

November 9, 2010

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**St. Paul, Minnesota** - The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission met today and acted on a request by Xcel Energy, Inc. (“Xcel”) for a general increase in its natural gas rates. The Commission approved a rate increase in an amount less than that sought by Xcel.

Although the final numbers are still to be calculated, today’s decisions by the Commission appear to result in a total rate increase somewhat less than the \$7.68 million recommended by an Administrative Law Judge in the case. Since the final rates will be set at a level less than the amount allowed as interim rates, customers will receive a refund of the difference.

Xcel filed its request on November 12, 2009. Xcel’s request was for an increase of \$16.22 million, or 2.8%, over existing rates and affecting approximately 430,300 customers in Minnesota. On January 7, 2010, the Commission approved an interim rate proposal and authorized collection of interim rates for service rendered on and after January 11, 2010. The annual interim increase was set at \$11.08, or approximately 1.91%.

The Commission’s decisions are subject to further proceedings, so the new rates established by today’s actions will most likely take several months to go into effect.

In addition to formal evidentiary hearings, Xcel’s proposal was also the subject of public hearings in Saint Paul, Woodbury, and Saint Cloud conducted by the Office of Administrative Hearings. Besides these hearings, 85 written comments were received from the public in this docket.

Final written orders formally documenting the Commission’s decisions will be issued in several weeks. Those orders will be filed in docket G002/GR-09-1153, which is available on the Commission’s website via the Commission’s [e-Dockets](#) system.