



2302 Great Northern Drive  
Fargo, ND 58802

September 15, 2023

– VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL –

Steven M. Kahl, Executive Director  
North Dakota Public Service Commission, Dept. 408  
State Capitol, 600 East Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58504-0480

RE: AMI REMOTE DISCONNECT/RECONNECT PETITION  
CASE NO. PU-23-\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mr. Kahl:

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits the enclosed original and seven copies of the application to the North Dakota Public Service Commission for approval of changes to its tariffs to modify the Service Reconnection Charge and the Manual Meter Reading Rider contained in our Electric Rate Book. These changes will reflect the costs of remote reconnection and remote meter reading, both of which are capabilities of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) we are implementing.

An electronic copy of this filing is also being sent to you for your convenience. A check has been sent under separate cover to the Commission in the amount of \$10,000 for the filing fee. Please contact me at [alex.j.nisbet@xcelenergy.com](mailto:alex.j.nisbet@xcelenergy.com) or Taige Tople at [taige.d.tople@xcelenergy.com](mailto:taige.d.tople@xcelenergy.com) if you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

ALEX NISBET  
REGULATORY POLICY SPECIALIST

cc: Victor Schock  
Enclosures

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF  
NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY  
REQUESTING APPROVAL OF TARIFF  
CHANGES TO OUR SERVICE  
RECONNECTION CHARGE AND MANUAL  
METER READING RIDER

CASE No. PU-23-\_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits to the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) this application for approval of changes to our tariffs to modify the Service Reconnection Charge and the Manual Meter Reading Rider contained in our Electric Rate Book. These changes reflect the actual costs of service reconnection, which will decrease for customers with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters that have remote reconnection capabilities.

The Company is in the process of deploying new AMI meters across our eight-state footprint to replace our current Automated Meter Reading (AMR) meters and service because these meters are at their end of life. We plan to begin deploying AMI meters to our North Dakota customers in the first quarter of 2024 and complete the roll-out in 2025.

AMI is a foundational element of a modernized grid. AMI technology – specifically, smart meters – will not only replace our existing remote meter reading capabilities but will also provide additional customer and operational value. AMI meters contain an internal service switch that we can operate using two-way communication capabilities, which negates the need to make a physical field visit to perform a service reconnection or disconnection; instead, these will be able to be performed remotely, which is more efficient and lower cost.

Conversely, costs to complete physical disconnections and reconnections have increased since they were last established. The Service Reconnection Charge update we propose in this Application reflects this increased cost for customers electing to opt-out of an AMI meter, and for large customers with polyphase meters that do not have an internal service switch, which is necessary to perform remote disconnection

and reconnection.<sup>1</sup>

We understand that service disconnections have a serious impact on our customers, so we are sensitive to the process and communications associated with it. Service disconnection is always a last resort, and we make every effort to proactively support customers in resolving past-due balances. We have a robust process that attempts to reach customers with past due balances numerous times before disconnecting service, including through mail, phone, and email. This process will continue as we transition to leverage our new remote reconnection and disconnection capabilities. Once the new meters are installed, if a customer with an AMI meter has a past due balance that cannot be resolved and therefore requires disconnection, an additional customer contact effort via a phone call will be placed to the customer to allow for direct contact or leaving a voice mail message about the disconnection.<sup>2</sup> If we cannot successfully reach the customer in the last phone call or leave a voice mail message, we will send a field service representative to their home prior to disconnection to attempt a final outreach prior to disconnection. If the outstanding balance cannot be resolved by the following business day, a remote disconnection will be initiated. This extra time after the additional phone call will allow our customers more time to respond to our outreach efforts. A detailed graphic of our process leading up to service disconnection can be found in Figure 1 of this Application.

Leveraging these remote capabilities offers numerous efficiencies including: (1) the ability to remotely reconnect customers more quickly after their service has been disconnected, and (2) cost savings due to the reduced field visits currently necessary to perform service disconnections and reconnections. This second efficiency reduces our O&M costs and results in (i) an immediate lower charge to customers to reconnect their service, and (ii) lower costs to all customers as our overall arrears and bad debt expense lowers over time.

We believe these operational changes are in the public interest and respectfully request the Commission approve the following:

- Our proposed changes to the Service Reconnection Charge contained in our Electric Rate Book.<sup>3</sup>
- Our proposed change to the Manual Meter Reading Rider contained in our Electric Rate Book.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Case No. PU-22-180, Northern States Power Company Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) Tariff and Rates, February 8, 2023, Order.

<sup>2</sup> ND Admin Code 69-09-02-05.1 governs service disconnections, and we will continue to comply with it.

<sup>3</sup> See Section 6, Original Sheet No. 1.1, of our North Dakota Electric Rate Book

<sup>4</sup> See Section 5, Original Sheet No. 92, of our North Dakota Electric Rate Book.

