

**From:** [Jackson Koeppel](#)  
**To:** [Talberg, Sally \(LARA\)](#); [Phillips, Tremaine \(LARA\)](#); [Scripps, Daniel \(LARA\)](#); [LARA-MPSC-EDOCKETS](#)  
**Cc:** [Zakia Gibson](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Case #U-20692  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 29, 2020 1:12:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [Power Outage Issue - Letter of Support form HP School District.pdf](#)  
[Outages Issue - Sign On Letter.pdf](#)

**CAUTION: This is an External email. Please send suspicious emails to  
abuse@michigan.gov**

Dear Commissioners,

Please find attached two letters addressed to you, regarding the current reliability and outage compensation docket. We are submitting them to you directly, and requesting they be added to the record for case #U-20692.

The first letter is from the Superintendent of the Highland Park School District focusing on educational impacts of outages. Ms. Gibson is copied here. The second letter is of similar form and is signed by over 100 residents of Detroit, Highland Park, and other communities and 14 organizations.

We hope you will stand with ratepayers impacted by outages and support meaningful and binding rule changes in this case, and in future consideration of performance-based ratemaking. The key elements are excerpted below for your convenience.

"Right now, the MPSC is considering reliability standard improvements. You need to hold fast to two principles about outages:

1.

**If you're impacted, you're compensated - automatically and in full**

2.

**DTE pays for poor service - not the people they failed to serve**

The Michigan Public Service Commission is currently considering changes to the administrative rules regarding outage compensation in Case #U-20629. To our dismay, the Commission staff engaged in this case have indicated a desire to punt this issue to another docket without binding outcomes. We, the undersigned residents and organizations of Highland Park, Detroit, and supporters beyond are demanding that action be taken in this docket, and are asking the Commission to:

1.

Adopt the initial recommendations of Citizens Utility Board of Michigan for a **\$2/hour compensation rate** for ratepayers impacted by outages, to be included as **an automatic bill credit** on the next monthly bill *as a baseline*

2.

Acknowledge that the \$2/hour rate (based on ability-to-pay research) does not cover the full cost of a power outage for low-income households and direct staff to **conduct research on the full cost impact of outages for future policymaking**

3. Direct the MPSC staff involved in **performance-based ratemaking** to support CUB's proposal to limit cost recovery of bill credits based on the utility's performance relative to national reliability metrics."

Thank you!

--

Jackson Koepfel  
Executive Director @ [Soulardarity](#)  
917.554.3741



## THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

12360 Woodward Avenue  
Highland Park, Michigan 48203-3322

Zakia Gibson, M.Ed.  
Chief Education Officer

December 18, 2020

**Dear Commissioners Scripps, Talberg, and Phillips and other MPSC staff:**

**I am writing as Superintendent of the Highland Park Public School District, with support of the Highland Park School Board, on behalf of Highland Park students and households harmed by power outages.** With the pandemic conditions of COVID-19, schools are in remote learning and have transitioned to being completely virtual. Under these conditions, electric outages completely disrupt student learning. Without power and a Wi-Fi connection, students have no means to connect with their teachers and learning process. Students are already behind because of the pandemic, the difficulties of online learning, and the struggles of living in a low-income community. If they are disconnected, they are not learning, and falling even further behind.

**Power outages hurt all of us.** From the most rural tip of the thumb to the urban center of Detroit, all our lives are subject to disruption from loss of power. DTE is one of the worst performers in the county on reliability. Outages are a constant problem that needs to be addressed.

**The economic and racial injustice impacting Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck means we feel it even worse.** With so many people with asthma and other health conditions, the loss of power in the summer means indoor air temperatures rise to deadly levels. In the winter, just the opposite. With so much poverty, the loss of a week's worth of groceries can be a devastating economic blow. For residents who rely on electric power for breathing machines and insulin, an outage is an existential threat. Power outages disrupt and threaten our lives - yet we are offered measly \$25 vouchers that do not come close to addressing that. And we continue to have people die and be seriously injured from electrocution because of our decrepit infrastructure. These household impacts were already disrupting and damaging educational achievement for students, and are even more severe with online learning.

**The Michigan Public Service Commission must hold DTE to a higher standard.** DTE Energy has routinely ignored local infrastructure improvements, in favor of building billion dollar gas plants and expensive transmission. They would rather trim trees and fix things as they break than make lasting improvements. And the Michigan Public Service Commission continues to grant them rate hike after rate hike for these faulty investments.

