

STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In the matter of the application of	)	
<b>LOWELL LIGHT AND POWER</b>	)	
for approval of a renewable energy plan and	)	Case No. U-15869
energy optimization plan to comply with the	)	
requirements of Public Act 295 of 2008.	)	
_____	)	

At the July 1, 2009 meeting of the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing, Michigan.

PRESENT: Hon. Orjiakor N. Isiogu, Chairman  
Hon. Monica Martinez, Commissioner  
Hon. Steven A. Transeth, Commissioner

**ORDER**

On October 21, 2008, the Commission opened a docket in this case addressing the regulatory issues created by the passage of Public Act 286 of 2008, an amendment to the “Customer Choice and Electricity Reliability Act,” 2000 PA 141, MCL 460.10 *et seq.*, and Public Act 295 of 2008, the “Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act,” MCL 460.1001 *et seq.* (Act 295). In the order, the Commission required Lowell Light and Power (Lowell), a municipally-owned electric utility, to file with the Commission a plan for establishing a renewable energy program (REP) and energy optimization program (EOP). The plans were to be filed within 120 days after the Commission issued a temporary order pursuant to Section 191 of Act 295. The Commission issued a temporary order in Case No. U-15800 on December 4, 2008.

On April 3, 2009, Lowell filed with the Commission an application for approval of its REP and EOP. On June 29, 2009, Lowell filed supplemental information in support of the application.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY PLAN**

Section 25(2) of Act 295 provides that a municipally-owned electric utility's proposed renewable energy plan must fulfill the following requirements: (1) the plan must describe how the municipally-owned electric utility will meet the renewable energy standards, (2) the plan must specify whether the number of megawatt-hours (MWh) used in the calculation of the renewable energy portfolio will be weather-normalized or based on the average number of MWh sold to Michigan retail customers annually during the previous three years, (3) the plan must include the expected incremental cost of compliance with the renewable energy standards, and (4) the plan must describe the manner in which the provider will allocate costs.

Lowell requested that Michigan Public Power Agency (MPPA) prepare its REP as part of a joint filing as permitted by Act 295 for municipalities with fewer than 15,000 customers. The joint filing includes 25 municipals.

Lowell proposes to begin purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs) by 2012 to meet the 10% goal by 2015. The primary source of RECs is Lowell's participation in the MPPA Granger Projects, which will begin commercial operation by January 2010. Lowell will have excess RECs to sell throughout the REP planning period. Lowell proposes to calculate the REC requirement using the average of the previous three years of electricity sold to its customers. Lowell will not exceed the renewable energy surcharge caps and the financial impact of this REP is expected to be minor for customers. Lowell will comply with Act 295 customer notification requirements in the event it incurs costs associated with its REP.

## ENERGY OPTIMIZATION PLAN

Section 71(2) of Act 295 states that the overall goal of an energy optimization plan is to reduce the future costs of provider service to customers. Energy optimization plans shall be “designed to delay the need for constructing new electric generating facilities and thereby protect consumers from incurring the costs of such construction.”

The EOP must: (1) propose a set of programs that will meet energy savings targets established by Act 295; (2) include offerings for each customer class, including low income residential; (3) specify necessary funding levels; (4) propose cost recovery mechanisms that will allow recovery of EOP costs; (5) demonstrate that the energy optimization programs, excluding program offerings to low income residential customers, will be cost effective; and (6) provide for the practical and effective administration of the proposed programs.

Section 73(2) of Act 295 provides:

The commission shall not approve a proposed energy optimization plan unless the commission determines that the EO plan meets the utility system resource cost test and is reasonable and prudent. In determining whether the EO plan is reasonable and prudent, the commission shall review each element and consider whether it would reduce the future cost of service for the provider’s customers. In addition, the commission shall consider at least all of the following:

- (a) The specific changes in customers’ consumption patterns that the proposed EO plan is attempting to influence.
- (b) The cost and benefit analysis and other justification for specific programs and measures included in a proposed EO plan.
- (c) Whether the proposed EO plan is consistent with any long-range resource plan filed by the provider with the commission.
- (d) Whether the proposed EO plan will result in any unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage to any class of customers.
- (e) The extent to which the EO plan provides programs that are available, affordable, and useful to all customers.

Lowell’s program portfolio was prepared by Summit Blue Consulting, LLC, and Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation to outline goals, budgets, and programs that have the potential to achieve the targets identified by Act 295. The programs described in this plan were modeled

based on typical measure characteristics used in similar “best practice” programs across the country, along with specific savings estimates from the new Michigan Energy Measures Database.

Lowell’s EOP extends through December 2012. Lowell proposed a set of programs to meet energy savings targets and included offerings for each customer class, including low income residential. Lowell specified necessary funding levels and proposed cost recovery mechanisms that will allow recovery of EOP costs. Lowell demonstrated how the EOPs, excluding low income residential, will be cost effective and how the plan will provide for the practical and effective administration of the programs.

Section 25 of Act 295 requires the Commission to provide an opportunity for public comment on Lowell’s renewable energy plan unless the governing body of the provider has already provided an opportunity for public comment. Lowell held a public hearing on April 1, 2009 and provided an opportunity for comment on the REP and EOP. No comments were received.

Section 73(1) of Act 295 states that a provider’s energy optimization plan shall be filed, reviewed, and approved or rejected by the Commission and enforced subject to the same procedures that apply to a renewable energy plan.

The Commission Staff reviewed Lowell’s application and recommends the Commission find that Lowell’s REP and EOP comply with the requirements of Act 295.

Section 45(2) of Act 295 permits recovery of "the incremental cost of compliance with the renewable energy standards by an itemized charge on the customer's bill for billing periods beginning not earlier than 90 days after the commission .... determines under section 25 that the plan complies with this act." MCL 460.1045(2). With regard to energy optimization plan surcharges, the Commission previously indicated that “energy optimization plan costs may be recovered as soon as practicable after energy optimization plan approval. Beginning the surcharge

as soon as possible will allow the costs to be spread over more months, which will lower the monthly surcharge amount.” December 4, 2008 order, Case No. U-15800, p. 34.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

A. The renewable energy plan and energy optimization plan of Lowell Light and Power are approved as in compliance with Public Act 295 of 2008.

B. Lowell Light and Power shall file an annual report with the Commission describing the status of compliance with the requirements of Public Act 295 of 2008 by February 1, 2010, and annually thereafter until further order of the Commission.

The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

Any party desiring to appeal this order must do so in the appropriate court within 30 days after issuance and notice of this order, under MCL 462.26.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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Orjiakor N. Isiogu, Chairman

By its action of July 1, 2009.

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Monica Martinez, Commissioner

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Mary Jo Kunkle, Executive Secretary

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Steven A. Transeth, Commissioner