should obtain
11 adequate resources to meet the levels of projected customer demand and ensure
12 reliable electric service to customers. Based on its August 2010 IRP, the Company
13 indicated it had a capacity need of 500 MW by 2016. In December 2011, the Company
14 updated its peak load forecast and the capacity need was almost 600 MW lower,
15 indicating the economic recession and loss of wholesale customers as the primary
16 drivers. Staff Exhibit__(JPT-14), pages 4 and 5, provides a comparison of the August
17 2010 and December 2011 demand and energy forecast. With the new forecast, it
18 appears unanticipated changes to NSP's long-term customer demand impacted
19 resource adequacy requirements. As a result, postponing the project until it is needed to
20 meet demand seems reasonable. Staff Exhibit__(JPT-14), page 3, itemizes the Black
21 Dog costs incurred as of December 31, 2011, and separates the total costs (\$2.9 million)
22 between those costs determined to have future value if the project is resurrected (\$1.5
23 million), reimbursable costs (\$0.4 million) and the \$891,043 of costs determined to have
24 no future value. I accept the Company's adjustment to write-off the preconstruction
25 costs having no future value by amortizing the \$891,043 over a two-year period with no
26 return on the unamortized balance. I also accept the Company's proposal to refund any
27 over-collections should the rates established in this case be in effect longer than the two-
28 year amortization period.
29

30 **FINES**

31
32 **Q. Please explain the adjustment regarding fines found on Exhibit__(BAM-1),**
33 **Schedule 3, column (be).**

1 A. In response to data request 1-4, the Company indicated that it paid fines related to four
2 incidents of small fish losses at the Prairie Island, Monticello, King, and Black Dog
3 Generating Plants during 2011. NSP must comply with all applicable laws, and fines
4 that result from imprudent management should not be borne by ratepayers. Staff
5 Exhibit___(JPT-15) describes the fines in further details.
6

7 **LAWRENCE CREEK SUBSTATION LAND SALE**
8

9 **Q. Please explain the adjustment regarding the Lawrence Creek Substation Land**
10 **Sale found on Exhibit__(BAM-2), Schedule 2, column (ab).**

11 A. According the response to data request 4-7, the Company purchased land for the
12 construction of the Lawrence Creek Substation that was ultimately not needed. Before
13 the substation was built, NSP agreed to sell any post-construction excess property to the
14 City of Taylor Falls, MN, at the same price per acre that was paid. The Company sold
15 the property to the City in February 2012. There was a loss on this transaction as a
16 result of closing cost associated with the transaction, but the loss was not included in the
17 test year. This asset was improperly included in the test year as the land is no longer
18 used to provide service to NSP customers. The Company agrees to remove the
19 revenue requirements associated with the Lawrence Creek Substation Land per
20 response to data request 1-8, as shown on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-16).
21

22 **INTEREST SYNCHRONIZATION**
23

24 **Q. Has the Company proposed an adjustment for interest synchronization?**

25 A. Yes. The Company calculates the impact of debt synchronization for each adjustment
26 as shown on Exhibit__(TEK-1), Schedule 6b, line 37.
27

28 **Q. Please explain what the adjustment accomplishes.**

29 A. Interest synchronization is an iterative process to synchronize the tax deduction for
30 interest on debt with the adjusted rate base and weighted cost of long-term debt.
31

32 **Q. What are you proposing in regard to this adjustment?**

33 A. Instead of calculating the impact of debt synchronization on each adjustment, my
34 adjustment uses Staff's historic test year rate base as adjusted for known and

1 measurable changes and Staff Witness Copeland's recommendation for NSP's weighted
2 cost of long-term debt. Although NSP's method for calculating the adjustment is
3 different, the end result should be the same. The details for this adjustment can be
4 found on Staff Exhibit__(JPT-17).

5
6 **Q. Do you anticipate any changes to the interest synchronization calculation during**
7 **the course of the rate case proceeding?**

8 A. Yes. Interest synchronization will need to be recalculated to reflect Commission
9 approved financial adjustments that impact rate base and the weighted cost of long-term
10 debt. Staff will incorporate the impacts of any adjustments to interest synchronization in
11 its compliance filing in this proceeding.

12
13 **DOCKET EL11-019 RATE CASE EXPENSE**

14
15 **Q. Please explain the Company's adjustment for rate case expenses associated with**
16 **Docket EL11-019.**

17 A. In Docket EL11-019, the Commission ordered the following in regard to rate case
18 expense (Section III.8.a. of the Settlement Stipulation):

19
20 The Parties agree that the actual rate case costs incurred (excluding accruals)
21 through March 31, 2012, is \$178,000 and is included in the Rate Case Expense
22 identified above. The Parties also agree that rate case expenses incurred after
23 March 31, 2012, through the conclusion of this proceeding, will be deferred on
24 the Company's balance sheet and reviewed for recovery in the Company's next
25 general rate filing in South Dakota.

