

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 24M-0173E

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONS' INVESTIGATION INTO THE APRIL 2024 FRONT RANGE WINDSTORM AND XCEL ENERGY'S PUBLIC SERVICE POWER SHUT-OFFS.

**COMMISSION DECISION OPENING
MISCELLANEOUS PROCEEDING AND
DIRECTING THE FILING OF INFORMATION**

Mailed Date: April 15, 2024
Adopted Date: April 10, 2024

I. BY THE COMMISSION

A. Statement

1. The Front Range experienced extremely high winds over the weekend of April 6, to 7, 2024, with wind gusts in excess of 100 miles per hour in some locations and sustained high winds throughout the weekend. This weather event resulted in pro-active wildfire mitigation actions deployed by Xcel Energy doing business as Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service or the Company) on its electric transmission and distribution system.

2. In anticipation of the weather event, Public Service took a number of pro-active steps to reduce the risk of wildfire resulting from utility transmission and distribution lines. According to the Company it changed the settings on certain distribution and transmission feeders so equipment would not automatically attempt to reclose, or re-energize, if the equipment tripped off-line. The Company refers to this action as "Wildfire Safety Operations" or WSO.

3. The Company also pro-actively de-energized certain distribution lines, a practice similar to the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) process that is in place in other states such as California and Oregon. This was the first time that a Colorado utility pro-actively implemented a

Public Safety Power Shutoff. These shutoffs impacted approximately 55,000 customers across six counties.

4. In addition to the 55,000 customers impacted by the pro-active shutoffs, well over 100,000 additional customers lost power as a result of the wind event. The majority of these outages were in areas where the Company was conducting WSO actions.

5. The Commission schedules a virtual public comment hearing to hear customers' experiences about the outage and to allow for customers to provide input on what could be done in the future to mitigate their concerns. Customers wanting to provide oral comments at the public comment hearing should register using the form available on the Commission's public calendar at: <https://puc.colorado.gov/puccalendar>.

B. Information Sought

6. Pursuant to Rule 4 *Code of Colorado Regulations* (CCR) 723-3-3253, of the Commission's Rules Regulating Electric Utilities, the Commission seeks certain additional information beyond the Major Event Reporting required pursuant to Rule 4 CCR 723-3-3252. Specifically, the Commission seeks information regarding the Company's operational actions and decision-making, customer communications activities, and community engagement efforts. The Commission directs Public Service to provide the following information to be filed in this proceeding no later than April 26, 2024:

- a. A detailed timeline of the utility decisions and events related to the April 6 to 7, 2024 high wind event including timeframes for restoration of service.
- b. The specific criteria used by the Company to determine what pro-active measures were taken on which transmission and distribution lines.
- c. A detailed map showing the miles and location of transmission and distribution lines and the number of customers impacted at the height of the outages and at 5pm on Sunday, April 7, 2024 for the following:
 - i. Lines pro-actively de-energized;
 - ii. Wildfire Safety Operation activity;

- iii. Total actual outages.
 - d. The process and procedures the Company utilized in order to restore service including:
 - i. Prioritization of restoration activities;
 - ii. Physical inspection process and timeline, including description of the use of helicopters, drones, or other technology to conduct line inspections;
 - iii. Description of any differences in the restoration process for the various categories of outage (*e.g.*, preventative outages, WSOs, and other outages);
 - iv. Information regarding the number of and nature of issues encountered (*e.g.*, number of downed trees on lines, number of bent poles, etc.)
 - e. Information regarding whether and how much assistance the Company sought or received from other utilities or non-utility crews including an explanation of the Company's decision-making regarding such actions.
 - f. The Company's customer emergency communications plan in effect during the April 6 to 7, 2024 event.
 - g. A detailed timeline of all customer communication efforts during the course of the event including the method of communication. Provide the specific information supplied to customers for different kinds of customers - residential, commercial, medical community, *etc.*
 - h. Provide all maps provided to the public over the course of the event, the timeframe of when they were provided, and the means of communication (*e.g.*, describe what website or other media were used to provide such maps).
 - i. A description of the Company's coordination efforts with other neighboring electric service providers including a timeline of communications and information provided or requested.
 - j. A description of the Company's coordination efforts with other kinds of service providers such as telecommunications companies, basic emergency service providers and Public Safety Answering Points, first responders, other county-level emergency response and disaster management, etc. including the timeline of communications and information provided or requested.
 - k. A description of the Company's coordination efforts with medical service providers. Include a description of the Company's efforts to identify and contact customers with electricity-dependent medical equipment.
7. The Commission may seek additional information after reviewing the initial information provided, including through the scheduling of a Commissioners' Information Meeting.

II. ORDER

A. The Commission Orders That:

1. A miscellaneous proceeding is opened by this Decision to receive information from Public Service Company of Colorado regarding the pro-active and unplanned service outages that occurred over the weekend of April 6 to 7, 2024.

2. The public comment hearing shall be held, as follows:

DATE: April 17, 2024

TIME: 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: By video conference using Zoom at a link in the calendar of events on the Commission's website, available at:
<https://puc.colorado.gov/puccalendar>

3. The Company is directed to prepare and file on or before April 26, 2024, a report in this proceeding, providing all information detailed in Paragraph No. 5 listed above.

4. This Decision is effective upon its Mailed Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' WEEKLY MEETING
April 10, 2024.**

(S E A L)



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

Rebecca E. White,
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

ERIC BLANK

MEGAN M. GILMAN

TOM PLANT

Commissioners