The balance of this Petition explains our current service disconnection and reconnection processes and outlines our proposed changes and provides an update to the meter roll-out schedule. We also provide several attachments as follows:

- Attachment A- Redline and Clean Tariff Pages
  - Attachment A1- Manual Meter Reading Rider; addition of reference to Electric Service Reconnection Charge
  - Attachment A2- General Service Rules; Changes to the Electric Service Reconnection Charge
- Attachment B- ND Medical Certification Form
- Attachment C- Schedule – Proposed Lower Service Reconnection Charge
- Attachment D- Schedule – AMI Opt-Out and Polyphase Customers Charge
- Attachment E- Bill Onsert

## II. FILING INFORMATION

Pursuant to Section 69-02-02-04 of the North Dakota Administrative Code, the following information is provided:

### A. Contact information for utility making the filing

Shubha Harris  
Principal Attorney General Counsel  
Xcel Energy Services Inc.  
414 Nicollet Mall – 401, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
(612) 215-4517  
[shubha.m.harris@xcelenergy.com](mailto:shubha.m.harris@xcelenergy.com)

Alex Nisbet  
Regulatory Policy Specialist  
Xcel Energy  
2302 Great Northern Drive  
PO Box 2747  
Fargo, ND 58108-2747  
(701) 241-8632  
[alex.j.nisbet@xcelenergy.com](mailto:alex.j.nisbet@xcelenergy.com)

We request that all communications regarding this proceeding, including data requests, also be directed to:

Christine Schwartz  
Regulatory Administrator  
Xcel Energy  
414 Nicollet Mall – 401, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
[regulatory.records@xcelenergy.com](mailto:regulatory.records@xcelenergy.com)

## **B. Date of filing and proposed effective date**

The date of this filing is September 15, 2023. The Company proposes the tariff be effective upon Commission approval of the updated charges.

## **C. Statutory Authority**

We submit this application pursuant to N.D.C.C. Section 49-02-03 which establishes Commission authority to supervise rates and N.D.C.C. Section 49-05-05 which allows a utility to make changes to its tariffs upon 30 days' notice to the Commission.

## **D. Articles of Incorporation**

Pursuant to Section 69-02-02-04 of the North Dakota Administrative Code, a certified copy of Xcel Energy's Articles of Incorporation is on file with the Commission, as is an original Certificate of Good Standing.

# **III. BACKGROUND**

## **A. Current Service Disconnection Process**

The Company takes service disconnection very seriously and will disconnect a customer's service only as a last resort. We have a set of guiding principles that govern how we interact with customers with past due balances and the process we follow before disconnecting a customer's service, which we outline below:<sup>5</sup>

- The Company makes every effort to proactively support customers in resolving their past due balances and provides numerous opportunities for bill resolution. This includes ongoing contact through multiple touchpoints such as United States Postal Service (USPS) mail, phone, and email, and making bill assistance information prominent on our website.
- We tailor solutions to meet each customer's unique needs, including offering payment plans and bill payment assistance and arrearage forgiveness programs.
- We refer customers to energy assistance resources during all interactions.
- We work with customers to restore service as quickly as possible if disconnection does occur.

Our contact center agents complete semi-annual trainings to refresh and learn new

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<sup>5</sup> ND Admin Code 69-09-02-05.1 governs service disconnections, and we will continue to comply with it.

skills on how to best support past due customers; these trainings include content on speaking with empathy and how to determine whether there are any special circumstances in the home that may be affecting the customer's ability to make payments.

Employees are provided with a guided conversation tool to assist them in finding the best practice solutions when speaking with our customers. Employees are empowered to find an arrangement that best suits the customer's needs, including payment arrangements with little or no down payment.

Customers receiving automated phone calls about their past due balance can link directly to our phone system to pay their bill and/or speak directly to a customer service representative. Customers receiving emails can click on a link to either (1) visit our online bill portal where they can make a payment or (2) download our mobile application, where they are also able to make a payment. Customers receiving a letter in the mail can make a payment at our website, on our mobile app, or call the Company and choose to make a payment using our automated phone system or by speaking to a customer service representative. Once a customer's past due balance goes above \$50, the Company begins an ongoing and intensive process to try and reach the customer to either resolve the bill or enroll the customer in a payment plan *before* the account balance becomes high enough to result in a disconnection notice.

The process we use to contact customers is generally as follows:

1. *Courtesy Past Due Reminders.* Multiple emails and/or phone calls (based on customer information and preference) to attempt to resolve past due balance or enroll the customer in a payment plan.
2. *Disconnection Notice.* Mailed via United States Postal Service (USPS) to customers who have a qualifying past due balance.
3. *"1<sup>st</sup> Calls."* Typically, one phone call per week over nine weeks is placed to any customer who has a past due balance and is in an advanced stage of the pre-disconnection communications process and is thus in jeopardy of disconnection. During these calls, our representatives attempt to resolve the past due balance or enroll the customer in a payment plan.

If we are not able to contact the customer, the customer's account is referred to our field collection area for additional review and possible disconnection, which we describe below.

1. *Current Field Disconnection Process*

Currently, if we cannot reach the customer with the attempts outlined above, a Company representative (field agent) will make a personal visit to the customer's

premise and attempt to make personal contact with the customer by knocking on the door. If the customer answers the door, the field agent attempts to resolve the customer's bill or establish a payment arrangement. If the customer can make a payment, the field agent can accept cash, a check, or a money order. Approximately 90 percent of the time, the customer does not answer the door and, therefore, our field agent is not successful in contacting the customer. At that point, the field agent will access the customer's electric meter and disconnect service. When that occurs, we leave a card on the customer's door stating that we have disconnected the customer's service and providing instructions for having their electric service reinstated.

