The Need to Advance Policies for All Stakeholders

Xcel Energy provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across portions of eight Western and Midwestern states, including Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin. The company is a recognized leader in delivering renewable and other clean energy solutions to reduce carbon emissions. For the past 12 years, the company has been ranked the nation’s No. 1 utility wind energy provider according to the American Wind Energy Association. Xcel Energy’s solar portfolio is also rapidly growing, and the company offers customers an extensive portfolio of energy-saving programs and rebates. By 2018, Xcel Energy is set to retire about 25 percent of its owned coal-fueled capacity through a series of upgrades to its generating fleet.

Despite this progress, stakeholders in the company’s two major service territories, Colorado and Minnesota, are demanding more. Clean energy advocates and others continue to push for legislative and policy solutions that promote the transition to a clean energy future through renewable and distributed energy solutions as well as emerging technologies. The stakeholders driving this change are primarily located in major metropolitan areas. However, both states have significant rural populations that are more concerned with energy affordability, system reliability and economic stability. They depend on the coal and natural gas industries for their livelihoods, including the jobs and tax revenues that Xcel Energy’s fossil-fueled power plants provide.

To respond to diverse stakeholder interests and industry change, Xcel Energy recognized two years ago that it needed to advance a significant number of new policy and regulatory initiatives for adding distributed generation to its system, increasing the use of renewable energy and transitioning its generating fleet for the future. The company had struggled with advancing these types of initiatives in the past. As a consequence, Xcel Energy initiated a comprehensive, Our Energy Future advocacy campaign in Colorado and Minnesota for securing widespread stakeholder support, and ultimately, regulatory approvals on a number of important proposals.

A Campaign to Lead the Transition for Our Energy Future

Xcel Energy embarked on a concerted effort over the last two years to inform and collaborate with local stakeholders on future energy initiatives. The Our Energy Future campaign and associated collaboration resulted in the company finding solutions that satisfied diverse interests while meeting the challenges of a changing utility industry. This advocacy campaign was critical to securing approvals for a number of regulatory and policy efforts required for meeting evolving customer needs while transitioning the company’s operations for the future. The effort focused on three key objectives:

- Transforming the company’s generating fleet and paving the way for new emerging technologies. The decline of renewable energy prices and available tax credits creates an opportunity to invest in renewable energy at a favorable price for customers.
- Powering the economy and helping local businesses and communities achieve their clean energy objectives while promoting an advanced power grid without increasing the cost for other customers.
- Empowering customers with new renewable and other energy options.

Colorado’s Our Energy Future Plan

In Colorado, Xcel Energy proposed a number of initiatives designed to position the state for a renewable and affordable energy future focusing on powering technology, powering the economy and empowering customer choice. These efforts included:
- A plan to build, own and operate the 600-megawatt Rush Creek Wind Farm in rural eastern Colorado to deliver low-cost, clean energy for customers and a $1 billion benefit to the local economy. To take full advantage of available tax credits, the company’s proposal required accelerated approval.
- Expanding Xcel Energy’s existing solar energy programs for customers through a proposed Renewable Energy Plan, while proposing a new option, Renewable*Connect®, to give customers an affordable, flexible and easy way to choose up to 100 percent certified solar power for their homes or businesses.
- A rate-case filing that proposed pricing plan improvements to make customers’ bills more transparent and understandable, and create more dynamic, flexible rate options.
- Powering emerging technology through two solar-to-battery demonstration projects, including a residential neighborhood project that tests battery systems to manage high-levels of distributed solar generation and a large battery system which will provide critical backup power to a sustainable business campus development.

In late 2015, Xcel Energy leadership recognized the need to share a larger vision for Colorado’s energy future with stakeholders as the company would be submitting an unprecedented number of regulatory filings in 2016. The company developed a comprehensive stakeholder outreach and advocacy plan which was implemented by its regulatory affairs, state public affairs, key account management, and community relations organizations. Meetings were held with large customers, local governments, chambers of commerce, elected officials and other stakeholders influential in guiding Colorado’s energy future. The company shared its vision, listened to the needs of stakeholders, and frequently, received letters and comments of support for its regulatory efforts.

