



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE



IMT
INSTITUTE
FOR MARKET
TRANSFORMATION



GREAT PLAINS
INSTITUTE



Minnesota Local Government Regulatory Engagement Coalition Xcel Energy 2020-2034 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

MN PUC Docket Number: E002/RP-19-368

Join Other Local Units of Government in Support of a Cleaner Energy Future

Xcel Energy filed their Upper Midwest Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) on July 1, 2019 with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), covering the 2020-2034 planning period. The plan outlines the utility's resource needs over that 15 year period, and charts a path for achieving its carbon goals of 80% reduction by 2030 and 100% carbon-free by 2050 with proposed plan retirements and new resource additions. As a part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge (ACCC), the technical assistance team are developing joint comments for the City of Minneapolis and also convening a coalition of other high-ambition local governments in Xcel Energy's Minnesota service territory to engage in this proceeding and connect the dots with other utility regulatory filings. Our objective with this effort is to increase awareness among local governments of utility plans and the impact on their sustainability goals, and to bring local government carbon and energy policies and priorities to the PUC to influence their decision-making.

Why Should Your City Engage?

- Local governments are important stakeholders that represent a large portion of customers and load and have ambitious sustainability goals, especially in aggregate
- Resource decisions will impact your local government's ability to achieve energy and climate goals, as well as utility rates among residents
- Publicly highlight local government clean energy and carbon goals in the Xcel Energy IRP filing, and the collective impact of those goals on the utility's planning process
- Develop the capacity of local government staff and decision-makers around regulatory processes
- Build relationships between local governments and the utility and its regulators for future engagement
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of a collaborative engagement model for coalitions of local governments sharing similar climate, energy, and equity goals to influence PUC decisions

Process

- Convene a series of workshops to help local governments understand:
 - the regulatory process – how the state takes input and decides on approval of an IRP
 - the impact of an IRP on local climate and energy goals, and
 - the opportunities for engaging in the IRP process (from lighter touch to more intensive) and ensuring the PUC and the utility consider those local goals in the final plan
- ACCC partners and local organizations will develop a draft comment letter to be signed by a coalition of cities and counties emphasizing the collective impact of shared local government carbon and clean energy goals on long-term utility resource planning, and highlighting the following potential themes:
 - need for clarification on plans for the 2034-2050 period for carbon neutrality
 - support for the increased energy efficiency goals for its near-term carbon saving impact, the equity benefits of a well-designed programs, and potential role in minimizing the need for new grid infrastructure or fossil fuel generation
 - oppose new natural gas plants
 - support for increased utility-scale and local renewable generation
 - promote the accelerated closure of coal plants
 - ensure the benefits of utility investments accrue to historically underserved communities

- Identify common questions for cities and counties to raise with the utility, through formal or informal engagement – building capacity among local governments for regulatory analysis and highlighting shared issues and concerns with the utility
- Create a document explaining the importance of regulatory engagement to make the case to local government leadership to justify participation

How to Participate:

Local governments interested in participating in this coalition and signing on to a joint letter should reach out to either of the contacts listed below. Let us know what your internal process is for getting official approval for your city or county's participation in the IRP engagement (who needs to sign off, is council action needed, how much time will it take to get on council agenda, etc.). The ACCC team is happy to provide resource materials, present to decision-makers in your city, or offer other support as needed. We ask that your local government staff and decision-makers review and approve the content of the joint letter based on the timeline below.

Timeline:

- August 28: Local Government IRP Coalition Workshop #1
- September 16: Local Government IRP Coalition Workshop #2
- October 16: Identify interested local governments through survey
- November 20: Draft local government coalition letter complete for distribution
- *January 15*: Local government edits and review complete
- *February 19*: Final comment letter complete for local government approval
- *March 15*: Local government coalition comments submitted

Contact Info

Julia Eagles – Associate Director of Utility & Regulatory Strategy
Institute for Market Transformation: <https://www.imt.org/>
Email: julia.eagles@imt.org
Phone: 612-747-9821

Brian Ross – Program Director
Great Plains Institute: <https://www.betterenergy.org/>
Email: bross@gpisd.net
Phone: 612-501-1531