## 2. *Current Reconnection of Service Process*

After a customer's service is disconnected, the customer will typically call to request service be restored. Once the customer has either resolved their past due bill or entered a payment arrangement, a field agent will return to the customer's property and restore electric service. Reconnection of service is typically completed on the business day after the customer reaches some type of resolution on their past due balance. In very limited situations, reconnection may take longer for a variety of reasons, including, for example, the inability to access the customer's meter due to a locked gate or an unleashed dog, or if the Company is in escalated operations following severe weather. If next day restoration of service is not possible, the Company will reconnect the customer's service as soon as practicable. In all cases today, a \$50 service fee for restoration of service after disconnection for non-payment is added to the customer's bill.<sup>6</sup>

### **B. Process Changes to Affect Remote Service Reconnection and Disconnection**

Our service disconnection process leading up to the customer's resolution of the past due balance or service disconnection will continue in accordance with our guiding principles and will also largely be the same as today, except for the final step, which will be to initiate an additional phone contact instead of a personal visit for customers with AMI meters. If we are successful in reaching the customer, which means we were able to speak to the customer or leave a message, we will attempt to resolve their past due balance, including enrollment in a payment plan. If we do not reach the customer directly, we will leave a voicemail. If the customer does not take action to resolve the past due balance within the next business day, we will initiate the service disconnection remotely (without attempting a field visit). If we do not make direct

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



<sup>6</sup> Service Reconnection Charge is authorized in Section 6, Original Sheet No. 1.1, Section 1.2 B, of our North Dakota Electric Rate Book.

contact with the customer and are unable to leave a voicemail, we will still perform a field visit to attempt a final contact with the customer prior to disconnection. Remote disconnections will occur in the first half of the business day, which will provide customers the opportunity to contact us, reach some type of resolution, and have their service remotely reconnected on the same day. This process is outlined and illustrated in Figure 1 below.

### **Remote Disconnection/Reconnection Process Under AMI**

1. *Courtesy Past Due Reminders.* Multiple emails and/or phone calls (based on customer information and preference) to attempt to resolve past due balance or enroll customer in a payment plan. [*No change from current process.*]
2. *Disconnection Notice.* Mailed via USPS to customers who have a qualifying past due balance. [*No change from current process.*]
3. *“1<sup>st</sup> Calls.”* Typically, one phone call per week over nine weeks is placed to any customer who has a past due balance and is in an advanced stage of the pre-disconnection communications process, and thus in jeopardy of disconnection. During these calls, our representatives attempt to resolve the past due balance or enroll the customer in a payment plan. [*No change from current process.*]
4. *“2<sup>nd</sup> Call.”* One final phone call to the customer to attempt to resolve the past due balance or enroll the customer in a payment plan. If this “2<sup>nd</sup> call” does not result in direct contact with the customer or we are unable to leave a voicemail for the customer, we will perform a field visit to attempt a final contact prior to disconnection. [*Additional Customer Outreach in New Process.*]

**Figure 1: Typical Process Leading Up to Electric Service Disconnection**

Tactic	Missed Payment	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	
		Email				Email	Email		Email		
		Disconnect Notice									
		Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	Call	
		Bill Displaying Past Due Charges				Bill Displaying Past Due Charges					
										Phone Call	
										Disconnect Remotely	
										Reconnect Remotely	

As we have noted, in what we expect will be rare situations where our numerous attempts to reach the customer are not successful, we will dispatch a field agent to attempt in-person contact at the customer’s premise. If our field agent is not able to contact the customer and/or the customer is unable to resolve the account with our field agent, we will follow our current field agent process – leaving a door card and initiating disconnection. In this case, for customers with AMI meters, we would use our remote disconnection capabilities in the field, which will allow us to use our remote capabilities to later reconnect the customer once the past due balance is resolved, negating the need for a second field visit to reconnect.

In the event the customer did not resolve the past due balance and service is disconnected, a customer can request to have their service reconnected by calling our customer care center 24 hours per day, seven days a week. When the customer contacts us to reconnect their service and resolves the past due balance associated with the service disconnection by paying in full or entering a payment arrangement, the customer’s account is flagged for immediate reconnection. A remote reconnection will then be completed as soon as practicable, which in many instances will be during the same business day. In the rare event the remote reconnection is not successful, a field agent will visit the property to restore power; typically, this is completed on the following business day, and in certain, rare cases may take slightly longer, as we noted above.

**C. Customers Who are Ineligible for Remote Reconnect and Disconnect**

There are two categories of customers who will not be affected by remote

disconnection and reconnection: (1) residential and non-demand business customers who opt-out of having an AMI meter installed. The non-standard meter they will receive lacks the requisite two-way communications capabilities. Also, (2) demand-billed polyphase customers, because the new meters for these business customers do not contain the internal service switch to affect remote reconnection and disconnection. In both cases, it will still be necessary for field agents to attempt in-person contact prior to service disconnection, and an in-person visit will be required for service reconnection.

