



For Release: Immediate Release

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## *media advisory*

# Minnesota Power warns customers not to fall prey to scammers demanding money

DULUTH, Minn. – Minnesota Power says reports of scam callers targeting their customers for payments have increased significantly in the past two days, and company officials are cautioning customers to protect themselves. In addition to Minnesota Power’s customers being targeted, Superior Water Light and Power, also an ALLETE subsidiary, is reporting an uptick in scam call activity to its customers.

Scam callers posing as Minnesota Power representatives are an ongoing problem and reports have escalated this week with scammers calling residents and business owners demanding immediate payment and threatening to shut off service. The scam callers often tell a customer that service is going to be shut off due to unpaid bills unless the customer purchases a pre-paid debit card or arranges for a transfer from bank accounts or credit/debit card numbers to pay a bill.

In some instances, the scammer manipulates caller ID to display a fake number, which may actually show as a Minnesota Power number.

### **These callers are not from Minnesota Power and the company does not accept payments of electric bills by pre-paid debit cards or by electronic account transfers.**

Customers who think they are dealing with a suspicious call are advised to hang up immediately and call Minnesota Power directly at 800-228-4966 to verify account status and to report this illegal activity.

Minnesota Power doesn’t want you to fall victim to this scam. As a reminder, these are the normal procedures we follow for accounts with overdue bills:

1. If a customer is behind on their bill, Minnesota Power sends a written notice before service is disconnected. Customers who have not received a disconnect notice in the mail should not engage anyone on the phone offering to take payment. Instead, customers should hang up and contact Minnesota Power at 800-228-4966 to verify account status and report the attempted scam.
2. We do place courtesy calls for various business reasons and leave our 800-228-4966 number for a return call. These are usually recorded calls and never demand immediate payment of an overdue bill.
3. While you may pay your Minnesota Power bill by phone or credit card, it is only through our third-party vendor, Western Union Speedpay, that these payments are accepted.
4. Never give your personal information to strangers. If a call sounds suspicious, call Minnesota Power at 800-228-4966 to report your concerns to one of our customer representatives.
5. To further protect yourself, use only authorized methods to pay your Minnesota Power bill.

Anyone who feels they may have been a target of an imposter or a payment scam should contact their local police department.

These types of scam calls are a nationwide problem and Minnesota Power has joined forces with other utility companies (Utilities United Against Scams) to help warn customers not to fall for the scams.

Minnesota Power provides retail electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota to 143,000 customers and wholesale electric service to 16 municipalities. More information can be found at <http://www.mnpower.com/CustomerService/PaymentOptions>

*The statements contained in this release, and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.*

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