

CHAPTER 7849**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION****CERTIFICATE OF NEED; POWER PLANT OR LINE**

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7849.0010 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** For purposes of parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400, the following definitions shall apply.

Subp. 2. **Adjusted net capability.** "Adjusted net capability" means net generating capacity, minus participation sales, plus participation purchases.

Subp. 3. **Adjusted net demand.** "Adjusted net demand" means system demand, minus firm purchases, plus firm sales.

Subp. 4. **Annual adjusted net demand.** "Annual adjusted net demand" means annual system demand, minus firm purchases, plus firm sales.

Subp. 5. **Annual electrical consumption.** "Annual electrical consumption" means sales of kilowatt hours of electricity to ultimate consumers over a 12-month period beginning January 1 and ending December 31 of the forecast year.

Subp. 6. **Annual system demand.** "Annual system demand" means the highest system demand of a utility occurring during the 12-month period ending with a given month.

Subp. 7. **Capacity factor.** "Capacity factor" means the ratio of the actual amount of electrical energy generated during a designated period by a particular generating facility to the maximum amount of electrical energy that could have been generated during the period by the facility had it been operated continuously at its rated capacity.

Subp. 8. **Commission.** "Commission" means the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Subp. 9. **Construction.** "Construction" means significant physical alteration of a site to install or enlarge a large energy facility, but not including an activity incident to preliminary engineering or environmental studies.

Subp. 10. **Firm purchases; firm sales.** "Firm purchases" and "firm sales" mean the amount of power to be purchased or sold which is intended to have assured availability.

Subp. 11. **Forecast years.** "Forecast years" means the 26 calendar years consisting of the calendar year the application is filed with the commission, the ten previous calendar years, and the 15 subsequent calendar years.

Subp. 12. **Heat rate.** "Heat rate" means a measure of average thermal efficiency of an electric generating facility expressed as the ratio of input energy per net kilowatt hour produced, computed by dividing the total energy content of fuel burned for electricity generation by the resulting net kilowatt hour generation.

Subp. 13. **Large electric generating facility; LEGF.** "Large electric generating facility" or "LEGF" means an electric power generating unit or combination of units as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.2421, subdivision 2, clause (1).

Subp. 14. **Large high voltage transmission line; LHVTL.** "Large high voltage transmission line" or "LHVTL" means a conductor of electrical energy as defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.2421, subdivision 2, clause (2), and associated facilities necessary for normal operation of the conductor, such as insulators, towers, substations, and terminals.

Subp. 15. **Load center.** "Load center" means that portion or those portions of a utility's system where electrical energy demand is concentrated.

Subp. 16. **Load factor.** "Load factor" means the ratio of the average load in kilowatts supplied during a designated period to the maximum load in kilowatts that was supplied during that designated period.

Subp. 17. **Minnesota service area.** "Minnesota service area" means that portion of a utility's system lying within Minnesota.

Subp. 18. **Net generating capacity.** "Net generating capacity" means the total number of kilowatts, less station use, that all the generating facilities of a system could supply at the time of its maximum system demand. The capability of the generating units that are temporarily out of service for maintenance or repair shall be included in the net generating capacity.

Subp. 19. **Net reserve capacity obligation.** "Net reserve capacity obligation" means the annual adjusted net demand multiplied by the percent reserve capacity requirement.

Subp. 20. **Nominal generating capability.** "Nominal generating capability" means the average output power level, net of in-plant use, that a proposed LEGF is expected to be capable of maintaining over a period of four continuous hours of operation.

Subp. 21. **Participation power.** "Participation power" means power and energy that are sold from a specific generating unit or units for a period of six or more months on a continuously available basis (except when such unit or units are temporarily out of service for maintenance, during which time the delivery of energy from other generating units is at the seller's option).

Subp. 22. **Participation purchases; participation sales.** "Participation purchases" and "participation sales" mean purchases and sales under a participation power agreement or a seasonal participation power agreement.

Subp. 23. **Peak demand.** "Peak demand" means the highest system demand occurring within any designated period of time.

Subp. 24. **Promotional practices.** "Promotional practices" means any action or policies by an applicant, except those actions or policies that are permitted or mandated by statute or rule, which directly or indirectly give rise to the demand for the facility, including but not limited to advertising, billing practices, promotion of increased use of electrical energy, and other marketing activities.

Subp. 25. **Seasonal adjusted net demand.** "Seasonal adjusted net demand" means seasonal system demand, minus firm purchases, plus firm sales.

Subp. 26. **Seasonal participation power.** "Seasonal participation power" means participation power sold and bought on a seasonal (summer or winter) basis.

Subp. 27. **Seasonal system demand.** "Seasonal system demand" means the maximum system demand on the applicant's system that occurs or is expected to occur in any summer season or winter season.

Subp. 28. **Summer season.** "Summer season" means the period from May 1 through October 31.

Subp. 29. **System.** "System" means the service area where the utility's ultimate consumers are located and that combination of generating, transmission, and distribution facilities that makes up the operating physical plant of the utility, whether owned or nonowned, for the delivery of electrical energy to ultimate consumers.

Subp. 30. **System demand.** "System demand" means the number of kilowatts that is equal to the kilowatt hours required in any clock hour, attributable to energy required by the system during such hour for supply of firm energy to ultimate consumers, including system losses, and also including any transmission losses occurring on other systems and supplied by the system for transmission of firm energy, but excluding generating station uses and excluding transmission losses charged to another system.

Subp. 31. **Ultimate consumers.** "Ultimate consumers" means consumers purchasing electricity for their own use and not for resale.

Subp. 32. **Utility.** "Utility" means any entity engaged in the generation, transmission, or distribution of electrical energy, including but not limited to a private investor-owned utility or a public or municipally owned utility.

Subp. 33. **Winter season.** "Winter season" means the period from November 1 through April 30.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216B.08; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624; 26 SR 1438*

Published Electronically: *August 12, 2013*

CERTIFICATES OF NEED

7849.0020 PURPOSE.

The purpose of parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 is to specify the content of applications for certificates of need and to specify criteria for the assessment of need for large electric generating facilities and large high voltage transmission lines.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0030 SCOPE.

Subpart 1. **Facilities covered.** A person applying for a certificate of need for an LEGF or an LHVTL shall provide the information required by parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400. A certificate of need is required for a new LEGF, a new LHVTL, and for expansion of either facility when the expansion is itself of sufficient size to come within the definition of "large electric generating facility" or "large high voltage transmission line" in part 7849.0010. The nominal generating capability of an LEGF is considered its size. If the nominal generating capability of an LEGF varies by season, the higher of the two seasonal figures is considered its size.

