



**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF JESSICA DUELL  
CASE NUMBER U-21870**

1 Q. Are you the same Jessica Duell who filed direct testimony on behalf of Michigan  
2 Public Service Commission (MPSC or Commission) Staff (Staff) in the instant  
3 case?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. What is the purpose of your rebuttal testimony?

6 A. The purpose of my rebuttal testimony is to: 1) provide a general response to  
7 several recommendations from intervenors regarding line clearing; and 2) respond  
8 to Association of Businesses Advocating Tariff Equity (ABATE) witness Jessica  
9 A. York's recommendation to disallow projected test year HVD Line Clearing  
10 Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expense of 10% or \$1.184 million.

11 Q. Are you sponsoring any exhibits?

12 A. Yes, I am sponsoring exhibits with my rebuttal testimony.

<u>Exhibit No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
14 Exhibit S-20	15 Consumers Energy's response to Staff discovery U21870-ST- 16 CE-0115

17 **Line Clearing**

18 Q. Can you provide a summary of the Line Clearing recommendations from Citizens  
19 Utility Board (CUB) witness Richard J. Bunch?

20 A. Yes. CUB witness Bunch recommends on page 40, lines 12-18 of direct  
21 testimony:

22 The Company proposes spending \$186,684,000 on forestry in the test  
23 year. (Table 4) Adjusting its historical test year spending for PAI  
24 [Productivity-adjusted Inflation] yields a baseline figure of \$113,977,000.  
25 Any proposed amount in excess of that figure represents increased activity  
26 over adjusted baseline, or surge. That amount is \$72,707,000, which is the

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1 figure witness Jester proposes for regulatory asset treatment and potential  
2 securitization.

3  
4 Q. Can you provide a summary of the Line Clearing recommendations from  
5 Attorney General (AG) witness Sebastian Coppola?

6 A. Yes. AG witness Coppola recommends on page 175, lines 1-18 of direct  
7 testimony:

8  
9 I recommend that the Commission approved the 2024 line clearing  
10 expense amount of \$110,225,000 as the baseline amount and direct the  
11 Company to defer all expenses above that amount beginning in 2026 to the  
12 regulatory asset. For the projected test year, the Company forecasted  
13 \$186,684,000 in O&M expense for line clearing (Forestry), as shown in  
14 Exhibit A-170 and Exhibit A-13, Schedule C-5.1. Based on this amount  
15 and the baseline of \$110,225,000, the difference of \$76,459,000 should be  
16 removed from O&M expense in this rate case and included the regulatory  
17 asset account. Later in my testimony, I will discuss the appropriate return  
18 to be applied to the regulatory asset balance. Therefore, I recommend that  
19 the Commission approve both the \$110,225,000 baseline and the transfer  
20 of \$76,459,000 from O&M expense to the regulatory asset account for the  
21 projected test year.

22  
23 Q. What is Staff's recommendation regarding these proposals to shift Line Clearing  
24 O&M expenses into a regulatory asset?

25 A. Staff recommends the Commission reject these proposals to approve a baseline of  
26 \$110,225,000 or \$113,977,000 in Line Clearing O&M and then transfer  
27 \$76,459,000 or \$72,707,000 into a regulatory asset. Staff's position is the  
28 Commission should approve the full proposed spend of \$186,683,974 in Line  
29 Clearing O&M being requested by the Company, with \$164,445,867 being  
30 recovered as base O&M expense and \$22,238,107 being recovered as part of a  
31 regulatory asset, as shown in Figure 23 in Consumers Energy Company  
32 (Company or Consumers) witness Sara Stewart's direct testimony. Approving the  
33 Company's proposed base O&M expense for the test year will set a baseline for

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1 future annual expenses that should ultimately result in less expense going into the  
2 regulatory asset over the next five years. This would mean lower interest expense  
3 to ratepayers in the long run compared to CUB witness Bunch's and AG witness  
4 Coppola's proposals.

5 **Disallowing HVD Line Clearing O&M Expenditures**

6  
7 Q. What is ABATE witness York's recommendation with regard to HVD Line  
8 Clearing O&M?

9 A. As stated on page 16, lines 1-6 of ABATE witness York's direct testimony:

10 Based on the Company's track record of maintaining consistency in 1)  
11 underspending planned amounts, 2) the number of HVD line miles  
12 cleared, and 3) the number of crews used to accomplish that goal, I  
13 recommend reducing the Company's projected test year HVD Line  
14 Clearing O&M by 10%, or \$1.184 million.

15  
16 Q. Does Staff agree with this recommendation?

17 A. No. Staff does not agree with this recommendation because Consumers explained  
18 to Staff that, if the Company underspends in HVD line clearing in any year, those  
19 funds will be reallocated to the LVD line clearing program. (See Staff Exhibit S-  
20 20.). Staff is not advocating for underspending on the HVD system, but if it  
21 occurs there should be a commensurate increase in LVD line clearing spending.  
22 Staff recommends the Commission approve the full spend in HVD Line Clearing  
23 in the amount of \$11,840,000 for the projected test year.

