BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Chair
Commissioner
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ISSUE DATE: December 31, 2014
DOCKET NO. E-999/CI-08-948
ORDER CLOSING DOCKET

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On December 19, 2007, the federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA or the Act) was signed into law. Among other things, the Act required state regulatory authorities to consider adopting specified standards and requiring rate-regulated electric and gas utilities with retail sales above a specified threshold to meet those standards.

The Commission examined the standards the Act required it to consider adopting and found that all except for the smart-grid standard had already been considered and appropriately implemented in Minnesota. On August 22, 2008, the Commission initiated an industry-wide examination of the smart-grid standard.

On June 5, 2009, after considering comments from stakeholders, the Commission adopted a working definition of “smart grid” and ordered utilities to take several measures designed to support the development of smart-grid technologies and gain information about the effects of smart-grid technology on utility systems. In brief, the Commission’s order

- Encouraged utilities to seek recovery of reasonable and prudent costs relating to the deployment of qualified smart grids;
- Encouraged utilities deploying qualified smart-grid systems to recover the remaining book-value depreciation costs of any equipment rendered obsolete by the deployment of the system;
- Identified certain information that utilities may be required to provide to customers in the future, including time-based prices, usage data, and generation sources;
- Required utilities to file annual reports on past, current, and planned smart-grid projects; and

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• Directed the Commission’s executive secretary to host periodic public meetings for utilities to report on their smart-grid projects.

In April 2010, Minnesota’s five investor-owned utilities began filing annual smart-grid reports in accordance with the Commission’s order. The most recent round of reports was filed on April 1, 2014.

Since January 2012, the Commission has held seven smart-grid workshops to facilitate a continuing dialogue with utilities and stakeholders on smart-grid issues. Topics have included data privacy, reliability and operations, electric vehicles, time-of-use rates, microgrids, renewables on the distribution system, and demand response.

On December 4, 2014, this matter came before the Commission.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the past five years, the annual smart-grid reports and stakeholder workshops have kept the Commission informed of current developments in smart-grid technology and the status of smart-grid implementation in Minnesota. While these tools have served their informational purpose well, the Commission believes that the time has come to close this docket and to consider, in a more focused way, how the Commission can most effectively facilitate the development of an integrated, dynamic grid.

Although utilities will not, for the time being, be required to file annual reports, the Commission fully intends to continue engaging with utilities and stakeholders to ensure that Minnesota is well positioned to move forward with the modernization of its electric grid.

ORDER

1. The Commission hereby closes this docket.

2. This order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Burl W. Haar
Executive Secretary

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