Subp. 2. **Exemption.** Notwithstanding subpart 1, a certificate of need is not required for a facility exempted by Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.243, subdivision 8.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0100 PURPOSE OF CRITERIA.

The criteria for assessment of need must be used by the commission to determine the need for a proposed large energy facility under Minnesota Statutes, sections 216B.2421, subdivision 2, and 216B.243. The factors listed under each of the criteria set forth in part 7849.0120 must be evaluated to the extent that the commission considers them applicable and pertinent to a facility proposed under parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400. The commission shall make a specific written finding with respect to each of the criteria.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0110 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERATION.

The commission shall consider only those alternatives proposed before the close of the public hearing and for which there exists substantial evidence on the record with respect to each of the criteria listed in part 7849.0120.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0120 CRITERIA.

A certificate of need must be granted to the applicant on determining that:

A. the probable result of denial would be an adverse effect upon the future adequacy, reliability, or efficiency of energy supply to the applicant, to the applicant's customers, or to the people of Minnesota and neighboring states, considering:

(1) the accuracy of the applicant's forecast of demand for the type of energy that would be supplied by the proposed facility;

(2) the effects of the applicant's existing or expected conservation programs and state and federal conservation programs;

(3) the effects of promotional practices of the applicant that may have given rise to the increase in the energy demand, particularly promotional practices which have occurred since 1974;

(4) the ability of current facilities and planned facilities not requiring certificates of need to meet the future demand; and

(5) the effect of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification thereof, in making efficient use of resources;

B. a more reasonable and prudent alternative to the proposed facility has not been demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence on the record, considering:

(1) the appropriateness of the size, the type, and the timing of the proposed facility compared to those of reasonable alternatives;

(2) the cost of the proposed facility and the cost of energy to be supplied by the proposed facility compared to the costs of reasonable alternatives and the cost of energy that would be supplied by reasonable alternatives;

(3) the effects of the proposed facility upon the natural and socioeconomic environments compared to the effects of reasonable alternatives; and

(4) the expected reliability of the proposed facility compared to the expected reliability of reasonable alternatives;

C. by a preponderance of the evidence on the record, the proposed facility, or a suitable modification of the facility, will provide benefits to society in a manner compatible with protecting the natural and socioeconomic environments, including human health, considering:

(1) the relationship of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification thereof, to overall state energy needs;

(2) the effects of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification thereof, upon the natural and socioeconomic environments compared to the effects of not building the facility;

(3) the effects of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification thereof, in inducing future development; and

(4) the socially beneficial uses of the output of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification thereof, including its uses to protect or enhance environmental quality; and

D. the record does not demonstrate that the design, construction, or operation of the proposed facility, or a suitable modification of the facility, will fail to comply with relevant policies, rules, and regulations of other state and federal agencies and local governments.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0200 APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND TIMING.

Subpart 1. **Form and manner.** An applicant for a certificate of need shall apply in a form and manner prescribed by parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400.

Subp. 2. **Copies, title, table of contents.** The original and 13 copies of the application must be filed with the commission. The applicant shall provide copies of the application to other state agencies with regulatory responsibilities in connection with the proposed facility and to other interested persons who request copies. The applicant shall maintain a distribution list of the copies. Documents, forms, and schedules filed with the application must be typed on 8-1/2 inch by 11 inch paper except for drawings, maps, and similar materials. An application must contain a title page and a complete table of contents that includes the applicable rule by the titles and numbers given in parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400. The date of preparation and the applicant's name must appear on the title page, as well as on each document filed with the application.

Subp. 3. **Changes to application.** After an application is filed, changes or corrections to the application must comply with subpart 2 as to the number of copies and size of documents. In addition, each page of a change or correction to a previously filed page must be marked with the word "REVISED" and with the date the revision was made. The original copy of the changes or corrections must be filed with the administrative law judge, and the remaining copies must be submitted to the commission. The applicant shall send to persons receiving copies of the application a like number of copies of changed or corrected pages.

Subp. 4. **Cover letter.** An application for a certificate of need must be accompanied by a cover letter signed by an authorized officer or agent of the applicant. The cover letter must specify the type of facility for which a certificate of need is requested.

Subp. 5. **Complete applications.** The commission must notify the applicant within 30 days of the receipt of an application if the application is not substantially complete. On notification, the applicant may correct any deficiency and may resubmit the application. If the revised application is substantially complete, the date of its submission is considered the application date.

Subp. 6. **Exemptions.** Before submitting an application, a person is exempted from any data requirement of parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 if the person (1) requests an exemption from specified rules, in writing to the commission, and (2) shows that the data requirement is unnecessary to determine the need for the proposed facility or may be satisfied by submitting another document. A request for exemption must be filed at least 45 days before submitting an application. The commission shall respond in writing to a request for exemption within 30 days of receipt and include the reasons for the decision. The commission shall file a statement of exemptions granted and reasons for granting them before beginning the hearing.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0210 FILING FEES AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE.

Subpart 1. **Fees.** The fee for processing an application shall be: \$10,000 plus \$50 for each megawatt of plant capacity for LEGFs; or \$10,000 plus \$40 per kilovolt of design voltage for LHVTLs; plus such additional fees as are reasonably necessary for completion of the evaluation of need for the proposed facility.

Subp. 2. **Payment schedule.** Twenty-five percent of the fee set according to subpart 1 must accompany the application, and the balance must be paid in three equal installments within 45, 90, and 135 days after submission of the application. The applicant must be notified of and billed for costs not covered by the fee described in subpart 1. The additional fees must be paid within 30 days of notification. The billing of additional fees must be accompanied by an itemized document showing the necessity for the additional assessment.

Subp. 3. **Payment required.** The commission shall not issue its decision on the application until the outstanding set fee payments and additional billings under subparts 1 and 2 are paid by the applicant.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 15, 2013*

7849.0220 APPLICATION CONTENTS.

Subpart 1. **Large electric generating facilities (LEGF).** Each application for a certificate of need for an LEGF shall include all of the information required by parts 7849.0240, 7849.0250, and 7849.0270 to 7849.0340.

Subp. 2. **Large high voltage transmission lines (LHVTL).** Each application for a certificate of need for an LHVTL shall include all of the information required by parts 7849.0240 and 7849.0260 to 7849.0340. If, however, a proposed LHVTL is designed to deliver electric power to a particular load center within the applicant's system, the application shall contain the information required by part 7849.0270 for that load center rather than for the system as a whole.

Subp. 3. **Joint ownership and multiparty use.** If the proposed LEGF or LHVTL is to be owned jointly by two or more utilities or by a pool, the information required by parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400 must be provided by each joint owner for its system. If the facility is designed to meet the long term needs, in excess of 80 megawatts, of a particular utility that is not to be an owner, that utility must also provide the information required by parts 7849.0010 to 7849.0400. Joint applicants may use a common submission to satisfy the requirements of any part for which the appropriate response does not vary by utility.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0230 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT.

