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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FIRST SESSION

H. F. No. 2211

03/07/2019 Authored by O'Neill
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to energy; capping the annual contributions made to the renewable
1.3 development account by Xcel Energy; establishing a process for reporting and
1.4 adjusting expenditures made from the account; amending the administrative
1.5 procedures governing the grant process funded by the account; amending Minnesota
1.6 Statutes 2018, section 116C.779, subdivision 1.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 116C.779, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.9 Subdivision 1. Renewable development account. (a) The renewable development
1.10 account is established as a separate account in the special revenue fund in the state treasury.
1.11 Appropriations and transfers to the account shall be credited to the account. Earnings, such
1.12 as interest, dividends, and any other earnings arising from assets of the account, shall be
1.13 credited to the account. Funds remaining in the account at the end of a fiscal year are not
1.14 canceled to the general fund but remain in the account until expended. The account shall
1.15 be administered by the commissioner of management and budget as provided under this
1.16 section.

1.17 (b) On July 1, 2017, the public utility that owns the Prairie Island nuclear generating
1.18 plant must transfer all funds in the renewable development account previously established
1.19 under this subdivision and managed by the public utility to the renewable development
1.20 account established in paragraph (a). Funds awarded to grantees in previous grant cycles
1.21 that have not yet been expended and unencumbered funds required to be paid in calendar
1.22 year 2017 under paragraphs (e) and (f) and (g), and sections 116C.7792 and 216C.41, are
1.23 not subject to transfer under this paragraph.

2.1 (c) ~~Except as provided in subdivision 1a,~~ Beginning January 15, 2018, and continuing
 2.2 each January 15 thereafter, the public utility that owns the Prairie Island and Monticello
 2.3 nuclear generating ~~plant~~ plants must transfer to the renewable development account \$500,000
 2.4 each year for each dry cask containing spent fuel that is located at the Prairie Island power
 2.5 ~~plant for \$20,000,000~~ each year the either plant is in operation, and \$7,500,000 each year
 2.6 ~~the plant is not in operation,~~ if ordered by the commission pursuant to paragraph ~~(i)~~ (h),
 2.7 \$7,500,000 each year the Prairie Island plant is not in operation and \$5,250,000 each year
 2.8 the Monticello plant is not in operation. The fund transfer must be made if nuclear waste is
 2.9 stored in a dry cask at the independent spent-fuel storage facility at Prairie Island or
 2.10 Monticello for any part of a year.

2.11 ~~(d) Except as provided in subdivision 1a, beginning January 15, 2018, and continuing~~
 2.12 ~~each January 15 thereafter, the public utility that owns the Monticello nuclear generating~~
 2.13 ~~plant must transfer to the renewable development account \$350,000 each year for each dry~~
 2.14 ~~cask containing spent fuel that is located at the Monticello nuclear power plant for each~~
 2.15 ~~year the plant is in operation, and \$5,250,000 each year the plant is not in operation if ordered~~
 2.16 ~~by the commission pursuant to paragraph (i).~~ The fund transfer must be made if nuclear
 2.17 waste is stored in a dry cask at the independent spent-fuel storage facility at Monticello for
 2.18 any part of a year.

2.19 ~~(e)~~ (d) Each year, the public utility shall withhold from the funds transferred to the
 2.20 renewable development account under ~~paragraphs~~ paragraph (c) and (d) the amount necessary
 2.21 to pay its obligations under paragraphs (e), (f) and (g), (k), and (n), and sections 116C.7792
 2.22 and 216C.41, for that calendar year.

2.23 ~~(f)~~ (e) If the commission approves a new or amended power purchase agreement, the
 2.24 termination of a power purchase agreement, or the purchase and closure of a facility under
 2.25 section 216B.2424, subdivision 9, with an entity that uses poultry litter to generate electricity,
 2.26 the public utility subject to this section shall enter into a contract with the city in which the
 2.27 poultry litter plant is located to provide grants to the city for the purposes of economic
 2.28 development on the following schedule: \$4,000,000 in fiscal year 2018; \$6,500,000 each
 2.29 fiscal year in 2019 and 2020; and \$3,000,000 in fiscal year 2021. The grants shall be paid
 2.30 by the public utility from funds withheld from the transfer to the renewable development
 2.31 account, as provided in paragraphs (b) and ~~(e)~~ (d).