#### **D. Stakeholder Outreach**

In recognition of the impacts to our customers from disconnection of service in our other service territories, we engaged with key stakeholders including AARP, regulatory agencies, and consumer advocates to make them aware and solicited feedback and input on our plans to leverage the remote service reconnection and disconnection capabilities of the AMI meters:

Attachment B is a mock-up of our North Dakota Medical Certification Form. The Company can make some minor modifications to this form if requested. This form is designed to add an additional layer of protection for our customers with medical conditions and/or equipment inside the home. Upcoming changes to the Medical Certification Form are focused on reducing customer effort and removing barriers for approvals.

#### **E. Customer Education and Resources**

As we have discussed, the process to communicate with customers who are behind in their monthly payments will remain the same; the only change is to substitute an additional successful phone contact for the current field visit. If we cannot make a successful phone contact, a field agent will attempt a home visit prior to disconnection.

We will be making additional communications materials available to our customers about AMI meters and our implementation of them. If Xcel Energy customers have questions about the advanced grid and smart meter plan, they can find more information on our website at [Smart Meter Installation | Customer Support | Xcel Energy](#).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://nd.my.xcelenergy.com/customersupport/s/projects/smart-meter-installation>. Ensure “North Dakota” is selected in the state-selector button at the bottom of the page.

## F. New Service Reconnection Charges

Today, all our North Dakota customers are subject to the same \$50 Service Reconnection Charge.<sup>8</sup> As we have discussed, our implementation of AMI allows for remote service reconnection and disconnection. This will result in efficiencies, which we propose to pass on to customers through a lower Service Reconnection Charge. In this section, we outline a new tiered Service Reconnection Charge structure that differentiates between customers with AMI meters that have remote reconnection and disconnection capabilities – and would thus be subject to a lower fee that recognizes the efficiencies realized through use of the technology – and those that do not.

In general, all our residential and commercial non-demand customers will receive AMI meters with the internal service switch that enables remote disconnection and reconnection of those meters without a field visit. The meters received by our polyphase customers and customers who have opted out of receiving an AMI meter – and are therefore on our Manual Meter Reading Rider tariff – are ineligible because the meters they will receive are not equipped with an internal service switch. As a result, ineligible customers will be subject to a higher, cost-based Service Reconnection Charge due to the ongoing need for a physical field visit to disconnect and reconnect service. To determine the appropriate charge that reflects the efficiencies we expect from leveraging the AMI remote service switch capabilities, we examined the effect of the process changes in relation to the process on which our current service charge is based.

### 1. *Service Reconnection Charge for AMI Meters with an Internal Service Switch*

We propose to lower the Service Reconnection Charge for customers with AMI meters from \$50 to \$13.50. The new lower charge of \$13.50 for remote customer reconnections is based on the costs associated with calls our customer service representatives make before and after disconnection to customers, plus the costs associated with dispatching field agents to physically disconnect and reconnect customers for approximately 18 percent of the total reconnections and disconnections we project where we were not able to make contact with the customer in the final call.<sup>9</sup> To arrive at this cost, we used actual average pay rates for the job roles involved in the various aspects of the process combined with estimated volumes and average times to complete the tasks.

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<sup>8</sup> See Section 6, Original Sheer No. 1.1, Section 1.2 B, of our North Dakota Electric Rate Book.

<sup>9</sup> We assume that we do not have the correct contact information for 15 percent of our customers and remote disconnect will not function properly for 3 percent of customers with AMI.

We outline the cost components associated with our proposed Service Reconnection Charge in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:  
Service Reconnection Charge Basis  
Customers with Remote Service Switch Capabilities**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Call Costs	\$4.44
Field Personnel	<u>\$9.10</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13.54</b>
<b>Proposed Service Reconnection Charge</b>	<b>\$13.50</b>

While our estimates show a \$13.54 actual cost to reconnect customers, that is based on an estimate of the total volume and the percentage that will be performed remotely and in-person, once AMI meters are fully deployed. As such, we propose to round down the charge in the favor of our customers, which also serves to ensure customers who are already having trouble paying their bills do not overpay. Please see Attachment C to this Petition for a Schedule that provides further details regarding these costs.

2. *Service Reconnection Charge for Meters with no Internal Service Switch*

As we noted above, the non-standard meters that customers who opt-out of AMI receive will not have an internal service switch, and, therefore, we will not be able to remotely reconnect and disconnect those customers. This is also the case with the polyphase meters that our larger customers will receive.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, we will need to continue making field visits to these customers to reconnect and disconnect service, like we do today. These customers should be subject to a higher charge that recognizes the higher costs associated with this activity.

Our current Service Reconnection Charge that is predicated on a physical field visit was established in 2010. We have reviewed actual costs and propose to update the current \$50 Service Reconnection Charge to \$100 to more accurately reflect our current costs associated with sending field personnel to perform disconnections and reconnections. Since this Service Reconnection Charge was last updated 12 years ago, we have experienced an increase in costs from \$58.44 per disconnection to \$110 per disconnection – or an increase of 88 percent. Like the new \$13.50 charge applicable to

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<sup>10</sup> As of the date of this filing, we have 6,731 polyphase meters in North Dakota.

customers with eligible remote reconnect and disconnect AMI meters, we propose to round down the service reconnection charge in customers’ favor to \$100.

Table 2 provides an outline of the cost components. We also provide Attachment D, which breaks out these costs in more detail.

