



Exhibit A

Planning Agreement

This Planning Agreement ("Agreement") between the Transmission Provider and the undersigned is entered into by signing below.

Recitals

A. The Northern Tier Transmission Group's Transmission Planning Committee is charged with the task of producing a sub-regional transmission plan for the Northern Tier footprint,¹ and coordinating the transmission plan and its development with other sub-regional planning groups and the Interconnection wide planning activities of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council ("WECC");

B. The Transmission Planning Committee (the "Planning Committee") operates according to the terms and conditions set forth in the Planning Committee Charter which may be amended from time-to-time by the Northern Tier Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") and which is posted on the Northern Tier website, www.nttg.biz;

C. The Planning Committee Charter provides that any stakeholder may attend and participate in any Planning Committee meeting but limits those entities that may formally vote to those entities that execute this Agreement;

D. This Agreement is intended to document an entity's voting membership on the Planning Committee and commit the voting entity to act in a good faith manner to further the purpose of the Planning Committee, as described herein;

E. A list of all members of the Planning Committee is maintained on the Northern Tier website; and

F. The Planning Committee is funded by the signatories to the Northern Tier Funding Agreement, as it may be amended from time-to-time, and which has been filed with the Commission and posted on the website of the Northern Tier Transmission Group ("Funding Members").

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual benefits and other good and valuable consideration the sufficiency of which are hereby recognized, the undersigned hereby agrees as follows:

¹ The Northern Tier Transmission Group's footprint is defined by the service territories of those entities that have executed the Northern Tier Funding Agreement, as may be amended from time to time.



Section 1 –Duration and Termination.

1.1 This Agreement is effective upon execution and shall continue in effect until terminated and the termination is made effective by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the "Commission"); provided, however, the undersigned may independently terminate its participation in this Agreement after giving the Transmission Provider five (5) business days advance notice in writing or through electronic transmission.

Section 2 – Obligations of the Undersigned

2.1 By executing the signature page set forth below, the undersigned, asserts that it is eligible for membership in the requested membership class, and agrees that, if requested by the Transmission Provider or the Chair of the Planning Committee, it will provide documentation demonstrating eligibility, and further agrees to:

- a. Act in a good faith manner to further the purpose of the Planning Committee Charter according to the terms and conditions of the Planning Committee and Steering Committee Charters, as each may be amended from time-to-time by the Steering Committee,
- b. Be bound by the decisions of the Steering Committee and the Planning Committee, and/or resolve disputes according to the process set forth in section 16 of Attachment K;
- c. The extent practicable, provide support from internal resources to achieve the purpose of the Planning Committee Charter;
- d. Bear its own costs and expenses associated with participation in and support of the Planning Committee;
- e. Be responsible for the costs of meeting facilities and administration, including third-party contract resources, associated with such meetings, if undersigned requests, in writing to the Planning Committee Chair, that Northern Tier hold a planning committee meeting outside the normal cycle as described in the Planning Committee Charter; and
- f. Execute non-disclosure agreements, as necessary, before receipt of transmission planning data.

Section 3 - Miscellaneous

3.1 Limit of Liability. Neither the Transmission Provider nor the undersigned shall be liable for any direct, incidental, consequential, punitive, special, exemplary, or indirect damages associated with a breach of this Agreement. The Transmission Provider and the undersigned's sole remedy for any breach of this Agreement is to enforce prospective compliance with this Agreement's terms and conditions.



3.2 No Joint Action. This Agreement shall not be interpreted or construed to create an association, joint venture or partnership, or to impose any partnership obligations or liability.

3.3 Ownership of Products. The undersigned agrees not to assert an ownership interest in products created by the efforts of the Planning Committee.

3.4 Amendments. The Transmission Provider retains the right to make a unilateral filing with the Commission to modify this Agreement under section 205 or any other applicable provision of the Federal Power Act and the Commission's rules and regulations.

3.5 Waiver. A waiver by the Transmission Provider or the undersigned of any default or breach of any covenants, terms or conditions of this Agreement shall not limit the party's right to enforce such covenants, terms or conditions or to pursue its rights in the event of any subsequent default or breach.

3.6 Severability. If any portion of this Agreement shall be held to be void or unenforceable, the balance thereof shall continue to be effective.

3.7 Binding Effect. This Agreement shall be binding upon and shall inure to the benefit of the successors and assigns of the parties.

3.8 Third Party Beneficiaries. All signatories of the NTTG Funding Agreement are third party beneficiaries of this Agreement.

3.9 Execution. The undersigned may deliver an executed signature page to the Transmission Provider by facsimile transmission.

3.10 Integration. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement of the Transmission Provider and the undersigned. Covenants or representations not contained or incorporated herein shall not be binding upon the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned executes this Agreement on the date set forth below.

Requested Membership Class Class 1 Date: 2/15/10
(Print)

<u>E. M. Egge</u> (Signature)	<u>Black Hills Power</u> (Name of Company or Organization)	<u>605 - 721 - 2646</u> (Phone)
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<u>Eric M. Egge</u> (Print Signature)	<u>PO Box 1400</u> (Street Address)	<u>605 - 721 - 2735</u> (Fax)
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<u>Manager, Transmission Planning</u> (Title)	<u>Rapid City, SD 57709-1400</u> (City, State, Zip Code)	<u>eric.egge@blackhillscorp.com</u> (Email)
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