Xcel Energy leaders also engaged and kept all Colorado employees informed as advocates for the company. It broadcast three employee webcasts and hosted a well-attended lunch & learn event. In addition, Our Energy Future initiatives were the focus of the 2016 Colorado Legislative Day at the State Capitol for employees.

**Powering Minnesota’s Energy Future**

In Minnesota, Xcel Energy introduced three major initiatives to shape the state’s energy future:

- A groundbreaking resource plan for the Upper Midwest will move the company away from coal to cleaner energy sources by investing in new wind, solar, energy efficiency and natural gas. The plan addresses pressure to retire two coal-fueled generators at the Sherco Generating Plant in Becker, Minn., resulting in a 60 percent reduction in carbon emissions and achieving a 63 percent carbon-free energy mix by 2030. The plan achieves all these benefits while keeping customer cost increases at lower than the projected rate of inflation.
- A proposed new renewable customer option, Renewable*Connect® will provide customers a more convenient, flexible choice to sign up for 100 percent renewable energy, which is certified.
- Minnesota’s multi-year rate case will support investment in clean, reliable and safe electricity, while providing price predictability and customer options.

The company promoted these initiatives through a consistent, detailed and transparent process that involved significant regulatory review, education and stakeholder engagement. The Upper Midwest Resource plan, in particular involved a unique and unprecedented advocacy effort.

In early 2015, Xcel Energy held the first in a series of stakeholder meetings to discuss its preferred resource plan. Three additional stakeholder meetings followed where company leaders outlined the
details of its plan and addressed key areas of stakeholder interest including modeling, demand side management, evolving environmental regulations and transmission system impacts. Company leaders also met with individual stakeholders to discuss aspects of the plan and participated in technical conferences held by the Department of Commerce and the Clean Energy Organizations.

After listening and carefully processing all the stakeholder feedback, Xcel Energy introduced an updated vision of its plan in fall 2015, which included retiring two of the three coal units at the Sherco Generating Plant in Becker, Minn. With a combined capacity of 2,400 megawatts, Sherco is Minnesota’s largest power plant. The impact of the retirement on the Becker community was a central focus of Xcel Energy’s plan because the town depends on the plant for about 75 percent of its total city tax revenue. Xcel Energy proposed building a new, natural gas plant at the Sherco location to help maintain jobs and tax revenue in Central Minnesota, as part of its ongoing support of the Becker community.

Xcel Energy worked with customers in the Becker community to reinforce the benefits that the new proposal would bring while providing adequate time to transition the local workforce and creating new jobs and investments for the local community. Xcel Energy CEO Ben Fowke, as well as Chris Clark, president, for Xcel Energy in Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota, regularly visited Becker and other central Minnesota communities to listen to customer feedback and address concerns. The company has also worked closely with communities leaders on economic development efforts to replace jobs and tax base associated with the coal plant closures.

**Supporting Communications**

Xcel Energy leadership recognized early on that individually presenting and discussing the many technical filings resulting from the overall vision was going to be problematic. Thus, a comprehensive outreach and talking point strategy was developed to enable more effective communication and support of the broader goals. Both the Colorado and Minnesota energy future efforts were supported through robust communication plans that included media and social media plans. The company developed customer friendly messaging and booklets that described the multiple initiatives underway by consistently bringing customers and stakeholders back to the common core goals.

Each communication plan included development of a consistent message platform, Q&As, fact sheets, presentations, web content, media outreach and social media components, targeted outreach to key employees, and other tools to support stakeholder outreach and engagement. Communication toolkits for each major filing or initiative were provided to account managers, community relations managers, media relations and state and federal government affairs staff to support their advocacy work with customers, community leaders and elected officials—which in many cases, helped to garner letters of support with the utilities commissions for various proposals.

For the Colorado plan specifically, a series of advertorials were completed to highlight key initiatives and Xcel Energy’s track record around clean energy, collaborative partnerships and emerging technology. The company also supplemented this effort with digital content and video shorts. Furthermore, many employees toured the state, using existing relationships to present and discuss the broader goals and make those goals more tangible for customers and others.

For employees, Xcel Energy kept up a steady stream of messages and updates via employee pocket guide cards and ongoing coverage of milestones through internal employee news sources.

