

STATE OF MINNESOTA
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Beverly Jones Heydinger	Chair
Nancy Lange	Commissioner
Dan Lipschultz	Commissioner
John Tuma	Commissioner
Matt Schuerger	Commissioner

March 21st, 2016

Docket No. E002/M-13-867

In the Matter of the Petition of Northern States Power Company, dba Xcel Energy, for Approval of its Proposed Community Solar Garden Program

REQUEST FOR A PUBLIC HEARING IN RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSION'S FEBRUARY 26, 2016 NOTICE

Community Power requests a Public Hearing on the items identified in its February 26th, 2016, Notice, particularly those items relating to diversity of subscriber types and encouraging access to low-income and minority subscribers.

Community Power has been collaborating with several community organizations to prepare comments focused on creating access to community solar gardens for low-income and minority households for the April 1st comment deadline, which we will file shortly. In the process, we have been in communication with a large number of grassroots organizations, congregations, and individual energy users who are interested in community solar gardens and are experiencing the barriers currently limiting participation by low-income and minority communities.

These stakeholders are a direct focus of the Commission's interest in ensuring that Community Solar Gardens are accessible to energy users from a broad range of rate classes, socioeconomic statuses, and racial demographics. Their perspectives need to be at the table as the Commission shapes the future rules of the Solar* Rewards Community program. However, many of these stakeholders are unfamiliar with the PUC and its regulatory process, and are intimidated by the formal comment process. They are voices of interested and concerned ratepayers that have not traditionally been included in PUC comment processes, and a public hearing would provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

We encourage the Commission to provide a hearing and provide notice at least three weeks in advance to enable community residents to arrange their schedules. We believe a Public Hearing date would be appropriate either before the deadline for Reply Comments, or after that deadline with public testimony received during the Hearing considered as the Commission evaluates this docket.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Farrell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Farrell, Board Chair
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