Subpart 1. **Draft report.** If the application is for an LHVTL, the information submitted under parts 7849.0240, 7849.0260, and 7849.0290 to 7849.0340 must be designated by the applicant as its "draft environmental report" and distributed in accordance with part 4410.7100, subpart 5.

Subp. 2. **Written responses.** The applicant shall submit written responses to the substantive comments entered into the record of the proceeding before the close of the public hearing on the application. The written responses must be entered into the record and be available to the administrative law judge in preparing the recommendation on the application.

Subp. 3. **Final report.** The draft environmental report, written comments, and the applicant's written responses to comments comprise the "final environmental report," which must be distributed in accordance with part 4410.7100, subpart 5.

Subp. 4. **Notice of final report.** On completing the final environmental report, the commission shall have published in the EQB Monitor, published by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, a notice indicating completion.

Subp. 5. **Supplements.** The applicant must prepare a supplement to the final environmental report if the tests described in part 4410.3000, subparts 1 and 2, are met and a certificate of need proceeding on the proposed facility is pending.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

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7849.0240 NEED SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Subpart 1. **Need summary.** An application must contain a summary of the major factors that justify the need for the proposed facility. This summary must not exceed, without the approval of the commission, 15 pages in length, including text, tables, graphs, and figures.

Subp. 2. **Additional considerations.** Each application shall contain an explanation of the relationship of the proposed facility to each of the following socioeconomic considerations:

A. socially beneficial uses of the output of the facility, including its uses to protect or enhance environmental quality;

B. promotional activities that may have given rise to the demand for the facility; and

C. the effects of the facility in inducing future development.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0250 PROPOSED LEGF AND ALTERNATIVES APPLICATION.

An application for a proposed LEGF must include:

A. a description of the facility, including:

(1) the nominal generating capability of the facility, as well as a discussion of the effect of the economies of scale on the facility size and timing;

(2) a description of the anticipated operating cycle, including the expected annual capacity factor;

(3) the type of fuel used, including the reason for the choice of fuel, projection of the availability of this fuel type over the projected life of the facility, and alternate fuels, if any;

(4) the anticipated heat rate of the facility; and

(5) to the fullest extent known to the applicant, the anticipated areas where the proposed facility could be located;

B. a discussion of the availability of alternatives to the facility, including but not limited to:

(1) purchased power;

(2) increased efficiency of existing facilities, including transmission lines;

(3) new transmission lines;

(4) new generating facilities of a different size or using a different energy source (fuel oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear fission, and the emergent technologies); and

(5) any reasonable combinations of the alternatives listed in subitems (1) to (4);

C. for the proposed facility and for each of the alternatives provided in response to item B that could provide electric power at the asserted level of need, a discussion of:

(1) its capacity cost in current dollars per kilowatt;

(2) its service life;

(3) its estimated average annual availability;

(4) its fuel costs in current dollars per kilowatt hour;

(5) its variable operating and maintenance costs in current dollars per kilowatt hour;

(6) the total cost in current dollars of a kilowatt hour provided by it;

(7) an estimate of its effect on rates systemwide and in Minnesota, assuming a test year beginning with the proposed in-service date;

(8) its efficiency, expressed for a generating facility as the estimated heat rate, or expressed for a transmission facility as the estimated losses under projected maximum loading and under projected average loading in the length of the transmission line and at the terminals or substations; and

(9) the major assumptions made in providing the information in subitems (1) to (8), including projected escalation rates for fuel costs and operating and maintenance costs, as well as projected capacity factors;

D. a map (of appropriate scale) showing the applicant's system; and

E. such other information about the proposed facility and each alternative as may be relevant to determination of need.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0260 PROPOSED LHVTL AND ALTERNATIVES APPLICATION.

Each application for a proposed LHVTL must include:

A. a description of the type and general location of the proposed line, including:

(1) the design voltage;

(2) the number, the sizes, and the types of conductors;

(3) the expected losses under projected maximum loading and under projected average loading in the length of the transmission line and at the terminals or substations;

(4) the approximate length of the proposed transmission line and the portion of that length in Minnesota;

(5) the approximate location of DC terminals or AC substations, which information shall be on a map of appropriate scale; and

(6) a list of all counties reasonably likely to be affected by construction and operation of the proposed line;

B. a discussion of the availability of alternatives to the facility, including but not limited to:

(1) new generation of various technologies, sizes, and fuel types;

(2) upgrading of existing transmission lines or existing generating facilities;

(3) transmission lines with different design voltages or with different numbers, sizes, and types of conductors;

(4) transmission lines with different terminals or substations;

(5) double circuiting of existing transmission lines;

(6) if the proposed facility is for DC (AC) transmission, an AC (DC) transmission line;

(7) if the proposed facility is for overhead (underground) transmission, an underground (overhead) transmission line; and

(8) any reasonable combinations of the alternatives listed in subitems (1) to (7);

C. for the proposed facility and for each of the alternatives provided in response to item B that could provide electric power at the asserted level of need, a discussion of:

(1) its total cost in current dollars;

(2) its service life;

(3) its estimated average annual availability;

(4) its estimated annual operating and maintenance costs in current dollars;

(5) an estimate of its effect on rates systemwide and in Minnesota, assuming a test year beginning with the proposed in-service date;

(6) its efficiency, expressed for a transmission facility as the estimated losses under projected maximum loading and under projected average loading in the length of the transmission line and at the terminals or substations, or expressed for a generating facility as the estimated heat rate; and

(7) the major assumptions made in providing the information in subitems (1) to (6);

D. a map (of appropriate scale) showing the applicant's system or load center to be served by the proposed LHVTL; and

E. such other information about the proposed facility and each alternative as may be relevant to determination of need.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0270 PEAK DEMAND AND ANNUAL CONSUMPTION FORECAST.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** Each application shall contain pertinent data concerning peak demand and annual electrical consumption within the applicant's service area and system, as provided in part 7849.0220, including but not limited to the data requested in subpart 2, item B. When recorded data is not available, or when the applicant does not use the required data in preparing its own

forecast, the applicant shall use an estimate and indicate in the forecast justification section in subparts 3 to 6 the procedures used in deriving the estimate. The application shall clearly indicate which data are historical and which are projected. It is expected that data provided by the applicant should be reasonable and internally consistent.

