

Connections

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

JANUARY 2020

STARTING POINT



By Doug Dean
Director

After the snowiest November in Denver in 25 years and higher-than-average snowfall around the state in December, Colorado utility customers, especially those in mountain communities with heavy snowfalls,

are reminded to inspect their natural gas meters on a regular basis and remove any ice and snow buildup.

The accumulation of snow and ice on natural gas meters is a safety hazard. Keeping meters clear of snow and ice will help prevent damage that could result in a dangerous situation.

Accumulated snow and ice places stress on the regulator or meter piping, and could cause gas to leak into your home and create a hazardous condition. Excessive snow cover also may result in abnormal pressure, affect appliance operation and interrupt your service.

Damage to natural gas facilities may also result from the impact of snow or ice falling from roofs, ice forming in or on regulators preventing their proper operation, or shoveling snow from roofs to protect dwellings from abnormal snow accumulations.

When removing heavy accumulations of snow or ice, do not strike meters with snow blowers, blades or shovels. Do not kick your meter to break or clear ice. Use a broom, a snow brush, or your hands to lightly remove snow and ice that is capable of being removed. For extremely heavy ice buildup, contact your local gas utility.

The problem of melting snow and ice falling on exposed meters will continue through the spring as daytime temperatures rise and then fall below freezing overnight. Customers who notice ice on their meters or are concerned that meter vents may be blocked should contact their local gas utility.

Excessive ice and snow may also block the electronic reading of your meter. And, if there is an emergency, response crews will need clear access to your meter.

If you own a vacation home or plan to be away from your home for an extended period, designate someone to clear your gas meter and sidewall appliance vents regularly while you're away. After you're back in the home, be especially attentive to any gas odor.

Customers should leave their residence immediately if they detect a gas or propane odor and report the odor to their local gas utility, propane operator or designated emergency response officials.

Stay safe during the winter by keeping your gas meter clear and dry.

Governor appoints new PUC member

Governor Jared Polis on January 3 appointed **Susan Perkins** of Greenwood Village to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

The appointment, which requires confirmation from the Colorado Senate, is effective January 13 for a term that expires in January of 2024. Perkins will replace **Frances Koncilja**, whose term expired.

"Susan is consumer-minded, and has the experience and forward-thinking focus Colorado needs on the PUC to keep rates low," Governor Polis said. "Last session, we took a number of steps to modernize the PUC and I am excited to nominate someone who can help build on that vision and will stand up for ratepayers from southern Colorado and across our state."

Perkins has spent the last six years as a member and pro bono attorney for Pueblo's Energy Future. Previously, she was a principal at Perkins Energy Law, where she focused on providing

legal and energy policy assistance for the development of renewable energy resources in Colorado.

She has also worked at Randstad North America, Total Petroleum, Inc., and other law firms.

Perkins holds a bachelor's and law degree from the University of Houston, and earned an MBA from Regis University.

Perkins will serve with Chairman **Jeff Ackermann** and Commissioner **John Gavan** on the three-member PUC, which regulates rates and services of investor-owned electric, gas and water utilities, some intrastate telecommunications services, for-hire motor carriers in Colorado, and safety of railroad crossings and intrastate natural gas pipelines.

PUC commissioner serve staggered four-year terms. No more than two appointees may be from the same political party. Ackermann and Perkins are Democrats; Gavan is an Independent.



Susan Perkins

PUC trims Xcel electric rate request

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has approved a \$41.5 million net increase in electric rates for Xcel Energy, expected to become effective in the first quarter of 2020.

In deliberations in December, the PUC granted the company significantly less than its original request of a \$158.3 million net increase, which Xcel later reduced to \$108.3 million.

The \$41.5 million increase is expected to increase monthly bills for residential customers by about \$1.03 a month, or 1.53 percent. Monthly bills for small commercial customers will go up by about \$1.95 a month, or 1.95 percent.

