

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)
BLACK HILLS POWER, INC. FOR APPROVAL)
OF 2013-2014 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT)
ACTIVITIES AND 2015 BUDGET)**

**ORDER GRANTING APPROVAL)
OF 2013-2014 VEGETATION)
MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND)
2015 BUDGET)**

EL14-108

On December 23, 2014, Black Hills Power, Inc. (BHP) filed a 2014 Vegetation Management Report with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) requesting approval of its vegetation management activities from April 2013 through November 2014, the 2015 vegetation management budget, and the Vegetation Management Regulatory Asset (VMRA) balance as of November 30, 2014. Per the Settlement Stipulation in EL12-061, this filing includes a report which outlines the progress made on the overall five-year plan and updates the forecast for the remaining years based on actual progress to date.

On December 24, 2014, the Commission electronically transmitted notice of the filing and the intervention deadline of January 9, 2015, to interested individuals and entities on the Commission's PUC Weekly Filings electronic listserv. No petitions to intervene or comments were filed. The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-34A, particularly 49-34A-2, 49-34A-6, 49-34A-7, 49-34A-8, 49-34A-8.4, 49-34A-9, 49-34A-10, 49-34A-11, 49-34A-12, 49-34A-19, and 49-34A-21.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on March 17, 2015, the Commission considered this matter. Following a lengthy discussion with BHP, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the April 2013 through November 2014 vegetation management activities, the 2015 vegetation management budget, and the Vegetation Management Regulatory Asset (VMRA) balance as of November 30, 2014, subject to the condition that such approval shall not preclude Commission review of the project, including project and cost management, accounting data and methods, and the resulting balance in the regulatory asset, for prudence and reasonableness for rate recovery in any determination of rates, including both rate filings by BHP and rate reviews initiated by the Commission and does not guarantee any such recovery. It is therefore

ORDERED, that BHP's vegetation management activities from April 2013 through November 2014, the 2015 vegetation management budget, and the Vegetation Management Regulatory Asset (VMRA) balance as of November 30, 2014, are hereby approved, subject to the condition that that such approval shall not preclude Commission review of the project, including project and cost management, accounting data and methods, and the resulting balance in the regulatory asset, for prudence and reasonableness for rate recovery in any determination of rates, including both rate filings by BHP and rate reviews initiated by the Commission and does not guarantee any such recovery.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 14th day of March, 2015.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, electronically or by mail.
By: <u>[Signature]</u>
Date: <u>3/18/15</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

[Signature]
CHRIS NELSON, Chairman

[Signature]
KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner

[Signature]
GARY HANSON, Commissioner