Social media also played an important role in educating key audiences. In Colorado Xcel Energy targeted audiences, including Arapahoe, Denver and Jefferson counties, and promoted four videos highlighting
the energy plan initiative, along with more than 25 posts driving traffic to energy plan initiative news articles, webpages and a petition to sign. These educational posts and energy plan initiative videos achieved nearly one million impressions and video views. In Minnesota, Central Minnesota audiences were targeted with social media messages that reinforced the economic value of Xcel Energy’s future plan, and Metro area audiences received promotions focused on the environmental benefits of the plan.

Approvals that Move the Company’s Energy Future Forward

Through a collaborative approach, Xcel Energy was able to work directly with stakeholders to tackle some of the utility’s most pressing challenges. These partnerships forged new ground by uncovering transformative solutions, delivering new business models and perhaps most importantly, creating a supportive network of problem solvers.

As a result of tireless efforts to educate and engage customers, stakeholders, opinion leaders and authoritative advocates, the following initiatives were approved.

In Colorado:

- The company achieved a wide-reaching agreement that was the largest of its kind in Colorado history, involving a record number of interveners and key energy issues. Xcel Energy and 22 interveners agreed, in total or in part, on a global settlement on three regulatory filings—the company’s Phase II Electric Rate Case, Renewable*Connect and the 2017 Renewable Energy Plan. Parties to the agreement included municipal customers, some of Xcel Energy’s biggest electricity users, solar and wind power developers, private solar companies and trade groups, consumer and low-income advocates, and environmental advocacy groups. The agreement paves the way to update Xcel Energy’s rate design structures, to offer the new Renewable*Connect program to customers, and to expand and broaden its existing customer renewable energy programs over the next three years.
- Xcel Energy received regulatory approval to build, own and operate the new 600-megawatt Rush Creek Wind Project and to build associated transmission infrastructure on an expedited schedule. The wind power project is expected to create substantial employment and economic development opportunities in Colorado. Additionally, because the project was green lighted prior to year end, the company was able to take advantage of federal tax incentives for construction, which will reduce capital costs and allows it to share these cost savings directly to customers.
- The company moved forward with its Innovative Clean Technology Program battery storage demonstrations, in partnership with Panasonic, Younicous, Sunverge Energy Inc., and Northern Reliability.
- As part of its Renewable Energy Plan, Xcel Energy is working with the Colorado Energy Office to implement a low-income rooftop solar program and with Energy Outreach Colorado to expand low-income access to community solar gardens.
- The Colorado Public Utilities Commission approved the company’s Renewable*Connect proposal, which will give customers a flexible, convenient and simple way to “go solar” by purchasing up to 100 percent certified solar power for their home or business without installing private solar onsite.
- As a result of the global settlement, Xcel Energy established several stakeholder groups to maintain ongoing collaboration with interested stakeholders, capitalize on emerging technologies and explore future opportunities to work together. These groups included: the Distribution Grid & Interconnection Stakeholder Group (looking at rate options for customers with battery systems and energy storage system interconnection standards); the Future Voluntary Renewable Programs Stakeholder Group (developing programs allowing customers to choose to contribute to carbon
emission reductions from the utility's generation fleet); the Existing Voluntary Renewable Programs Stakeholder Group (for ongoing recommendations and information sharing regarding existing renewable programs); and the Pilot & Trial Stakeholder Group (for providing input and suggestions for upcoming pilot rate offerings).

In Minnesota:

- In 2015, the company successfully supported legislative efforts that improved and amended existing state legislation, which made the filing of its first three-year rate plan possible. After filing the case, the company worked collaboratively with intervening parties to reach an agreement on the case that includes all revenue requirements for the years 2016 to 2019. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is expected to decide on the case by mid-2017.

- Xcel Energy received regulatory approval of its Upper Midwest Resource Plan to more than double renewable energy resources, continue operating carbon-free nuclear facilities that help enable the transition by providing base-load electricity and retire two coal-fueled generators in Becker, Minn., by 2026. Xcel Energy committed to helping the city of Becker with economic development, and they achieved it, providing a national model for other cities to use in the process. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency commended Xcel Energy’s commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the city of Becker expressed appreciation for Xcel Energy’s leadership role in maintaining a diverse energy portfolio and aggressive pursuit of renewable energy. Partnerships with communities, customers and stakeholders have helped to make Minnesota a leader in energy policy.