The PUC granted Xcel a total increase in its electric base rate revenues of approximately \$286.4 million. Most of that amount, however, is the result of transfers into base rates from three ongoing riders, including:

- The Clear Air-Clean Jobs Act rider, which closed coal plants, converted coal plants to natural gas, and installed state-of-the-art equipment to reduce emissions at power plants across the state;
- The Transmission Cost Adjustment; and
- A General Rate Schedule Adjustment (GRSA) to collect costs associated with the Rush Creek Wind Project that are currently recovered through the company's Electric Commodity Adjustment (ECA).

Xcel was seeking to recover about \$4.1 billion of investment that the company has made in the last five years, including investments in next-generation technology to strengthen and improve the resiliency of the electric grid. Benefits of these investments include faster outage restoration times, meters that provide real-time information to help customers adjust usage and

save money, and the infrastructure needed to serve more than 80,000 additional residential customers since the last review in 2014.

Additional components of the request included accelerating wildfire safety, prevention and mitigation efforts and upgrading infrastructure to reduce the risk of damage due to wildfires; and an initiative to help communities and businesses achieve their sustainability goals through better tracking of their use of renewable energy.

The PUC established a 9.3 percent return on equity (ROE) for Xcel's electric operations, down from the current 9.83 percent. The ROE is the profit that a utility is authorized to earn on its investments. The PUC sets a maximum ROE, but it is not guaranteed.

The PUC is expected to issue its written decision on the Xcel rate case in January, with new rates going into effect shortly after that.

Xcel proposes permanent TOU electric rates

Xcel Energy has submitted a proposal to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to permanently implement time-of-use (TOU) electric rates for its residential customers.

The plan, filed on December 2, would make a modified TOU rate the default rate for all residential customers once Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meter deployment is completed in their area. The company said it plans to start deployment of smart meters in the second quarter of 2021, and have all residential meters swapped out by the end of 2024.

Since 2017, Xcel has been conducting a large-scale trial for a voluntary TOU service rate called Residential Energy Time-of-Use. TOU customers in the trial program would migrate to the new schedule when it becomes effective, which is proposed to be January 1, 2021.

Based on what the company has learned from the residential TOU

trial, Xcel has proposed a modified TOU rate schedule that is designed to encourage residential customers to shift their summer energy usage away from periods when electricity demand is greatest, which is when system costs as well as fossil fuel generation and associated carbon dioxide emissions are at their highest.

In addition to creating the opportunity for customers to reduce their bills by moving their energy usage to off-peak periods, reductions in load as a result of changes in customer behavior in response to the price signals established in the modified TOU rates can help reduce carbon emissions on (Xcel's) system, according to the company's filing.

Along with the TOU pricing, as the Advanced Meter deployment to residential customers in Xcel's territory is completed, customers will gain further insight into their energy usage. Xcel is proposing a customer

education program in association with the modified TOU rates that it said will further enable residential customers to understand and share in the benefits of TOU pricing.

If approved by the PUC, the proposed TOU rates would replace summer tiered rates for Xcel customers in Colorado. The current tiered rate schedule focuses pricing on the amount of energy customers use, regardless of what time of the day that energy is used. TOU rates can assist in informing customers that at certain times of the day it costs more or less to deliver the energy they are using.

As proposed, the On-Peak rate would apply from 3-7 p.m. each weekday (except holidays) June through September. Off-Peak rates would stay in effect for most of the year (October to May), plus summer weekends and holidays.

A PUC decision on the proposal is expected later this summer..



Members of the South African Power Pool met with PUC staff in November to discuss best practices in developing, implementing and enforcing power quality standards.

PUC hosts African power delegation

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in November hosted a visit by members of the South African Power Pool (SAPP), which included representatives of utilities from 12 countries in southern Africa.

The objectives of the visit were to share best practices associated with developing, implementing, and enforcing power quality standards; understand how the Colorado PUC receives and uses power quality reports from utilities; and gain a better understanding of how Colorado's experiences can help shape how member utilities in southern Africa handle power quality issues.

