

STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In the matter, on the Commission's own motion,)	
to commence a collaborative to consider issues)	Case No. U-20959
related to the further engagement, education, and)	
participation of utility customers.)	
_____)	

At the January 20, 2022 meeting of the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing,
Michigan.

PRESENT: Hon. Daniel C. Scripps, Chair
Hon. Tremaine L. Phillips, Commissioner

ORDER

On February 18, 2021, the Commission issued an order in this docket (February 18 order) launching the Customer Education and Participation workgroup (CEP workgroup) as part of Phase III of MI Power Grid, to integrate the Customer Data Access section of the Data Access & Privacy workgroup into the CEP workgroup, and to provide guidance to the Commission Staff (Staff) and stakeholders regarding the Commission's objectives and expectations for this effort. The Commission issued the February 18 order in agreement with, and to bring to fruition, the recommendations contained in the Staff's October 15, 2020 MI Power Grid Status Report. *See*, MI Power Grid Status Report, Case No. U-20645, filing #U-20645-0004, p. ii. The February 18 order directed the Staff to provide a report to the Commission on CEP workgroup activities not later than February 25, 2022. February 18 order, p. 9.

The October 17, 2019 order in Case No. U-20645 launched MI Power Grid in partnership with Governor Gretchen Whitmer (October 17 order), and intended the initiative to provide the Commission, the Staff, and stakeholders with a multi-year vehicle “to maximize the benefits of the transition to clean distributed energy resources for Michigan residents and businesses.” February 18 order, p. 1. MI Power Grid aspires “to engage utility customers and other stakeholders to help integrate new clean energy technologies and to optimize grid investments for reliable, affordable electricity service, and including outreach and education, as well as changes to utility regulation designed to advance Michigan’s clean energy future.” *Id.*

As set forth in the-February 18 order:

The Commission’s October 17 order described the MI Power Grid objective of *Customer Engagement* as ‘[p]roviding Michigan residents and businesses with the energy technologies, programs, and price signals that will allow customers to be more active and effective participants in the state’s transition to increased clean and distributed energy resources.’ The Commission also described this corresponding work area:

Customer education and participation, including educating customers on new utility and non-utility offerings and involving all customers (residential, commercial, and industrial) in developing programs in order to ensure customers fully benefit from these new offerings.

Id., pp. 1-2 (emphasis in original) (citing October 17 order, p. 6).

The Commission acknowledges that “Michigan’s energy system is undergoing a fundamental shift ‘from large, central-station power plants to cleaner and more distributed energy resources such as wind and solar energy.’” February 18 order, p. 2 (quoting October 17 order, p. 2).

Further, the Commission acknowledges that this transition will require “deployments of supply-side wind, solar, and other generating resources” and “necessitate[s] the considerable engagement of customers and deployment of demand-side resources.” February 18 order, pp. 2-3.

Increasingly, energy customers will be relied upon to not only be passive recipients of electrons and grid services, but active, engaged, and dependable participants

integral to supporting the energy ecosystem. Customer engagement, participation, and adoption of energy waste reduction (EWR) and demand response (DR) programs, time-of-use rates, distributed energy resources (DERs), and other demand-side measures will be an essential component to ensuring that this transition maximizes the benefits for all ratepayers while ensuring the reliability of the energy system.

Id., p. 3.

Acknowledging “the increasing role utility customers will play in the energy transition when establishing the Customer Engagement work area of the MI Power Grid initiative” and “the importance of access to energy data and information in order to fully leverage the participation of customers and enabling the availability of demand-side resources,” the Commission found that incorporation of

the Customer Data Access & Privacy topic into the Customer Education and Participation workgroup [would] allow the Staff to more thoroughly assess and provide recommendations to the Commission on how providing safe access to customer energy data, and balancing the availability of that data with customer privacy, can contribute to the energy systems’ transition to clean DERs.

Id.

The February 18 order noted that “several emerging developments have spurred Commission activity related to the Customer Education and Participation workgroup.” *Id.* The Commission intended that the Staff would “convene customers, utilities, third-party demand-side technology and service providers, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders” (*id.*, p. 6) to examine the following developments to discern context and learnings that may inform the workgroup’s recommendations to the Commission: (1) response to the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) the Commission’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan; (3) the Commission’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; (4) the Commission’s outreach to Michigan’s Tribal communities; and (5) customer data access. *See, id.*, pp. 3-6.

Further, the Commission directed the Staff to:

focus on ways to better connect and communicate the availability of customer-facing programs and resources, whether offered by the Commission, utilities, or other third parties, to Michigan's ratepayers [and to explore] best practices to outreach more effectively and create pathways for all customers to participate in demand-side programs, services, and technologies that are key components to the success of the ongoing energy transition. Such programs, services, and technologies may include, but are not limited to, EWR, DR, DERs, and innovative rate offerings.

Id., p. 6. Additionally, the Commission directed the Staff to “engage in discussions and profile other state public utility commissions to identify ways to improve customer knowledge and understanding of, and involvement in, Commission activities.” *Id.*, p. 7.

Lastly, the Commission also directed the Staff to continue to engage with utilities and stakeholders to encourage and support the dedication of resources and the education of one another in order to gain knowledge and understanding of (and to collectively lessen) the challenges and systemic inequalities that customers in underserved and historically marginalized communities face when interacting with the energy system. *Id.*

As discussed above, a report on the CEP workgroup's activities, progress, and achievements is due February 25, 2022. At this time, the Commission and the Staff involved in the CEP workgroup are in agreement that an extension of the deadline for the report is in the public interest and will further the goals summarized above and set forth in detail in the February 18 order. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the CEP workgroup report deadline should be extended to March 25, 2022.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the deadline for the Customer Education and Participation workgroup's report summarizing efforts of the workgroup to date, providing recommendations for the Commission's consideration, and identifying potential next steps is extended to March 25, 2022.

The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Daniel C. Scripps, Chair

Tremaine L. Phillips, Commissioner

By its action of January 20, 2022.

Lisa Felice, Executive Secretary


PROOF OF SERVICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN)

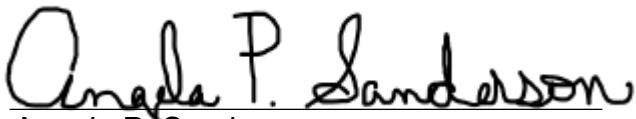
Case No. U-20959

County of Ingham)

Brianna Brown being duly sworn, deposes and says that on January 20, 2022 A.D. she electronically notified the attached list of this **Commission Order via e-mail transmission**, to the persons as shown on the attached service list (Listserv Distribution List).


Brianna Brown

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 20th day of January 2022.



Angela P. Sanderson
Notary Public, Shiawassee County, Michigan
As acting in Eaton County
My Commission Expires: May 21, 2024

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