

**Laura McCarten**  
**Evidentiary Hearing Opening Statement**

Thank you Judge and Commissioners for the opportunity to provide testimony in this case. I also want to thank the Commission Staff for their constructive engagement and thoughtful review of our petition.

The Company is seeking an Advance Determination of Prudence for 100 MW of dispersed solar energy through the Geronimo Solar Power Purchase Agreement. This proposed addition was ordered by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in a Competitive Acquisition Process, to meet a capacity need in the 2017 to 2018 timeframe. In addition, this resource will help us meet Minnesota's solar energy requirement with minimal impact on electric prices

This case invokes important, broader North Dakota energy policy questions, as did our ADP request for the 187 MW solar portfolio. I believe Mr. Diller's testimony and Mr. Haeger's Rebuttal testimony in this proceeding provide valuable information and perspectives for your consideration of this resource, consistent with North Dakota's overall resource needs and energy policy goals.

I recognize that the Commission and Xcel Energy will assess these broader state policy questions going forward. In the meantime, we continue to work with Commission Staff to develop an appropriate means of balancing North Dakota's energy policies with the policies of Minnesota and other states we serve. As such, the Commission will have additional opportunities in the future to address the overall divergence in state energy policies. Those larger questions are important and we welcome the dialogue.

Regarding this ADP application, I believe the record supports a finding of prudence for the Geronimo PPA resource. We believe this Geronimo PPA provides overall good value for our customers, as it helps to ensure adequate resources and maintain a diversified generation portfolio, at a reasonable cost.

Thank you.