

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

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION BY NORTHERN STATES POWER
COMPANY, DOING BUSINESS AS XCEL ENERGY, AND OTTER TAIL POWER
COMPANY FOR A FACILITY PERMIT FOR A 765 KV TRANSMISSION FACILITY
AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES IN GRANT, DEUEL, AND BROOKINGS COUNTIES,
SOUTH DAKOTA**

SD PUC DOCKET _____

**PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF KIRK PHINNEY
ON BEHALF OF NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY, DOING BUSINESS AS
XCEL ENERGY, AND OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY**

September 4, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Q. Please state your name, employer, and business address.

A. My name is Kirk Phinney. I am employed by Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail). My business address is Big Stone Plant, 48450 144th Street, Big Stone City, South Dakota.

Q. What is your position with Xcel Energy?

A. I am employed as a Senior Manager in Otter Tail's Project Management Office.

Q. Briefly describe your educational and professional background.

A. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. I have worked in the electric utility business for 23 years and for Otter Tail for 20 years. I was the Principal Engineer, and later, the Commissioning Manager for the Big Stone Air Quality Control System project. In my current role at Otter Tail, I am responsible for supporting Otter Tail's long-term transmission growth and transmission project portfolio. My statement of qualifications is attached as **Schedule 1**.

Q. What is your role with respect to PowerOn: Big Stone South to Brookings County to South Dakota/Minnesota Border Project (Project)?

A. I currently serve as an Otter Tail Project Manager for the Project. This role is responsible for Otter Tail ownership representation for the Project and ensures subject matter experts coordinate and collaborate between Otter Tail and Xcel Energy.

II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY

Q. What is the purpose of your Direct Testimony?

A. The purpose of my Direct Testimony is to:

- Provide an overview of Otter Tail; and
- Discuss Otter Tail's involvement and ownership of the Project.

1 **Q. What exhibits are attached to your Direct Testimony?**

2 A. The following exhibit is attached to my Direct Testimony:

- 3 • **Schedule 1**: Statement of Qualifications.

4
5 **Q. Please identify which sections of the Application you are sponsoring for the record.**

6 A. I am sponsoring the following portions of the Application:

- 7 • Section 2.3: Purpose and Benefits, as it concerns Otter Tail
8 • Section 5: Names of Participants, as it concerns Otter Tail
9 • Section 7.3.1.2 Energy Adequacy as it concerns Otter Tail Section 7.3.1.2: Energy
10 Adequacy as it concerns Otter Tail
11 • Section 9.2.1: Expanded Big Stone South Substation

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13 **III. OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY**

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15 **Q. Please describe Otter Tail's business operations.**

16 A. Otter Tail is an investor-owned electric utility company headquartered in Fergus Falls,
17 Minnesota that provides electricity and energy services to over 133,000 customers
18 spanning 70,000 square miles in northeastern South Dakota, eastern North Dakota, and
19 western Minnesota. Otter Tail wholly or jointly owns approximately 6,000 miles of
20 transmission lines and approximately 1,100 megawatts (MW) of generation capacity in
21 these three states and is a transmission-owning member of the Midcontinent Independent
22 System Operator (MISO).

23
24 **Q. Describe Otter Tail's involvement in the Project.**

25 A. Otter Tail owns and operates the existing Big Stone South Substation located west of Big
26 Stone City, which serves as the northern endpoint of the proposed single-circuit 765
27 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between the Big Stone South and Brookings Substations.
28 To accommodate the Project, the existing Big Stone South Substation's 345 kV facilities
29 will be expanded to the south and will include installation of additional equipment such as
30 breakers, switches, capacitive voltage transformers (CVTs), arresters, and bus work. The
31 Big Stone South Substation will also be expanded to accommodate 765 kV facilities, which

1 will include equipment such as breakers, switches, transformers, reactors, CVTs, arresters,
2 and bus work. The expanded 765 kV area will be connected to the expanded 345 kV area
3 via a short 345 kV substation interconnection line located entirely within the Big Stone
4 South Substation Siting Area. Otter Tail will also co-own, with Xcel Energy, the 765 kV
5 line between the Big Stone South and Brookings Substations.

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7 **IV. CONCLUSION**
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9 **Q. Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?**

10 **A.** Yes.
11

12 Dated this 4th day of September, 2026.
13

14 /s/ Kirk Phinney

15 Kirk Phinney