26
27 In this proceeding, the Company is requesting to recover \$210,000 in rate case
28 expenses incurred after March 31, 2012, associated with Docket EL11-019. The
29 Company is requesting to amortize these estimated projected expenses over 3 years,
30 and include the average unamortized balance as a component of rate base.

31
32 **Q. What did the Company project as the total rate case expense from Docket EL11-**
33 **019?**

34 A. When the rate case costs incurred prior to March 31, 2012, are combined with the
35 estimated rate case costs incurred after March 31, 2012, the total requested recovery is

1 \$388,241. The calculation and the breakdown of specific costs by category are shown
2 on Staff Exhibit____(JPT-19), page 1, column g.

3
4 **Q. Did NSP provide the actual rate case costs incurred after March 31, 2012?**

5 A. Yes. In response to data request 4-2, Attachment A, as shown on Staff Exhibit____(JPT-
6 19), page 27, the Company indicated it incurred \$383,554 in rate case costs after March
7 31, 2012. When combined with the costs incurred prior to March 31, 2012, the total rate
8 case costs associated with Docket EL11-019 was \$561,795. NSP exceeded its revised
9 rate case expense budget of \$388,241 by \$173,554 or 47%. Staff Exhibit____(JPT-19),
10 page 1, columns f through g, compare the actual with estimated rate case costs.

11
12 **Q. In what specific rate case cost categories did NSP exceed its budget?**

13 A. NSP exceeded its budget for outside legal fees and ROE consulting costs. NSP
14 incurred \$229,607 in outside legal fees, exceeding its revised budget of \$133,247 by
15 \$96,360 or 72%. The Company also incurred \$175,834 in ROE consulting costs,
16 exceeding its revised budget of \$95,035 by \$80,799 or 85%.

17
18 **Q. What explanation did the Company provide for exceeding the legal and consulting
19 budget?**

20 A. In response to an informal discovery request, Company Witness Ms. Debra Paulson,
21 Manager – Rate Cases, provided a line item breakout of costs into the four categories
22 (Legal, Consulting, Administrative, and Commission Fees) and the following explanation
23 to Staff Witness Patrick Steffensen:

24
25 “Taken together costs before and after 3/31/12 are higher than the original
26 \$388,500 of estimated rate case expenses by approximately \$173k due in large
27 part to the additional consulting and legal expenses of a contested case
28 proceeding before the Commission.”
29

30 Ms. Paulson’s complete response and the breakout of costs is shown on Staff
31 Exhibit____(JPT-19), pages 28-29.

1 **Q. Did the detailed breakout of costs provided by the Company explain the cost**
2 **overruns?**

3 A. The detailed breakout of costs provided adequate support to justify cost recovery of the
4 actual administrative costs. In regards to legal and consulting fees, the breakout
5 appeared to identify the checks written to Moss & Barnett, and Concentric Energy
6 Advisors (“Concentric”). The breakout did not contain any information regarding the
7 work performed or describe any variances from projections. As a result, the information
8 provided did not support the reasonableness of the expenses.

9

10 **Q. Did Staff ask any additional discovery to determine the reasonableness of legal**
11 **fees and ROE consultant costs?**

12 A. Yes. Staff asked the Company to reconcile the difference between the budgeted and
13 actual expenses for legal and consulting costs. Ms. Paulson responded to the Mr.
14 Steffensen’s question with the following:

15

16 “The EL11-019 was held June 13 & 14, however development of workpapers
17 was done prior to the time of hearings in order to file the current case on June
18 30, 2012. Regardless of that timing, as with the court reporter fees for work at
19 that hearing being billed/paid/posted in August, we did not have more complete
20 knowledge of the legal and consulting fees than what was remaining in the prior
21 estimate.”

22

23 While I do not disagree that complete knowledge is obtained after the proceeding has
24 concluded, NSP needs to justify the reasonableness and prudence of the expenses it
25 incurs. The Company has not performed the reconciliation that Staff requested. NSP
26 has not provided enough information to explain the significant cost overruns in legal and
27 consulting costs. Ms. Paulson’s complete response is provided on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-
28 19), pages 30 - 31.

29

30 **Q. Did Staff request to review the legal and consulting invoices?**

31 A. Yes. The Company provided Staff with four Concentric invoices. The invoices
32 contained the hours worked by each Concentric employee during the month and each
33 employee’s hourly rate. There were also expense lines for reimbursable expenses
34 (travel, meals, and entertainment) and unit billings (conference calls, copies) for each
35 month. While this information is useful in calculating the bill, it provides little insight into
36 the work actually performed by the employees during the month. The Company

1 requested confidential treatment of the invoices, and they are shown on Staff
2 Exhibit___(JPT-19), pages 32 – 35.