Right now, the MPSC is considering reliability standard improvements. They need to hold fast to two principles about outages:

- 1. If you are impacted, you are compensated - automatically and in full**
- 2. DTE pays for poor service - not the people they failed to serve**

When your power goes out, you should get an automatic credit on your bill - no forms required. The credit should be big enough to cover the full impact of the outage - lost groceries, lost work, lost time. And it should take into account the impacts on those with health issues and less income. And DTE should under no circumstances be allowed to raise your rates later to make that money back. If they do a poor job, they should bear the cost - not those of us already suffering unaffordable rates and unreliable service. With these principles in place, DTE will feel a real economic pressure to prioritize safety and reliability.

These steps are about more than outages. Local infrastructure improvements make a higher level of local solar and clean energy possible, improving our health and bringing dollars into the community. They are building blocks of **affordability, health, and local clean power** that communities have been fighting for.

The Michigan Public Service Commission is currently considering changes to the administrative rules regarding outage compensation in Case #U-20629. To our dismay, the Commission staff engaged in this case have indicated a desire to punt this issue to another docket without binding outcomes. We are demanding that action be taken in this docket, and are asking the Commission to:

1. Adopt the initial recommendations of the Citizens Utility Board of Michigan for a **\$2/hour compensation rate** for ratepayers impacted by outages, to be included **as an automatic bill credit** on the next monthly bill *as a baseline*;
2. Acknowledge that the \$2/hour rate (based on ability-to-pay research) does not cover the full cost of a power outage for low-income households and direct staff to **conduct research on the full cost impact of outages for future policymaking; and**
3. Direct the MPSC staff involved in **performance-based ratemaking** to support CUB's proposal to limit cost recovery of bill credits based on the utility's performance relative to national reliability metrics.

These steps in Case #U-20629 do not address the full scope of affordability, health, and community clean energy issues experienced in our communities. They, would represent, however, a strong positive move from the Commission that shows a real concern for the Highland Park students and households impacted by outages.

Sincerely,



Zakia S. Gibson, M.Ed.  
Chief Education Officer  
The School District of the City of Highland Park

**Dear Commissioners Scripps, Talberg, and Phillips and other MPSC staff;**

**Power outages hurt all of us.** From the most rural tip of the thumb to the urban center of Detroit, all our lives are subject to disruption from loss of power. DTE is one of the worst performers in the county on reliability. Outages are a constant problem that needs to be addressed.

**The economic and racial injustice impacting Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck means we feel it even worse.** With so many people with asthma and other health conditions, the loss of power in the summer means indoor air temperatures rise to deadly levels. In the winter, just the opposite. With so much poverty, the loss of a week's worth of groceries can be a devastating economic blow. For residents who rely on electric power for breathing machines and insulin, an outage is an existential threat. Power outages disrupt and threaten our lives - yet we are offered measly \$25 vouchers that do not come close to addressing that. And we continue to have people die and be seriously injured from electrocution because of our decrepit infrastructure.

**The Michigan Public Service Commission must hold DTE to a higher standard.** DTE Energy has routinely ignored local infrastructure improvements, in favor of building billion dollar gas plants and expensive transmission. They would rather trim trees and fix things as they break than make lasting improvements. And the Michigan Public Service Commission continues to grant them rate hike after rate hike for these faulty investments.

Right now, the MPSC is considering reliability standard improvements. You need to hold fast to two principles about outages:

- 1. If you're impacted, you're compensated - automatically and in full**
- 2. DTE pays for poor service - not the people they failed to serve**

When your power goes out, you should get an automatic credit on your bill - no forms required. The credit should be big enough to cover the full impact of the outage - lost groceries, lost work, lost time. And it should take into account the impacts on those with health issues and less income. And DTE should under no circumstances be allowed to raise your rates later to make that money back. If they do a poor job, they should bear the cost - not those of us already suffering unaffordable rates and unreliable service. With these principles in place, DTE will feel a real economic pressure to prioritize safety and reliability.

These steps are about more than outages. Local infrastructure improvements make a higher level of local solar and clean energy possible, improving our health and bringing dollars into the community. They are building blocks of **affordability, health, and local clean power** that communities have been fighting for.

The Michigan Public Service Commission is currently considering changes to the administrative rules regarding outage compensation in Case #U-20629. To our dismay, the Commission staff engaged in this case have indicated a desire to punt this issue to another docket without binding outcomes. We, the undersigned residents and organizations of Highland Park, Detroit, and supporters beyond are demanding that action be taken in this docket, and are asking the Commission to:

1. Adopt the initial recommendations of Citizens Utility Board of Michigan for a **\$2/hour compensation rate** for ratepayers impacted by outages, to be included **as an automatic bill credit** on the next monthly bill *as a baseline*
2. Acknowledge that the \$2/hour rate (based on ability-to-pay research) does not cover the full cost of a power outage for low-income households and direct staff to **conduct research on the full cost impact of outages for future policymaking**
3. Direct the MPSC staff involved in **performance-based ratemaking** to support CUB’s proposal to limit cost recovery of bill credits based on the utility’s performance relative to national reliability metrics.

