



October 31, 2025

Michigan Public Service Commission and Commission Staff
7109 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, MI 48917

RE: Comment on Final Draft Michigan Integrated Resource Planning Parameters and Filing Requirements (U-21867)

Dear Commissioners and Commission Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the final draft versions of the Michigan Integrated Resource Planning Parameters (“Draft MIRPP”) and Integrated Resource Plan Filing Requirements (“Draft IRP Filing Requirements”) dated August 15, 2025, and filed in Case No. U-21867. As members of the Abrams Environmental Law Clinic, approximately ten students, two legal fellows, and I represent Michigan community organizations—namely, Soulardarity, Urban Core Collective, and We Want Green, Too—on energy and environmental issues. Each organization’s advocacy is targeted in part to improving access to affordable and clean energy for low-income and BIPOC communities. As part of this work, we have represented these organizations in approximately twenty-five proceedings before the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC or Commission), including in multiple Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) cases for DTE Electric Company and Consumers Energy Company. This comment represents our initial reactions to the proposed planning parameters and does not represent the position that these organizations may take during litigation in individual proceedings on any of these issues. Furthermore, silence on a particular topic does not indicate assent; we affirmatively support only the parts of the proposal that we expressly describe. We also join the comments of the Clean Energy Organizations, particularly those related to identifying and considering the impacts on environmental justice communities, capturing the impacts on affordability, and modeling public health impacts.

We support the inclusion of affordability as a central concern in these planning parameters. Indeed, Part XX of the IRP outline, which is titled “Rate Impact, Financial Information, and Affordability,” is essential; utilities *must* consider the way that their planned course of action will affect the customers that they serve. It is especially important that they consider how affordability is impacted across different income ranges, as the guidelines require. Otherwise, utilities’ resource planning may exacerbate the already ongoing affordability crisis about which our clients have filed

extensive analysis¹ and briefing in multiple cases before the Commission. We also strongly urge the guidelines to go further and require that utilities additionally explore potential racial disparities. Our clients and other intervenors have identified and discussed racial disparities in aspects of the utilities' performance in previous Commission cases. Without this analysis, long-term planning and resource allocation may disparately affect BIPOC communities, which already struggle under the current system. Both income and race are essential considerations in ensuring equitable access to our energy future.

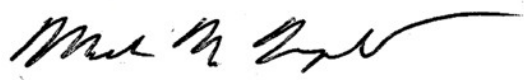
Appendix 2 to the proposal, which details an example affordability methodology, clarifies this process. In general, we support this methodology, which requires utilities to forecast how much customers will pay for energy and then assess how these costs will change with the utilities' planned courses of action. Moreover, it requires utilities to assess this impact across income ranges to ensure that their planned course of action does not disproportionately burden low-income customers. As the guidelines require, the utility must specifically discuss any income range that has an "energy burden"—not just an "electricity burden"—that will be at or above 6%. We support the inclusion of this "energy burden" threshold of 6%, which approximates the point at which rates become deeply unaffordable. In short, the goal is to ensure that utilities do not plan—and that the Commission does not ratify—a future in which rates are unaffordable. It is essential that unaffordability is examined within different income ranges; averaging energy burden across *all* customers would simply obscure and likely exacerbate the affordability struggles that low-income customers continue to face. It is also important that a utility presents the total amount of unaffordability across all ranges, so that the utility, Commission, stakeholders, and public can understand the incremental costs that particular scenarios will impose on customers, many of whom cannot afford their energy bills at present.

Ultimately, though, such an IRP analysis cannot solve the affordability crisis alone; action must be taken. First, utility companies and the Commission must take action to ensure that affordability gets better *in the present*—not just in future planning. Current affordability programs are inadequate; that much is evident from analyzing energy burdens. Yet utilities continue to raise rates, and the Commission continues to approve these rate increases. This only makes things worse, while low-income customers increasingly suffer. IRP parameters themselves will not change this. It is incumbent on utilities and the MPSC to stop this suffering now. Second, utility companies and the Commission must address any increase in unaffordability as part of the IRP process. If IRP scenarios indicate that costs will increase, then a utility must include the costs of additional affordability programs in its planning, must consider those incremental costs when weighing the options, and propose—and execute on—concrete plans to address incremental affordability impacts as part of obtaining approval for an IRP. Anything less will not provide a comprehensive

¹ Our clients have provided this information and analysis through the testimonies of Sergio Cira-Reyes, Elizabeth Jacob, Yunus Kinkhabwala, Arjun Makhijani, Shimekia Nichols, and Justin Schott, among others.

view and set of actionable mitigation measures and will only exacerbate the current affordability crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark N. Templeton", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark N. Templeton
Clinical Professor of Law
Director, Abrams Environmental Law Clinic