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Commission addresses outages, utility response, and customer data and privacy in MI Power Grid initiative

The Michigan Public Service Commission took action today in two key areas of its ongoing MI Power Grid initiative, calling for additional information and reports from several utilities focused on improving reliability in the electric distribution system, and moving ahead in the MPSC's work on customer data and privacy matters as the agency works to encourage greater public involvement in Michigan's clean energy transition.

Today's proceedings deal with two matters in MI Power Grid, the MPSC's multiyear efforts to work with utilities, businesses, customers and other stakeholders to maximize the benefits as Michigan transitions from centralized power plants to clean, distributed energy resources.

In [Case No. U-20147](#), the Commission summarized comments and progress so far in its review of distribution investment and maintenance plans for DTE Electric Co., Consumers Energy Co. and Indiana Michigan Power Co.

The Commission found current distribution planning approaches insufficient to address pressing matters of reliability of service to customers, and found Michigan's distribution system reliability inadequate and current plans for improvements insufficient.

Among other considerations, the Commission:

- Adopted recommendations by Attorney General Dana Nessel's office for the utilities to file forecasted metrics in future distribution plans and to map planned system investments against these metrics to better understand the anticipated improvements in customer reliability.
- Called on DTE Electric to file additional information on how the company expects its ongoing work on tree trimming and grid hardening to improve its reliability performance.
- Adopted a recommendation for utilities to report outage incident statistics with and without major outage events, allowing for more granular data to better understand grid performance not related to major storm events.
- Indicated it found submissions from the utilities in their distribution plans insufficient to address the issue of financial incentives and penalties related to reliability and noted that a MI Power Grid order will be issued by the end of 2022

kicking off a workgroup to address the creation of appropriate financial incentives and penalties around outages and distribution performance.

- Found that more work is needed on benefit costs analyses to more uniformly balance utility investments and customer affordability, with additional guidance to be provided in a future order to develop a jurisdiction-specific benefit cost test.
- Called for more accessible and usable reliability data from DTE Electric and Consumers compatible with the [MiEJscreen: Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) so that stakeholders may better analyze reliability impacts geographically, addressing environmental justice and equity concerns about the impacts of outages. The Commission directed the two utilities to work with MPSC Staff to determine the appropriate format for publicly sharing this data.
- Noted that utilities in a growing number of other states have made significant strides in developing distribution system maps and providing distribution system loading and hosting capacity data in publicly available, easy-to-use formats, and expressed its expectation that similar information will be included in future distribution system plans filed by Michigan utilities to build on the initial maps included in the most recent distribution plans filed by DTE Electric and Consumers Energy.
- Requested targeted strategic pilot proposals for moving overhead powerlines underground, to be filed in future rate cases or next distribution plans.
- Asked DTE Electric and Consumers to provide more detailed information on distribution conversion plans. The Commission also asked DTE Electric, Consumers, and other utilities in this matter to file comparisons of tradeoffs between grid hardening, undergrounding, and upgrading, using appropriate benefit-cost analysis tests to determine the most reasonable and prudent path forward.

The Commission also indicated its interest in incorporating appropriate metrics for distributed energy resources (DERs) and DER integration into future distribution plans and asked for comments on this matter, and that more work remains on benefit cost analyses so that they better balance utility investments and customer affordability.

Today's order directed DTE Electric, Consumers, I&M to file their next distribution investment and maintenance plans by Sept. 29, 2023, and Alpena Power Co. and Northern States Power Co., which serves parts of the western Upper Peninsula, to file their first distribution investment and maintenance plans by Sept. 30, 2024.

Those interested in providing comments on the requested information pertaining to appropriate metrics for distributed energy resources and their integration in future distribution plans may do so by 5 p.m. on Nov. 1, 2022, with reply comments due no later than 5 p.m. Nov. 15, 2022.

Comments may be submitted using the Submit Comment button in this case in the MPSC's [E-Dockets](#) system; mailed to Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48909, or emailed to mpscdockets@michigan.gov. All comments should reference Case No. U-20147.