**Table 2:  
Service Reconnection Charge Basis  
AMI Opt-Out and Polyphase Customers**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Call Costs	\$4.44
Field Personnel	<u>\$105.56</u>
Total	\$110.00
<b>Proposed Service Reconnection Charge</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

3. *Proposed Implementation of the New Tiered Fee Structure*

The Company proposes the tariff be effective upon Commission approval of the updated charges. Currently, we have included a January 1, 2024, effective date for the updated Service Reconnection Charge in our Electric Rate Book. We propose that residential and small commercial customers would be eligible for the lower Service Reconnection Charge immediately after AMI installation at their premises. We propose customers with ineligible meters will continue to pay the current \$50 Service Reconnection Charge until our AMI deployment is fully complete, which we expect to be in 2025. We propose that the higher Service Reconnection Charge for ineligible, AMI opt-out and polyphase customers would take effect on January 1, 2026.

Table 3 outlines the estimated AMI meter installations and our proposed Service Reconnection Charge levels, based on our most current deployment schedule.

**Table 3: Proposed Service Reconnection Charge Levels  
2024-2026 Transition Period**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average AMI Installed</b>	<b>Average Existing AMR Meters</b>	<b>Reconnection Charge for Customers with Eligible AMI Meter</b>	<b>Reconnection Charge for Customers without AMI or with Ineligible Meter</b>
2024	25,000	75,000	\$13.50	\$50
2025	50,000	50,000	\$13.50	\$50
2026	100,000	0	\$13.50	\$100

We note that our proposed tiered charge structure is reflected in the redline and clean tariff sheets we propose with this Petition as Attachments A1 and A2.

**IV. DEPLOYMENT UPDATE**

Deployment of the AMI meters will begin in Q1 2024 and conclude in 2025. Field Area Network (FAN) deployment precedes AMI meter deployment by approximately three to six months to ensure that there is a fully operational network for the meters to communicate with when they are installed. To support this, we began FAN installation in April 2023.

Customers will be notified of their meter replacement approximately 90, 60, and 30 days before they receive their AMI meter by bill insert, postcard, and email or letter, respectively. Each of these touchpoints will provide information about the installation and how to initiate an opt-out process, should they prefer to receive a non-communicating meter. Customers will also receive scripted calls approximately one week before their AMI meter is installed. Overall, customers will receive at least four notifications through multiple communication channels prior to the planned AMI meter installation date at their premises. These communications will be applicable to small business customers as well as residential customers. Xcel Energy account managers dedicated to large C&I customers will help ensure a smooth experience before, during and after meter installation.

We also note that during deployment, we expect we will find a limited number of customer meter sockets that are defective and do not comply with Xcel Energy’s standards and criteria applicable to meter sockets as set forth in Section 4.11 of Xcel Energy’s Standard for Electric Installation and Use (Xcel Energy Standards). Section 4.11 of the Xcel Energy Standards designates meter sockets as customer-owned

equipment, which means that customers are responsible for its maintenance and repair. However, to ensure a timely and efficient roll-out of the Company's new AMI meters, we plan to facilitate any necessary minor repairs on the customer's behalf and at the Company's expense. We will coordinate with the customers to complete these repairs at a mutually agreeable time and require each customer to sign a consent and release form. We will not, however, perform work beyond the meter housing and socket; should that work be necessary, the customer will need to hire and pay for a qualified electrician to perform that work. If a customer refuses to sign the consent and release for the Company to facilitate the necessary repairs, the customer will need to hire a qualified electrician to complete the necessary repairs at their own cost – and will not receive an AMI meter until that work is complete.

## **V. TARIFF MODIFICATIONS**

The Company proposes to revise the Service Reconnection Charge shown on Tariff Sheet Section No. 6, Sheet No. 1.1 of the North Dakota Electric Rate Book – NDPSC No. 2. Attachment A2 shows the proposed changes in both redline and clean versions. The tariff states that the Service Reconnection Charge will be applied to customer bills starting on January 1, 2024. The tariff sheet and revised Service Reconnection Charge will be made effective after the Commission acts on this application. The final Service Reconnection Charge Tariff Sheet will be revised as necessary to comply with the Commission's final order in this proceeding.

The Company also proposes to revise the Manual Meter Reading Rider as shown on Tariff Sheet Section No. 5, Sheet No. 92 of the North Dakota Electric Rate Book – NDPSC No. 2. Attachment A1 shows the proposed change in both redline and clean versions. The tariff states that customers electing for the manual meter reading with the rider will be subject to a higher Service Reconnection Charge, as specified in Section 1.2 of the General Service Rules.

We summarize the affected tariff sheets and provide redline and clean versions of our proposed Manual Meter Reading Rider Tariff Sheets and Service Reconnection Tariff Sheets as Attachments A1 and A2 to this filing.

## **VI. CUSTOMER NOTICES**

To ensure compliance with the customer information provisions of Section 69-09-02-01 of the North Dakota Administrative Code, the Company's North Dakota customers will see on their October 2023 bills one of the following notices of the changes to the Service Reconnection Charge and Manual Meter Reading Rider:

Following approval of the new Service Reconnection Charge and changes to the Manual Meter Reading Rider by the Commission, the Company will provide notice to customers through a bill message and corresponding onsert, seen as Attachment E. We propose the following bill message language:

*Xcel Energy has recently changed its reconnection policies and pricing. Please refer to the onsert in this bill for details.*

The Company commits to working collaboratively with Commission Staff if there are any suggested modifications of these customer notifications.