2.32 ~~(g)~~ (f) If the commission approves a new or amended power purchase agreement, or the
 2.33 termination of a power purchase agreement under section 216B.2424, subdivision 9, with
 2.34 an entity owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by two municipal utilities located north
 2.35 of Constitutional Route No. 8, that was previously used to meet the biomass mandate in

3.1 section 216B.2424, the public utility that owns a nuclear generating plant shall enter into a
3.2 grant contract with such entity to provide \$6,800,000 per year for five years, commencing
3.3 30 days after the commission approves the new or amended power purchase agreement, or
3.4 the termination of the power purchase agreement, and on each June 1 thereafter through
3.5 2021, to assist the transition required by the new, amended, or terminated power purchase
3.6 agreement. The grant shall be paid by the public utility from funds withheld from the transfer
3.7 to the renewable development account as provided in paragraphs (b) and ~~(e)~~ (d).

3.8 ~~(h)~~ (g) The collective amount paid under the grant contracts awarded under paragraphs
3.9 ~~(e) and (f) and (g)~~ is limited to the amount deposited into the renewable development account,
3.10 and its predecessor, the renewable development account, established under this section, that
3.11 was not required to be deposited into the account under Laws 1994, chapter 641, article 1,
3.12 section 10.

3.13 ~~(i)~~ (h) After discontinuation of operation of the Prairie Island nuclear plant or the
3.14 Monticello nuclear plant and each year spent nuclear fuel is stored in dry cask at the
3.15 discontinued facility, the commission shall require the public utility to pay \$7,500,000 for
3.16 the discontinued Prairie Island facility and \$5,250,000 for the discontinued Monticello
3.17 facility for any year in which the commission finds, by the preponderance of the evidence,
3.18 that the public utility did not make a good faith effort to remove the spent nuclear fuel stored
3.19 at the facility to a permanent or interim storage site out of the state. This determination shall
3.20 be made at least every two years.

3.21 (i) The public utility shall file annually with the commission a petition to recover all
3.22 funds required to be transferred or withheld under paragraphs (c) to (f) for the next year
3.23 through a rider mechanism. The commission shall approve a reasonable cost recovery
3.24 schedule for all transferred or withheld funds.

3.25 (j) On or before January 15 of each year, the public utility shall file a petition with the
3.26 commission setting forth the amounts withheld by the public utility the prior year under
3.27 paragraph (d) and the amount actually paid the prior year for obligations identified in
3.28 paragraph (d). If the amount actually paid is less than the amount withheld, the public utility
3.29 shall deduct the surplus from the amount withheld for the current year under paragraph (d).
3.30 If the amount actually paid is more than the amount withheld, the public utility shall add
3.31 the deficiency amount to the amount withheld for the current year under paragraph (d). Any
3.32 surplus remaining in the account after all programs identified in paragraph (d) are terminated
3.33 must be returned to the customers of the public utility.

3.34 ~~(k)~~ (k) Funds in the account may be expended only for any of the following purposes:

4.1 (1) to stimulate research and development of renewable electric energy technologies;

4.2 (2) to encourage grid modernization, including, but not limited to, projects that implement
4.3 electricity storage, load control, and smart meter technology; and

4.4 (3) to stimulate other innovative energy projects that reduce demand and increase system
4.5 efficiency and flexibility.

4.6 Expenditures from the fund must benefit Minnesota ratepayers receiving electric service
4.7 from the utility that owns a nuclear-powered electric generating plant in this state or the
4.8 Prairie Island Indian community or its members.

4.9 The utility that owns a nuclear generating plant is eligible to apply for grants under this
4.10 subdivision.

4.11 ~~(k)~~ (l) For the purposes of paragraph ~~(j)~~ (k), the following terms have the meanings
4.12 given:

4.13 (1) "renewable" has the meaning given in section 216B.2422, subdivision 1, paragraph
4.14 (c), clauses (1), (2), (4), and (5); and

4.15 (2) "grid modernization" means:

4.16 (i) enhancing the reliability of the electrical grid;

4.17 (ii) improving the security of the electrical grid against cyberthreats and physical threats;
4.18 and

4.19 (iii) increasing energy conservation opportunities by facilitating communication between
4.20 the utility and its customers through the use of two-way meters, control technologies, energy
4.21 storage and microgrids, technologies to enable demand response, and other innovative
4.22 technologies.

4.23 ~~(j)~~ (m) A renewable development account advisory group that includes, among others,
4.24 representatives of the public utility and its ratepayers, and includes at least one representative
4.25 of the Prairie Island Indian community appointed by that community's tribal council, shall
4.26 develop recommendations on account expenditures. Members of the advisory group shall
4.27 be chosen by the public utility. The advisory group must design a request for proposal and
4.28 evaluate projects submitted in response to a request for proposals. The advisory group must
4.29 utilize an independent third-party expert to evaluate proposals submitted in response to a
4.30 request for proposal, including all proposals made by the public utility. A request for proposal
4.31 for research and development under paragraph ~~(j)~~ (k), clause (1), may be limited to or include
4.32 a request to higher education institutions located in Minnesota for multiple projects authorized

5.1 under paragraph ~~(j)~~ (k), clause (1). The request for multiple projects may include a provision
 5.2 that exempts the projects from the third-party expert review and instead provides for project
 5.3 evaluation and selection by a merit peer review grant system. In the process of determining
 5.4 request for proposal scope and subject and in evaluating responses to request for proposals,
 5.5 the advisory group must strongly consider, where reasonable, potential benefit to Minnesota
 5.6 citizens and businesses and the utility's ratepayers.

