2022 OCSC NEWSLETTER

Steering Committee of Cities Served by Oncor

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW ISSUE

This past year was an active one for the Steering Committee of Cities Served by Oncor. This Year in Review edition of the OCSC newsletter highlights significant 2022 events and looks ahead to 2023.

OCSC Welcomes New 2022 Members

The Steering Committee of Cities Served by Oncor welcomed several new members to the coalition in 2022, including the cities of Seymour, Garrett, Lavon, Gunter and Hutchins. OCSC, an organization of more than 160 Texas cities with residents served by the Oncor transmission and distribution utility, represents consumer interests in ratemaking matters at the Public Utility Commission of Texas. Membership in this standing committee is determined by passage of a resolution by each governing body.

Oncor Rate Case Update

On December 28, 2022, after several months of deliberation, the State Office of Administrative Hearing (SOAH) released its Proposal for Decision (PFD) in Oncor's ongoing rate case, PUC Docket No. 53601. Oncor initially filed its application to change rates with the Public Utility Commission of Texas on May 13, 2022, requesting an annual retail base rate revenue requirement of $5.811 billion. Put differently, Oncor sought a $251 million increase to its revenue requirement, which represents a 4.5 percent increase over its adjusted test-year revenues. If adopted, the requested revenue requirement would have increased residential rates by 11.2 percent.

OCSC played an active role throughout the case, with recommendations focused on striking an appropriate balance between consumer rates and Oncor's capital recovery. OCSC recommended that the PUC reduce Oncor's requested revenue requirement by $525.7 million. If adopted, this reduction would result in a $275 million reduction to Oncor's 2021 test-year revenue requirement.

SOAH agreed that Oncor's requested rates would unduly burden consumers. Accordingly, the PFD recommends that the PUC decrease Oncor's test-year revenue requirement by $60.6 million.

To reach its conclusion, among other things, SOAH found that:

- Oncor's current capital structure of 57.5% long-term debt and 42.5% common equity is appropriate.
- Oncor's Return on Equity (ROE) should be 9.3% rather than Oncor's requested ROE of 10.30%.
- The PUC should not consider Oncor's mobile generation unit leasing costs, which accounted for $3.1 million of Oncor's rate base, in Oncor's revenue requirement.
- A ten-year amortization period for all non-tax regulatory assets and liabilities, except the Intangible Amortization Over-Recovery Liability, is appropriate. The Intangible

Amortization Over-Recovery Liability should have a five-year amortization period.

The PFD also addresses substantive concerns raised by OCSC in hearing. For example, the PFD recommends that the PUC include language in Oncor's tariff that expressly grants city customers input in selecting street light alternatives.

The PFD, if adopted by the PUC commissioners, would substantially lower Oncor's requested revenue requirement and, among other things, ensure that city customers have appropriate input in key decisions such as Oncor's streetlamp selections. To take effect, the PFD still must be adopted by the PUC Commissioners. The Commissioners should issue their decision soon, likely at the next PUC Open Meeting on January 12, 2023.

Find more information at the PUC website, under Docket No. 53601.

Policymakers Consider Post-Winter Storm Uri Market Reforms

In response to the statewide power outages from the previous year, the Public Utility Commission during 2022 continued its consideration of potentially far-reaching reforms for the ERCOT market.

Broadly referred to a "Phase II" reforms, the market modifications — if authorized — could lead to generation capacity additions but likewise add to consumer costs. Consideration of these Phase II changes followed the adoption of so-called "Phase I" changes in 2021. These previous changes included new weatherization requirements for power plants and modifications to existing operational rules at ERCOT.

On Nov. 10, the Public Utility Commission released an independent study from the San Francisco-based E3 consulting firm that outlined several Phase II reform options. These included a "Performance Credits Mechanism" model favored by PUC chair Peter Lake, and a separate "Forward Reliability Market" favored by the E3 consultants themselves.

