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December 30, 2016

—VIA ELECTRONIC FILING AND U.S. MAIL—

Mr. Darrell Nitschke, Executive Secretary
ND Public Service Commission, Dept. 0408
600 E. Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58504-0480

RE: COURTENAY WIND ENERGY PROJECT
COMPLIANCE FILING – DECOMMISSIONING PLAN (Case No. PU-16-___)

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation ("Xcel Energy" or "the Company"), submits to the North Dakota Public Service Commission (the "Commission") this compliance filing in the above-referenced matter.

This filing is being made pursuant to North Dakota Century Code 49-02-27, North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-09-09-06, and conditions contained in the Certificate of Site Compatibility for an Energy Conversion Facility (Certificate Number 36) transferred to the Company on August 24, 2015 from Courtenay Wind Holdings, LLC (Courtenay Wind). These statutes require a Decommissioning Plan ("Plan") be filed with the Commission describing the manner in which the Company anticipates decommissioning the Courtenay Wind Project at the end of its useful life, and the estimated costs to do so.

Based on this Plan and the current estimate of decommissioning costs, the Company proposes to use a negative 9.4 percent net salvage rate to recover the costs of decommissioning the Courtenay Wind facility. This net salvage rate is incorporated into the depreciation rate and will be used in the future to set rates, either as part of a general rate case or a North Dakota Renewable Energy Rider rate adjustment.

Background

Courtenay Wind is comprised of one hundred 2 MW Vestas wind turbines located on privately owned and primarily agricultural land located in Stutsman County, northeast of Jamestown, North Dakota. Courtenay Wind was initially being developed by Geronimo Energy, LLC and was later purchased and completed by Xcel Energy. It went into service on November 29, 2016. The Courtenay Wind facility represents an important part of Xcel

Energy's continued commitment to a cost-effective and geographically diverse supply portfolio of Company-owned resources.

Courtenay Wind has a service life assumption of 25 years and thus an estimated decommissioning date of November 2041. As is the case with all Company generating investments, the estimated remaining life of the facility will be periodically reassessed when the Company's Remaining Life Studies are conducted every five years.

A Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity was issued by the NDPSC for the Courtenay Wind facility on August 24, 2015 in Case No. PU-15-175. An Advanced Determination of Prudence ("ADP") for this project was also granted by the Commission on the same day in Case No. PU-15-181. For reference, the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for these dockets have been included with this petition as Attachment A.

Decommissioning Scope

Xcel Energy will begin decommissioning the Courtenay Wind facility within eight months after the facility reaches the end of its useful life, as required in section 69-09-09-04 of the ND Administrative Code. The decommissioning process will be completed within eighteen months of the end of the facility's useful life.

Decommissioning will include:

A. dismantling and removal of all towers, turbine generators, transformers and overhead cables;

B. removal of underground cables to a depth of at least twenty-four inches;

C. removal of foundations, buildings and ancillary equipment to a depth of at least three feet; and

D. removal of surface road material and restoration of the roads and turbine sites to substantially the same physical condition that existed immediately before construction of the Courtenay Wind facility.

In addition, the site will be restored and reclaimed to the same general topography that existed just prior to the beginning of construction, with topsoil re-spread over the disturbed areas at a depth similar to that in existence prior to the disturbance. Areas disturbed by the construction of the facility and/or decommissioning activities will be graded, top-soiled, and reseeded unless the landowner requests in writing that the access roads or other land areas be retained.

In general, the Company's decommissioning and restoration activities will adhere to the requirements of the appropriate governing authorities and will be in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local permits, if any are required, and pursuant to the terms and conditions of any landowner leases currently in place.