These steps in Case #U-20629 do not address the full scope of affordability, health, and community clean energy issues experienced in our communities, but they would represent a strong positive move from the Commission that shows a real concern for those impacted by power outages and the equity issues therein.

Sincerely,

The undersigned

<b>Organizations</b>
East Grand Block Club (Highland Park) The Cooperation Group (Highland Park) Mary Joe’s Cafe (Highland Park) 48217 Southwest Detroit Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition Black Home Ecology Center EcoWorks Michigan Interfaith Power & Light Hope Village Revitalization Work For Me DTE Campaign Union Of Concerned Scientists Soulardarity The Work For Me DTE Campaign
<b>Residents (Name &amp; City)</b>

Todd Ziegler	Ann Arbor
Edyta Sitko	Ann Arbor
Mary Ann Baier	Dearborn
Theresa Landrum	Detroit
Michelle Martinez	Detroit
Deborah Taylor	Detroit

Prostell Thomas	Detroit
Lawrence Stallworth	Detroit
Kathryn Savoie	Detroit
Leah Wiste	Detroit
Mary McLoughlin	Detroit
Jerome D Goldberg	Detroit
Kristen Hamel	Detroit
Juanita Maxwell	Detroit
Jeffrey B Jones	Detroit
Gibran Washington	Detroit
Shimekia Nichols	Detroit
Debbie Fisher	Detroit
Meiko Krishok	Detroit
Gloria J lowe	Detroit
Steven Gerard	Detroit
Stephanie Johnson-Cobb	Detroit
Jerice L Stevenson	Detroit
Abby Rubin	Detroit
Joy Robinson	Detroit
Christina Ridella	Detroit
Kubwa Baraka Johnson	Detroit
Angela Thomas	Highland Park
Anthony Askew	Highland Park
Bella Cook	Highland Park
Benj Bersche	Highland Park
Benjamin Bersche	Highland Park
Brenda Noble	Highland Park
Brendan Morgan	Highland Park
Brian Donovan	Highland Park
Brian Henderson	Highland Park
Craig Matthews	Highland Park
Daniel Jackson	Highland Park
Denise Williams	Highland Park
Dionne Swan	Highland Park

Dominique Miller	Highland Park
Dorian Jackson	Highland Park
eban morales	Highland Park
Elizabeth Clagg	Highland Park
Elmer Davenport	Highland Park
Erica Deline	Highland Park
Faith Stroud	Highland Park
Farnum Zobel	Highland Park
Glenda M McDonald	Highland Park
Glenn L.	Highland Park
Haley Connors	Highland Park
Haley O'Connors	Highland Park
Jailen Owens	Highland Park
Jennifer Sacks	Highland Park
Jermaine Ward	Highland Park
Jevon Brown	Highland Park
Juan Shannon	Highland Park
Juanita Millhouse	Highland Park
Kara Vauzaudt	Highland Park
Kendle Chaleah	Highland Park
Kenneth Lacy	Highland Park
Kenneth Leonard	Highland Park
Kenneth Woolridge	Highland Park
Kenton Higgins	Highland Park
Lakesha Mays	Highland Park
Larry Durr	Highland Park
Lashella Kueton	Highland Park
Lashelle Kueton	Highland Park
Leon Miller	Highland Park
Lillian Ellis	Highland Park
Lisa Butler	Highland Park
Lisa Tipton	Highland Park
Lorne Mcgee	Highland Park
Luquan Bowe	Highland Park
Magdelynn Miller	Highland Park



Marcus Rhymes	Highland Park
Michael Lamon Jr.	Highland Park
Michelle Jones	Highland Park
Milton Bennett	Highland Park
Nancy Gambrill	Highland Park
Natalie Wiseman	Highland Park
Nayah Neimah	Highland Park
Reuben Goodwin	Highland Park
Rob Drain	Highland Park
Robert Bryce	Highland Park
Robert Johnson	Highland Park
Rosie M.	Highland Park
S. Lyght	Highland Park
Sarah grieve	Highland Park
Shadrick Wilson	Highland Park
Sharday White	Highland Park
Sofia Allen	Highland Park
Steve Johnson	Highland Park
T. Smith	Highland Park
Tim Mcpherson	Highland Park
Tim Sharpe	Highland Park
Toni Bennett	Highland Park
Jackson Koeppel	Highland Park
Zachary Kolodziej	Highland Park
Sarna Salzman	Traverse City
Ellery M Rosenzweig	West Bloomfield