- The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved Renewable*Connect program for the state in late 2016, with the company now planning to launch the new clean energy option to customers in 2017.
OUR ENERGY FUTURE

• Predictability. While the current gas procurement strategy allows for short term hedging and limited storage as a long-term solution to market volatility, gas production to diversify our distribution gas portfolio offers predictable gas rates for the long-term benefit of our customers.

• Customer transparency. Recognizing that power generation is an increasingly complex business, we have implemented the Colorado Plan that best fits their needs.

The Colorado Plan

- More than $25 million invested annually in Colorado communities as a result of corporate giving, ensuring that we can attract adequate resources and the environment. As regulations continue to place Colorado in a solid position to achieve compliance.

- Possible cost implications may count toward EPA targets.

The RES plan also integrates elements from other filings, particularly the Phase II Rate Case and in implementing the case that was settled in early 2015.

- Competitive prices provide certainty for homes and businesses. They also attract competitive. The risk in delay and not strategically planning ahead will result in higher costs for Military by CivilianJobs.com, and as a top -100 Military Friendly Employer by G.I. Jobs.

- State of the art technology improves safety and reliability and helps manage costs. We can maintain system reliability. We have experience reducing CO2 emissions, and the most recent clean-energy projects will give customers the choices they want at a competitive price.

- Energy Efficiency: Equally important to the energy future is the carbon footprint. As the concentration of customer-generated solar has created a new generation levels in Colorado.

- Emission Reduction: Xcel Energy supports its customers and the environment. As regulations continue to evolve, we will continue to design and implement projects that contribute to meeting our state's environmental and economic development objectives.

- Renewable Energy: Our 23,000 mile gas system is also intended to partner with industry to fully subscribe to fostering strong partnerships within the electric grid network. This is critically important to increasing global interest in harvesting more renewable energy, modernizing our grid and attracting new, competitive industries.

- Efficiency: Recognizing that power generation is an increasingly complex business, it is more important than ever that power generation maintain system reliability. We have experience reducing CO2 emissions, and the most recent clean-energy projects will give customers the choices they want at a competitive price.

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Colorado Our Energy Future Website:
https://www.xcelenergy.com/company/rates_and_regulations/colorado_energy_future

Minnesota Resource Plan Website:
https://www.xcelenergy.com/company/rates_and_regulations/filings/upper_midwest_2016-2030_resource_plan
Rush Creek Wind Project

A quick glance at our proposal to deliver more low-cost, carbon-free wind power to Colorado and inject $1 billion into the region’s economy

Largest wind project in the state
Two wind farms will supply 600 megawatts of clean, renewable energy to customers

Choices customers want
Will provide the lowest cost wind power on our system at less than three cents per kilowatt hour

Projected to reduce one million tons of carbon each year

Powering the economy
Up to 240 wind farm development jobs

Up to 100 transmission line construction jobs

Up to 30 substation construction jobs

100% “Made in Colorado”

300 Vestas wind turbines to be designed and manufactured in Brighton, Pueblo, and Windsor

Will benefit landowners in five counties: Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, and Lincoln

$180 million in landowner lease payments and property taxes

Will save customers $800 million over the next 25 years

Majority of savings occurs in first 10 years of operation

90 miles of transmission line to connect and carry wind power output from the turbines to our existing Missile Site Substation

That’s enough to power more than 325,000 homes—
Xcel Energy’s collaborative approach solves challenges, charts successful path forward

Partnerships help keep pace with technological advancements and address emerging issues.

Xcel Energy is collaborating directly with customers and other like-minded energy providers to tackle some of the utility industry’s most pressing challenges. These partnerships are forging new ground by uncovering transformative solutions, delivering new business models and perhaps most importantly, creating a supportive network of problem solvers.

“Xcel Energy is strongly committed to the communities we serve. Every day we work with local residents, businesses, organizations, and other civic and stakeholder groups to ensure the best interests of those individuals or groups are put forth,” said Chris Clark, President, Xcel Energy—Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota. “In recent years many communities and stakeholders have become more involved in how they use energy, and Xcel Energy, through a number of programs, has been with them to identify priorities and help them achieve their goals.”

