

April 29, 2011

MAY 02 2011

Robert J. Harris  
 Regional Manager  
 Upper Great Plains Region  
 Western Area Power Administration  
 2900 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
 Billings, MT 59101-1266

Dear Mr. Harris:

As a customer of the Western Area Power Administration (“Western”), Minnkota Power Cooperative (“Minnkota”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed 2021 Power Marketing Initiative (“PMI”) for the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program, as invited in the *Federal Register*. 76 Fed. Reg. 12104 (Mar. 4, 2011).

Minnkota is a Generation and Transmission Cooperative located in Grand Forks, North Dakota, which supplies wholesale electricity to its 11 member-owned retail distribution cooperative members located in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. It also serves as the operating agent for the Northern Municipal Power Agency, an association of 12 municipal utilities. Together, the system serves more than 130,000 retail customers. Power from Western is an important resource for Minnkota and its customers.

Minnkota supports Western’s proposed 2021 PMI, which includes amendments to two of the six current principles, namely, amending the contract term and amending the resource pool. Minnkota believes the extension of the contract term grants a degree of stability to customers, and, while Minnkota supports the proposed 30-year contract term, a 40-year term would provide even more stability in our resource planning efforts. Minnkota also supports the proposed amended resource pools provision and the proposal to leave intact the remaining PMI principles. These principles would continue to provide Western the necessary flexibility to market power appropriately, balanced with the stability a 40-year contract term provides to customers like Minnkota.

Minnkota values its participation in Western, and appreciates the opportunity to provide input in the process to develop the 2021 PMI.

Sincerely,



David Sogard  
 Vice President, Legal & Governmental Affairs