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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MPSC issues show-cause order in investigation of Consumers Energy for faulty meters, estimated billing, late service hookups**

The Michigan Public Service Commission today directed Consumers Energy Co. to show cause why it shouldn't be held in violation of rules governing billing and service quality and reliability, the next stage of an ongoing Commission investigation into malfunctioning meters, inaccurate estimated bills and delays in completing new service connections (Case No. U-21502).

The Commission [launched the investigation in July](#) in [Case No. U-21458](#) amid persistent customer complaints about non-working meters and abnormally high estimated bills as Consumers transitioned its advanced metering infrastructure electric meters from now-obsolete 3G cellular service to 4G-based meters. MPSC Staff investigating the matter found that Consumers was estimating bills for many electric customers with 3G meters even before cellular phone companies discontinued operating 3G service in January 2023, because the meters were not working and showing blank screens — allowing neither customers nor Consumers to pull actual readings from the meters.

The MPSC also received complaints from customers about delays in new service hookups, in violation of Service Quality and Reliability Standards that require 90% of new service installations to be completed within 15 days.

Today's order directs Consumers to file testimony on its consecutive estimated billings issues, its failure to provide actual meter readings in compliance with billing rules, and new service installation completion issues. The utility also must show cause by Nov. 14, 2023, why it shouldn't be found in violation of the MPSC's Consumer Standards and Billing Practices for Electric and Natural Gas Service, Mich Admin Code, R 460.101 et seq.; the MPSC's Service Quality and Reliability Standards for Electric Distribution Systems, Mich Admin Code, R 460.701 et seq.; and the MPSC's Technical Standards for Gas Service, Mich Admin Code, R 460.2301 et seq.

The Commission directed MPSC Staff to continue its investigation into potential rules violations, audit the reliability of information provided by Consumers and provide testimony on its findings.

A pre-hearing on the show-cause matter is scheduled for 10 a.m. Dec. 4, 2023, via Microsoft Teams.

### **MPSC OKS CONSUMERS ENERGY POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT FOR WEST MICHIGAN HYDRO PLANT**

The MPSC approved a power purchase agreement (PPA) between Consumers Energy Co. and STS Hydropower LLC for the output of the Ada Hydro Plant, a 1,400-kilowatt generating facility on the Thornapple River near Ada in Kent County ([Case No. U-18425](#)). Consumers Energy has contracted with current and previous owners of the hydro facility since 1984, and today's order approves a new PPA with STS Hydropower from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, at an estimated cost of \$64,829. Approval of the PPA will not affect customer rates or increase the cost of service to customers.

### **MPSC SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON 5-YEAR ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION PLANS FOR DTE ELECTRIC, CONSUMERS ENERGY AND INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER**

The MPSC is seeking public comment on 5-year electric distribution system investment and maintenance plans filed by DTE Electric Co., Consumers Energy Co. and Indiana Michigan Power Co. (I&M) ([Case No. U-20147](#)). In September 2022, the Commission, saying it found current distribution planning approaches insufficient to address pressing matters of reliability of service to customers and current plans for improvements insufficient, [ordered the three utilities](#) to file the 5-year plans by Sept. 29, 2023. The Commission now invites public input on the plans. Comments on I&M's distribution plan are due Jan. 19, 2024, and replies by March 29, 2024. Comments on Consumers' distribution plan are due by Feb. 16, 2024, and replies by April 26, 2024. Comments on DTE Electric's distribution plan are due March 15, 2024, and replies by May 24, 2024. Comments may be mailed to Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48909, or emailed to [mpscdockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscdockets@michigan.gov). All comments should reference Case No. U-20147.

### **MPSC HEARS PRESENTATION ON GAS-ELECTRIC HARMONIZATION REPORT**

The MPSC heard a presentation today from Bob Gee, a co-chair of the North American Energy Standards Board, on the NAESB's Gas-Electric Harmonization (GEHF) Forum Report [issued this summer](#). The [GEHF report](#) explores challenges to reliability of both electric and natural gas systems as natural gas is increasingly used in electric generation, and issues recommendations that the energy industry and regulators can take to improve reliability given increasing gas-electric interdependency. The issue came to the fore during Winter Storm Uri in 2021, when electric and natural gas systems across Texas failed during freezing temperatures, leading to more than 200 deaths and tens of billions of dollars in damages, and again with Winter Storm Elliott in 2022, when power was knocked out to more than 1.5 million homes across the country amid similar stresses on the electric and natural gas systems during times of soaring energy demand. The MPSC has been focused on improving coordination between the

natural gas and electric systems since at least 2019, when recommendations on the subject were included in the Commission's [Statewide Energy Assessment](#).

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](#).

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