

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE

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February 8, 2013

Rosemary Chiavetta  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Commonwealth Keystone Building  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Petition of West Penn Power Company for  
Approval of their Smart Meter Deployment  
Plan  
Docket No. M-2013-2341991

Secretary Chiavetta:

Enclosed for filing please find the Office of Consumer Advocate's Comments and Answer in the above referenced proceeding.

Copies have been served as shown on the Certificate of Service.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Candis A. Tunilo*

Candis A. Tunilo  
Assistant Consumer Advocate  
PA Attorney I.D. # 89891

Enclosures

cc: Certificate of Service  
\*165844

BEFORE THE  
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Petition of West Penn Power Company : Docket No. M-2013-23341991  
For Approval of their Smart Meter :  
Deployment Plan :

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COMMENTS AND ANSWER  
OF THE  
OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE

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The Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) files these Comments and Answer to the Joint Petition of Metropolitan Edison Company (Met-Ed), Pennsylvania Electric Company (Penelec), Pennsylvania Power Company (Penn Power) and West Penn Power Company (West Penn) (collectively the FirstEnergy Companies) for approval of their Smart Meter Deployment Plan in accordance with the Notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin published on January 19, 2013. 43 Pa. B. 419-20. The Petition was filed with the Public Utility Commission on December 31, 2012. The Petition seeks: (1) a finding that the Deployment Plan satisfies the requirements of Act 129, 66 Pa. C.S. § 2807(f)(1)-(f)(3) and the Commission's June 24, 2009 Implementation Order at Docket No. M-2009-2092655; (2) approval of the Companies' proposed procurement and deployment of approximately 2.1 million smart meters, over 98% of which will be installed by the end of 2019; (3) authorization for the Companies to continue to recover smart meter costs through their Smart Meter Technologies Riders, including an additional \$5.1 million for previous West Penn expenditures; and (4) authorization for the Companies to create a regulatory asset for their meter stock that will be replaced by smart meters (Legacy Meters). Accompanying the

Petition are the Final Plan and the testimony of five witnesses: (1) John Dargie; (2) David W. Iorio; (3) Kevin A. Klein; (4) George L. Fitzpatrick; and (5) Raymond E. Valdes.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to the requirements of Act 129 and the Implementation Order, on August 14, 2009, Met-Ed, Penelec, and Penn Power filed their Joint Smart Meter Implementation Plan (2009 SMIP). By Order entered June 9, 2010, the Commission approved the 2009 SMIP. As part of the Commission's approval of the 2009 SMIP, the Commission noted that the Companies expected to file their full Deployment Plan by April 2012.<sup>1</sup> Also on August 14, 2009, West Penn separately filed its Smart Meter Implementation Plan (WP SMIP). On June 30, 2011, the Commission approved the Joint Petition for Settlement of All Issues (Settlement) regarding the WP SMIP. In the Settlement, West Penn agreed to file its full Deployment Plan as part of its revised WP SMIP with the Commission no sooner than June 2012.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, FirstEnergy and West Penn's corporate parent, Allegheny Energy, Inc. merged, and West Penn is now an operating company of FirstEnergy.

On May 25, 2012, the Companies requested a filing extension for the Deployment Plan until the end of 2012 to allow for the testing and analysis of the smart meter technology. The request was granted by Secretarial Letter on June 28, 2012.

On December 31, 2012, the Companies filed their Final Smart Meter Technology Procurement and Installation Plan (Final Plan). The matter has been referred to the Office of

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<sup>1</sup> See Joint Petition of Metropolitan Edison Company, Pennsylvania Electric Company and Pennsylvania Power Company for Approval of Smart Meter Technology Procurement and Installation Plan, Docket Nos. M-2009-2123950 *et al.*, Order at 10 (June 9, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> See Petition of West Penn Power Company for Expedited Approval of its Smart Meter Technology Procurement and Installation Plan, Docket No. M-2009-2123951, Settlement at ¶ 15 (March 9, 2011).

Administrative Law Judge and further assigned to Administrative Law Judge Mary D. Long. A Prehearing Conference has been set for February 19, 2013.

The OCA provides the following Comments and Answer to the Companies' Joint Petition for Approval of Their Smart Meter Deployment Plan.

## **II. COMMENTS AND ANSWER**

The Companies' Final Plan and their accompanying Direct Testimony provide the following:

1. A description of the technical aspects of the Final Plan including an analysis of: (a) the current state of meter technology; (b) technology "baselines" for the Companies; and (c) the nature of the Companies' service territories, with respect to the density and terrain.
2. A description of the Companies' Smart Meter Deployment timeline.
3. A breakdown and explanation of the total Smart Meter Program costs incurred and anticipated savings.
4. A description of the proposal to recover the costs through each of the Companies' respective Smart Meter Technologies Charge (SMT-C Rider.)
5. A description of the proposal to recover the costs for the Companies' Legacy Meters including the creation of a regulatory asset for the Legacy Meters.
6. A description of the Companies' proposed development of the internal and external communications plan, the change management transition plan, training plan, and the lessons learned from several other utilities in various stages of smart meter deployment.
7. A description of the Companies' proposal to develop a cyber-security plan.

Based on its preliminary review of the Final Plan, the OCA has identified the following areas that require further review and analysis:

Compliance with Act 129 and the Commission Implementation Order: The OCA submits that a review of the Final Plan is necessary to determine whether the Final

Plan complies with the requirements of Act 129, the Implementation Order, other applicable Commission Orders and the Public Utility Code;

Technology Selection and Implementation: The OCA intends to review the Companies' selected technologies and meter functionalities to determine whether the technical elements of the Final Plan, including whether FirstEnergy's technology and functionality choices, vendor selections, and IT integration activities represent prudent and cost-effective actions or plans of action for which recovery of costs from customers is warranted;

Total Costs and Cost Recovery: The Companies' projected costs and cost recovery proposals should be analyzed to assess whether FirstEnergy's anticipated total project cost of \$1.258 billion is reasonable. The OCA will also review the Companies' anticipated savings of \$406 million; the Companies' proposals to recover an additional \$5.1 million for the initial phase of the West Penn SMIP through the SMT-C Rider and the proposal to create a regulatory asset for the Companies' Legacy Meters.

Privacy of Customer Information: The Final Plan will need to be evaluated to determine whether appropriate systems and protocols are in place to protect the privacy of customer information obtained by the FirstEnergy Companies through smart meters;

Security of the Smart Meter Systems: The Final Plan must be reviewed to assure that adequate protocols and measures are in place to provide necessary security;

Customer Education: The Companies' proposal to develop a Communication Plan needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is reasonable, practical and an efficacious method of proposing to educate customers about Smart Meters.

As noted, these areas of focus are based on the OCA's preliminary review. As the OCA's review of the Final Plan proceeds, additional areas of inquiry may arise.

### III. CONCLUSION

The OCA respectfully submits that the FirstEnergy Companies' Joint Petition for Approval of their Smart Meter Deployment Plan requires further review. The matter has been referred to the Office of Administrative Law Judge, and the OCA will address the issues identified above in the matter.

Respectfully Submitted,



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DATE: February 8, 2013  
165847.doc

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Re: Petition of West Penn Power Company for Approval of their Smart Meter Deployment Plan  
Docket No. M-2013-2341991

I hereby certify that I have this day served a true copy of the foregoing, the Office of Consumer Advocate's Comments and Answer, upon parties of record in this proceeding in accordance with the requirements of 52 Pa. Code Section 1.54 (relating to service by a participant), in the manner and upon the persons listed below:

Dated this 8th day of February 2013.

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