## **VII. EFFECT OF CHANGE UPON XCEL ENERGY REVENUE**

There is no change to Xcel Energy revenue resulting from the proposal we make in this Petition. This filing proposes changes to our tariffs reflecting customer charges associated with our change to remote operation of the internal service switch of our new AMI meters are cost-causative and designed to be revenue-neutral to the Company.

### **CONCLUSION**

We respectfully request the Commission to approve the following:

- Our proposed changes to the Service Reconnection Tariff sheets contained in our Electric Rate Book, and
- Our proposed change to the Manual Meter Reading Rider contained in our Electric Rate Book.

Dated: September 15, 2023

Northern States Power Company

**Redline**

**MANUAL METER READING RIDER**

Section No. 5  
~~Original~~1st Revised Sheet No. 92

**AVAILABILITY**

Available as an option to Residential Service, Residential Time of Day, Small General Service, and Small General Time of Day Service customers who elect on-site manual meter reading service and a non-standard, non-communicating meter instead of having their energy usage measured with standard Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) with two-way communication capabilities (smart meter).

**RATE**

Fixed Charge per Month	\$10.00
Non-Standard Meter Installation and Removal Charge	\$80.00
Non-Standard Meter Removal Charge	\$40.00

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

1. Customers who elect to receive this service after the installation of a standard AMI smart meter at their premise(s) will be subject to the Non-Standard Meter Installation and Removal Charge upon request for this service. This charge covers the cost to install the non-standard meter as requested, as well as the future cost to remove the non-standard meter when the customer cancels this service or vacates the premise where service was requested.
2. Customers who elect to receive this service prior to the installation of a standard AMI smart meter at their premise(s) will be subject to the Non-Standard Meter Removal Charge upon request for this service. This charge covers the future cost to remove the non-standard meter when the customer cancels this service or vacates the premise where service was requested.
3. This rider will separately apply to each individual non-standard meter.
4. The Company reserves the right to refuse availability of this rider if the:
  - a. Manual meter reading service would create a safety hazard for the customer, the public, or the Company's personnel or facilities,
  - b. Customer does not allow the Company's employees or agents access to the non-standard meter(s) at the customer's premise(s), or
  - c. Customer has a history of meter tampering.
5. Entities such as multi-unit dwelling associations are not authorized to elect this rider on behalf of individually metered customers.
6. Customers electing manual meter reading service may receive bills based on estimated meter readings in any month where circumstances prevent a meter reading.
7. Customers electing for the manual meter reading with the rider will be subject to a higher Service Reconnection Charge as specified in Section 1.2 of the General Service Rules.

**Clean**

**MANUAL METER READING RIDER**

Section No. 5  
1st Revised Sheet No. 92

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**AVAILABILITY**

Available as an option to Residential Service, Residential Time of Day, Small General Service, and Small General Time of Day Service customers who elect on-site manual meter reading service and a non-standard, non-communicating meter instead of having their energy usage measured with standard Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) with two-way communication capabilities (smart meter).

**RATE**

Fixed Charge per Month	\$10.00
Non-Standard Meter Installation and Removal Charge	\$80.00
Non-Standard Meter Removal Charge	\$40.00

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

1. Customers who elect to receive this service after the installation of a standard AMI smart meter at their premise(s) will be subject to the Non-Standard Meter Installation and Removal Charge upon request for this service. This charge covers the cost to install the non-standard meter as requested, as well as the future cost to remove the non-standard meter when the customer cancels this service or vacates the premise where service was requested.
2. Customers who elect to receive this service prior to the installation of a standard AMI smart meter at their premise(s) will be subject to the Non-Standard Meter Removal Charge upon request for this service. This charge covers the future cost to remove the non-standard meter when the customer cancels this service or vacates the premise where service was requested.
3. This rider will separately apply to each individual non-standard meter.
4. The Company reserves the right to refuse availability of this rider if the:
  - a. Manual meter reading service would create a safety hazard for the customer, the public, or the Company's personnel or facilities,
  - b. Customer does not allow the Company's employees or agents access to the non-standard meter(s) at the customer's premise(s), or
  - c. Customer has a history of meter tampering.
5. Entities such as multi-unit dwelling associations are not authorized to elect this rider on behalf of individually metered customers.
6. Customers electing manual meter reading service may receive bills based on estimated meter readings in any month where circumstances prevent a meter reading.
7. Customers electing for the manual meter reading with the rider will be subject to a higher Service Reconnection Charge as specified in Section 1.2 of the General Service Rules.

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**SECTION 1 - GENERAL SERVICE RULES**

**1.2 SERVICE CHARGES**

A. Service Processing Charge:

The Company will assess a \$15.00 processing charge for the initial establishment of service for each customer.

