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Cold Weather Rule goes into effect Oct. 1, protects eligible customers from service disconnection

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power, a utility division of ALLETE Inc. (NYSE: ALE), reminds residential customers that help is available for those who may have difficulty paying their energy bills this winter. In addition to payment plans and programs or discounts offered by Minnesota Power, customers also may benefit from the Cold Weather Rule and be eligible for Energy Assistance Program dollars.

“We know that our customers count on the electric service we provide. This is particularly true in the cold winter months where power is used to heat their homes,” said Tina Koecher, director of Customer Experience Operations. “We’re here to help and provide options for our customers to manage electric bills and avoid interruption to service. Our state’s Cold Weather Rule provides important protections from service disconnection for customers who work with us to set up and keep a payment plan. We also understand that circumstances change, sometimes very unexpectedly. Contact us, so we can work with you.”

If customers have a past-due balance on their bill or are struggling to keep up, they should contact Minnesota Power at (800) 228-4966 to explore options and set up a payment plan to avoid disconnection. We will work with customers to find a payment plan that best fits the financial circumstances of their household.

Cold Weather Rule

Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule is in place from Oct. 1 to April 30 each year. Under this state statute, eligible residential energy customers are protected from service disconnection for these seven months if the disconnection would affect the customer’s primary heating source. **Customers must set up and keep a monthly payment plan with Minnesota Power to be protected.** The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter shut-off if customers don’t commit to a payment plan and don’t make the agreed-to payments on time.

Any residential customer who receives a proposed shut-off notice during the winter should act promptly and contact Minnesota Power at (800) 228-4966 to set up a payment plan or for more information about available options and resources. Residential customers whose service has been disconnected can also set up a payment plan to get reconnected under Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule.

Energy Assistance available

With winter just around the corner, the state’s Energy Assistance Program, or EAP, may benefit residential customers who need help paying their bill. The new program year is scheduled to start Oct. 1. Minnesota Power encourages eligible residential customers to apply for Energy Assistance Program dollars or refer a family member or friend to these financial resources. Online applications are available at mn.gov/home. Paper applications can also be requested or printed from this



website or through local agencies. To find your local agency, you can call (800) 657-3710. **Apply early. Applications are generally processed in the order received.**

Households that qualify for Energy Assistance also may be eligible to receive other benefits, including relief from some fees, bill discounts and access to resources through weatherization and energy efficiency programs.

Other resources

Minnesota Power's CARE program (Customer Affordability of Residential Electricity www.mnpower.com/customerservice/careprogram), is a discount program that may help. Customers can find out if they are eligible for a reduced electric bill through CARE by visiting mnpower.com/care. In addition, the Salvation Army HeatShare program is a resource available for customers who are unable to pay their energy bills or make heating-related repairs. It is also a way for customers to spread the warmth by donating at www.mnpower.com/HeatShare.

Watch for scammers

Customers also are reminded to be aware of scam phone calls that threaten power shutoffs. Minnesota Power does not call customers to demand immediate payment, and does not ask for credit or debit account numbers or threaten disconnection over the phone.

Any customers receiving such a call should not provide credit card numbers or their Minnesota Power account number. They should instead hang up and contact Minnesota Power at (800) 228-4966 if they have concerns. Customers also can report the calls and the numbers the calls came from to their local police department.

To learn more, go to www.mnpower.com/Alerts. To avoid any phone scam, the Federal Trade Commission recommends people ignore calls from toll-free numbers they are not familiar with and block them if possible.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 150,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

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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