Decommissioning Process

The process of removing structures involves evaluating and categorizing all components and materials into categories of recondition and reuse, salvage, and disposal. In the interest of increased efficiency and minimal transportation impacts, components and materials may be stored on-site at landowner-approved locations until the bulk of similar components or materials are ready for transport. The components and material will be transported to the appropriate facilities for reconditioning, salvage or disposal. Above-ground structures include the turbines, transformers, overhead collection or transmission lines, substation(s) and the facility's portions of the interconnection facilities. Below-ground structures include turbine, substation and building foundations, collection system conduit and cable, fiber optic facilities, and subterranean drainage structures, if any.

Turbine removal: Access roads to turbines will be widened to a sufficient width to accommodate movement of appropriately sized cranes, trucks, and other machinery required for the disassembly and removal of the turbines. Control cabinets, electronic components, and internal cables will be removed. The rotor, nacelle, and tower sections will be lowered to the ground where they may be transported whole for reconditioning and reuse, or disassembled/cut into more easily transportable sections for salvageable, recyclable, or disposable components.

Turbine and substation foundation removal: Topsoil will be removed from an area surrounding the foundation and stored for later replacement, as applicable. Turbine foundations will be excavated to four feet below grade per the landowner agreements in place. All anchor bolts, rebar, conduits, cable, and concrete will be removed to that depth. The remaining excavation will be filled with clean, sub-grade material of quality comparable to the immediate surrounding area. The sub-grade material will be compacted to a density similar to surrounding sub-grade material. All unexcavated areas compacted by equipment used in decommissioning will be de-compacted to adequately restore the topsoil and subgrade material to the proper density, consistent and compatible with the surrounding area.

Underground collection cables: The cables and conduits contain no materials known to be harmful to the environment. As part of the decommissioning, these items will be cut back to the required depth. All cable and conduit and other materials buried below the required depth will be left in place and abandoned.

Overhead collection lines: Overhead collection lines and poles will be removed as needed. Access roads and construction pads: Access roads and construction pads will be reclaimed to agricultural land suitable for its purpose before the construction of the Courtenay Wind facility.

Site Restoration Activities

Prior to the removal of structures from all work areas, topsoil will be removed, separated from other excavated material, stockpiled, and clearly designated. The topsoil will be replaced to original depth. The topsoil will be de-compacted to match the density and

consistency of the immediate surrounding area. Any topsoil deficiency and trench settling will be mitigated with imported topsoil consistent with the quality of the affected site.

Following decommissioning activities, the sub-grade material and topsoil from affected areas will be de-compacted and restored to a density and depth consistent with the surrounding areas to a maximum depth of 18 inches. The affected areas will be inspected, cleaned, and all construction-related debris removed. Disturbed areas will be reseeded to promote re-vegetation of the area to a condition reasonably similar to original condition. In all areas restoration will include leveling, terracing, mulching and other necessary steps to prevent soil erosion, to ensure establishment of suitable grasses and forbs, and to control noxious weeds and pests.

Decommissioning Costs

Xcel Energy will be responsible for all costs associated with decommissioning the Courtenay Wind facility. To ensure that there is adequate recovery of future decommissioning and restoration costs, a negative net salvage rate is included in the calculation of the depreciation expense rate for the project. The net salvage rate reflects both the estimated decommissioning costs and any offsetting proceeds from the salvaging and/or recycling of certain generation equipment, such as the towers, cables and other material. The net salvage rate is negative reflecting the fact that the costs of decommissioning wind facilities are significantly higher than any realized salvage proceeds.

At this time, the Company is proposing a net salvage rate of negative 9.4 percent based primarily on a decommissioning cost estimate provided by the construction contractor, Wanzek (see Attachment B). This rate will collect an additional 9.4 percent of the in-service book value of all Courtenay Wind assets ($285,000,000) over the life of the facility. The rate will be a component of the annual depreciation rate, and the expense recorded in the accumulated depreciation reserve account for the eventual removal of the wind facility and restoration of the site.

It should be noted that the decommissioning cost estimate used to calculate the proposed negative net salvage rate applies only to the generation assets for this project. The transmission assets within this project are depreciated using approved average service lives, net salvage rates, and depreciation rates specific to those assets. These transmission depreciation lives and rates were reflected in the Company's most recent electric rate proceeding (Case No. PU-12-813).

