

**BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN**

Application of Wisconsin Power and Light Company
for Authority to Adjust Electric and Natural Gas Rates

Docket No. 6680-UR-124

**INITIAL BRIEF OF THE WISCONSIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CLIMATE
COALITION**

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a proceeding to consider the request of Wisconsin Power and Light Company (“WPL,” “Applicant,” “the Company”) to adjust electric and natural gas rates. The Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition (“WLGCC”) submitted a request to become an intervening party on May 31, 2023,¹ and appears in the Scheduling Order² as such.

In this initial brief, WLGCC addresses a limited set of issues related to the Company’s proposal to end its current net metering program (PgS-3) by December 31, 2025, and replace it with Power Partnership V2 (Ex.-WPL-Cook-11, Ex. WPL-Cook-12). Our arguments and recommendations to the Commission are detailed further in the sections below.

II. ARGUMENT

- a. The Commission should reject the Applicant’s request to replace its current net metering program (PgS-3) with the Power Partnership V2 tariff by December 31, 2025. Instead, the Commission should complete a**

¹ Request to Intervene and Notice of Appearance of Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition, PSC Reference Number 469426, filed on May 31, 2023.

² Scheduling Order, PSC Reference Number 472010, filed on July 5, 2023.

comprehensive and collaborative statewide process to explore the impacts and future of net metering.

First, the Applicant’s proposed changes preempt a broader statewide discussion on the future of net metering, either as a part of the Commission’s open and active investigation of Parallel Generation Purchase Rates (Docket No. 5-EI-157), or via another generic investigation or process as suggested by several other parties in their direct testimony (Direct-VS/SC-Kenworthy-p-22-23, Direct-RENEW-Kell-4, Direct-SEIA-White-17-18). The Applicant asserts that the most appropriate place to address its net metering tariff is in this rate case because tariff modifications are routinely made in rate cases (Rebuttal-WPL-Cook-r-27). However, the issue of net metering is broader than one utility’s tariff; rather, it is a long-standing policy and must be treated as such. Mr. Kenworthy outlines that the Applicant’s revised proposal does not “address the problem that a general rate case is not the correct process to change the 40 year old statewide net metering policy.” (Surrebuttal-VS/SC-Kenworthy-r2-5). In surrebuttal testimony, Ms. Kathryn Kuntz adds to this by citing concern that, “rather than collaborating on ways to accelerate a clean energy future in Wisconsin, we are spending time debating a variety of complicated changes to net metering policies, one utility at a time, before such changes are justified.” (Surrebuttal-DC-Kuntz-r-2).

Second, net metering is a policy of great importance to the State of Wisconsin and to local governments in meeting their clean energy goals. Both the State of Wisconsin (“the State”), as well as many individual local governments, have set clean energy goals and are in the process of working towards these commitments. Several parties highlighted the State’s Clean Energy Plan (Ex.-DC-Kuntz-4r), which identifies the need to create a more equitable and consistent net metering policy to advance renewable energy adoption across the state

(Direct-350-Greenler-r-9, Direct-DC-Kuntz-16-r). Local governments in Wisconsin are also working towards clean energy goals, both within their own operations and at the community scale. As noted in Ms. Kuntz’s direct testimony, Dane County has set ambitious goals for “cutting countywide emissions in half by 2030 and putting the County on a path to carbon neutrality by 2050” (Direct-DC-Kuntz-2-r). The current net metering policies have played an important part in expanding customer-sited solar installations that contribute to the County’s progress to these goals (Direct-DC-Kuntz-5-r). Given the level of importance of net metering to our State and local governments, the Commission should address the future of net metering in a comprehensive, statewide process, rather than utility by utility.

Third, while the Company has been responsive to incorporating a number of pieces of intervenor feedback into its most recent proposal, these changes were made over a matter of days with limited time for full analysis, consideration, or ability to respond by the parties or the public. The Applicant made substantial changes to its proposal via Mr. Cook’s surrebuttal testimony submitted on September 25, 2023 (Surrebuttal-WPL-Cook). This gave most parties just two days to understand or assess the changes proposed prior to the party hearing, held on September 27, 2023. Mr. Kenworthy states that “PPV2 is still complex compared to net metering and will be more difficult for customers and solar installers to understand and navigate and will inevitably dissuade some customers from installing DG that would have been installed under net metering. *It also raises new problems that the parties have not had an opportunity to address (emphasis added).*” (Surrebuttal-VS/SC-Kenworthy-r2-5). To add to Mr. Kenworthy’s point, these changes were introduced after the public hearing took place on September 13, 2023, giving customers and other stakeholders with non-party status only a limited opportunity to try to understand what the

changes meant or ability to respond by the public comments due date of October 4, 2023.

This condensed time frame within the construct of a contested rate case is not sufficient for determining the future of a long standing and important policy such as net metering.

III. CONCLUSION

In summary, for the reasons presented in this brief and on the record of evidence in this proceeding, WLGCC recommends that the Commission reject the Applicant's proposal to change their net metering program, and instead complete a comprehensive and collaborative statewide process to explore net metering in as a part of the Commission's open investigation of Parallel Generation Purchase Rates (Docket No. 5-EI-157), or under another generic docket or process as appropriate. Simply put, regardless of the individual testimonies and evidence offered through this single rate case, changes made to the current net metering paradigm in Wisconsin rise to the level of a statewide process, and should not be delegated to an individual utility process.

Dated this day, October 6, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

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