24 Q. Does this conclude your rebuttal testimony?

25 A. Yes.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**  
**BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

\* \* \* \*

**In the matter of the application of )**  
**CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY )**  
**for authority to increase its rates for the )**  
**generation and distribution of electricity )**  
**and for other relief. )**  

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)

**Case No. U-21870**

**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF**  
**NICHOLAS M. EVANS**  
**MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**October 21, 2025**

**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF NICHOLAS M. EVANS  
CASE NUMBER U-21870**

1 Q. Are you the same Nicholas M. Evans who filed direct testimony on behalf of  
2 Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC or Commission) Staff (Staff) in the  
3 instant case?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. What is the purpose of your rebuttal testimony?

6 A. The purpose of my rebuttal testimony is to provide a general response to several  
7 recommendations from intervenors regarding the Investment Recovery  
8 Mechanism (IRM).

9 Q. Can you provide a summary of the IRM recommendations from intervenor  
10 witnesses?

11 A. Yes. ABATE witnesses Colin Fitzhenry and James Dauphinais both recommend  
12 the Commission reduce the Company's proposed annual authorized capital  
13 expenditure amount for the LVD Lines Reliability sub-program for Year 3  
14 (twelve months ending April 30, 2027) and Year 4 (twelve months ending April  
15 30, 2028) of the IRM by at least \$108.8 million per year. METC witness Michael  
16 Fleck stated that METC supports Consumers' inclusion of vulnerable  
17 communities in the IRM. Sergio Cira-Reyes, testifying on behalf of the Urban  
18 Core Collective, stated that he has concerns about approving another increase in  
19 IRM spending before reconciliation of the current two-year IRM has been  
20 completed, and he also recommends the Company report more thoroughly on the  
21 linkage between the percentage of the investments in EJ communities relative to  
22 the needs of those communities.

23 Q. Does Staff agree with these proposed adjustments?

**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF NICHOLAS M. EVANS  
CASE NUMBER U-21870**

1 A. For the most part, no. In contrast to the large IRM reductions being  
2 recommended by ABATE and UCC, Staff recommends the reductions be more  
3 modest. Staff also does not support the Vulnerable Communities program being  
4 added to the IRM. However, Staff does not oppose the Company being required  
5 to report more thoroughly on the linkage between the percentage of the  
6 investments in EJ communities relative to the needs of those communities.

7 Staff's adjustments are summarized in my direct testimony on page 17:

8 Staff recommends approving the two-year extension of the IRM, covering  
9 May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2028, but \$6,068,800 should be removed from the  
10 Repetitive Outages program for each year and the Vulnerable  
11 Communities program should be removed from the IRM and the  
12 associated \$30,000,000 of proposed IRM expenditures should be placed  
13 into rate base. For May 1, 2027 – April 30, 2028, the rate of return  
14 associated with the IRM surcharge should be lower than the pretax rate of  
15 return as ordered in this instant case, but no lower than the short-term debt  
16 rate ordered in the instant case.

17  
18 Q. Does this conclude your rebuttal testimony?

19 A. Yes.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**  
**BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

\* \* \* \*

<b>In the matter of the application of</b>	)	
<b>CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY</b>	)	<b>Case No. U- 21870</b>
<b>for authority to increase its rates for the</b>	)	
<b>generation and distribution of electricity</b>	)	
<b>and for other relief.</b>	)	
<hr/>	)	

**REBUTTAL EXHIBITS OF**  
**ENERGY OPERATIONS DIVISION**  
**MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**October 21, 2025**

U21870-ST-CE-0115  
Page 1 of 1

**Question:**

22. Please refer to Exhibit A-170 (SES-1), Line 2 Column H.

a. In case U-21585 the Company projected \$12,279,000 for HVD Maintenance Clearing in 2024. Please explain in detail why this actual expense is \$10,729,853.

i. Please explain in detail where the remaining \$1,549,147 in funding for Maintenance Clearing in 2024 was allocated to.

**Response:**

- a. The HVD system has been cleared once already through a four-year cycle and is in the second four-year cycle clearing stage. The average cost to clear a mile of the HVD system have been able to keep up with inflation for labor costs, as expected, now that the system is "on cycle."
- b. As stated in Pamela Bolden's direct testimony in Case No. U-21585, page 40, lines 9 through 11, any net decrease in HVD clearing costs for the test year will be allocated to the LVD system to bring the LVD system into cycle sooner by addressing circuits not cleared in many years while still maintaining the HVD system on its four-year cycle.

**Witness:** Sara E. Stewart

**Date:** July 28, 2025

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

\* \* \* \* \*

**In the matter of the application of** )  
**CONSUMERS ENERGY COMPANY** )  
**for authority to increase its rates for the** )  
**distribution of electricity and for other relief.** )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

**Case No. U-21870**

**PROOF OF SERVICE**


Michelle L. Conarton, being duly sworn, deposes and says that on October 21, 2025, A.D., she emailed a copy of the attached MPSC Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits to the persons as shown on the attached list.

**Michelle L.** Digitally signed by  
**Conarton** Michelle L. Conarton  
Date: 2025.10.21  
07:47:08 -04'00'

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Michelle L. Conarton

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brianna L. Brown, Notary Public  
State of Michigan, County of Gratiot  
Acting in the County of Eaton  
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