Also noteworthy is that the Company will review net salvage rates for its entire wind generation fleet every five years through engineering studies conducted for each generating facility. As decommissioning rules and regulations change (e.g., mandates for deeper removal of underground equipment and material), these changes will be incorporated into the five-year update. With respect to Courtenay Wind, we anticipate updating our decommissioning cost estimate through a site-specific engineering study in the 2018-2019 timeframe. This data will inform the next Annual Review of Remaining Lives Study to be

filed in 2020 and may result in a revised net salvage rate, which will then be reflected in the next applicable rate proceeding.

Conclusion

Xcel Energy is a regulated utility governed by the laws of the State of North Dakota and will observe all regulatory requirements with respect to decommissioning the Courtenay Wind facility, including removal of all buildings and equipment and restoration of the site.

Xcel Energy provides the Commission with this Decommissioning Plan to allow for adequate recovery of the projected decommissioning costs during the operating life of the facility, and ensure restoration of the site at the end of the facility's life

If you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

David H. Sederquist

David H. Sederquist
Sr. Consultant, Regulation & Finance

cc: Patrick Fahn

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Northern States Power Company/Courtenay Wind Transfer of Site Certificate Siting Application	**Case No. PU-15-174**
Northern States Power Company 200 MW Courtenay Wind Farm Public Convenience and Necessity	**Case No. PU-15-175**
Northern States Power Company Advance Prudence – 200 MW Courtenay Wind Farm Application	**Case No. PU-15-181**
Northern States Power Company Discontinue Prudence – Courtenay Wind Farm PPA Application	**Case No. PU-15-183**

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

AUGUST 24, 2015

Appearances

Commissioners Julie Fedorchak, Brian P. Kalk, and Randy Christmann.

Alison C. Archer, Xcel Energy, 414 Nicollet Mall, 5th Floor, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401-1993, and Zeviel T. Simpser, Briggs and Morgan, P.A., 2200 IDS Center, 80 South Eighth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2157, appearing on behalf of Northern States Power Company.

John Schuh, Public Service Commission, State Capital, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, on behalf of the Public Service Commission Advocacy Staff.

Illona Jeffcoat-Sacco, General Counsel, Public Service Commission, State Capitol, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, on behalf of the Public Service Commission Advisory Staff.

Wade C. Mann, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, 2911 North 14th Street – Suite 303, Bismarck, North Dakota 58503.

Preliminary Statement

On April 30, 2015, in Case No. PU-15-174, Northern States Power Company (NSP) filed an application to transfer Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36

originally issued in Case No. PU-13-64 to Courtenay Wind Farm, LLC for the proposed 200 MW Courtenay Wind Farm Project (Courtenay Project), in Stutsman County, North Dakota.

Also on April 30, 2015, in Case No. PU-15-175, NSP filed an application with the Commission seeking a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the Courtenay Project. NSP was previously granted an Advanced Determination of Prudence (ADP) for purchasing the output of the Courtenay Project through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) in Case No. PU-13-706. Due to changed circumstances, NSP is now proposing to develop, construct, own, and operate the Courtenay Project and hence requires a CPCN to do so.

On May 6, 2015, in Case No. PU-15-181, NSP filed an application with the Commission seeking an Advanced Determination of Prudence (ADP) to develop, construct, own, and operate the proposed Courtenay Project resource addition.

On May 11, 2015, in Case No. PU-15-183, NSP filed an application with the Commission seeking to discontinue the ADP previously granted by the Commission in Case No. PU-13-706. Also on May 11, 2015, the Commission's Advocacy Staff filed its response indicating support for the discontinuation of prudence requested by the Company.

On May 13, 2015, the Commission issued a Notice of Consolidated Hearing for Case No. PU-15-175, Case No. PU-15-181, and Case No. PU-15-183, scheduling a consolidated public hearing to begin July 23, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. CDT in the Commission Hearing Room, 12th Floor, State Capitol, 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota, 58505. The Notice identified the following issues to be considered:

1. Whether public convenience and necessity require or will require the construction and operation of the public utility plant or system.