However, both proposals as well as others in the E3 report drew pushback from key lawmakers during 2022. Some representatives of influential ERCOT stakeholder groups and the state's independent monitor of the ERCOT market also panned the E3 analysis during Nov. 17 and Dec. 5 legislative hearings.

Reform Options

The Forward Reliability Market (recommended by the E3 consultants) and the Performance Credits Mechanism (favored by PUC Chair Lake) share various operational similarities and would impact consumers in similar ways. For example, both would add approximately $460 million per year to energy costs, according to the E3 report. Both also appear similar to "capacity market" concepts historically rejected in Texas.

More specifically, the Forward Reliability Market ("FRM") design recommended by the E3 consultants would establish a reliability standard within ERCOT — that is, a level of targeted capacity reserves based on calculated outage risks — and then a corresponding quantity of reliability credits would be created to fulfill that standard. Market participants would acquire these reliability credits through a mandatory, centrally cleared forward market administered by ERCOT.

By contrast, PUC Chair Lake's favored Performance Credits Mechanism ("PCM") design would establish a reliability standard along with a corresponding quantity of performance credits. The performance credits would be purchased by load-serving entities, and the value of the credits would go to generation resources based on their availability during high-risk hours. The overall value of the credits would be determined by an administratively set demand curve. In addition, the PCM design allows for load-serving entities and generators to trade Performance Credits during the year, through a voluntary market.

Other market designs examined by E3 include the state's status quo Energy Only design, a Load Serving Entity Reliability Obligation design, a Backstop Reliability Service design, a Dispatchable Energy Credits design, and a hybrid of the Backstop Reliability Service and Dispatchable Energy Credits designs.

Legislative Concerns

These market reform efforts pursued by the PUC and the E3 report took center stage during a pair of legislative committee meetings — a Nov. 17 meeting of the Senate Business and Commerce Committee, and a Dec. 5 meeting of the House State Affairs committee. The E3 consultants themselves did not appear at either meeting — an absence described as "bad form" by one of the lawmakers.

Of the two committee meetings, it was that of Senate Business and Commerce in which lawmakers expressed the most skepticism about the report's findings. For instance, Sen. Charles Schwertner, chair of the Senate Business and Commerce Committee, questioned whether any of the plans would guarantee the construction of new thermal generation. In addition, all nine Senate committee members signed onto a critical Dec. 1 letter addressed to the PUC. The lawmakers wrote in it that none of the proposals so far under consideration adhered to the goals set forth in Senate Bill 3, which was omnibus energy reform legislation adopted in 2021. "It is not in the best interest of our constituents to support any proposal that further delays investments in new dispatchable generation, and the Commission should carefully consider the unintended consequences of any type of proposal that creates more uncertainty for market participants," the lawmakers wrote.

PUC Chair Lake defended the E3 report during both legislative hearings and said that three of the agency's five commissioners have expressed qualified support for the PCM option. According to Lake, the extra consumer costs associated with that option are worthwhile because of its reliability benefits. He said that if it turned out more reliability was unneeded, then the extra costs would be inconsequential. "Anything short of a comprehensive reliability standard and reliability service like the PCM is just a band-aid," Lake told members of the State Affairs Committee.

Lake said the PUC would adopt one of the planned options during the commissioners' January 12 meeting, but not authorize implementation until after they receive input from the Texas Legislature during the upcoming session that convenes on January 10.

2022 Interim Filings

In addition to the ongoing general rate, Oncor also submitted interim rate requests during 2022.

Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery Factor Order

On May 31, Oncor filed an application with the PUC to adjust its Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery Factor to recover $83,058,209 in program costs incurred during 2023. This included the energy-efficiency costs of $51,665,637, a net under recovery of $2,603,394 for 2021 program costs and other expenses. Under an agreement with OCSC and other parties, Oncor will reduce its recovery by $200,000, for a total of $82,858,209. The resulting EECRF charge for residential consumers amounts to $.001028 per kilowatt hour, or approximately $1.34 cents for a customer consuming 1,300 kilowatt hours of electricity per month. The PUC adopted the order on September 15, 2022. More information can be found in PUC Docket No. 53671.