3
4 Staff also requested to review Moss and Barnett invoices. In response to this request,
5 Ms. Paulson provided the following, as documented on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-19), page
6 30:

7
8 “Regarding the legal invoice, the \$114,941.36 represents costs relating to the
9 time spent on the 2011 rate case for research, drafting pleadings, and
10 preparation for and attendance at the June hearings. The invoices themselves
11 are subject to attorney-client privilege and include information related to litigation
12 strategy and presentation of our case and are not subject to discovery.”
13

14 **Q. Please explain why the cost overruns cannot be justified by the additional
15 consulting and legal expenses of a contested hearing.**

16 A. Staff does not dispute that Docket EL11-019 was a contested case on two issues, cost
17 of capital and cost recovery of the Nobles wind plant. However, Staff and the Company
18 were able to resolve all other issues. As a result, I expected rate case costs to be
19 significantly below original projections, as one of the primary reasons Staff settles a case
20 is to save ratepayers litigation costs. Yet, the Company still exceeded its legal and
21 consulting budgets by substantial amounts. The fact that Docket EL11-019 was a
22 contested hearing on two issues does not justify an unlimited budget to process the
23 case. When Staff inquires about variances from budgets and the Company cannot
24 provide any detailed information to explain the differences, Staff becomes increasingly
25 concerned regarding the Company’s cost controls and its oversight of outside
26 consultants.

27
28 **Q. Were any petitions to intervene granted in Docket EL11-019?**

29 A. No petitions to intervene were filed. Intervenors typically engage in discovery, write
30 testimony, and file pleadings, causing the applicant to perform additional work when
31 compared to a proceeding with just Staff and the applicant. Intervenors were not a
32 factor in the rate case expense in this proceeding.

33
34 **Q. How many Staff discovery questions were related to cost of capital issues?**

35 A. Three. Staff Exhibit___(JPT-19), page 36 shows data request 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5 issued
36 in the proceeding. I believe Staff engaged in limited discovery on cost of capital.

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Q. What did Staff pay its cost of capital witness, Mr. Basil Copeland, for his consulting services in Docket EL11-019?

A. The total bill for Mr. Copeland's service in Docket EL11-019 was \$21,840. Mr. Copeland spent a total of 136.5 hours reviewing and analyzing NSP's filings, preparing data requests necessary to complete analyses, preparing and presenting testimony and exhibits, and responding at the hearing. The hourly rate for his service was \$160 per hour. When comparing the total ROE consulting bill, NSP spent over *eight* times the amount of Staff for its witness ($\$175,834 / \$21,840 = 8.05$). Concentric described its hours spent, hourly rate, and fee for testimony in detail in its contract and confidential invoices on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-19), pages 8, 19, and 32 - 35.

Q. Do you have any questions regarding the Concentric invoices?

A. Yes. The invoice for professional services from April 1, 2012, to April 30, 2012, included hours for [confidential begins] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [confidential ends].

Q. What is the Company estimating for legal and cost of capital consulting costs in the current case?

A. According to work paper PF 13-2, the Company's projected legal and cost of capital consulting costs were \$90,000 and \$175,000, respectively. If the actual costs incurred in Docket EL11-019 were reasonable and prudent, one would assume that NSP would use those costs as a basis for developing its estimate in the current case. However, NSP did not, and they have not revised its estimate for these two cost categories through discovery.

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Q. What is your recommendation regarding rate case expense incurred after March 31, 2012, from Docket EL11-019?

A. I accept the Company's actual administrative costs incurred after March 31, 2012, and agree that NSP was assessed a fee of \$125,000 by the Commission for actual costs incurred in processing the case.

I do not believe the Company has supported its request for actual legal and cost of capital consulting costs. Staff has issued data requests to develop an understanding of the costs incurred, but NSP's responses have not provided sufficient justification for the expenses. The Company has not explained why the level of expense it is requesting is reasonable for cost recovery or why it exceeded its budget by a substantial amount. The Company may supplement its application during this proceeding.

Based on the information provided, using both estimates and actual costs incurred, I recommend accepting the legal and cost of capital consulting estimates for costs incurred after March 31, 2012, on work paper PF 13-2 of \$80,000 and \$50,000, respectively. Shareholders should be responsible for costs that exceed budgets that have not been justified.

I accept the Company's adjustment to include one-half of the Commission approved unamortized rate case expense as a component of rate base. My recommendations have been incorporated by Staff Witness Patrick Steffensen on Staff Exhibit___(PJS-1), Schedule 1.

