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Public Utilities Commission Unanimously Approves Xcel's 15-year energy plan Doubling the amount of wind and solar on their system; retiring 1500 MW of coal by retiring Sherco 1 and 2; likely 60% carbon reductions by 2030

Saint Paul, MN -- Today, the Public Utilities Commission held its final hearing and unanimously approved with modifications Xcel Energy's 15-year energy plan (Integrated Resource Plan). After two years of rigorous study, Xcel Energy proposed a Midwest-leading energy plan for the next 15 years - doubling the amount of wind and solar on its system and taking significant strides to reduce coal with the retiring of Sherco units 1 and 2 in the mid-2020s. Xcel's proposed energy plan saw broad support from customers, including over 10,000 Minnesotans; cities of Becker, Red Wing, and Minneapolis; Sherburne County; clean energy organizations, and the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.

The PUC unanimously approved today:

- Retirement of Sherco 2&1 in 2023 and 2026, respectively, and a process to identify approximately 750 MW of intermediate capacity replacement resources for 2026 that considers existing location and grid reliability needs;
- Add at least 1000 MW of cost-effective wind resources by 2019;
- Add at least 650 MW of solar by 2021 through community solar gardens or other cost-effective solar;
- Save no less than 400 MW through demand response; consider technical and economic achievability of 1000 MW of demand response in the next resource plan;
- Meet Minnesota's goal of 1.5% annual energy savings through 2030 and investigate the cost effectiveness of acquiring additional energy savings through a competitive bidding process;
- In next resource plan, describe possible scenarios for cost-effective and orderly retirement of its coal and nuclear fleet which is reaching the end of its life, including Sherco, King, Monticello and Prairie Island.

Xcel Energy's next 15-year energy plan filing is due February 1, 2019.

In response, Sierra Club, Fresh Energy, MCEA, and Wind on the Wires released the following statements,

"The state approved the lowest-cost plan--affordable, reliable, low carbon--in approving Xcel's proposal to replace coal with clean energy. All Xcel customers will benefit from this clean pathway forward," said J. Drake Hamilton, science policy director at Fresh Energy.

"Today's decision is huge for our health and Minnesota's clean air and water, climate and economy. It also answers the 10,000 Minnesotans who submitted comments in support of this responsible transition beyond coal to wind, solar, and more energy savings," said Rose Thelen, a Sierra Club community leader, from Clearwater, MN. "Our goal moving forward will be to make sure there is a racially and economically just transition for impacted workers, communities, and others impacted by these announcements; ensuring no one is left behind as we move toward a 100% renewable energy system."

"Getting this much coal out of our electricity system is going to be a great thing for Minnesotans. I'm extremely pleased with the PUC's decision, because it recognizes the importance of moving off of coal as quickly as possible for our health, our climate, and our economy; and we can start planning right now for this major transition." said Leigh Currie, Energy Program Director and Staff Attorney at MCEA, who represented clean energy interests at the Public Utilities Commission.

"The investments that Xcel is proposing in clean, renewable energy as a component of this resource plan are nation-leading," said Wind on the Wires Executive Director Beth Soholt. "We are pleased to see the Commission recognize the benefits of Xcel's proposed near-term investments in wind, which we are confident will provide long-term benefits for their customers and drive new opportunities for the growing clean energy economy in greater Minnesota."