Transmission Cost of Service Order

On January 26, 2022, Oncor filed an application seeking an interim update of its previously approved transmission cost of service and wholesale transmission rate. On March 31, an approval was granted adjusting Oncor's annual revenue on an interim basis to $1,247,772,772 and adjusting its wholesale transmission rate to $17,212.955892 per megawatt.

Find more information at the PUC website, under Docket No. 53145.

Oncor Distribution Spending and Reliability Update

Even while nearly tripling its spending in gross capital additions to its distribution systems over the years, Oncor's service reliability decreased, according to the seventh annual "Electric Distribution System spending and Reliability Report" released Sept. 7 by the Texas Public Utility Commission.

An annual report that tracks reliability and reliability-related spending trends, the latest iteration covers the ten-year period from 2012-2021 and included findings for Oncor, as well as other major Texas utilities such as CenterPoint, AEP Texas, El Paso Electric Company, Entergy Texas, Southwestern Electric Power Company, Southwestern Public Service Company, and Texas-New Mexico Power Company.

Under the report, the frequency of outages is benchmarked through a "System Average Interruption Frequency Index," or "SAIFI." The report likewise employs the "System Average Interruption Duration Index" or "SAIDI," to rank Texas distribution utilities by average interruption time on a per-customer basis. All else equal, a lower SAIDI represents better reliability.

Both SAIDI and SAIFI calculations in the report do not account for momentary service interruptions. Further, the report specifically does not mention Winter Storm Uri, although presumably the devastating February 2021 storm contributed to the exponential increases in SAIFI and SAIDI observed from 2020 to 2021.

Report highlights pertaining to Oncor include:

- From 2012 to 2021, Oncor's distribution gross capital additions per customer nearly tripled, from about $120 per customer to $300 per customer.
- Oncor's major event SAIFI value increased from .5 interruptions per customer in 2020 to 1.20 interruptions per customer in 2021. Major event interruptions from 2012 to 2021 ranged from about .5 interruptions to 1.20 interruptions depending on the year.
- Oncor's major events SAIDI value increased from ninety interruptions per customer in 2020 to about five hundred interruptions per customer in 2021. Prior to this peak, there was one other peak (though not nearly as high) in 2019 due to Hurricane Harvey.

The report can be found on the PUC website, under Docket No. 46735.

Oncor Financial Results

Oncor Electric has reported net income of $318 million during the three months ending September 30, as compared to net income of $258 million for the same period in 2021, according to the most recent financial report the Texas electric utility released to investors.

The company attributed the $60 million quarter-over-quarter increase to higher weather-related consumption, increases in customer growth, increases to transmission and distribution rates, and performance bonus revenue from its energy efficiency efforts. Those gains were partially offset by increases in operation and maintenance expenses and taxes.

The quarterly financial information was released Nov. 3 and coincided with a call with financial analysts by California-based Sempra Energy, Oncor's majority owner. Oncor is based in Dallas and operates the state's largest electric transmission and distribution utility.

Oncor also reported an increase of 9.2 percent in distribution base revenues for the recent quarter (or 2.3 percent on a weather normalized basis), as compared to the same quarter in 2021. Contributing to this increase was a 12.6 percent increase in distribution base revenues from residential customers.

The company noted that its service territory continues growing at one of the nation's fastest rates, and that this dramatic growth has allowed it to increase revenues while simultaneously developing new infrastructure projects. Indicative of that growth is the approximately 14,000 new premises Oncor connected to the ERCOT grid during the third quarter of 2022, an increase of about 7.7 percent as compared to the third quarter of 2021.