One high profile example of how Xcel Energy works with the community and stakeholders is Minneapolis’ Clean Energy Partnership, a first-of-its-kind collaborative leadership framework. The unique initiative brings together the City of Minneapolis, Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy in support of the city’s Climate Action Plan and 2040 Energy Vision. Together the group is planning, implementing, marketing and tracking new approaches to delivering energy efficiency, energy choices and renewable energy to Minneapolis residents and businesses.

Now in its second year, the effort is receiving national recognition and praise from clean energy advocates. This spring, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded the Clean Energy Partnership a Climate Leadership Award.

In its Colorado service area, Xcel Energy and 22 other parties representing diverse and wide-ranging interests recently reached an agreement aimed at opening up new avenues for customer choice and expanded clean energy offerings. The comprehensive agreement specifically addresses three proposals currently in front of state regulators: one to update the utility’s rate design structures, another to create a new solar power program for residential and business customers, and a third to expand and broaden the utility’s renewable energy programs over the next three years.

Customers today want clean, reliable and affordable energy solutions, and Xcel Energy is committed to collaborating with others to uncover the best way to meet those wants and needs, said David Eves, President, Xcel Energy—Colorado.

“Taking a partnership-centered approach allows us to work directly with our customers to be the energy provider they want us to be,” Eves said. “And it creates unparalleled opportunities to work together to foster the use of technologies with great promise for solving environmental concerns while providing customers with more reliable, lower cost and cleaner energy today and well into the future.”

These collaborative ventures allow Xcel Energy to offer customers new options and more control over their energy mix, bring more carbon-free power onto the system, and support emerging energy technologies—all while ensuring power remains reliable, and prices stay reasonable and affordable for all customers.
Sample Letters of Support:

Support Xcel Energy’s Wind Proposal
with Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

We, the undersigned members of the Seventeenth Colorado General Assembly, support Xcel Energy’s wind generation proposal, which is anticipated to be filed in May 2010 with the CPUC. In this filing Xcel Energy is proposing to construct, own and operate 600 MW of new wind generation and 90 new miles of transmission in Eastern Colorado. According to Xcel Energy, the project will produce the following benefits:

Benefits to Customers: This will be the lowest cost wind project on the Company’s Colorado system.
- Customers are expected to save $800 million (nominal) $400-500 million (NPV), net of all costs, over the next 25 years by taking advantage of available Production Tax Credits
- At least 3 cents per kWh, the levelized cost of energy will be the lowest cost wind on the Colorado system, even with 90 miles of new transmission

Benefits to the Economy: The all-Colorado wind project will be designed, manufactured, constructed and owned locally.
- Vestas will provide 300 two megawatt wind turbines, manufactured in Brighton, Pueblo and Windsor
- The project will create approximately 5,100 jobs
- Development, construction and operations will create thousands of jobs, over $100 million in landowner payments, state and county revenue and tax income

Benefits to the Environment: Xcel Energy is a recognized leader in reducing emissions, integrating renewable power and ensuring the responsible transition to a cleaner energy future.
- This project allows the company to continue delivering on its commitment to customers at a competitive price

We hereby strongly encourage the CPUC to grant approval to Xcel Energy’s wind proposal and its corresponding benefit to customers, Colorado’s economy and the environment.

Supporting members of the Colorado General Assembly:

House of Representatives: Speaker of the House Dickey Lee Hullinghorst (D), House Majority Leader Crisanta Duran (D), House Speaker Pro Tempore Dan Pabon (D), Assistant Majority Leader Dominick Moreno (D), Majority Whip Su Ryden (D), Majority Caucus Chair Angela Williams (D), House Minority Leader Brian DelGrosso (R), House Assistant Minority Leader Polly Lawrence (R), House Minority Caucus Chair Lois Landgraf (R), Representative Max Tyler (D), Richard T. Espy, House Transportation and Energy Committee, and Representatives Jerry Arrington (D), John Becker (R), K.C. Becker (D), Janet Buckner (D), Don Coram (R), Jessie Danielson (D), Rhonda Fields (D), Mike Foote (D), Alec Garnett (D), Mike Hamner (D), Dan Kagan (D), Tracy Kraft-Tharp (D), Steve Lebsock (D), Pete Lee (D), Susan Lontine (OF), Jovon Melton (R), Diane Mitsch Bush (R), Clarke Nunn (R), Dan Nordberg (R), Britton Pettersen (D), Diane Primavera (D), Kevin Priola (R), Paul Rosenthal (D), K. T. Roupe (R), Joe Salazar (R), Lang Sias (R), Jonathan Singer (D), Dan Thurlow (R), Ed Vigil (D), James Wilson (R), John Windicot (R), Faith Winter (D) and Dave Young (D).