Q. What is your position on the amortization period?

A. While the Company's proposal of three years is reasonable in most cases, NSP's recent rate case history and capital investment forecast suggests a shorter amortization is necessary to collect the costs for ratepayers over the time rates are in effect. The Company has filed three rate cases over the past four years, indicating that rates have been revised about every one and a half years. The amortization periods established in the last two rate cases, Dockets EL09-009 and EL11-019, were five and three years, respectively. As a result, rates established in this proceeding will most likely include the costs associated with processing three rate cases: Docket EL09-009, Docket EL11-019,

1 and the current proceeding. In addition to past history, Ms. McCarten indicated it was
2 likely that the Company will file another rate case in 2013. I would recommend a two
3 year amortization period for rate case expense to reflect these considerations. A two
4 year amortization period is the same period of time remaining on the rate case expense
5 tracking mechanism established in Section III.8.a. of the Settlement Stipulation from
6 Docket EL11-019. To protect both ratepayers and the Company in the event that two
7 years is an inaccurate estimate, I would further recommend that the rate case costs
8 incurred after March 31, 2012, from Docket EL11-019 be included in the previously
9 established tracking mechanism. The tracking mechanism ensures the Company
10 neither over recovers nor under recovers these costs.

11 12 **NET-ZERO INTERCONNECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

13
14 **Q. Please explain Shetek's concerns regarding the contract that allows Prairie Rose
15 Wind to use certain interconnection rights associated with NSP's Angus Anson
16 plant.**

17 A. According to Shetek's Petition to Intervene, Xcel transferred certain generation rights
18 with respect to the Angus Anson plant to Prairie Rose Wind, LLC, the owner of a 200MW
19 wind project located in Minnesota. The Prairie Rose Wind interconnection rights are
20 generically referred to as a "net zero" arrangement and were made pursuant to MISO
21 interconnection policies. On page 2 of Shetek's Petition to Intervene, Shetek stated the
22 following concerns regarding the ratemaking treatment of the net zero interconnection
23 arrangement:

24
25 "From a ratemaking perspective, now that Xcel has disposed of its generation
26 interconnection rights, the expenses and capital costs related to the Angus
27 Anson plant should be removed from the rate base to the extent of the
28 disposition. Moreover, the value of the rights disposed of should be reflected as
29 income in the rate base accruing to the benefit of ratepayers. Failure to do so
30 will result in ratepayers paying double for the same generation capacity."
31

32 **Q. Did NSP respond to Shetek's ratemaking concerns regarding the net zero
33 interconnection arrangement in its answer to Shetek's Petition to Intervene?**

34 A. No. On page 4 of the Answer of Northern States Power Company to Petition to
35 Intervene by Shetek Wind Inc., NSP indicated that Staff could address Shetek's
36 concerns:

1
2 "If there is any question regarding the Prairie Rose Wind interconnection
3 arrangement at Angus Anson and the potential impact on the Company's costs
4 or rates, the Commission Staff can adequately investigate and address the
5 issue."
6

7 **Q. Please describe your review of the Prairie Rose Wind interconnection**
8 **arrangement at Angus Anson.**

9 A. I issued seven interrogatories, data requests 11-1 through 11-7, to obtain an
10 understanding of the interconnection arrangement and determine if any adjustments
11 should be made to test year revenues, expenses, and investments to reflect the
12 interconnection agreement. Staff Exhibit___(JPT-18) contains the Company's
13 responses to those interrogatories.
14

15 **Q. Please provide your recommendation regarding the ratemaking treatment of the**
16 **Prairie Rose Wind interconnection arrangement at Angus Anson.**

17 A. According to the Company's response to data request 11-1 (a), as shown Staff
18 Exhibit___(JPT-18), page 2, all rights of Prairie Rose Wind to utilize the interconnection
19 capacity of the Angus Anson plant are subordinated to the rights of the Anson Plant to
20 utilize the existing interconnection capacity. Since the Prairie Rose Wind
21 interconnection rights are subordinate to the rights of Angus Anson, NSP has not
22 disposed of its Angus Anson generation interconnection rights. In response to data
23 request 11-2, as shown on Staff Exhibit___(JPT-18), page 7, NSP indicated that the
24 interconnection rights with MISO allow the Angus Anson plant to generate and inject into
25 the transmission grid up to 392 MW of output during all hours of the year. Based on the
26 information provided, the Angus Anson plant appears used and useful in serving NSP
27 customers on the system. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to remove investments
28 and expenses associated with the Angus Anson plant. As shown on Staff
29 Exhibit___(JPT-18), page 2, in response to data request 11-1 (c), NSP stated that it
30 does not receive any income from the Prairie Rose facility that is offsetting any of the
31 revenue requirements. As a result, no adjustment should be made to test year
32 revenues.
33

34 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

35 A. Yes.