Subp. 2. **Content of forecast.** For each forecast year, the following data must be provided:

A. when the applicant's service area includes areas other than Minnesota, annual electrical consumption by ultimate consumers within the applicant's Minnesota service area;

B. for each of the following categories, estimates of the number of ultimate consumers within the applicant's system and annual electrical consumption by those consumers:

(1) farm, excluding irrigation and drainage pumping (for reporting purposes, any tract of land used primarily for agricultural purposes shall be considered farm land);

(2) irrigation and drainage pumping;

(3) nonfarm residential (when electricity is supplied through a single meter for both residential and commercial uses, it shall be reported according to its principal use, and apartment buildings shall be reported as residential even if not separately metered);

(4) commercial (this category shall include wholesale and retail trade; communication industries; public and private office buildings, banks, and dormitories; insurance, real estate and rental agencies; hotels and motels; personal business and auto repair services; medical and educational facilities; recreational, social, religious, and amusement facilities; governmental units, excluding military bases; warehouses other than manufacturer owned; electric, gas, water and water pumping, excluding water pumping for irrigation, and other utilities);

(5) mining;

(6) industrial (this category shall include all manufacturing industries, construction operations and petroleum refineries);

(7) street and highway lighting;

(8) electrified transportation (this category shall include energy supplied for the propulsion of vehicles, but shall not include energy supplied for office buildings, depots, signal lights or other associated facilities that shall be reported as commercial or industrial);

(9) other (this category shall include municipal water pumping facilities, oil and gas pipeline pumping facilities, military camps and bases, and all other consumers not reported in subitems (1) to (8)); and

(10) the sum of subitems (1) to (9);

C. an estimate of the demand for power in the applicant's system at the time of annual system peak demand, including an estimated breakdown of the demand into the consumer categories listed in item B;

D. the applicant's system peak demand by month;

E. the estimated annual revenue requirement per kilowatt hour for the system in current dollars; and

F. the applicant's estimated average system weekday load factor by month; in other words, for each month, the estimated average of the individual load factors for each weekday in the month.

Subp. 3. **Forecast methodology.** An applicant may use a forecast methodology of its own choosing, with due consideration given to cost, staffing requirements, and data availability. However, forecast data provided by the applicant is subject to tests of accuracy, reasonableness, and consistency. The applicant shall detail the forecast methodology employed to obtain the forecasts provided under subpart 2, including:

A. the overall methodological framework that is used;

B. the specific analytical techniques which are used, their purpose, and the components of the forecast to which they have been applied;

C. the manner in which these specific techniques are related in producing the forecast;

D. where statistical techniques have been used:

(1) the purpose of the technique;

(2) typical computations (e.g., computer printouts, formulas used), specifying variables and data; and

(3) the results of appropriate statistical tests;

E. forecast confidence levels or ranges of accuracy for annual peak demand and annual electrical consumption, as well as a description of their derivation;

F. a brief analysis of the methodology used, including:

(1) its strengths and weaknesses;

(2) its suitability to the system;

(3) cost considerations;

(4) data requirements;

(5) past accuracy; and

(6) other factors considered significant by the applicant; and

G. an explanation of discrepancies that appear between the forecasts presented in the application and the forecasts submitted under chapter 7610 or in the applicant's previous certificate of need proceedings.

Subp. 4. **Data base for forecasts.** The applicant shall discuss the data base used in arriving at the forecast presented in its application, including:

A. a complete list of all data sets used in making the forecast, including a brief description of each data set and an explanation of how each was obtained, (e.g., monthly observations, billing data, consumer survey, etc.) or a citation to the source (e.g., population projection from the state demographer's office);

B. a clear identification of any adjustments made to raw data in order to adapt them for use in forecasts, including:

- (1) the nature of the adjustment;
- (2) the reason for the adjustment; and
- (3) the magnitude of the adjustment.

The applicant shall provide to the commission or the administrative law judge on demand copies of the data sets used in making the forecasts, including both raw and adjusted data, input and output data.

Subp. 5. **Assumptions and special information.** The applicant shall discuss each essential assumption made in preparing the forecast, including the need for the assumption, the nature of the assumption, and the sensitivity of forecast results to variations in the essential assumptions.

The applicant shall discuss the assumptions made regarding:

- A. the availability of alternate sources of energy;
- B. the expected conversion from other fuels to electricity or vice versa;
- C. future prices of electricity for customers in the applicant's system and the effect that such price changes will likely have on the applicant's system demand;
- D. the data requested in subpart 2 that is not available historically or not generated by the applicant in preparing its own internal forecast;
- E. the effect of energy conservation programs on long-term electrical demand; and
- F. any other factor considered by the applicant in preparing the forecast.

Subp. 6. **Coordination of forecasts with other systems.** The applicant shall provide:

A. a description of the extent to which the applicant coordinates its load forecasts with those of other systems, such as neighboring systems and associate systems in a power pool or coordinating organization; and

B. a description of the manner in which such forecasts are coordinated, and any problems experienced in efforts to coordinate load forecasts.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; L 1987 c 312 art 1 s 10; 12 SR 2624; 17 SR 1279*

Published Electronically: *October 15, 2013*

7849.0280 SYSTEM CAPACITY.

The applicant shall describe the ability of its existing system to meet the demand for electrical energy forecast in response to part 7849.0270 and the extent to which the proposed facility will increase this capability. In preparing this description, the applicant shall present the following information:

A. a brief discussion of power planning programs, including criteria, applied to the applicant's system and to the power pool or area within which the applicant's planning studies are based;

B. the applicant's seasonal firm purchases and seasonal firm sales for each utility involved in each transaction for each of the forecast years;

C. the applicant's seasonal participation purchases and seasonal participation sales for each utility involved in each transaction for each of the forecast years;

D. for the summer season and for the winter season corresponding to each forecast year, the load and generation capacity data requested in subitems (1) to (13), including the anticipated purchases, sales, capacity retirements, and capacity additions, except those that depend on certificates of need not yet issued by the commission:

- (1) seasonal system demand;
- (2) annual system demand;
- (3) total seasonal firm purchases;
- (4) total seasonal firm sales;
- (5) seasonal adjusted net demand (subitem (1) minus subitem (3) plus subitem (4));
- (6) annual adjusted net demand (subitem (2) minus subitem (3) plus subitem (4));
- (7) net generating capacity;
- (8) total participation purchases;
- (9) total participation sales;
- (10) adjusted net capability (subitem (7) plus subitem (8) minus subitem (9));
- (11) net reserve capacity obligation;
- (12) total firm capacity obligation (subitem (5) plus subitem (11)); and
- (13) surplus or deficit (-) capacity (subitem (10) minus subitem (12));

E. for the summer season and for the winter season corresponding to each forecast year subsequent to the year of application, the load and generation capacity data requested in item D, subitems (1) to (13), including purchases, sales, and generating capability contingent on the proposed facility;