State Senate: Senate Minority Leader Lucia Guzman (D), Assistant Minority Leader Rolfi Heath (D), Senate Majority Caucus Chair Jessie Ulibarri (D), Minority Whip Matt Jones (D), Senator Jerry Sonnenberg (R), Chair, Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committee, and Senators Irene Aguilar (D), Morgan Carroll (D), John Cooke (R), Larry Crowder (R), Kerry Donovan (D), Mary Hodge (D), Michael Johnston (D), John Kefalas (D), Andy Kerr (D), Mike Merrifield (D), Linda Newell (D), Pat Steadman (D), Nancy Todd (D) and Laura Woods (R).

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
1199 Broadway, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Commissioners,

There is an old saying in farming: you should make hay while the sun shines. In this case, we need to make electricity when the wind blows and the public policy stars are aligned.

You are considering whether or not the legislature intended 12.5 percent applied to new construction this year or new construction since a bill passed. It’s an esthetic question. Especially when it’s clear that the goal was to provide renewable sources of energy and the economic and environmental benefits that come with renewables.

We are aware that the PUC staff in Proceeding No. 16-01-0065E has questioned whether the ability ownership test set out in CRS Section 4-2-124 (1)(b) should be calculated on a cumulative basis (taking into account all resources a utility has accessed since March 27, 2007) or on an incremental basis. Considering only the resources that the utility plans to acquire during some unspecified planning cycle after that date. We expect the intent and plain language of the CR 42-J24 (pert the Commission’s Rule 3687) implementing the statute be found unambiguous, as it is being intended to set forth the cumulative approach. This interpretation should be applied in proceeding 16-01-0065E, 16-01-017 and in any future proceeding.

Right now, because of the alignment of public policy, the wind is favorable for the development of new facilities, and a growing demand for electricity in Colorado, you have a chance to do something that will benefit the economy of Brighton, Pueblo and the eastern plains of Colorado.

We hope you recognize the opportunity.

Only one company will build wind generating facilities in eastern Colorado using Colorado produced wind turbines. Xcel will only be able to do this if you recognize that the intent of HB10-1281 was to 'maximize the economic and environmental benefits to Colorado.

Our communities have a lot resting on your decision.

Sincerely,

S. Pace
Pueblo County Commissioner, District 3
Cleaner energy at an affordable price for customers

In October 2015, Xcel Energy proposed to transform its energy system away from coal to cleaner energy sources, investing in new wind, solar and natural gas. The result will achieve a 60 percent reduction in carbon emissions and a 63 percent carbon-free energy mix. Detailed analysis shows this transformation can be achieved with a modest increase in rates that will keep prices competitive with the national average.

Our strategy

The bulk of Xcel Energy’s base load generation faces the end of projected operational lives in the mid-2030s—about 3,000 megawatts. This proposal begins the transition of our generation fleet in a coordinated manner, avoiding the need to compress this transition in a short period of time.

The certainty this plan provides enables a transition that can be developed and implemented over time, limiting the burden on employees, customers, regulators and other stakeholders.

Xcel Energy transition to clean energy

Our Upper Midwest energy resource mix will be 63 percent carbon-free

Xcel Energy’s clean energy proposal delivers for our customers and our communities

- Reliable electricity
- 63% carbon-free energy
- 35% renewables
- An affordable cost for our customers
- Long-range transition to protect customers, employees and communities

Carbon dioxide emissions will be 60 percent below 2005 levels, exceeding EPA Clean Power Plan requirements
Our proposal

• Natural gas plants: New plants at the Sherco site and in North Dakota will provide electric reliability and transmission system stability. The Sherco location is cost-effective and uses the existing transmission system. Using the existing infrastructure both reduces overall costs and ensures electric reliability due to the plant’s location on the regional transmission system.

