

Frequently Asked Questions on Smart Grid

What has the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission done on smart grid?

The MPUC first opened an investigation into smart grid in 2008 and asked for input from utilities, stakeholders, and the public. After receiving comments, the MPUC issued an Order in June 2009 doing the following: 1) requiring utilities to submit yearly reports on current and planned smart grid projects; 2) encouraging utilities to petition for cost recovery of reasonable costs related to smart grid; 3) stated that it may require enhanced information on pricing to purchasers of electricity service; and 4) stated its intention to continue gathering information on smart grid through public meetings. The Commission has continued to gather information on smart grid.

What is smart grid?

The MPUC, in its July 2009 Order in Docket No. E999/CI-08-948, defined smart grid as follows:

A smart grid encompasses information and control technology to improve the reliability, security, and efficiency of the electric grid. A smart grid allows deployment and integration of distributed and renewable resources, “smart” consumer devices, automated systems, and electricity storage and peak-shaving technologies.

Has the MPUC authorized cost recovery for smart grid equipment, such as smart meters/AMI?

The Commission has authorized cost recovery for any type of equipment where the cost is incurred reasonably and prudently, whether or not it is smart grid-related. Utilities have already submitted proposals for projects that could be considered to include smart grid equipment and would be granted cost recovery on a case-by-case basis. There is no single decision where the Commission has stated it will automatically grant cost recovery for smart grid equipment, because the Commission first would review the specific project to ensure costs are reasonable.

Where can I find out what smart projects have happened, or are planned to happen, in Minnesota?

Rate-regulated utilities are required to file informational reports by April 1 of every year (starting in 2010) listing their current and planned smart grid projects in Docket No. E999/CI-08-948, the Commission’s generic docket on smart grid. These reports can be viewed online by clicking here: [Smart Grid Reports](#).

Who at the MPUC can I contact for more information about smart grid?

You may contact the Commission at consumer.puc@state.mn.us . Media inquiries should be sent to Dan Wolf at 651-201-2217 or dan.wolf@state.mn.us.