5.7 (n) The cost of acquiring the services of the independent third-party expert described in
 5.8 paragraph (m) and any other reasonable costs incurred to administer the advisory group and
 5.9 its actions as required by this section shall be paid from funds withheld by the public utility
 5.10 under paragraph (d).

5.11 ~~(m)~~ (o) The advisory group shall submit funding recommendations to the public utility,
 5.12 which has full and sole authority to determine which expenditures shall be submitted by
 5.13 the advisory group to the ~~legislature~~ commission. The commission may approve proposed
 5.14 expenditures, may disapprove proposed expenditures that it finds not to be in compliance
 5.15 with this subdivision or otherwise not in the public interest, and may, if agreed to by the
 5.16 public utility, modify proposed expenditures. The commission shall, by order, submit its
 5.17 funding recommendations to the legislature as provided under paragraph ~~(n)~~ (p).

5.18 ~~(n)~~ (p) The commission shall present its recommended appropriations from the account
 5.19 to the senate and house of representatives committees with jurisdiction over energy policy
 5.20 and finance annually by February 15. Expenditures from the account must be appropriated
 5.21 by law. In enacting appropriations from the account, the legislature:

5.22 (1) may approve or disapprove, but may not modify, the amount of an appropriation for
 5.23 a project recommended by the commission; and

5.24 (2) may not appropriate money for a project the commission has not recommended
 5.25 funding.

5.26 ~~(o)~~ (q) A request for proposal for renewable energy generation projects must, when
 5.27 feasible and reasonable, give preference to projects that are most cost-effective for a particular
 5.28 energy source.

5.29 ~~(p)~~ (r) The advisory group must annually, by February 15, report to the chairs and ranking
 5.30 minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over energy policy on
 5.31 projects funded by the account under paragraph (k) for the prior year and all previous years.
 5.32 The report must, to the extent possible and reasonable, itemize the actual and projected
 5.33 financial benefit to the public utility's ratepayers of each project.

6.1 (s) By June 1, 2018, and each June 1 thereafter, the public utility that owns the Prairie
 6.2 Island nuclear generating plant must submit to the commissioner of management and budget
 6.3 an estimate of the amount the public utility will deposit into the account the following
 6.4 January 15, based on the provisions of paragraphs (c) to (h) and any appropriations made
 6.5 from the fund during the most recent legislative sessions.

6.6 ~~(q)~~ (t) By February 1 June 30, 2018, and each February 1 June 30 thereafter, the
 6.7 commissioner of management and budget shall estimate the balance in the account as of
 6.8 the following January 31, taking into account the balance in the account as of June 30 and
 6.9 the information provided under paragraph (r). By July 15, 2018, and each July 15 thereafter,
 6.10 the commissioner of management and budget shall submit a written report regarding the
 6.11 availability of funds in and obligations of the account to the chairs and ranking minority
 6.12 members of the senate and house committees with jurisdiction over energy policy and
 6.13 finance, the public utility, and the advisory group. If more than \$15,000,000 is estimated
 6.14 to be available in the account as of January 31, the advisory group must, by July 30, 2018,
 6.15 and each July 30 thereafter, issue a request for proposals to initiate a grant cycle for the
 6.16 purposes of paragraph (k).

6.17 ~~(r)~~ (u) A project receiving funds from the account must produce a written final report
 6.18 that includes sufficient detail for technical readers and a clearly written summary for
 6.19 nontechnical readers. The report must include an evaluation of the project's financial,
 6.20 environmental, and other benefits to the state and the public utility's ratepayers.

6.21 ~~(s)~~ (v) Final reports, any mid-project status reports, and renewable development account
 6.22 financial reports must be posted online on a public website designated by the commissioner
 6.23 of commerce.

6.24 ~~(t)~~ (w) All final reports must acknowledge that the project was made possible in whole
 6.25 or part by the Minnesota renewable development account, noting that the account is financed
 6.26 by the public utility's ratepayers.

6.27 ~~(u)~~ (x) Of the amount in the renewable development account, priority must be given to
 6.28 making the payments required under section 216C.417.

6.29 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.