In [Case No. U-20959](#), the Commission took several steps in response to the MI Power Grid a [Customer Education and Participation](#) workgroup's [March 25 report](#) on its examination of the best ways to provide safe access to customer energy data, balance the availability of that data with customer privacy, and promote customer engagement with the transition to clean energy.

Advancing the workgroup's recommendations, the Commission today directed regulated utilities to adopt federal Fair Information Practice Principles for customer data storage and data sharing and to file a customer data storage and data sharing reports no later than June 1, 2023, and annually thereafter. The Commission also adopted MPSC Staff's recommended definition of un-shareable personal data and the report's recommended definition of anonymous data.

Further, the Commission directed regulated utilities with more than 100,000 customers to, by July 1, 2023, support third party access to aggregated and anonymized data at minimum standards adopted in today's order and file documentation detailing how aggregated and anonymized data has been made available to third parties.

The Commission strongly encouraged regulated utilities to adopt the nationally recognized industry standard Green Button energy sharing platforms, including Green Button Download My Data and Green Button Connect, and seek certification for standards compliance through the Green Button Alliance.

The Commission directed regulated utilities to file by June 1, 2023, disclosure reports that outline personal data they collect and store and the primary purpose for that data, as well as outlining personal information shared with contractors, agents, and unregulated affiliates (without customer consent) and any customer safeguards associated with this sharing. Transparency about how this data collection and sharing is necessary to assess the reasonableness of utilities' internal data sharing policies and the existent safeguards to protect this data.

To further support customer engagement, the Commission also directed MPSC staff to explore development of a utility program portal, to be hosted on the Commission's website, providing easy access on utility programs and offerings, pursue a greater social media presence, and develop and issue a survey community organizations and customer advocates by Dec. 30, 2022, to gain additional information from customers related to customer outreach.

MPSC Staff also was directed to explore opportunities to hold additional energy assistance fairs and listening sessions and other customer outreach events for customer insight and feedback. The Commission's work in this regard is already underway, with the MPSC [having launched](#) a [Facebook page](#) in June and holding an ongoing series of energy fairs and listening sessions in April and May in Benton Harbor and Gaylord, respectively, and additional sessions planned for the Upper Peninsula and other parts of the state.

COMMISSION ALLOWS FOR ADDITIONAL BRIEFS TO BE FILED IN ENBRIDGE LINE 5 CASE IN 2023

The Commission today granted approval of a joint request by Enbridge Energy LP and several intervenors in the case involving the Enbridge's application for siting approval for a project to reconstruct a segment of the Line 5 pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac and move it to a tunnel beneath the lakebed to file additional briefs in the case in 2023 ([Case No. U-20763](#)). The Commission disagreed with the petitioners' request for a rehearing but granted their request to file initial briefs of no more than 30 pages and reply briefs of no more than 25 pages addressing the supplemental record developed in response to the Commission's July 7, 2022, order to address deficiencies in the record on critical matters of engineering and safety. The other joint petitioners are Michigan Laborers' District Council, Michigan Propane Gas Association, and the National Propane Gas Association. The briefs and replies must be filed by May 19, 2023.

MPSC REOPENS UPPER PENINSULA POWER CO.'S ENERGY WASTE REDUCTION PLAN CASE TO FURTHER DEVELOP RECORD

The Commission today reopened [Case No. U-20879](#) to allow parties in Upper Peninsula Power Co.'s (UPPCO) application for approval of its energy waste reduction (EWR) plan for the 24 months ending Dec. 31, 2023, to receive testimony, exhibits and rebuttal for a disputed matter involving EWR cost allocations for Verso Corp., the sole member of UPPCO's real time market pricing customer class. The Commission found the record insufficient to support approval of UPPCO's EWR plan and reopened the case to develop a more complete record on this and other issues, with scheduling deferred to the administrative law judge in the case.

To look up cases from today's meeting, access the [MPSC's E-Dockets filing system](#). Watch recordings of the MPSC's meetings on the [MPSC's YouTube channel](#).

For information about the MPSC, visit www.michigan.gov/mpsc, sign up for its [monthly newsletter](#) or other [listservs](#). Follow the Commission on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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