2. Whether NSP is fit, willing and able to provide service.

3. Whether NSP's proposed resource addition is prudent.

4. Whether the Courtenay Wind Power Purchase Agreement resource addition determined to be prudent by the Commission's February 26, 2014 Order Adopting Settlement in Case No. PU-13-706 is no longer prudent.

5. Whether the Commission's February 26, 2014 Order Adopting Settlement in Case No. PU-13-706 should be modified.

Also on May 13, 2015, in Case No. PU-15-174, the Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, which provided until June 30, 2015 for receiving written comments or hearing requests. The notice identified the issues to be considered in

Case No. PU-15-174 as whether NSP agrees and is able to comply with the terms and conditions of the permit for construction and site certificate issued to Courtenay Wind, and whether the requested transfer is compatible with the public interest. No response was received.

On June 9, 2015, NSP filed information regarding potential ex-parte communications that occurred between Company employees and the Commissioners and staff of the North Dakota Public Service Commission in its June 3, 2015 Periodic Information Exchange. NSP presented updates of the Company's 2015 Resource Plan and updates on the regulatory process in Minnesota related to the review of the Courtenay Project.

On July 10, 2015, the Commission's Advocacy Staff filed the Direct Testimony of Mr. Victor Schock for Case No. PU-15-175 and Case No. PU-15-181.

On July 23, 2015, the Commission held the consolidated hearing as scheduled.

Having allowed all interested persons an opportunity to be heard and having heard, reviewed and considered all testimony and evidence presented, the Commission makes its:

Findings of Fact

1. NSP is an investor-owned utility headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, authorized to provide public utility service in North Dakota under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Commission.

2. NSP provides electric service to approximately 90,000 retail electric customers in and around Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot, North Dakota. NSP owns and operates a multi-state electric generation, transmission and distribution system with more than 250 miles of transmission lines and 14 substations in North Dakota.

3. NSP is fit, willing and able to provide service.

4. The Courtenay Project was first identified for acquisition through NSP's February 2013 Request for Proposals (RFP) for additional wind resources.

5. On July 26, 2013, the Company requested an ADP for purchasing the output of the Courtenay Project through a PPA in Case No. PU-13-706. On February 26, 2014, the Commission granted the requested ADP.

6. On November 13, 2013, in Case No. PU-13-64, the Commission granted Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36 to Courtenay Wind Farm, LLC for the Courtenay Project.

7. Courtenay Wind Farm, LLC and its Parent, Geronimo Energy, LLC, were not able to obtain certain tax credits critical to securing financing or a third party partner for the Courtenay Project. Consequently the Courtenay Project is no longer viable on the terms negotiated in the PPA.

8. NSP determined that the Courtenay Project resource addition could remain viable under a different arrangement where NSP acquires, develops, and owns the Courtenay Project.

9. The Courtenay Project, as proposed, is located in Stutsman County, North Dakota, northeast of Jamestown. The Courtenay Project is a 200 MW wind energy generation facility that will cover 24,900 acres of land. Consistent with the Certificate of Site Compatibility, the Courtenay Project will consist of 100 Vestas wind turbine generators and associated infrastructure. NSP testified the Courtenay Project must be in service no later than December 31, 2016 to qualify for federal production tax credits and to meet that deadline initial construction must begin September 2015.

10. In order to facilitate NSP's development of the Courtenay Project, the transaction will include three key contracts. First, the Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) between NSP and Courtenay Wind Holdings LLC (a subsidiary of Geronimo Wind Energy) for the purchase of Courtenay Wind Farm LLC, which is the corporate entity that holds the real estate rights, permits (including the Certificate of Site Compatibility), and contracts (such as the Generator Interconnection Agreement) necessary for the development of the Courtenay Project. Second, a turbine supply agreement (TSA) with Vestas. Third, a Balance of Plant (BOP) contract with Wanzek, a North Dakota based contractor, for the construction of the Courtenay Project.