F. for the summer season and for the winter season corresponding to each forecast year subsequent to the year of application, the load and generation capacity data requested in item D, subitems (1) to (13), including all projected purchases, sales, and generating capability;

G. for each of the forecast years subsequent to the year of application, a list of proposed additions and retirements in net generating capability, including the probable date of application for any addition that is expected to require a certificate of need;

H. for the previous calendar year, the current year, the first full calendar year before the proposed facility is expected to be in operation and the first full calendar year of operation of the proposed facility, a graph of monthly adjusted net demand and monthly adjusted net capability, as well as a plot on the same graph of the difference between the adjusted net capability and actual, planned, or estimated maintenance outages of generation and transmission facilities; and

I. a discussion of the appropriateness of and the method of determining system reserve margins, considering the probability of forced outages of generating units, deviation from load forecasts, scheduled maintenance outages of generation and transmission facilities, power exchange arrangements as they affect reserve requirements, and transfer capabilities.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0290 CONSERVATION PROGRAMS, APPLICATION.

An application must include:

A. the name of the committee, department, or individual responsible for the applicant's energy conservation and efficiency programs, including load management;

B. a list of the applicant's energy conservation and efficiency goals and objectives;

C. a description of the specific energy conservation and efficiency programs the applicant has considered, a list of those that have been implemented, and the reasons why the other programs have not been implemented;

D. a description of the major accomplishments that have been made by the applicant with respect to energy conservation and efficiency;

E. a description of the applicant's future plans through the forecast years with respect to energy conservation and efficiency; and

F. a quantification of the manner by which these programs affect or help determine the forecast provided in response to part 7849.0270, subpart 2, a list of their total costs by program,

and a discussion of their expected effects in reducing the need for new generation and transmission facilities.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0300 CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY.

The applicant shall present a discussion of anticipated consequences to its system, neighboring systems, and the power pool should the proposed facility be delayed one, two, and three years, or postponed indefinitely. This information must be provided for the following three levels of demand: the expected demand provided in response to part 7849.0270, subpart 2, and the upper and lower confidence levels provided in response to part 7849.0270, subpart 3, item E.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0310 ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REQUIRED.

Each applicant shall provide environmental data for the proposed facility and for each alternative considered in detail in response to part 7849.0250, item C or 7849.0260, item C. Information relating to construction and operation of each of these alternatives shall be provided as indicated in parts 7849.0320 to 7849.0340, to the extent that such information is reasonably available to the applicant and applicable to the particular alternative. Where appropriate, the applicant shall submit data for a range of possible facility designs. Major assumptions should be stated, and references should be cited where appropriate.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0320 GENERATING FACILITIES.

The applicant shall provide the following information for each alternative that would involve construction of an LEGF:

A. the estimated range of land requirements for the facility with a discussion of assumptions on land requirements for water storage, cooling systems, and solid waste storage;

B. the estimated amount of vehicular, rail, and barge traffic generated by construction and operation of the facility;

C. for fossil-fueled facilities:

(1) the expected regional sources of fuel for the facility;

(2) the typical fuel requirement (in tons per hour, gallons per hour, or thousands of cubic feet per hour) during operation at rated capacity and the expected annual fuel requirement at the expected capacity factor;

(3) the expected rate of heat input for the facility in Btu per hour during operation at rated capacity;

(4) the typical range of the heat value of the fuel (in Btu per pound, Btu per gallon, or Btu per 1,000 cubic feet) and the typical average heat value of the fuel; and

(5) the typical ranges of sulfur, ash, and moisture content of the fuel;

D. for fossil fueled facilities:

(1) the estimated range of trace element emissions and the maximum emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulates in pounds per hour during operation at rated capacity; and

(2) the estimated range of maximum contributions to 24-hour average ground level concentrations at specified distances from the stack of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulates in micrograms per cubic meter during operation at rated capacity and assuming generalized worst-case meteorological conditions;

E. water use by the facility for alternate cooling systems, including:

(1) the estimated maximum use, including the groundwater pumping rate in gallons per minute and surface water appropriation in cubic feet per second;

(2) the estimated groundwater appropriation in million gallons per year; and

(3) the annual consumption in acre-feet;

F. the potential sources and types of discharges to water attributable to operation of the facility;

G. radioactive releases, including:

(1) for nuclear facilities, the typical types and amounts of radionuclides released by the facility in curies per year for alternate facility designs and levels of waste treatment; and

(2) for fossil-fueled facilities, the estimated range of radioactivity released by the facility in curies per year;

H. the potential types and quantities of solid wastes produced by the facility in tons per year at the expected capacity factor;

I. the potential sources and types of audible noise attributable to operation of the facility;

J. the estimated work force required for construction and operation of the facility; and

K. the minimum number and size of transmission facilities required to provide a reliable outlet for the generating facility.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0330 TRANSMISSION FACILITIES.

The applicant shall provide data for each alternative that would involve construction of an LHVTL. The following information must be included:

A. for overhead transmission facilities:

(1) schematic diagrams that show the dimensions of the support structures and conductor configurations for each type of support structure that may be used;

(2) a discussion of the strength and distribution of the electric field attributable to the transmission facility, including the contribution of air ions if appropriate;

(3) a discussion of ozone and nitrogen oxide emissions attributable to the transmission facility;

(4) a discussion of radio and television interference attributable to the transmission facility; and

(5) a discussion of the characteristics and estimated maximum and typical levels of audible noise attributable to the transmission facilities;

B. for underground transmission facilities:

(1) the types and dimensions of the cable systems and associated facilities that would be used;

(2) the types and quantities of materials required for the cable system, including materials required for insulation and cooling of the cable; and

(3) the amount of heat released by the cable system in kilowatts per foot of cable length;

C. the estimated width of the right-of-way required for the transmission facility;

D. a description of construction practices for the transmission facility;

E. a description of operation and maintenance practices for the transmission facility;

F. the estimated work force required for construction and for operation and maintenance of the transmission facility; and

G. a narrative description of the major features of the region between the endpoints of the transmission facility. The region shall encompass the likely area for routes between the endpoints.

The description should emphasize the area within three miles of the endpoints. The following information shall be described where applicable:

- (1) hydrologic features including lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands;
- (2) natural vegetation and associated wildlife;
- (3) physiographic regions; and
- (4) land-use types, including human settlement, recreation, agricultural production, forestry production, and mineral extraction.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0340 NO-FACILITY ALTERNATIVE.

