

DOCKET NO. E002/CI-24-248
IN THE MATTER OF THE INTERCONNECTION OMBUDSPERSON SURCHARGE
NOVEMBER 20, 2024

COMPILED DECISION OPTIONS

Staff has compiled an updated list of decision options based on late filings. Xcel Alternative 5, Staff Revised 6, and Xcel Additional 9 are the three additions since briefings papers were filed on November 13, 2024.

Ombudsperson Surcharge in MN DIP

1. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to update the Minnesota Distributed Energy Resources Interconnection Process document as follows (Xcel):

1.5.1 The Interconnection Customer shall submit an Interconnection Application to the Area EPS Operator, together with the Ombudsperson Fee, processing fee, or deposit specified in the Interconnection Application. Additional fees or deposits for the interconnection process shall not be required, except as otherwise specified in these procedures. Application form templates are available in Attachment 2 Simplified Application Form and Attachment 3 Interconnection Application Form.

5.3.1 The Parties agree to attempt to resolve all disputes arising out of the interconnection process and associated study and Interconnection Agreements according to the provisions of this article and Minnesota Administrative Rules 7829.1500-7829.1900. More information on the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office dispute resolution services is available on the Commission's website:
<https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/help/complaint/>. To support these efforts all interconnection applications must provide an Ombudsperson Fee as part of their interconnection application.

[AND]

2. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to update the Glossary of Terms section of the Minnesota Distributed Energy Resources Interconnection Process document as follows (Xcel):

Ombudsperson Fee – The fee assessed pursuant to Minnesota Law 2024, Ch. 127, Art. 42, Sec. 43 in the amount as last modified by written order of the Commission.

[OR] If choose 3, do not select Decision Options 1 & 2.

3. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to update the Minnesota Distributed Energy Resources Interconnection Process document as follows (MnSEIA, Department):

1.5.1 The Interconnection Customer shall submit an Interconnection Application to the Area EPS Operator, together with the processing fee or deposit specified in the Interconnection Application. Additional fees or deposits for the interconnection process shall not be required, except as otherwise specified in these procedures. Application form templates are available in Attachment 2 Simplified Application Form and Attachment 3 Interconnection Application Form. The Area EPS Operator's tariff shall include specific fees for Simplified Process, Fast Track Process, ~~and~~ Study Process, and Interconnection Ombudsperson Surcharge if applicable, consistent with:

1.5.1.1 The processing fee for the Simplified Process Application shall be up to \$100.

1.5.1.2 For certified, Fast Track Process eligible applications, the processing fee shall be up to \$100 + \$1/kW. For non-certified Fast Track Process eligible applications, the processing fee shall be up to \$100 + \$2/kW.

1.5.1.3 For an Interconnection Application that is not eligible or does not apply for Simplified Process or Fast Track Process, the processing fee shall be a down payment not to exceed \$1,000 plus \$2.00 per kW toward the deposit required for the study(s) under Section 4 Study Process.

1.5.1.4 Each Interconnection Application shall include the Interconnection Ombudsperson Surcharge, if applicable, as determined annually by the Commission in Docket 24-248.

1.5.1.4~~5~~ Interconnection Applications shall contain a single line diagram and site diagram. A signature from a professional engineer licensed in Minnesota shall be required when: 1) Certified equipment is greater than 250kW; or 2) non-certified equipment is greater than 50 kW.

Ombudsperson Annual Report and Surcharge Review

4. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to file an annual report in an annually recurring docket providing the following information, with the first report filed by October 1, 2025 (Staff proposed, all parties support A and B):

- A. Total ombudsperson surcharges collected by the Commission.
 - B. Total expenses incurred for the ombudsperson position.
 - C. The number, type, resolution timelines, and outcome of interconnection disputes as required in the Legislation.
 - D. Proposed changes to the ombudsperson surcharge to meet the requirements established in the Legislation.
 - E. Require additional reporting in the annual report as follows (MnSEIA):
 - i. Time spent on a list of categories by quarter-hour increments, or other time increment, including Application Processing, Facilities Upgrade Costs, Administrative Tasks, Engineering Disputes, and Other Issues.
 - ii. A breakdown of time spent between utilities, installers, customers, and other relevant entities, including the “response time” from each party.
 - iii. Proposed changes to tracking procedures to inform the review and adjustment of the surcharge as needed.
5. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to approve by Notice the ombudsperson annual report and any changes to the surcharge if no objections are filed within 30 days of the annual report being filed. (Staff proposed, Xcel, Minnesota Power, Department)

Xcel Alternative 5. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to propose by Notice the approval of the ombudsperson annual report and any changes to the surcharge. If no objections to this Notice are filed within 30 days, then the Executive Secretary will issue a second Notice of Updated Ombudsperson Surcharge approving the change which will become effective 15 days after the date of the second Notice. (Xcel)

Surcharge Implementation

6. Require Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power to remit revenues received through the ombudsperson surcharge to the Commission on the 15th of each month. (Xcel, Minnesota Power, Otter Tail Power, Department, MnSEIA)

Staff Revised 6. Require Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power to remit revenues received through the ombudsperson surcharge to the Commission on the 15th of each month for each interconnection application filed with the utility during the previous month. (Staff provides this revised decision option to comply with subdivision 3(a) of the Legislation)

As discussed in briefing papers, Staff notes that Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power have implemented or proposed different methods of codifying the ombudsperson surcharge. Decision Option 7 requires each utility to update whichever method to reflect the

Commission's decision on this matter.

7. Require Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power to file tariff, website, or other relevant language implementing the ombudsman surcharge consistent with the Commission's decision within 15 days of the Commission's Order or Notice of Updated Ombudsperson Surcharge. (Staff proposed)
8. Delegate authority to the Executive Secretary to approve by Notice utility tariff, website, or other relevant language updates related to the ombudsperson surcharge if no objections are filed within 30 days of the proposed language being filed. (Staff proposed)

Xcel Additional 9. The Ombudsperson is expected to adhere to national standards on the role of a mediator such as set forth by the American Arbitration Association. This includes the requirements of confidentiality such as set forth in Standard V (Confidentiality) in these standards. To the extent that the Commission expects or allows communications between the Ombudsperson and Commission Staff or Commissioners about the substance of any mediation, this should be made clear before any mediation session involving the Ombudsperson is started. (Xcel)