11. Courtenay Wind Farm, LLC , through its parent Geronimo Energy, LLC, supports the transfer of Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36.

12. NSP agrees and is able to comply with the terms, conditions, and modifications of Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36.

13. The requested transfer of Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36 is compatible with the public interest.

14. North Dakota Century Code § 49-05-16(7) provides: "There is a rebuttable presumption that a resource addition located in the state is prudent."

15. NSP uses the Strategist modeling tool for quantitative resource planning modeling efforts. The tool is widely used by both utilities and utility commissions throughout the United States.

16. NSP's modeling indicates that the Courtenay Project will provide a net cost savings on a Present Value of Revenue Requirement (PVRR) basis to customers of $97

million over the next 20 years. Consistent with North Dakota Century Code § 49-02-23, this analysis does not reflect any environmental externality costs.

17. NSP factored in various sensitivities, including low natural gas prices, a scenario where the system cannot make market purchases to meet increasing demands, and scenarios with higher and lower capacity factors than expected.

18. The results of NSP's sensitivity analyses indicate that even under a worst case scenario, the Courtenay Project would still provide customers with approximately $20 million in net cost savings on a PVRR basis over the next 20 years.

19. Advocacy Staff testified that NSP ownership of the Courtenay Project represents the least cost option available to NSP to meet its future energy needs. Advocacy Staff reasoned that NSP's 2011-2025 Resource Plan identified a need for additional wind resources and the original PPA for the Courtenay Project was granted an ADP as a least cost resource. NSP's proposal to own the resource is a lower net present value cost than the original PPA.

20. Advocacy Staff testified that it does not rebut the statutory presumption of prudence and recommends approval of both the Advance Determination of Prudence Application and the requested Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission makes its:

Conclusions of Law

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over these matters.

2. The original PPA negotiated for the Courtenay Wind Farm is no longer viable and consequently no longer prudent.

3. Under North Dakota Century Code § 49-05-16, NSP's proposed Courtenay Wind Farm resource addition is presumed prudent and that presumption has not been rebutted. NSP's development, construction, ownership, and operation of the Courtenay Project is prudent.

4. Public convenience and necessity require NSP's construction and operation of the Courtenay Wind Farm.

5. NSP is fit, willing, and able to provide service.

6. NSP agrees to comply with the terms, conditions, and modifications of Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36 and its requested certificate transfer is compatible with the public interest.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission makes its:

Order

The Commission Orders:

1. NSP's request for an Advance Determination of Prudence for acquisition and development of the Courtenay Wind Farm Project in North Dakota is GRANTED.

2. NSP's request for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to develop, construct, own, operate, and maintain the Courtenay Wind Farm Project in North Dakota is GRANTED.

3. Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity No. 5876 is issued to NSP to construct and operate the Courtenay Wind Farm Project.

4. NSP's request to transfer Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36 previously granted by the Commission's November 13, 2013 Order in Case No. PU-13-64 is GRANTED, and First Reissued Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36 is issued to NSP.

5. The Applicant's request to discontinue the Prudence of the Power Purchase Agreement for the Output of the Courtenay Wind Farm granted by the Commission's February 26, 2014 Order Adopting Settlement in Case No. PU-13-706 is GRANTED.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Randy Christmann **Commissioner**	**Julie Fedorchak** **Chairman**	**Brian P. Kalk** **Commissioner**

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity

Certificate Number 5876

This is to certify that public convenience and necessity require, and permission is granted for Northern States Power Company, to construct and operate the Courtenay Wind Farm Project in Stutsman County, North Dakota.

This certificate is issued in accordance with the Order of this Commission dated August 24, 2015 in Case No. PU-15-175, and is subject to the conditions and limitations noted in the Order.

This certificate is conditioned upon Northern States Power Company securing the franchise or other authority of the proper municipal or other public authority for the exercise of these rights and privileges.