For each of the three levels of demand specified in part 7849.0300, the applicant shall provide the following information for the alternative of no facility:

A. a description of the expected operation of existing and committed generating and transmission facilities;

B. a description of the changes in resource requirements and wastes produced by facilities discussed in response to item A, including:

- (1) the amount of land required;
- (2) induced traffic;
- (3) fuel requirements;
- (4) airborne emissions;
- (5) water appropriation and consumption;
- (6) discharges to water;
- (7) reject heat;
- (8) radioactive releases;
- (9) solid waste production;
- (10) audible noise; and
- (11) labor requirements; and

C. a description of equipment and measures that may be used to reduce the environmental impact of the alternative of no facility.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.0400 CERTIFICATE OF NEED CONDITIONS AND CHANGES.

Subpart 1. **Authority of commission.** Issuance of a certificate of need may be made contingent upon modifications required by the commission. When an application is denied, the commission shall state the reasons for the denial.

Subp. 2. **Proposed changes in size, type, and timing.** Changes proposed by an applicant to the certified size, type, or timing of a proposed facility before the facility is placed in service must conform to the following provisions:

A. A delay of one year or less in the in-service date of a large generation or transmission facility previously certified by the commission is not subject to review by the commission.

B. A power plant capacity addition or subtraction smaller than the lesser of 80 megawatts or 20 percent of the capacity approved in a certificate of need issued by the commission does not require recertification.

C. A change in power plant ownership smaller than the lesser of 80 megawatts or 20 percent of the capacity approved in a certificate of need issued by the commission does not require recertification.

D. The applicant shall notify the commission as soon as it determines that a change described in item A, B, or C is imminent, detailing the reasons for the change.

E. A large transmission line length addition or subtraction made as a result of the route length approved by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board for projects previously certified does not require recertification.

F. A design change required by another state agency in its permitting process for certified facilities is not subject to review by the commission, unless the change contradicts the basic type determination specified by the certificate of need.

G. If a utility applies to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board for a transmission line route that is not expected to meet the definition of LHVTL in part 7849.0010, but at some time in the routing process it becomes apparent that the board may approve a route that meets the definition, the utility may apply for a certificate of need as soon as possible after that time. The length of a route is determined by measuring the length of its center line.

H. If an applicant determines that a change in size, type, timing, or ownership other than specified in this subpart is necessary for a large generation or transmission facility previously certified by the commission, the applicant must inform the commission of the desired change and detail the reasons for the change. A copy of the applicant's submission to the commission must be sent to each intervenor in the certificate of need hearing proceeding on the facility. Intervenors may comment on the proposed change within 15 days of being notified of the change. The commission

shall evaluate the reasons for and against the proposed change and, within 45 days of receipt of the request, notify the applicant whether the change is acceptable without recertification. The commission shall order further hearings if and only if it determines that the change, if known at the time of the need decision on the facility, could reasonably have resulted in a different decision under the criteria specified in part 7849.0120.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.2421; 216B.243; 216C.10*

History: *L 1983 c 289 s 115; 12 SR 2624*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.1000 APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE.

Subpart 1. **Applicability.** Parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100 apply to any high voltage transmission line project or large electric power generating plant project for which a certificate of need or other need determination is required by the Public Utilities Commission under Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.243 or 216B.2425, and applicable rules.

Subp. 2. **Scope.** Parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100 establish the requirements for the conduct of environmental review of proposed projects before the Public Utilities Commission for consideration of need pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.243 or 216B.2425, and applicable rules. Additional review at the permitting stage is required under parts 7850.1000 to 7850.5600.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.1100 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** For the purposes of parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100, the following terms and abbreviations have the meanings given them.

Subp. 2. **Associated facilities.** "Associated facilities" means buildings, equipment, and other physical structures that are necessary to the operation of a large electric power generating plant or a high voltage transmission line.

Subp. 3. **Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the person who is the commissioner of the Department of Commerce.

Subp. 4. **Environmental report.** "Environmental report" means a written document that describes the human and environmental impacts of a proposed large electric power generating plant or high voltage transmission line and alternatives to the project and methods to mitigate anticipated adverse impacts.

Subp. 5. **High voltage transmission line or HVTL.** "High voltage transmission line" or "HVTL" means any high voltage transmission line with a capacity of 200 kilovolts or more and any high voltage transmission line with a capacity of 100 kilovolts or more with more than ten miles of its length in Minnesota or that crosses a state line.

Subp. 6. **Large electric power generating plant or LEPGP.** "Large electric power generating plant" or "LEPGP" means any electric power generating plant or combination of plants at a single site with a combined capacity of 50,000 kilowatts or more and transmission lines directly associated with the plant that are necessary to interconnect the plant to the transmission system.

Subp. 7. **Mail.** "Mail" means either the United States mail or electronic mail by email.

Subp. 8. **Public Utilities Commission or PUC.** "Public Utilities Commission" or "PUC" means the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *April 12, 2024*

7849.1200 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT.

The commissioner of the Department of Commerce shall prepare an environmental report on a proposed high voltage transmission line or a proposed large electric power generating plant at the need stage. The environmental report must contain information on the human and environmental impacts of the proposed project associated with the size, type, and timing of the project, system configurations, and voltage. The environmental report must also contain information on alternatives to the proposed project and shall address mitigating measures for anticipated adverse impacts. The commissioner shall be responsible for the completeness and accuracy of all information in the environmental report.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.1300 INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.

Subpart 1. **Certificate of need application.** A person who submits an application to the Public Utilities Commission for a certificate of need for a LEPGP or a HVTL pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.243, shall at the same time submit a copy of the application and all accompanying materials required by the PUC to the commissioner of the Department of Commerce. The person shall provide the commissioner with an electronic version of the application suitable for posting on the commissioner's web page.

Subp. 2. **Transmission projects report.** A person who submits a transmission projects report to the Public Utilities Commission with a request for certification of a high voltage transmission line pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 216B.2425, shall at the same time submit a copy of the report and all accompanying materials required by the PUC to the commissioner of the Department of Commerce. The person shall provide the commissioner with an electronic version of the report suitable for posting on the commissioner's web page.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: 28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19
Published Electronically: September 10, 2018

7849.1400 PROCESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT PREPARATION.

Subpart 1. **Notice to interested persons.** Upon receipt of an application for a certificate of need or receipt of a transmission projects report seeking certification of a high voltage transmission line, the commissioner of the Department of Commerce shall provide notice to interested persons of the pending project. Notice must be mailed to the following persons:

- A. those persons on the commissioner's list maintained pursuant to part 7850.2100;
- B. those persons on the general service list maintained by the applicant pursuant to part 7829.0600;
- C. those persons on any service list maintained by the Public Utilities Commission for the proceeding;
- D. those persons who are required to be given notice of the certificate of need application or the transmission projects report under rules of the Public Utilities Commission;
- E. local governmental officials in the area of the proposed project; and
- F. those persons who own property adjacent to any site or within any route identified by the applicant as a preferred location for the project or as a site or route under serious consideration by the applicant if such sites or routes are known to the applicant.

