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Minot, ND 58701

February 4, 2025

Chairman Jonathan Warrey  
Members of House Industry, Business and Labor  
North Dakota State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

**RE: HB 1486**

Chairman Warrey, Members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of House Bill 1486.

For more than 116 years, Xcel Energy has been proud to be the trusted energy provider for residential and commercial customers in North Dakota. We continue to invest strategically to support our economy, build and maintain energy infrastructure, and to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable service. One of these investments is the advanced grid. The advanced grid includes new tools and technology to give customers more control over their energy use, creating a better experience with improved reliability and faster outage restoration while helping to keep bills low. A key part of the advanced grid is the smart electric meter. Xcel Energy began installing smart meters in North Dakota in 2024 and expects to finish installation the summer of 2025.

Smart meters are a critical component of modernizing our electrical grid, offering real-time insights that empower customers to make informed decisions about their energy use. Smart meters enhance efficiency, improve outage response times, and ultimately contribute to a more resilient and reliable energy system. The proposed legislation introduces unnecessary uncertainty, particularly with vague definition of a "smart meter gateway device" and the unclear requirements around written consent for existing customers.

Our customers are given the option to opt-out of our smart meter program, ensuring their ability to make a choice that aligns with their preferences. The additional constraints proposed in this bill would hinder utilities' ability to provide reliable, data-driven service improvements. Smart grid advancements benefit consumers and strengthen our energy infrastructure. I respectfully ask for a **Do Not Pass** to ensure that we do not take a step backward in our progress toward a smarter, safe, reliable, and affordable energy future.

Sincerely,

*Beth Feldner*

Beth Feldner  
Community Relations Manager

Enclosure: Xcel Energy Smart Meter FAQs

Xcel Energy has additional information about the Advanced Grid and Smart Meters on our website: [Advanced Grid and Smart Meters | Our Commitment | Xcel Energy](#)

### **What is a smart meter?**

A smart meter is an electrical device that measure the electricity consumption of a home or building. It allows for two-way communication between an electric meter and Xcel Energy and can help customers better understand how energy is being used and identify specific, measurable actions to make energy-saving improvements to a home or business. Smart meters can also provide quicker notifications when service is out and more accurate information on when power will be restored.

### **How will a smart meter benefit customers?**

Smart meters enhance the service Xcel Energy delivers to our customers and provides customers with detailed energy usage information and pricing plans that can maximize savings. New tools will help customers better understand how energy is being used, manage their bills to save money, and identify specific measurable actions to make energy-saving improvements to their home or business.

### **Can customers opt out of smart meters?**

Residential customers and many small commercial customers have the option to opt out of receiving a smart meter. Customers who opt out will still receive a new meter, but it will be a non-communicating meter. Because non-communicating meters need to be read in the field, there is a monthly meter reading fee for customers who choose a non-communicating meter.

Those who opt out will not have the ability to access real-time energy information and insights and will not be able to receive high usage-related alerts.

### **Does Xcel Energy have more control over energy usage or smart devices with the smart meter?**

No. Smart meters, like current meters, are used to read energy use and provide customers with insights into their energy use. We do not currently have plans to share information between the meter and appliances, so smart meters will not communicate with customer's appliances.

### **Will the smart meter compromise my personal security or privacy?**

No. Protecting customer data is extremely important to us. Energy use data is securely transferred wirelessly from the smart meter, eliminating the need for manual meter reading or estimates, which also helps reduce costs. The information collected from all our meters (and any personal information customers provide us) is used only for purposes directly related to providing energy service.

### **Are smart meters safe?**

Yes, smart meters are safe. They communicate using radio frequency (RF) signals that emit the same type of low-energy radiation that most of us are exposed to every day from Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and airport body scanners. Smart meters transmit radio frequency energy for only a few minutes each day and that energy is weakened by walls and other surrounding materials.