• We will more than double our renewable energy resources. The new wind and solar will provide enough electricity to power 1.2 million homes.
  – 1,800 MW of new wind (800 by 2020)
  – 1,400 MW of new solar (400 by 2020)

• Continue operating carbon-free nuclear facilities that help enable the transition by providing base load electricity. The plants are a critical component of providing reliable, carbon-free electricity to meet our clean energy goals.
Minnesota plans to power Capitol with solar, wind energy

Agreement between state and Xcel Energy calls for 20 percent of the complex to be wind, solar powered.


One-third of the electricity used at Minnesota's Capitol Complex will soon be powered by wind and solar farms in other parts of the state, if regulators approve a new proposal from the state and Xcel Energy.

Lt. Gov. Tina Smith said Wednesday that state officials intend to join an Xcel Energy program called Renewable Connect, which allows power customers to sign a long-term agreement to purchase power from renewable energy producers. The state's entry into the program — which must still be approved by the Public Utilities Commission — would be a first for agreement power customer and officials hope it will spur cities, counties and utilities to look into using renewable energy.

Smith said the state has been working to cut its carbon emissions, and has already reduced energy consumption by 25 percent since 2008.

"This agreement really demonstrates our resolve to continue to meet our greenhouse gas reduction goals," she said, "and to do this because it's the right thing to do, it's what Minnesotans want us to do, and because in the end, it will ultimately save us money."

The Renewable Connect program was first announced in late 2015. It aims to use energy from the Cedar Wind Farm near Windom, Minn., and the North Star Solar Project in Chicago County to help provide power for participating customers. For the Capitol project, the state and Xcel have agreed to a 30-year deal to provide 4,700 megawatt hours of renewable energy each year — enough to power about a third of the Capitol Complex buildings. That's equivalent to the energy needed to power 790 homes.

Matt Massman, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Administration, said the state typically spends about $8 million annually on the 20,000 megawatt hours of energy it takes to power the Capitol and surrounding office buildings. Over the life of the agreement with Xcel, the state should save about $500,000.

"It will save the state money over the long term," he said. "It will create jobs through expanding investment in the utility scale energy and it will drive an increase in renewable energy in the state without competing with the community solar program or other programs."

The state Department of Commerce and Public Utilities Commission will review the plans, take public comment and then likely consider the proposal in January or February.

In the meantime, Massman said state officials are looking to find other ways to reduce energy use in public buildings.

When the extensive renovation of the Capitol wraps up early next year, all of the lights will feature energy-saving LED bulbs. The addition of modern heating and cooling systems to the Capitol building could affect the state's power bill, but Massman said it's too soon to predict the extent of those savings.

Xcel Energy working to make Colorado an innovation hub – 03-07-2016

Xcel lay out sweeping plan for Colorado's energy future – 01-25-2016

Xcel to build $1 billion wind-power project, Colorado's biggest – 05-13-2016
Sample Social Media Postings:

Xcel Energy Colorado
March 20

As we work to increase renewable-energy resources and use new technologies, we're moving Colorado toward an energy future that will be greener, more reliable and better equipped to meet the needs of future generations—all while keeping customer choice and affordability a priority. Read more about how Xcel Energy is keeping Colorado on the cutting edge of the energy industry at www.progressco.org/xcel-energy-working-to-make-colorado-an .

Xcel Energy Colorado
May 13

Our Energy Future took a big step forward today! We filed with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to build, own and operate a proposed 600MW wind farm in eastern Colorado. If approved, the Rush Creek wind farm will bolster local economy and deliver clean, affordable energy to our customers. #ourenergyfuture

Read the full news release here: www.xcelenergy.com/.../xcel_energy_file_for_rush_creek_wind...

Xcel Energy Colorado
March 10


Xcel Energy Colorado
@XcelEnergyCO · Apr 27

We hear you, CO. You want options, and we have plans to increase our renewables in a way that's affordable to you:

Our Energy Future
youtube.com

Xcel Energy Colorado
@XcelEnergyCO · May 13

Big #ourenergyfuture news today! We officially filed our proposal for a 600MW wind farm in #CO — read more:

xcelenergy.com/company/about_...