



**Comments of DTE in Response to the Staff's Draft
Recommendations for Customer Education and Outreach
February 22nd, 2022**

DTE Electric Company and DTE Gas Company (collectively “DTE” or the “Companies”) appreciate the opportunity to provide the enclosed comments in response to the Commission Staff’s Final Draft Customer Education and Participation Recommendations. The workgroup addressed various topics, including current practices for customer outreach and education, opportunities for MPSC outreach and education, and ways to engage low-income and other vulnerable customer classes.

DTE notes that several recommendations offered for consideration are quite broad and ask the Commission to take actions which duplicate existing practice in many cases. For example, the draft recommendations suggest that “the Commission should explore opportunities to encourage the utilities to engage with customers on issues including their long-term investment plans, rate case requests, and pilot programs through customer surveys, public meetings, and other available means.” DTE agrees with the sentiment embedded in this recommendation that the voice of the customer is a tremendously valuable input to the operations of any business, and already regularly engages customers in a range of contexts. A few recent examples include:

- DTE extensively engaged customers and community leaders through webinars, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations to understand customer views on reliability, energy usage, and grid improvement during the development of its recently filed distribution grid plan.
- DTE’s Education and Awareness program within its broader Energy Waste Reduction offerings seeks to provide DTE residential and business customers with information and resources to help them learn how to use energy more efficiently. DTE also actively participates in a number of collaboratives related to EWR, which provide a structured framework for sharing knowledge, common obstacles, and best practices.
- DTE engages the public through multiple public meetings during the development of its Integrated Resource Plan, a process which is currently underway.
- DTE regularly provides community-specific updates on infrastructure projects through the company’s Empowering Michigan blog and continually monitors various social media outlets to understand customer perspectives and needs on a wide variety of topics. DTE also engages with customers to address issues when appropriate.
- As presented during the August 25th working session, DTE partnered with a range of stakeholders and developed a low-income solar council as part of its development of a low-income solar pilot.

Given DTE’s ongoing customer engagement activities in multiple contexts through multiple avenues, any broad-based recommendations around this topic should recognize the extensive work already being done in this space. Many of these customer engagement forums, such as EWR plans, distribution plans, renewable energy plans, and various other customer-facing activities, include Commission Staff.

The final draft also recommends that the Commission publish case-specific webpages containing summaries of the proposals and issues in each case. Clarity around expectations for the scope and content development responsibilities are needed before this recommendation can be meaningfully considered.

DTE appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on Staff’s draft recommendations and looks forward to future opportunities to collaborate with Staff and the Commission.