SAPP is a cooperation of the national electricity companies under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In 1995, member governments of SADC signed an Inter-Governmental

Memorandum of Understanding for the formation of an electricity power pool in the region under the name of the Southern African Power Pool. The members of SAPP have created a common power grid between their countries and a common market for electricity in the SADC region.

The power pool includes Eksom, a South African electric public utility and the largest producer of electricity in southern Africa. Eksom is among the top seven utilities in the world in terms of generation capacity and among the top nine in terms of sales.

The main goals of the SAPP include increasing the accessibility of electricity to rural communities and improving the relationships between the member countries. There is a need to develop sustainable development priorities, and to coordinate the planning of electric power.

PUC staff members **Drew Bolin** and **Bob Bergman** made presentations to the delegation on power quality standards, rules and regulations, and related application, parameters and quality remedial measures. They also emphasized reliability requirements through a discussion of the electric resource planning (ERP) process.

Another point of interest for the delegation was the distinction between the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) as a reliability coordinator and its voluntary membership compared to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) as a regulatory authority.

"We hope the outcome of this visit will assist the SAPP in meeting its goals to improve the relationships between the member countries," Bolin said.

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

George Bernard Shaw's popular witticism "he who can, does; he who cannot, teaches" certainly doesn't apply to **Erin O'Neill**. When it comes to Irish dancing, she's very accomplished at both.

O'Neill is the Chief Economist in the Economics Section at the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). But whenever she can find a spare moment, O'Neill usually fills it teaching an Irish dancing class or participating in a dance competition.

"I teach an Irish dancing class for adults. It is my happy place," O'Neill said. But she also enjoys putting her skills into practice, recently finishing first in her age group at the 2019 Western U.S. Region Oireachtas, a competition that brings together Irish dancers and schools from 13 western states.

"I am pretty proud of that," she said. As chief economist, O'Neill directs the PUC economics staff in providing expert testimony, research, and recommendations on economic and policy issues before the Commission.

"What I like most is my team," she said. "They are absolutely amazing. We learn from each other every day. We all

love a spirited argument, but try to avoid being argumentative. I think we exemplify the adage 'iron sharpens iron'."

O'Neill also enjoys the technical aspects of the work, where there is always something new and interesting to learn.

"The economics section gets to focus on policy research and economic analysis in today's quickly evolving energy industry," she said. "And we do it all in the name of the public interest!"

O'Neill holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University and a master's in Technology Policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Prior to starting at the PUC in August of 2016, O'Neill spent almost 15 years in economic consulting, working mostly with electric utilities as well as for environmental organizations and the Electric Power Research Institute. Her work consisted mostly of performing quantitative modeling—electricity price forecasting, resource planning, modeling of federal environmental policy, generation asset valuation, etc.

In addition to Irish dancing, her



Erin O'Neill

hobbies include skiing with her two kids, golfing, and gardening when she has time.

She can quote most any line from *The Princess Bride*, and strives to treat others the way she would like to be treated.

"The Golden Rule doesn't quite cover every situation, but it's a very good starting point," she said.

(*Inside Connections* will feature a PUC employee each edition as selected by PUC section chiefs.)

Special recognition goes to the following PUC employees for hitting milestones in their years of service with the state of Colorado:

- 5 years—**Michael Hayes, Deidre Hudson, Ismael Reyna**
- 15 years—**Ellie Friedman, Melody Mirbaba**
- 20 years—**April Woods**
- 35 years—**Jerry Enright**

Welcome to new PUC employees **Jay Estrada** and **Joe O'Haver**, criminal investigators in the Transportation section; and **Ryan Echer**, an inspector in the Gas Pipeline Safety section.



Jay Estrada



Joe O'Haver



Ryan Echer

No-call telemarketer fees set for 2020

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has established the registration fees for 2020 that telemarketers will pay to obtain the state's do-not-call list.