B. Service Reconnection Charge:

The Company ~~will assess \$50.00 for reconnecting service that has been disconnected for non-payment charges a fee to~~ reconnect service that has been disconnected for non-payment. The fee amount is based on whether the meter installed at the customer premise is equipped with an internal service switch and will be phased-in as follows:

All customers through December 31, 2023: \$50

Effective Jan 1, 2024:

- Residential customers with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$50
- Commercial customers on Small General Service and Small General Time of Day rates with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$50
- Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect: \$50
- All other customers: \$50

Effective Jan 1, 2026:

- Residential customers with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$100
- Commercial customers on Small General Service and Small General Time of Day rates with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$100
- Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect: \$100
- All other customers: \$100

C. Service Relock Charge

The Company will charge \$100.00 for reconnecting service where the Company has disconnected service for non-payment and subsequently returned to relock the service after it was reconnected without Company authorization.

**1.3 ACCESS TO CUSTOMER'S PREMISES**

Company representatives, when properly identified, shall have access to customer's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading meters, making repairs, making inspections, removing the Company's property, or for any other purpose incident to the service.

**1.4 CONTINUITY OF SERVICE**

The Company will endeavor to provide continuous service but does not guarantee an uninterrupted or undisturbed supply of electric service. The Company will not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from the interruption or disturbance of service for any cause other than gross negligence of the Company. The Company will not be liable for any loss of profits or other consequential damages resulting from the use of service or any interruption or disturbance of service.

(Continued on Sheet No. 6-2)

Date Filed: ~~11-22-21~~ 09-15-23

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President, Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation

Case No. ~~PU-21-43323-~~

Order Date: ~~12-02-21~~

**Clean**

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## SECTION 1 - GENERAL SERVICE RULES

### 1.2 SERVICE CHARGES

A. Service Processing Charge:

The Company will assess a \$15.00 processing charge for the initial establishment of service for each customer.

B. Service Reconnection Charge:

The Company charges a fee to reconnect service that has been disconnected for non-payment. The fee amount is based on whether the meter installed at the customer premise is equipped with an internal service switch and will be phased-in as follows:

All customers through December 31, 2023: \$50

Effective Jan 1, 2024:

- Residential customers with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$50
- Commercial customers on Small General Service and Small General Time of Day rates with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$50
- Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect: \$50
- All other customers: \$50

Effective Jan 1, 2026:

- Residential customers with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$100
- Commercial customers on Small General Service and Small General Time of Day rates with a standard AMI meter: \$13.50
- Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading: \$100
- Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect: \$100
- All other customers: \$100

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The Company will charge \$100.00 for reconnecting service where the Company has disconnected service for non-payment and subsequently returned to relock the service after it was reconnected without Company authorization.

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Company representatives, when properly identified, shall have access to customer's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of reading meters, making repairs, making inspections, removing the Company's property, or for any other purpose incident to the service.

### 1.4 CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

The Company will endeavor to provide continuous service but does not guarantee an uninterrupted or undisturbed supply of electric service. The Company will not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from the interruption or disturbance of service for any cause other than gross negligence of the Company. The Company will not be liable for any loss of profits or other consequential damages resulting from the use of service or any interruption or disturbance of service.

(Continued on Sheet No. 6-2)

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Date Filed: 09-15-23

By: Christopher B. Clark

Effective Date:

President, Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation

Case No. PU-23-

Order Date:

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# NEED HELP PAYING ENERGY BILLS?



Si ocupa ayuda pagando su factura ay recursos que pueden ayudar. Contacte al número de teléfono listado por condado de Minnesota Energy Assistance Program.

If you're having trouble paying your energy bills, we want to help you with a payment plan- Call us at **800-895-4999** or TDD **800-895-4949** for assistance.

### Averaged monthly payment is available

Energy bills go up and down with the temperature, but we can help even out your monthly payments. With Averaged Monthly Payment, your monthly payments are based on an average of your past use. For more information, or to sign up, call us or visit [xcelenergy.com](http://xcelenergy.com).

### You might qualify for a free home energy audit

**FREE** home energy audits are available to income-qualified customers who need help making their home more energy efficient. Check with your nearest Community Action Agency to see if you qualify based on your yearly income and the number of people in your household.

The **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** helps eligible families with home heating and weatherization costs. The program begins Nov 1st and runs through May 31st. The regular season ends May 31st. Applications for a cooling device repair/replacement are being accepted, call 1-866-614-6005 for information.

The program partially pays the cost of natural gas, electricity, propane, fuel oil, coal, wood, or other fuel sources. The program also covers:

- Weatherization services (insulation, weather stripping around doors and windows, etc.)
- Furnace cleaning, repair, and replacement
- Chimney cleaning and inspection
- Emergency assistance

**2023-2024 LIHEAP Income Guidelines:** contact your local agency for household size greater than 10.

Family Size	3 MONTH
	MAX
1	7,290
2	9,827
3	12,140
4	14,452
5	16,764
6	19,077
7	19,510
8	19,944
9	20,887
10	22,815

### How to apply:

- **Locally:** Contact your local Human Service Zone office:  
<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/human-service/zones>  
Email: [applyforhelp@nd.gov](mailto:applyforhelp@nd.gov)  
Call: 1-866-614-6005
- **Online:** <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/liheap>

**ND Help for Homeowners:** This assistance can help qualifying homeowners who are at risk of housing instability due to past due mortgage, utilities, or related property expenses or who may be struggling to maintain stable housing for other financial reasons.