Bismarck, North Dakota, August 24, 2015.

ATTEST: ***PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION***

Executive Secretary ***Commissioner***

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

First Reissued Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 36

This is to certify that the Commission has designated an energy conversion facility site for Northern States Power Company for its Courtenay Wind Farm consisting of up to 127 Wind Turbines and associated facilities totaling up to 200.5 MW of generating capacity in Stutsman County, North Dakota.

The facility may be sited in this designated location in compliance with the energy conversion facility siting criteria. This certificate is issued in accordance with the Finding of Fact, Conclusion of Law and Order of the Commission in Case No. PU-13-64 dated November 13, 2013 and Case No. PU-15-174 dated August 24, 2015 and is subject to the conditions and limitations noted in those orders.

Bismarck, North Dakota, August 24, 2014.

ATTEST: ***PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION***

Darrell Nitschke
Executive Secretary

Commissioner

Courtenay Wind Facility
Decommissioning Cost Estimate (December 2016)

	Unit Price	Amount
Turbines/Towers (100)		
Dismantle Turbines	$88,655.59	$8,865,559
Trucking/Haul Off	$113,850.00	$11,385,000
Tower Foundation Removal (4' depth)	$7,665.75	$766,575
		$21,017,134
Tower Access/Roads		
Site Civil Work Removal		$2,864,684
Other Structures		
Operations/Maintenance Building		$91,425
Collection System		
Remove Termination Sections, Junction Boxes		$776,275
Transmission		
Remove Poles,Cable, Equipment		$1,130,605
Substation Removal		$592,250
		$1,722,855
Other Misc.		
Heavy Equipment Mobilization		$722,384
Fuel, Materials, Equipment, Job Trailers, etc.		$1,274,735
Total		$1,997,119
Grand total:		$28,469,492
Exclude Transmission-related[1]:		-$1,722,855
Adjusted total:		$26,746,637
Final estimate:	**$356,622**	**$26,746,637**
Estimated Total Project Investment:		$285,000,000
Net Salvage Rate:		9.4%

1 Substation and Switchyard items are excluded because they are depreciated in separate transmission-related accounts.

WANZEK
a MasTec company

Project:	**Courtenay Decommissioning**
Proposal Type:	Non-Binding Decommissioning Budget
Proposal Date:	11/8/2016
WTG #:	100
WTG Type:	Vestas 2 MW - 80M HH - 100M rotor
Total MW:	200
Phase:	1
Location:	Courtenay, ND

OVERALL PRICING WORKSHEET

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	SITE CIVIL WORK REMOVAL	1	LS	$ 2,864,684	$ 2,864,684
2	FOUNDATION PEDESTAL REMOVAL (to 4' depth)	100	EA	$ 7,666	$ 766,575
3	WTG TEARDOWN				
3a	WTG Teardown	100	EA	$ 88,656	$ 8,865,559
3b	Haul Off Allowance	100	EA	$ 113,850	$ 11,385,000
4	OTHER/MISCELLANEOUS				
4a	Surveying/Engineering/Testing				Not Applicable
4b	O&M Building Removal	1	LS	$ 91,425.00	$ 91,425
4c	Taxes, if Applicable				Not Applicable
4d	Met Tower Removal				Not Applicable
4e	General Conditions	1	LS	$ 1,274,735	$ 1,274,735
4f	Mobilization	1	LS	$ 722,384	$ 722,384
5	COLLECTION SYSTEM REMOVAL (Leave Cable in Ground)	1	LS	$ 776,275	$ 776,275
6	SUBSTATION REMOVAL (to 4' depth)	1	LS	$ 592,250	$ 592,250
7	TRANSMISSION LINE	1	LS	$ 1,130,605	$ 1,130,605
8	INTERCONNECT				Not Applicable
	TOTAL PRICE (EXCLUDING PERFORMANCE BOND)				**$ 28,469,492**

in 2016 USD