The fees are set on a sliding scale based on the number of employees of the soliciting company. The fees collected are used to pay the annual contract costs for the designated agent to administer the Colorado No-Call program, and to support enforcement activities provided by the Colorado Attorney General's Office.

The 2020 fees will range from \$275 for telemarketers with 5-10 employees, up to \$500 for companies with more than 1,000 employees. Telemarketers with

less than five employees are not charged an annual registration fee.

PUC staff estimates that approximately 231 telemarketers will register with the Colorado No-Call program in 2020 and pay registration fees that will generate roughly \$103,290 in annual revenues.

Colorado's No-Call program allows residential and wireless telephone subscribers to notify solicitors of their objection to receiving solicitations by telephone or fax by placing their telephone numbers on a do-not-call list at no charge. Telemarketers must update these do-not-call lists four times a year to help reduce unwanted telephone calls.

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2020 Telemarketer Registration Fees

Number of Employees	Fee Amount
1-4	\$0
5-10	\$275
11-50	\$375
51-100	\$450
101-250	\$480
251-400	\$490
401-1,000	\$495
1,001+	\$500



CONNECTIONS is the newsletter of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. It covers Commission cases and actions of importance to consumers, utilities, consumer groups, and decision makers. Comments, suggestions, and requests for more information should be directed to:

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Maps showing DIA taxi zones available on-line

Maps depicting zones for flat-rated taxi fares to and from Denver International Airport (DIA) are now available on the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) website. Taxi customers can easily check on-line to see if their location falls within a flat-rated zone.

The PUC sets maximum rates for taxi service between the airport and four zones—downtown Denver, the Denver Tech Center, Boulder, and Tower Road. Taxi companies may charge less than the maximum rate if they have a different rate on file with the PUC, but it cannot exceed the maximum flat rate.

Current maximum rates for trips between DIA and various zones are as follows:

- Between DIA and Zone A (downtown Denver), \$51.
- Between DIA and Zone B (Denver Tech Center), \$57.
- Between DIA and Zone C (Boulder), \$84.
- Between DIA and Zone D (Tower Road), \$24.

In addition, taxis may include access/gate fees as established by DIA (currently \$4.57 for trips originating at the airport). Taxis may not use meters or include any charge for mileage, waiting time or traffic delay for flat-rated airport trips.

All taxi trips to and from destinations outside the four zones must be charged on a metered basis. For example, a trip from a downtown Denver hotel to Union Station cannot be a flat-rated fare, but must use the meter.

Maximum flat rates to and from the airport apply only to taxi companies. The PUC does not regulate rates for transportation network carriers such as Uber and Lyft, or luxury limousines.

Taxi customers can find maps showing the four DIA flat-rated zones here: <https://sites.google.com/state.co.us/puc-zone-maps> or from the PUC's main transportation page.

Zone A—Downtown Denver



Decision pending on Xcel's RES compliance plan

A final Public Utilities Commission (PUC) decision is expected by the end of the first quarter of 2020 on Xcel Energy's proposed two-year roadmap for its renewable energy programs.

Hearings were conducted December 10–12 on the company's 2020–21 Renewable Energy Compliance Plan, which Xcel describes as a "bridge plan" that largely continues existing programs while potential PUC rule changes and other factors are resolved.

Under the state's renewable energy standard, Xcel must provide 30 percent of its electricity through renewable sources by 2020. All customers pay a 2 percent monthly surcharge on electric bills to fund renewable programs to meet the standard.

Xcel has met Colorado's statutory Renewable Energy Standard (RES) requirements every year since the inception of the RES, and the company states it will continue to exceed the RES requirements in the foreseeable future. Its 2020–21 compliance plan proposed a measured increase in renewable energy programs and related customer choice

market activities, which Xcel said will advance its efforts toward a more sustainable energy future and less carbon-intensive fuel sources.

"The company's overall strategy with this plan is to continue the progress we have made to date while proposing some minor modifications to our programs and offerings in order to 'right size' them to customer demand," Xcel stated in its application.

