

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Petition of West Penn Power Company	:	
d/b/a Allegheny Power for Expedited	:	
Approval of its Smart Meter	:	Docket No. M-2009-2123951
Technology Procurement and	:	
Installation Plan	:	

**ANSWER OF PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES
ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE d/b/a ACTION UNITED, INC.**

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Dated: November 1, 2010

INTRODUCTION

1. Act 129 of 2008 requires that electric distribution companies (“EDCs”) with at least 100,000 customers in Pennsylvania file implementation plans with the Commission to address the installation of smart meters and associated smart meter technology. On August 14, 2009, West Penn Power d/b/a Allegheny Power (“Allegheny” or “company”) filed its Smart Meter Implementation Plan (“SMIP”).
2. On May 6, 2010, ALJ Mark A. Hoyer issued an Initial Decision. On May 13, 2010, Allegheny Power filed a Petition to Stay the Exceptions Period so that parties may consider the impact on Allegheny Power’s proposed SMIP given the proposed merger of Allegheny Power’s parent company Allegheny Energy, Inc. with FirstEnergy Corp (“First Energy”). The stay was granted.
3. On October 19, 2010, Allegheny and the Office of the Consumer Advocate (“OCA”) joined in a Joint Petition for Settlement (“Settlement”) and requested that the Commission approve the Settlement. This Answer/Comments on behalf of Pennsylvania Communities Organizing for Change d/b/a Action United, Inc. (“PCOC”) is filed in support of the Settlement.
4. PCOC is a not-for-profit corporation and an advocacy and membership organization, with members who reside within the Allegheny Energy Territory and who are customers of the company. PCOC’s mission is to advocate on behalf of low and lower income persons on numerous consumer issues, including access to and affordability of utility service.

COMMENTS

5. PCOC supports the proposed settlement because it will reduce the cost of the SMIP on low income customers and because it will provide the company with time to analyze the impact of the SMIP on low income customers. In particular, PCOC supports that the settlement will reduce the SMIP surcharge for residential customers from approximately \$15 per month to approximately \$1 per month.¹
6. PCOC supports the company's agreement to decelerate the deployment of smart meters from the schedules proposed in the original and modified SMIPs, and PCOC supports the company's decision to use some or all of the 30-month grace period to reevaluate its back-office systems and system-wide network development and installation plan, and to perform any needed redesign based on that reevaluation.²
7. PCOC supports the company's agreement to deploy approximately 25,000 smart meters between 2010 and 2013 and supports the analyses the company will conduct during and after the 30-month grace period with the information these meters provide.³
8. PCOC supports the company's agreement to refrain from deploying In Home Devices ("IHDs") prior to May 31, 2013.⁴
9. PCOC supports the company's agreement to collect and provide non-confidential data to interested parties on low income and vulnerable customers it has identified, including elderly heads of households and disabled persons in households who require electricity as a medical

¹ *Petition of West Penn Power Company d/b/a Allegheny Power for Expedited Approval of its Smart Meter Technology and Installation*, Docket No. M-2009-2123951 (Joint Petition for Settlement, October 19, 2010) at ¶ 18-19.

² *Id.* at ¶ 14.

³ *Id.* at ¶ 16.

⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 17.

necessity, including, but not limited to, households where medical certifications have been obtained under Sections 56.111 -56.131 of the Commission's regulations.⁵

10. PCOC supports the company's agreement to review the data collected on low income and vulnerable customers with interested parties during the grace period to examine the potential programs for low income and vulnerable customers intended to enable them to benefit from smart meter technology.⁶
11. PCOC supports the company's reaffirmation of its commitment to not use the remote disconnect feature of its smart meter system for involuntary termination.⁷
12. PCOC supports the company's agreement that, if, as part of its Revised SMIP, the company proposes to use the remote disconnect feature for involuntary termination, prior to doing so, it will work collaboratively with the interested parties to address compliance with Chapter 14 and Chapter 56 and to address the issues presented by use of the technology for remote disconnection. As part of the collaboration, the company will consider and discuss with the interested parties the use of a pilot program to identify the issues and policy implications from the use of the remote disconnect feature for involuntary termination. The company also agrees to meet with the interested parties to share and review the results of any pilot program that may be conducted.⁸
13. PCOC supports the company's agreement to provide periodic briefings to keep interested stakeholders informed and to collaborate with the interested stakeholders to receive input on

⁵ *Id.* at ¶ 25.

⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 26.

⁷ *Id.* at ¶ 27.

⁸ *Id.* at ¶ 27.

the development of the Revised SMIP. Briefings and meetings will occur at least semi-annually until the Revised SMIP regulatory filing is made.⁹

CONCLUSION

14. Wherefore, PCOC respectfully requests that the Public Utility Commission approve the Joint Petition for Settlement.

Respectfully Submitted,



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⁹ *Id.* at ¶ 28.