Propane Shortage Feared After Pipeline Explosion

Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — State agencies in North Dakota are monitoring natural gas supplies in the eastern part of the state, after a pipeline explosion in the neighboring Canadian province of Manitoba, Gov. Jack Dalrymple says.

Xcel Energy is asking customers in North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin to conserve natural gas after the explosion Saturday near Winnipeg that knocked out three pipelines.

State officials including those with North Dakota's Department of Emergency Services have been working with local officials, health care providers and utilities in eastern North Dakota on contingency plans should there be heat shortages, Dalrymple said. The National Guard and Highway Patrol are ready to respond if needed, he said.

"The state is fully committed and prepared to help keep our vulnerable populations safe in the event of heat losses," the governor said.

Xcel said one of the three pipelines that have been out of service was being returned to service and was expected to reach full capacity by Monday afternoon.

"We still need customers to conserve natural gas," said Kent Larson, Xcel Energy's senior vice president for operations. "The system won't be back to normal until the natural gas is delivered to our service territory, and demand remains high due to extremely cold temperatures."

The National Weather Service posted a warning for eastern North Dakota early Monday, with wind chills plummeting into the minus 30s and 40s.

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