With regards to Solar*Rewards, Xcel proposes to:

- Obtain up to 52.35 megawatts (MW) of solar capacity for each year in 2020 and 2021;
- Keep incentive payment levels for Solar*Rewards Small and Medium programs at 2019 levels;
- Double the annual Solar*Rewards Large capacity from 10 MW to 20MW, based on "robust demand for the large offering;
- Maintain Rooftop Low-Income Solar, implemented in conjunction with the Colorado Energy Office, at 3.5 kW per year;
- Obtain up to 48 MW of solar capacity

each year through its Solar*Rewards Community program;

- Develop a total of 8 MW of additional company-offered Community Solar Gardens each year that will be offered exclusively to eligible low-income customers.

For its Windsource program, Xcel anticipates no pricing changes from the 2017–19 plan. Xcel also states that the

Renewable*Connect program is fully subscribed and no expansion is anticipated in the 2020–21 plan.

A PUC Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) is expected to issue a recommended decision on the application in late January or early February. Any exceptions to the ALJ's decision would likely be taken up by the PUC before the end of March.

Report estimates \$27 million for voice, broadband in 2020

The fund that provides money to reimburse eligible telecommunications providers that serve areas with higher than average costs is projected to distribute approximately \$14 million for basic voice service and \$13 million for broadband support in 2020.

The projections are included in the annual report of the Colorado High Cost Support Mechanism (HCSM), which was submitted to the legislature on December 1. The report provides a detailed overview of the operations of the HCSM for calendar year 2019 and proposed operations for 2020.

Once fourth quarter distributions are added in, HCSM funds distributed for 2018 are expected to be about \$15.9 million, mostly to Century Link, to support universal basic voice service in rural areas of Colorado that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has not yet found to have effective competition. The PUC also is expected to transfer an additional \$11.8 million from the high cost fund to support broadband deployment in unserved areas in Colorado.

Since 2014, when the legislature passed telecommunications reform legislation that expanded the purpose of the

high cost fund to include broadband support, the PUC has allocated nearly \$35 million to the Broadband Deployment Board.

Colorado telecom customers support the high cost fund through a monthly surcharge on their bills. The surcharge is assessed as a percentage of a customer's monthly charges for local, wireless, and optional services. The surcharge currently is 2.6 percent.

A new law passed in 2018 froze the surcharge amount at 2.6 percent through 2023. At the same time, distributions to support basic voice service will be reduced, with increasing percentages of the funding allocated to broadband deployment. Beginning in 2023, 100 percent of the HCSM will be allocated to broadband deployment.

The 2018 law also requires deregulation of basic voice service throughout Colorado. Prior to 2018, the PUC issued decisions eliminating regulation and high-cost support in primarily urban areas of Colorado with demonstrated competition. The 2018 law requires elimination of regulation and high-cost fund support in all remaining, primarily rural, exchange areas of Colorado by January 1, 2023.

Black Hills seeks to amend ERP to add more renewables

Black Hills Colorado Electric is seeking approval from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to amend its 2016 Electric Resource Plan (ERP) to solicit competitive bids for up to 200 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and energy storage from individual projects.

The proposed "Renewable Advantage" project, filed in November, would significantly increase renewable penetration on the company's system while providing annual savings to customers, according to the company's application. As proposed by Black Hills, after hosting a competitive solicitation and evaluating the bids, the company will report to the PUC on the acquisitions that can take place to result in customer savings.

In support of its application, Black Hills said there have been two major developments since its last ERP that have caused the company to reevaluate whether there is an opportunity to acquire increased renewables while also reducing customer bills. One was a 2019 competitive solicitation by Xcel Energy that resulted in very low prices of new solar resources. Second, existing tax credits for wind and solar generation resources are

expiring and phasing-out after 2019.

