



2302 Great Northern Drive  
P.O. Box 2747  
Fargo, North Dakota 58102  
(701) 241-8632

[dave.sederquist@xcelenergy.com](mailto:dave.sederquist@xcelenergy.com)

September 10, 2021

—VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL—

Mr. Steven M. Kahl, Executive Director  
North Dakota Public Service Commission  
State Capitol Building, Dept. 408  
600 East Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

RE: AIRCRAFT DETECTION LIGHTING SYSTEM – COURTENAY WIND FACILITY  
REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF INSTALLATION DEADLINE AND STATUS UPDATE  
CASE NO. PU-15-174

Dear Mr. Kahl:

Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota Corporation, doing business in North Dakota as Xcel Energy, respectfully submits this request to the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) for an extension of the December 31, 2021 deadline for installing an operating Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS) at the Courtenay Wind facility in central North Dakota. We also provide a status update, as requested by the Commission's August 2, 2021 Notice and Request for Status Updates.

### **Background**

In an Order dated November 13, 2013 (Case No. PU-13-064), the Commission approved the Certificate of Site Compatibility No. 36 for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the 200 Megawatt Courtenay Wind Project (Courtenay Wind) in Stutsman County, North Dakota. The Commission transferred this Certificate of Site Compatibility to Xcel Energy in an Order dated August 24, 2015 (Case No. PU-15-174). Courtenay Wind began commercial operations in December 2016.

Since the Certificate of Site Compatibility for Courtenay Wind was issued before June 5, 2016, it must be equipped with a functioning light-mitigating technology by December 31, 2021, as required by section 49-22-16.4(3) of the North Dakota Century Code (N.D.C.C.) and section 69-06-11-02(2) of the North Dakota Administrative Code (N.D. Admin. Code).

In compliance with these requirements, Xcel Energy is constructing an ADLS at Courtenay Wind. ADLS is a radar-based system that automatically activates obstruction lighting on wind turbines upon detection of aircraft approaching within defined parameters.

### **Project Status Update**

The ADLS installation for Courtenay Wind includes the construction of an ADLS radar tower, lighting control modules, additional underground power and fiber optic cables, and temporary staging areas along existing wind turbine roads. Xcel Energy contracted DeTect Inc. in May 2021 to be its ADLS vendor.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification for the radar tower location is complete. We have also begun the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process for the current ADLS plan, and it is expected to be completed on or before September 30, 2021.

Recently, the Company executed a lease agreement with the landowner for the radar tower site.

The lighting control modules have already been ordered and are currently in the process of being manufactured. We expect to install the lighting control modules during the first week of October.

Grading plans and designs have been delayed due to extended negotiations with the landowner with respect to obtaining consent for the radar tower location.

Manufacturing of the ADLS components and infrastructure supporting the ADLS electronics have been completed. This includes the generator skid and computer server rack along with other electrical components associated with the generator. The purpose of the generator is to supply power to the ADLS system in case of the main power failure.

### **Request for Extension**

Xcel Energy's intent was to complete the ADLS construction activities by November 30, 2021, prior to ground freeze and extreme cold weather, and fully install and activate the system by December 31, 2021. However, construction activities have been delayed as described in more detail below. With this letter the Company respectfully requests an extension of the deadline to complete the ADLS installation to June 30, 2022.

Earlier this summer, the Company had a verbal agreement with a landowner to install the ADLS radar tower on his land. Accordingly, plans for the siting, grading, access road, and conduit were completed in June 2021, and work had started on cable trenching. In July 2021, however, the landowner indicated that he did not support having a radar tower access road constructed on his land.

The Company then explored the option of using “road mats” instead of constructing a road to provide access to the radar tower without altering or damaging the ground. Road mats are temporary solutions to provide access to construction sites and through environmentally sensitive areas. The mats are transferred to the site, installed, and removed after there is no longer a need to use them. Both Xcel Energy and DeTect require year-round truck access to the site for regular and unforeseen maintenance as well as for power outage restoration. Ultimately, it was determined that hazardous winter and early spring driving conditions, such as muddy freeze/thaw conditions and excess snowfall, would make the installation and use of road mats difficult given the uncertain conditions. Additionally, the road mat option was not a feasible alternative under the terms of the Extended Warranty for the radar tower, which requires year-round access.

Within the last week, the landowner agreed to terms which included an access road. However, because of the delay caused by extended negotiations and uncertainty around where the tower might be located, the Company was not able to timely order the radar tower, finalize the grading plans, or prepare map packages. The ADLS project was originally planned so that construction of the radar tower would be completed by November 30, 2021, prior to ground freeze and extreme winter weather. This schedule would have allowed unhindered foundation work and trenching and avoided the damage that very cold temperatures can impose on fiber optic cable during installation. However, given the current situation, it is unlikely that we will be able to complete the necessary construction activities prior to more extreme cold weather conditions.

Based on these reasons, Xcel Energy respectfully requests that the Commission grant a six-month extension to June 30, 2022 to complete the ADLS installation for Courtenay Wind. We are continuing our efforts to meet the December 31, 2021 deadline, however, given the current situation, we believe that meeting the deadline is unlikely.

Please contact me if you have any further questions about this extension request or the status of the ADLS installation project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David H. Sederquist". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

DAVID H. SEDERQUIST  
SR. CONSULTANT, REGULATION & FINANCE

cc: Patrick Fahn  
Marcus Dethloff