Oncor likewise reported 565 active transmission point-of-interconnection requests in queue as of Sept. 30, which is a 52 percent increase from Sept. 30, 2021. Of those active requests, approximately 52 percent are for solar generators, 35 percent for energy storage, 10 percent for wind generators and three percent for gas, according to the company.

In addition, Oncor reported the construction or upgrade of approximately three hundred miles of power lines and the completion of two major substations during the third quarter of 2022. It also placed $80 million of transmission projects into service.

In total, the company reported capital expenditures totaling $2.2 billion during the nine months ending Sept. 30, and it reports that it remains on track to meet its $3 billion capital plan for 2022. However, financial uncertainties associated with high inflation and a pending rate case prompted the board to put off adoption of its 2023 capital expenditure budget until a later board meeting. It likewise delayed any announcement pertaining to a new five-year capital plan, and instead said it will reveal those details at the end of the first quarter of 2023.

Lawmakers File Energy-Related Bills in Preparation for 88th Regular Session

During the most recent Regular Session of the Texas Legislature — the 87th in 2021 — lawmakers filed approximately four hundred energy-related bills, which is far more than the typical number of such bills. This aggressive filing of energy-related bills largely can be attributed to public outcry over the 2021 winter storm power outages. Given that Texas so far has not suffered a repeat grid crisis, do not expect the number of such bills filed during the 88th session to match those of the 87th session. However, both ERCOT and the Public Utility Commission will be subject to the Sunset Review process during the upcoming session and so legislative interest in both organizations will be keen. The 88th session convenes on Jan. 10.

Bills of interest

This year's bill filing deadline is on March 10. Some of the energy-related bills we have seen so far relate to wind and solar power, electric vehicles, energy efficiency and the use of natural gas appliances. Here is a sample:

- House Bill 564, by Rep. Ron Reynolds, would require the Texas Facilities Commission, in collaboration with the Department of Information Resources, to conduct a study on the potential use by state agencies of energy efficient and energy-saving information technology.
- House Bill 763, by Rep. Christina Morales, requires the PUC to study the impact of additional interconnections between the ERCOT grid, Mexico and other jurisdictions. This is refiled legislation from 2021.
- House Bill 795, by Rep. Ed Thompson, would require nursing homes to maintain an emergency generator or comparable power source that can operate for at least 72 hours during a power outage.
- House Bill 820, by Rep. Ken King, would impose an additional registration fee of $200 for electric vehicles and $100 for hybrid vehicles. Most proceeds would go to State Highway Fund, but 10 percent would go an "electric battery disposal account" to reimburse costs incurred by the state or its political subdivisions for disposing of electric car batteries.
- Senate Bill 330, by Bob Hall, would create the Texas Electric Grid Security Commission that would be charged with evaluating the vulnerabilities to the grid and critical infrastructure and developing standards that will mitigate these threats.
- Senate Bill 114, by Jose Menendez, stipulates that electric customers are entitled to participate in demand response programs through their retail electric providers and must receive notice when ERCOT issues an emergency energy alert about low operating reserves to generators, planned outages, and the length of time the outages are expected to last.
- Senate Bill 258, by Sen. Sarah Eckhardt, would enhance energy efficiency goals for electric utilities.
- House Bill 697, by Rep. Justin Holland, would require home sellers to reveal the sort of gas piping installed at their residence and particularly whether black iron pipes, corrugated, copper or stainless steel. The disclosure holds importance for customer safety given that older black iron pipes have been associated with various fatal accidents.
- House Bill 743, by Rep. Jay Dean, prohibits cities and counties from adopting ordinances that restrict the use of gas appliances in residential or commercial buildings. The issue has been pressed in recent years by gas utilities, who have seen a move away from the use of gas appliances nationwide for environmental reasons.

2023 OCSC Meetings

March 9 — in person and Zoom
June 8 — Zoom only
September 7 — in person and Zoom
December 7 — Zoom only

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