Black Hills is proposing to expedite the solicitation, evaluation and acquisition process to facilitate the entering of an energy purchase agreement within 12 months, if a determination is made that new resources can be added to the company's system resulting in annual customer savings. In the event that Renewable Advantage results in bids that would increase rates, then Black Hills said it would recommend to the PUC that procurement decisions be delayed until the company's next ERP filing.

Black Hills asserts that customer savings will occur by displacing higher-cost power supplies with lower-cost renewable energy supplies. Customers would receive the benefits of these saving through the company's Energy Cost Adjustment. In addition, Black Hills asserts that Renewable Advantage has the potential to increase the company's retail load served by renewables to approximately 55–65 percent.

The PUC is expected to establish a procedural schedule to consider the merits of the application once the notice and intervention period expires in mid-January.

No-call fees

(Continued from page 2)

A state enforcement action may be brought against commercial telemarketers for three or more violations in a month. Certain types of calls are excluded from no-call rules, including political calls, calls from charitable organizations, and calls from businesses that have an

existing relationship with a customer.

As of December 4, more than 4.1 million telephone numbers had been registered with Colorado's do-not-call list, which began in 2002.

Telephone subscribers may register a residential or wireless phone number or file a complaint about possible violations of the no-call law by either calling toll-free at 1-800-309-7041, or by going on-line at www.coloradonocall.com.

PUC to investigate performance-based regulation

*Report to Legislature
due by Nov. 30, 2020*

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in December opened a proceeding to collect input from stakeholders related to performance-based regulation for Colorado utilities.

Senate Bill 19-236, signed by Governor Jared Polis in May, directed the PUC to conduct an investigation of financial performance-based incentives and metrics to identify mechanisms for aligning utility operations, expenditures and investments with various public benefit goals, including safety, reliability, cost efficiency,

emissions reductions and expansion of distributed energy resources.

The PUC was directed to submit its findings in a report to the legislature by November 30, 2020. The report is to include:

- A general determination as to whether a transition to performance-based regulation would be beneficial to the state, in terms of meeting stated PUC objectives and other related statutory requirements;
- Actions that the PUC may pursue to guide the change to performance-based regulation;
- Directives to be given to utilities;
- A list of types of future litigated proceedings within which the report could be implemented; and
- A proposed timeline for transition to performance-based regulation.

Performance-based regulation, or PBR, is a broad topic comprising rate-setting alternatives and a wide variety of incentive mechanisms. Hawaii has recently begun a comprehensive review of PBR for the state's utilities, but similar activities have been undertaken in Oregon, Minnesota and California, among others. Multi-year rate plans and formulaic rate setting have been ordered in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York and North Carolina. The lessons learned from other states will be an important part of Colorado's review of new performance-based incentives.

Commissioner **John Gavan** was designated as Hearing Commissioner and will work with PUC staff to take input from stakeholders and other interested participants to review PBR. The result of this examination will be a report

on financial performance-based incentives and performance-based metric tracking for Colorado's investor-owned utilities, consistent with the new statute.

Persons interested in participating in this proceeding were encouraged to file a notice of participation by January 8, 2020. The proceeding will serve as a repository for the filing of comments, studies and analyses, and will serve as a platform from which to conduct workshops and commissioner information meetings.

Interested persons may submit written comments by using the PUC's on-line comment form at www.dora.state.co.us/pacific/puc/puccomments under proceeding number 19M-0661EG.

Visit https://www.colorado.gov/dora/puc_legislation_implementation for updates on this and other PUC proceedings related to 2019 legislation.

911 authorities begin new year with surcharge hikes

A handful of emergency telephone service authority boards in Colorado were expected to implement increases to monthly E-911 surcharges around the first of the year after receiving approvals from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

On January 1, E-911 surcharge hikes were scheduled to go into effect for Eastern Rio Blanco 911 Telephone Authority, Sedgwick County Emergency Telephone Service Authority, and Jefferson County Emergency Communications Authority. For Eastern Rio Blanco, the monthly surcharge increased from \$.70 to \$1.80; for Sedgwick County the surcharge went from \$.70 to \$1.90; and in Jefferson County the surcharge increased from \$1.15 a month to \$1.30 a month.

