

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Northern States Power Company
2023 Natura Gas Rate Increase Application

Case No. PU-23-367
OAH No. 20240006

APPLICATION FOR TRADE SECRET PROTECTION

Northern States Power Company (Xcel Energy or the Company) respectfully requests the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) enter a trade secret protective order in the above-referenced Case pursuant to Chapter 69-02-09 of the North Dakota Administrative Code. The purpose of the requested protective order is to protect trade secret and commercial information as defined by N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18.4 from public disclosure pursuant to N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18 *et seq.* or any other applicable disclosure laws.

In accordance with Section 69-02-09-02 of the North Dakota Administrative Code, one copy of the trade secret material is provided in the enclosed sealed envelope which is labeled: **PROTECTED INFORMATION – PRIVATE.**

1. A general description of the nature of the information sought to be protected.

The information for which the Company seeks protection is set forth in Late Filed Exhibit 20. It is information regarding a specific large customer’s agreement with the Company for gas transportation service, including current and past terms and provisions related to any minimum requirements.

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 N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18.4(2)(a). 2

The Company further states that the cost information is trade secret because it is information that “(1) [d]erives 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 or use; and (2) [i]s the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain the secrecy of the information,” as provided in N.D.C.C. § 44-04-18.4(2)(d). The Company further states that the information sought to be protected meets the definition of “trade secret” set forth in N.D.C.C. § 47-25.1-01(4).

2. An explanation of why the information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to other persons.

The pricing and contract information could have economic value to customers negotiating for gas transportation service. Knowledge of the terms under which a specific, large customer receives service could impact negotiations with other existing or potential large customers. Knowledge of contract terms would provide potential counterparties the opportunity to identify items of importance to the Company. Such a result could be harmful for the Company’s customers as a whole, now and in the future.

3. An explanation of why the information is not readily ascertainable by proper means by other persons.

The confidentiality of this information has been maintained by Xcel Energy. 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’s proposal, or to third persons pursuant to nondisclosure agreements to maintain the confidentiality of the information.

4. A general description of known competitors and competitors’ goods and services that are pertinent to the tariff or rate filing.

Other actual or potential large natural gas customers.

5. **A specific description of known competitors and competitors' goods and services that are pertinent to the tariff or rate filing.**

See response to No. 4 above.

6. **A description of the efforts used to maintain the secrecy of the information.**

See response to No. 3 above.

Respectfully submitted this ___th day of September, 2024.

Dorsey & Whitney, LLP

By: /s/ Zeviel Simpson
Zeviel Simpson (ND ID # 06794) 50
South Sixth Street, Suite 1500
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2157
Telephone: (612) 492-6129
Email: simpser.zev@dorsey.com