For more information contact the ND Housing Stability Program: 701-328-1907 email: [haf@nd.gov](mailto:haf@nd.gov)

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/housing>

### Community action agency information

Fargo SENDCAA -----701-232-2452 or 800-726-7960

Grand Forks Red River Valley -----701-746-5431 or 800-450-1823

Minot -----701-839-7221 or 800-726-8645



### Learn about energy assistance funds

Energy assistance or other Human Service Zone funds are available to help qualifying individuals pay their natural gas and electric bills. Apply online at <https://www.applyforhelp.nd.gov/> or call the Human Service Zone agency in your area for more information.

### Buffalo Bridges Human Service Zone

(Serves Barnes County) -----701-952-6868

Cass County Human Service Zone ----- 701-241-5747

Grand Forks Human Service Zone -----701-787-8535

Agassiz Valley Human Service Zone

(Traill County) -----701-636-5220

Ward County Human Service Zone -----701-852-3552

### Avoid or delay disconnection for up to 30 days

If you are disabled, have a special medical situation, are 65 or older — or have someone in your household who is — we can take special action before your service is disconnected due to non-payment. But to do this, you must complete and return the form below.

**Complete the Delay of Disconnection Request Form below and mail to:**

ATTN PAR DEPT

Fax to: 612-573-1818

XCEL ENERGY

P.O. BOX 8

EAU CLAIRE, WI 54702

## DELAY OF DISCONNECTION REQUEST FORM

**Yes | No**

Is a member of your household 65 or older?

Is a member of your household disabled?

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a special medical situation or medical equipment in your house?

If yes, please explain please describe medical condition or list medically necessary equipment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of clinic or health care organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you want your local social services office notified in the event of a proposed disconnection?

Do you want a **third-party** contacted in the event of a proposed disconnection?

**If you checked yes to the previous third-party question, please fill in the following:**

Third-party name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, state and ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print the following information and sign your name:**

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, state and ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My Xcel Energy account number (from bill)

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**DELAY OF DISCONNECTION REQUEST FORM in Spanish here**

**Average Cost per Remote Disconnect/Reconnect\***

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Pre Lock Call Cost	\$0.55
Post Lock Call Cost	\$3.89
Field Personnel Costs - Disconnects	\$7.92
Field Personnel Costs - Reconnects	\$1.19
<hr/>	
*All costs include labor and benefits	
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$13.54</b>

**Average Cost per Remote Disconnect/Reconnect\***

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Pre Lock Call Cost	\$0.55
Post Lock Call Cost	\$3.89
Field Personnel Costs - Disconnects	\$65.97
Field Personnel Costs - Reconnects	\$39.58
<hr/>	
*All costs include labor and benefits	
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$110.00</b>



# CHANGE IN NORTH DAKOTA Service Reconnection Charge

On Sept. 15, 2023, Xcel Energy submitted an application to the North Dakota Public Service Commission to make changes to the Service Reconnection Charge and the Manual Meter Reading Rider. The company requested these changes due to changes in reconnection costs resulting from the installation of AMI meters and the option for customers to opt-out of receiving a meter without the internal service switch, thereby necessitating that their meter be read manually.

The changes will become effective upon Commission approval. Pending Commission approval, residential and small commercial customers will be eligible for the lower Service Reconnection Charge of \$13.50 immediately after AMI installation at their premises. Customers with ineligible meters will continue to pay the current \$50 Service Reconnection Charge until our AMI deployment is complete in 2025. The higher Service Reconnection Charge for AMI opt-out and polyphase customers would take effect on January 1, 2026.

The tables below show the cost for Service Reconnection for each category of customer and when the new Service Reconnection Charge will go into effect.

## Effective January 1, 2024

Type of Customer and Meter	Service Reconnection Charge
Residential customers with standard AMI meter	\$13.50
Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading	\$50
Commercial customers on Small Service and Small General Time of Day rates with standard AMI meter	\$13.50
Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading	\$50
Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect	\$50
All other customers	\$50

## Effective January 1, 2026

Type of Customer and Meter	Service Reconnection Charge
Residential customers with standard AMI meter	\$13.50
Residential customers opting for Manual Meter Reading	\$100
Commercial customers on Small Service and Small General Time of Day rates with standard AMI meter	\$13.50
Non-demand business customers opting for Manual Meter Reading	\$100
Demand-billed customers ineligible for remote connect	\$100
All other customers	\$100

AMI meters contain an internal service switch that we can operate using two-way communication abilities, which negates the need to make a physical field visit to perform a service reconnection or disconnection, as they can be performed remotely, at a lower cost. Conversely, costs to complete physical disconnections and reconnections have increased.

The Service Reconnection Charge only applies to customers who have their service disconnected due to a past-due balance. We understand that service disconnections have a serious impact on our customers. Therefore, service disconnection is a last resort. We have a robust process in place that attempts to reach customers with past due balances numerous times before disconnecting service, and we make every effort to proactively support customers in resolving past due balances.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more details, visit our website at [www.xcelenergy.com/rates](http://www.xcelenergy.com/rates). Residential customers may also contact Xcel Energy at **800-895-4999**, and business customers may call us at **800-481-4700**. You also may contact the North Dakota Public Service Commission at **701-328-2400**.