Elbert County Communications Authority was expected to implement a monthly E-911 surcharge increase from \$1.20 to \$1.80 on January 2; and the surcharge for the Grand County Emergency Telephone Service Authority Board was scheduled to rise from \$1.50 to \$2.76 a month on January 6.

The Federal Heights Emergency Communications Center, a newly-formed 911 authority board, also received approval to implement an E-911 surcharge of \$1.50 per month on January 1. Emergency telephone services for Federal Heights were previously funded by the Adams County E-911 emergency Telephone Service Authority at the same surcharge rate.

Land-line and wireless telephone

customers in Colorado pay a monthly surcharge to fund the equipment and operational expenses of the E-911 system. Individual authority boards establish the amount needed to cover the costs of equipment, personnel and access to telephone lines. The surcharge is collected by the telephone provider and passed on to authority boards.

Under Colorado law, a 911 authority may assess a surcharge of up to 70 cents per customer per month for emergency

telephone services without permission from the PUC. Anything above that amount requires PUC approval.

The PUC has seen a rise in surcharge increase requests recently as emergency telephone service authority boards experience higher costs in transitioning to Next Generation 911 service, and as cities and counties reduce their support for 911 services due to budget constraints, according to **Daryl Branson**, the PUC's 911 program manager.

PUC to take stakeholder input on distribution system planning

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in December opened a proceeding to gather input from stakeholders relating to distribution system planning by Colorado electric utilities.

Senate Bill 19-236, signed by Governor Jared Polis in May, directs the PUC to promulgate rules establishing the filing of Distribution System Plans (DSPs). Through a workshop process that ended in late 2018, the PUC and stakeholders developed an understanding that the increasing adoption of distributed energy is accelerating due to changes in customer choices, technological development, cost reductions and public policy. Distribution planning may help the PUC ensure that grid modernization allows for continued safe, reliable and cost-effective utility operations. However, the PUC believes that the collection of additional information is necessary prior to the development of proposed rules.

Chairman **Jeff Ackermann** was

designated as Hearing Commissioner and will work with PUC staff, stakeholders and other interested participants to collect and organize information, conduct public comment hearings or workshops, and make recommendations to the full Commission as to the next steps in promulgating the rules required by statute.

Persons interested in participating in this proceeding are required to file a notice of participation by January 10, 2020. Initial written comments are due by February 1, 2020, with reply comments and draft rules due by March 13, 2020.

Interested persons may submit written comments by using the PUC's on-line comment form at www.dora.state.co.us/pacific/puc/puccomments under proceeding number 19M-0670E.

Visit https://www.colorado.gov/dora/puc_legislation_implementation for updates on PUC proceedings related to 2019 legislation.

Utility EV plans due May 15

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is gathering input from stakeholders on what information would be useful for electric utilities to include in upcoming proposals to support transportation electrification.

Senate Bill 19-077 directed public electric utilities to file no later than May 15, 2020, and every three years thereafter, an application for a program for regulated activities to support widespread transportation electrification within the utility's service area. The legislation established several criteria for evaluating the proposals, including: seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs; improve use of the electric grid; increase access to electricity as a transportation fuel; ensure safety and reliability; contribute to air quality standards; foster

competition for charging; include transparent public reporting; and provide access for low-income customers.

The PUC and its staff are working with electric utilities, stakeholders and other interested participants to collect and organize information, conduct workshops, and make suggestions to inform the plans to be filed this year. The PUC also is collecting comment on additional criteria, beyond the items identified in the recent legislation, which the PUC should consider.

Initial comments were filed by November 22 and reply comments by December 6. Interested parties can visit https://www.colorado.gov/dora/puc_legislation_implementation for updates on PUC proceedings related to this and other 2019 legislation.



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