Subp. 2. **Content of notice.** The notice required by subpart 1 must contain the following information:

- A. a description of the proposed project, including possible sites or routes if known;
- B. a statement that authorization from the Public Utilities Commission to construct the facility has been applied for and a description of the PUC process, including a statement that the PUC proceeding is the only proceeding in which the no-build alternative and the size, type, timing, system configuration, and voltage will be considered;
- C. a statement that the commissioner of the Department of Commerce will prepare an environmental report on the project and a description of the process for preparation of the report;
- D. a statement that a public meeting will be held by the commissioner and the date and place of the meeting, a statement that the public will have an opportunity to ask questions about the project and to suggest alternatives and impacts to address in the environmental report, and a statement explaining the purpose of the public meeting;
- E. a statement informing the public of where copies of the pertinent information may be reviewed and copies obtained;
- F. a statement indicating whether the project proposer may exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire the land necessary for the project and the basis for such authority; and

G. a statement describing the manner in which an interested person can add the person's name to the mailing list for future notices.

Subp. 3. **Public meeting.** The commissioner of the Department of Commerce shall hold a public meeting within 40 days after receipt of an application for a certificate of need or receipt of a transmission projects report seeking certification of a high voltage transmission line. At least 15 days prior to the meeting, the commissioner shall mail notice of the meeting to those persons listed in subpart 1. The commissioner shall also publish notice of the meeting in a newspaper of local circulation in the area at least ten days before the meeting. The commissioner shall also publish notice of the meeting in the EQB Monitor and shall post the notice on the commissioner's web page. The public meeting must be held in a location that is convenient for persons who live near a proposed project.

Subp. 4. **Conduct of public meeting.** The commissioner shall make available at the public meeting a copy of the certificate of need application or transmission projects report. The commissioner's staff shall explain the process for preparation of the environmental report. At the public meeting, the public must be afforded an opportunity to ask questions and present comments and to suggest alternatives and possible impacts to be evaluated in the environmental report. The commissioner shall keep an audio recording of the meeting. The commissioner shall provide at least 20 days from the day of the public meeting for the public to submit written comments regarding the proposed project.

Subp. 5. **Applicant role.** The applicant shall provide representatives at the public meeting who can respond to questions about the proposed project.

Subp. 6. **Alternatives and impacts.** A person desiring that a particular alternative to the proposed project or a possible adverse impact of the project be considered in the environmental report shall identify the alternative or impact to be included, provide an explanation of why the alternative or impact should be included in the environmental report, and submit all supporting information the person wants the commissioner to consider. The commissioner shall provide the applicant with an opportunity to respond to each request that is filed. The commissioner shall include in the environmental report any alternative or impact identified by the PUC for inclusion. The commissioner may exclude from analysis any alternative that does not meet the underlying need for or purpose of the project or that is not likely to have any significant environmental benefit compared to the project as proposed, or if another alternative that will be analyzed is likely to have similar environmental benefits with substantially less adverse economic, employment, or sociological impacts than the suggested alternative.

Subp. 7. **Commissioner decision.** Within ten days after close of the public comment period, the commissioner shall issue an order determining the following:

- A. the alternatives to be addressed in the environmental report, including the alternatives required by part 7849.1500, subpart 1, item B;
- B. the specific potential impacts to be addressed;
- C. the schedule for completion of the environmental report; and

D. other matters to be included in the environmental report.

Once the commissioner has issued an order establishing the matters to be evaluated in the environmental report, the order must not be changed except upon a decision by the commissioner that substantial changes have been made in the project or substantial new information has arisen significantly affecting the potential environmental effects of the project or the availability of reasonable alternatives. The commissioner may elect to bring any decisions regarding what should be included in the environmental report to the next regularly scheduled meeting or a special meeting.

Subp. 8. **Notice of decision.** At the time of the commissioner's decision, the commissioner shall mail the order to those persons who have requested to be notified. Any person may request to bring the matter of what alternatives or impacts to include in the environmental report to the commissioner in accordance with part 4405.0600, subpart 5. Such request shall be filed in writing with the commissioner within ten days of the commissioner's decision. A request to bring the matter to the commissioner shall not preclude the commissioner from beginning preparation of the environmental report in accordance with the commissioner's decision.

Subp. 9. **Time frame for completion of environmental report.** The commissioner shall complete the environmental report in accordance with the schedule determined by the commissioner. In establishing the schedule for completion of the environmental report, the commissioner shall take into account any applicable statutory deadlines, the number and complexity of the alternatives and impacts to be addressed, and the interests of the public, the applicant, the PUC, the commissioner, and other state agencies. The commissioner shall complete the environmental report within four months of submission of the information required by part 7849.1300. If the PUC should determine that an initial certificate of need application or transmission projects report is incomplete, the commissioner's schedule shall be extended accordingly.

Subp. 10. **Notification of availability of environmental report.** Upon completion of the environmental report, the commissioner shall publish notice in the EQB Monitor of the availability of the environmental report and mail notice of the availability of the document to those persons who have requested to be notified. The commissioner shall provide a copy of the document to the PUC and to any other public agency with authority to permit or approve the proposed project. The commissioner shall post the environmental report on the agency's web page.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *September 10, 2018*

7849.1500 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CONTENT.

Subpart 1. **Content of environmental report.** The environmental report must include the items described in items A to H.

A. A general description of the proposed project and associated facilities.

B. A general description of the alternatives to the proposed project that are addressed. Alternatives shall include the no-build alternative, demand side management, purchased power,

facilities of a different size or using a different energy source than the source proposed by the applicant, upgrading of existing facilities, generation rather than transmission if a high voltage transmission line is proposed, transmission rather than generation if a large electric power generating plant is proposed, use of renewable energy sources, and those alternatives identified by the commissioner of the Department of Commerce.

C. An analysis of the human and environmental impacts of a project of the type proposed and of the alternatives identified.

D. An analysis of the potential impacts that are project specific.

E. An analysis of mitigative measures that could reasonably be implemented to eliminate or minimize any adverse impacts identified for the proposed project and each alternative analyzed.

