

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF  
NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY  
FOR APPROVAL OF MISCELLANEOUS  
TARIFF MODIFICATION TO GENERAL  
RULES AND REGULATIONS

DOCKET No. EL21-\_\_\_\_

**PETITION**

**INTRODUCTION**

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission this Petition for approval of text modification to the Company's General Rules and Regulations tariff language<sup>1</sup>. Our proposed miscellaneous text change will allow the Company to offer customers additional signature or document execution options on customer form documents. Specifically, we are proposing this change to allow customers to sign tariffed forms using electronic signatures—which will have the same effect as original signatures—while still permitting customers to sign and execute documents under the existing options. Modified tariffs are presented in redline and final formats, as shown in Attachment A.

Over time, the Company has expanded our online services for customers in an incremental way. Our customer strategy aims to transform the customer experience by implementing capabilities, technologies, and program management strategies to enable best-in-class customer experiences that customers expect. One area where we are working to improve the customer experience is providing customers with additional, paperless, document execution options. For example, with the proposed change to the General Rules and Regulations, the Company's Statement of Work<sup>2</sup> could be executed without needing to print, manually sign, scan and return documents to the Company. We believe this will both improve our customer experience and reduce paper waste and, therefore, request the Commission approve our requested change.

Specifically, we request that the Commission:

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<sup>1</sup> See our *Electric Utility Rate Book, Section No. 6, Sheet 3 – General Rules and Regulations*

<sup>2</sup> See our *Electric Utility Rate Book, Section No. 8, Sheet 25*

- Approve the proposed tariff modification necessary to enhance the customer experience by enabling additional signature and document execution options including click-and-agree document execution and digital signatures on customer forms.

The following attachments are included with this Petition in clean and redline formats:

- Attachment A: Legislative and Non-Legislative Tariff Sheets

The following information is provided in accordance with South Dakota Administrative Rule 20:10:13:26, the tariff schedule change notification requirements.

**(1) Name and Address of the Public Utility**

Northern States Power Company  
500 West Russell Street  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104  
(605) 339-8350

**(2) Section and Sheet Number of Tariff Schedule**

Xcel Energy proposes to revise the following sheets in Section 6 of the Northern States Power Company South Dakota Electric Rate Book.

Sheet No. 3, Revision 2

**II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF FILING**

**A. Background**

The Company is actively engaged in a variety of efforts to improve our customers' experience. One such improvement we are pursuing is allowing electronic signatures for Xcel Energy customer forms and other customer agreements. This change will make it easier to request services from the Company by providing customers with ability to execute customer forms without printing and manually signing them.

Currently, the process for customers signing tariffed forms involves several steps. For example, if a customer was completing a Statement of Work, the customers must receive an executable file of the customer form from the Company, print a physical

copy of the form, manually sign that form, and finally transmit the form to the Company by fax, mail or email. The difficulty associated with these steps is aggravated for customers without easy access to printers and scanners, such as customer representatives who work in the field.

With Commission approval of our proposed tariff text modification the Company intends to take steps to make this process easier for customers by providing additional document execution and signature options: 1) Click-and-agree execution allowing customer to check a box indicating that they understand, acknowledge, and agree to the terms on the customer form, and 2) Digital signature on document using digital signature software. These additional signature and execution options meet the needs of customers, and address customer feedback we have received requesting that we simplify our cumbersome signature process.

These updated processes will align the Company with current business practices, which have widely incorporated these methods of document execution across a variety of industries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals and businesses needed to adapt to new digital practices and access as a way of doing business, and it is our view that by these proposed tariff text modifications will improve the customer experience.

## **B. Description of the Proposed Tariff Changes**

The specific change we are proposing to our General Rules and Regulations is to Section 1 General Service Rules, Subsection 1.1 Application for Service in our Electric Utility Rate Book at Section 6, Sheet No. 3. The language we request the Commission approve is underlined and bolded for emphasis below:

### **1.1 APPLICATION FOR SERVICE**

A party desiring gas service must make application to the Company before commencing the use of the Company's service. The Company reserves the right to require a signed application or written contract for service to be furnished. All applications and contracts for service must be made in the legal name of the party desiring the service. The Company may refuse an applicant or terminate service to a customer who fails or refuses to furnish reasonable information requested by the Company for the establishment of a service account. Any person who uses gas service in the absence of application or contract shall be subject to the Company's rates, rules, and regulations and shall be responsible for payment of all service used. **Consistent with the South Dakota Uniform Electronic Transactions Act codified in Chapter 53-12 of**

**the South Dakota Codified Laws, and any successor thereto, both click-and-agree and digital signatures may be allowed on customer forms. However, the Company may still insist on original hard copy signatures. Where electronic signatures are provided, they shall have the same effect as original signatures. Electronically stored versions of such documents shall have the same validity as the original.**

A redlined version of these tariff modifications is included in Attachment A with this Petition. A Clean version of the modifications are included in Attachment A.

### **C. Utility Rate Book Changes**

The new tariff modifications will be made to the following pages from our electric and natural gas rate books:

- *Electric Utility Rate Book, Section No. 6, Sheet 3 – General Rules and Regulations*

### **COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING FILING**

#### **Utility Employee Responsible for Filing**

Steve T. Kolbeck  
Principal Manager  
Xcel Energy Services Inc.  
500 W Russell Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
(605) 339-8350

We request that all communications regarding this proceeding, including data requests, pleadings, documents and other filings also be directed to:

Steve T. Kolbeck  
Principal Manager  
Xcel Energy Services Inc.  
500 W Russell Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
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Lynnette Sweet  
Regulatory Administrator  
Xcel Energy Services Inc.  
414 Nicollet Mall, 401 - 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
[Regulatory.Records@xcelenergy.com](mailto:Regulatory.Records@xcelenergy.com)

## **CONCLUSION**

Xcel Energy respectfully requests that the Commission approve the proposed tariff text modification necessary to implement the customer option for electronic customer signatures.

Dated: November 22, 2021

Northern States Power Company