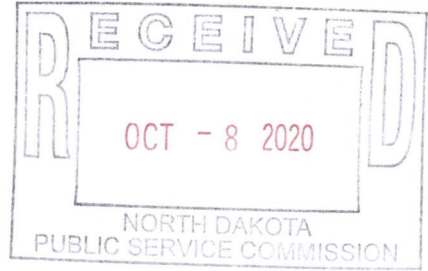




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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October 6, 2020

Darrell Nitschke
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 East Boulevard, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Re: 2020 Report Regarding Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan
Case No. PU-09-670

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

With this letter, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. submits for filing its 2020 Report Regarding Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan for PU-09-670 – 345 kV Transmission Line – Center to Grand Forks. Please find 10 copies of the 2020 Report. Additionally, I have enclosed an Affidavit of Service.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and do not hesitate to contact me should you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Samuel H. Schmitz
Staff Attorney
Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.
Phone: (701) 795-4275
sschmitz@minnkota.com

Enclosures

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
PU-09-670

REPORT REGARDING TREE/SHRUB REPLACEMENT PLAN:
SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED 2013
SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED 2014
SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED 2015
SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED 2016
SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED 2017
NO TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2018
NO TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2019
NO TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2020

The Public Service Commission of North Dakota (the Commission) approved Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.'s (Minnkota) Tree and Shrub Replacement Plan for the 345 kV Transmission Line – Center to Grand Forks by Motion dated May 28, 2014. The approved plan provided that Minnkota will replace each tree/shrub removed for the Center to Grand Forks Transmission Line project (the Project) to be mitigated on a 2-for-1 basis. In the approved Replacement Plan, Minnkota indicated the total trees/shrubs to be replaced is 58,454 with at least 75% surviving for three years after the planting. As discussed in the 2017 Report, the weather during the summer of 2017 resulted in a higher than expected loss of trees which resulted in Minnkota having more trees planted and has now planted a total of 72,150 trees/shrubs, as shown on the Attached Exhibit 1. As of this filing, 49,603 trees/shrubs have survived, which is 84.86 percent of Minnkota's obligation in its Replacement Plan.

The approved plan provided that planted trees/shrubs will be inspected once each year for three years to determine the survival rate of the trees/shrubs and to determine whether additional plantings of trees/shrubs are necessary based on the survival rate. Minnkota is to submit a report regarding the survival rate of the trees/shrubs. This is the seventh and final report Minnkota is submitting to the Commission for this Project which includes a summary of all trees that were

planted for this project, including the first plantings in 2013 through the last plantings in 2017. Minnkota hereby submits this 2020 Report Regarding Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan, which is the final report per the approved plan.

1. TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2013 (Completed 2017)

As discussed in earlier reports, Minnkota had the opportunity to plant 1000 trees/shrubs in Burleigh County prior to the commissioning of the power line. The planting was completed in conjunction with Burleigh County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These trees were inspected in October 2017 with a survival rate at 95%. 2017 was the final inspection and report for the trees planted in 2013.

2. TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2014 (Completed 2017)

As discussed in the 2015 report (Docket #362), Minnkota planted 328 trees during the 2014 planting season. In 2017, Minnkota submitted that these trees/shrubs were inspected in October 2017 with an 89% survival rate. 2017 was the third and final inspection and report for the trees planted in 2014.

3. TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2015 (Completed 2018)

As discussed in the 2015 report (Docket #362), Minnkota had planted a total of 34,042 trees/shrubs in impacted counties along the transmission line during the 2015 planting season. In 2018, Minnkota submitted that these trees/shrubs were inspected in October 2018 with a 67.1% survival rate. 2018 was the third and final inspection and report for the trees planted in 2015.

4. TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2016 (Completed 2019)

As discussed in the 2016 report (Docket #363), Minnkota had planted a total of 22,691 trees in impacted counties along the transmission line during the 2016 planting season. In 2019, Minnkota submitted that these trees/shrubs were inspected in October 2019 with a 68.9% survival

rate. 2019 was the third and final inspection and report for the trees planted in 2016.

5. SURVIVAL RATE, OCT. 2020, TREES/SHRUBS PLANTED IN 2017 (THIRD AND FINAL INSPECTION)

In 2017, Minnkota had planted a total of 14,089 trees in impacted counties along the transmission line. All of the trees/shrubs planted in 2017 were planted with cooperation of the landowners and the Natural Resource Conservation offices in the respective counties. Of the 14,089 trees/shrubs planted in 2017, 10,936 have survived through October 2020. This is a 77.62% survival rate. This is the third and final inspection and report for the trees planted in 2017.

6. NO TREES/SHRUBS WERE PLANTED IN 2018

No trees were planted in 2018. As indicated above, Minnkota has planted a total of 72,150 trees/shrubs since 2013. In the approved Replacement Plan, Minnkota indicated the total trees/shrubs to be replaced is 58,454 with at least 75% surviving for three years after the planting. As of this report, 49,603 trees/shrubs have survived giving a total trees/shrubs to be replaced survivability rate of 84.86%. This is the final inspection and report Minnkota will conduct and submit on the survival rate per the approved Plan.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. respectfully asks the Public Service Commission to accept this 2020 Final Report as to:

- 1. The survival rate in October 2019 of trees/shrubs planted in 2013;**
- 2. The survival rate in October 2019 of trees/shrubs planted in 2014;**
- 3. The survival rate in October 2019 of trees/shrubs planted in 2015;**
- 4. The survival rate in October 2019 of trees/shrubs planted in 2016; and,**
- 5. The survival rate in October 2019 of trees/shrubs planted in 2017.**

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DATED this 5th day of October, 2020.

MINNKOTA POWER COOPERATIVE, INC.



Brian Hoffar

Property and Right-of-Way Manager

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.

5301 32nd Avenue S

Grand Forks, ND 58201

Exhibit 1

Center to Grand Forks – 345 kV Transmission Line

Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan: Plantings and Inspections

PSC Docket PU-09-670

Planting Year	Number of Trees/shrubs Planted	2015 Inspection (% Survival)	2016 Inspection (% Survival)	2017 Inspection (% Survival)	2018 Inspection (% Survival)	2019 Inspection (% Survival)	2020 Inspection (% Survival)	Final Inspection Numbers
2013 Planting	1000	95%	95%	95%				950
2014 Planting	328	90%	90%	89%				291
2015 Planting	34,042		75.7%	67%	67.1%			22,852
2016 Planting	22,691			70%	70.8%	68.9%		15,638
2017 Planting	14,010				77.6%	69.0%	77.62%	10,936
2018 Planting	0							
Total Planted	72,150							

Report Filed with PSC	Filed	Docket Item
2015 Inspection	October 1, 2015	362
2016 Inspection	September 28, 2016	363
2017 Inspection	October 20, 2017	364
2018 Inspection	October 18, 2018	366
2019 Inspection	October 17, 2019	367
2020 Inspection	October __, 2020	