F. An analysis of the feasibility and availability of each alternative considered.

G. A list of permits required for the project.

H. A discussion of other matters identified by the commissioner.

Subp. 2. **Impacts of power plants.** At a minimum, the commissioner shall address in the environmental report the following impacts for any large electric power generating plant and associated facilities:

A. the anticipated emissions of the following pollutants expressed as an annual amount at the maximum rated capacity of the project and as an amount produced per kilowatt hour and the calculations performed to determine the emissions: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon dioxide, mercury, and particulate matter, including particulate matter under 2.5 microns in diameter;

B. the anticipated emissions of any hazardous air pollutants and volatile organic compounds;

C. the anticipated contribution of the project to impairment of visibility within a 50-mile radius of the plant;

D. the anticipated contribution of the project to the formation of ozone expressed as reactive organic gases. Reactive organic gases are chemicals that are precursors necessary to the formation of ground-level ozone;

E. the availability of the source of fuel for the project, the amount required annually, and the method of transportation to get the fuel to the plant;

F. associated facilities required to transmit the electricity to customers;

G. the anticipated amount of water that will be appropriated to operate the plant and the source of the water if known;

H. the potential wastewater streams and the types of discharges associated with such a project including potential impacts of a thermal discharge;

I. the types and amounts of solid and hazardous wastes generated by such a project, including an analysis of what contaminants may be found in the ash and where the ash might be sent for disposal or reuse; and

J. the anticipated noise impacts of a project, including the distance to the closest receptor where state noise standards can still be met.

Subp. 3. Impacts of high voltage transmission lines. At a minimum, the commissioner shall address in the environmental report the following impacts for any high voltage transmission line and associated facilities:

- A. the typical right-of-way required for construction of a transmission line;
- B. the anticipated size and type of structures required for a line;
- C. the electric and magnetic fields usually associated with a line;
- D. the anticipated noise impacts of the transmission line; and
- E. the anticipated visual impacts of the transmission line.

Subp. 4. Incorporation of information. In preparing an environmental report, the commissioner may incorporate information and data from other documents in accordance with part 4410.2400.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.1600 AGENCY ASSISTANCE.

The commissioner of the Department of Commerce may request another state agency to assist in the preparation of an environmental report. Upon request, another state agency shall provide in a timely manner any unprivileged data or information to which it has reasonable access concerning the matters to be addressed in the environmental report and shall assist in the preparation of the environmental report when the agency has special expertise or access to information.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

Published Electronically: *October 13, 2009*

7849.1700 APPLICANT ASSISTANCE.

The commissioner of the Department of Commerce may request the applicant for a certificate of need or for certification of a HVTL to assist in the preparation of an environmental report. Upon request, the applicant shall provide in a timely manner any unprivileged data or information to which it has reasonable access and which will aid in the expeditious completion of the environmental report.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: 28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19
Published Electronically: October 13, 2009

7849.1800 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT TO ACCOMPANY PROJECT.

Subpart 1. **PUC decision.** The environmental report, or environmental assessment or EIS prepared pursuant to part 7849.1900, must be completed and copies provided to the Public Utilities Commission before the PUC can hold any public hearing or render a final decision on an application for a certificate of need or for certification of a HVTL. However, the PUC can commence the public hearing process by conducting prehearing matters. The commissioner's staff shall participate in the PUC proceeding and be available to answer questions about the environmental report or environmental assessment or EIS and to respond to comments about the document. The environmental report or environmental assessment or EIS must be considered by the PUC in making a final decision on a certificate of need or HVTL certification request.

Subp. 2. **Completeness of environmental report.** At the time the PUC makes a final decision on a certificate of need application or a request for certification of a HVTL, the PUC shall determine whether the environmental report and the record created in the matter address the issues identified by the commissioner in the decision made pursuant to part 7849.1400, subpart 7. The PUC may direct the commissioner to prepare a supplement to the environmental report, or the environmental assessment or EIS if one is prepared pursuant to part 7849.1900, if the PUC determines that an additional alternative or impact should be addressed or supplemental information should be provided.

Statutory Authority: MS s 116D.04
History: 28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19
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7849.1900 JOINT PROCEEDING.

Subpart 1. **Environmental assessment.** In the event an applicant for a certificate of need for a LEPGP or a HVTL applies to the commissioner of the Department of Commerce for a site permit or route permit prior to the time the commissioner completes the environmental report, and the project qualifies for alternative review by the commissioner under part 7850.2800, the commissioner may elect to prepare an environmental assessment in accordance with part 7850.3700 in lieu of the environmental report required under part 7849.1200. If combining the processes would delay completion of environmental review under parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100, the commissioner can combine the processes only if the applicant and the Public Utilities Commission agree to the combination. If the processes are combined, the commissioner shall include in the environmental assessment the analysis of alternatives required by part 7849.1500, but is not required to prepare an environmental report under parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100.

Subp. 2. **Environmental impact statement.** In the event an applicant for a certificate of need for a LEPGP or a HVTL applies to the commissioner for a site permit or route permit prior to the time the commissioner completes the environmental report, and the project does not qualify for alternative review by the commissioner under part 7850.2800, the commissioner may elect to prepare an environmental impact statement in lieu of the environmental report required under part

7849.1200 if the applicant and the Public Utilities Commission agree to the additional time that will be required to prepare the environmental impact statement. In this event, the commissioner shall include in the EIS the analysis of alternatives required by part 7849.1500, but is not required to prepare an environmental report under part 7849.1200.

Subp. 3. **Procedures.** In the event the commissioner combines the two processes pursuant to subpart 1 or 2, the procedures of parts 7850.1000 to 7850.5600 shall be followed in conducting the environmental review.

Subp. 4. **Joint hearing.** If the commissioner determines that a joint hearing with the Public Utilities Commission to consider both permitting and need issues is feasible, more efficient, and may further the public interest, the commissioner may decide to hold a joint hearing with the approval of the commission.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19*

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7849.2000 ALTERNATIVE FORM OF REVIEW.

The requirements under parts 7849.1000 to 7849.2100 for preparation of an environmental report on a LEPGP or HVTL for which a determination of need by the Public Utilities Commission has been requested is approved as an alternative form of review.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: *28 SR 951*

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7849.2100 COSTS TO PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT.

Subpart 1. **Applicant required to pay costs.** The applicant for a certificate of need for a large electric power generating plant or a high voltage transmission line or for a certification of a high voltage transmission line as part of a transmission projects report shall pay the commissioner of the Department of Commerce the reasonable costs incurred by the commissioner in preparing the environmental report.

Subp. 2. **Payment schedule.** The applicant shall submit a minimum payment of \$5,000 to the commissioner at the time the application or request is filed with the Public Utilities Commission. Additional payments shall be made within 30 days of notification by the agency that additional fees are necessary for completion of the environmental review. After preparation of the environmental report, the commissioner shall provide the applicant with a final accounting. The applicant shall make the final payment within 30 days of notification, or the agency shall refund any excess payments within 30 days of the final accounting.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 116D.04*

History: 28 SR 951; L 2005 c 97 art 3 s 19

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