



P.O. Box 719
Baudette, MN 56623
218-634-2202
1-888-634-2202
Fax: 218-634-2203

P.O. Box 371
Littlefork, MN 56653
218-278-6658
1-888-258-2008
Fax: 218-278-4748

e-mail: nsec@wiktel.com
www.northstarelectric.coop

March 30, 2020

RE: Electric Utilities' Responsive Measures to COVID-19

Dear Commissioner Kelley and Chair Sieben:

North Star Electric Cooperative, Inc. is headquartered along the Canadian border in Baudette, Minnesota. We submit this letter in response to your March 24, 2020 memorandum regarding utility measures in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

North Star Electric Cooperative has always worked hard to help our member owners (customers) through difficult times, rarely disconnecting accounts. In 2018 (and 2019) we disconnected an average of only 2 (and 4) accounts per month for a geographic area the size of Connecticut. Please be assured that our member owners will continue to receive the flexibility they need. During this pandemic our dedication to them, and our commitment to agreeing on payment arrangements, is stronger than ever.

We at North Star Electric Cooperative share your concern for our fellow Minnesotans during this difficult time, and we commend the Governor for his decisive action to protect the state from this unseen but deadly threat. Importantly, as a nonprofit provider of essential electric service, we will continue to put the needs and welfare of our member owners first during this emergency.

Regarding the three commitments requested in your letter, we at North Star Electric Cooperative intend to do all we can to continue providing uninterrupted electric service to our member owners during this emergency. Specifically and consistent with the Cold Weather Rule protections in Minnesota Statutes, Section 216B.097, North Star Electric Cooperative intends at a **minimum** to: (1) refrain from residential customer disconnections, and to reconnect any previously disconnected residential customers as

part of a reasonable payment plan that reflects the financial circumstances of the customer and the hardships caused by the pandemic; (2) waive late fees that any residential or small business customer incurs because of economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) arrange payment plans for customers requesting help during this time based on the financial resources and circumstances of the customer.

Our board of directors, with each one locally elected by approximately 800 other member owners in their districts, wants to protect our member owners. The local policies they adopt to govern the cooperative indicate this, as well as addressing our uniqueness way up here. But there is more than just that. There is also heart poured into what we do every day because these are the people we see at the grocery stores, churches, school functions, and more.

Thank you for your support.

Cooperatively yours,

Ann Ellis
General Manager