

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Northern States Power Company
200 MW Courtenay Wind Project
Advance Determination of Prudence

Case No. PU-15-181

Northern States Power Company
200 MW Courtenay Wind Project
Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity

Case No. PU-15-175

Northern States Power Company
200 MW Courtenay Wind Project
Transfer of Certificate of Site

Case No. PU-15-174

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE BY CERTIFIED MAIL

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
COUNTY OF BURLEIGH

Geralyn R. Schmaltz deposes and says that:

she is over the age of 18 years and not a party to this action and, on the **13th day of July, 2015**, she deposited in the United States Mail, at Bismarck, North Dakota, **one** envelope with certified postage, return receipt requested, fully prepaid, securely sealed and containing a photocopy of:

**Cover Letter
Staff Response To The Request Of Northern States Power Company
For Company For Trade Secret Protection**

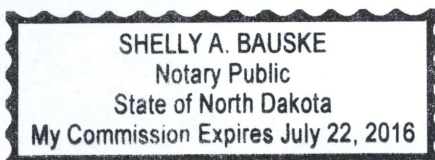
The envelope was addressed as follows:

David H Sederquist
Senior Consultant, Regulation & Finance
Xcel Energy
2302 Great Northern Drive
Fargo, ND 58102
Cert. No. 7014 1820 0001 3262 8313

The address shown is the respective addressee's last reasonably ascertainable post office address.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this **13th day of July, 2015**.

SEAL



Geralyn R. Schmaltz
Shelly A Bauske
Notary Public



Public Service Commission

State of North Dakota

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July 13, 2015

Mr. Dave Sederquist
Senior Consultant - Regulation & Finance
Xcel Energy
2302 Great Northern Drive
Fargo, ND 58102

RE: Northern States Power Company Case No. PU-15-181
Northern States Power Company Case No. PU-15-175
Northern States Power Company Case No. PU-15-174

Dear Mr. Sederquist:

Attached please find the Staff Response to the above cases for the Request of Northern States Power Company for Trade Secret Protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Schuh".

John Schuh
Legal Counsel

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

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**STAFF RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST OF NORTHERN STATES POWER
COMPANY FOR TRADE SECRET PROTECTION**

On 30 April 2015, and 6 May 2015, Northern States Power Company (Xcel Energy or Company), filed applications for a trade secret protective order under North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-02-09 for protecting against public disclosure trade secret information as defined by North Dakota Century Code Section 47-25.1-01(4).

The information for which the Company seeks protection includes Cost information as well as contract terms regarding the Company's proposal to construct, own and operate the 200 MW Courtenay Project.

The Company states that this information is commercial information because it is "information pertaining to buying and selling of goods and services that has not been previously publicly disclosed and that if the information were to be disclosed... would cause substantial competitive injury to the person from which the information was obtained," as provided in North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-18.4(2)(a).

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Staff Response to Request for Trade Secret Protection
- 20 PU-15-175 Filed 07/10/2015 Pages: 4
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Staff Response to Request for Trade Secret Protection

The Company further states that the cost information is trade secret because it is information that "(1) derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons that can obtain economic value from its disclosure; and (2) is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain the secrecy of the information," as provided in North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-18.4(2)(d). As a result, the Company states that the information sought to be protected meets the definition of "trade secret" as set forth in North Dakota Century Code Section 47-25.1-01(4).

The information could have economic value to potential vendors, contractors, and suppliers who may desire to bid to provide material or services for the Company. In particular, potential suppliers would know what the Company has determined to be the cost range for certain components of its proposal, and consequently the cost range could potentially serve as a floor below which no bidder would submit a bid price. Such a result could be harmful for the Company's customers.

The confidentiality of this information has been maintained by the Company. The information is not disclosed to the public or to persons other than employees or authorized agents who need to know the information to fulfill their responsibilities in connection with the Company proposal, or to third persons pursuant to nondisclosure agreement to maintain the confidentiality of the information. The Company has requested that this information be treated as trade secret in all of its regulatory filings and other sharing of this information with governmental entities.

North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-02-09-03 requires that the Commission staff examine the information and applications and make a recommendation to the Commission. Staff has reviewed the request of Xcel for protection of information.

North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-18.4(2) authorizes protection for commercial, financial, proprietary, and trade secret information if privileged and if the information has not been previously publically disclosed. North Dakota Century Code Section 44-04-18.4(1). Commercial and financial information can be protected from disclosure if the information has not been previously disclosed and disclosure would impair the Commission's ability to obtain similar information in the future or would cause competitive injury to the person providing the information. North Dakota Century Code Sections 44-04-18.4(2)(a) and 44-04-18.4(2)(b). Proprietary and trade secret information can be protected when the information derives independent economic value from not being generally known to or readily ascertainable by other persons, and is the subject of reasonable efforts to maintain its secrecy. North Dakota Century Code Sections 44-04-18.4(2)(c) and 44-04-18.4(2)(d).

Staff believes that Xcel's applications satisfy the requirements of the North Dakota Century Code for protection of the information which is the subject of this request. The Commission's process provides a means for interested parties to review protected documents upon signing a nondisclosure agreement.

For reasons set forth above, Staff recommends that the Commission grant the applications of Northern States Power Company to protect certain filed information in this case.

Dated this 10th day of July, 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John M. Schuh', written over a horizontal line.

John M. Schuh
Staff Attorney
North Dakota Public Service Commission