

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120**

**Duquesne Light Company Universal
Service and Energy Conservation
Plan for 2017-2019**

**Public Meeting April 19, 2018
2534323-LAW
Docket No. M-2016-2534323**

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER DAVID W. SWEET

In March 2017, the Commission evaluated a revised version of Duquesne's Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan for the period 2017-2019. I, along with Vice Chairman Place introduced a motion which ordered that Duquesne begin a collaborative to address design issues in its Customer Assistance Program (CAP), specifically the energy burdens of those at or below 50% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

Duquesne worked with interested parties, including the Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA) and the Coalition for Affordable Utility Services and Energy Efficiency in Pennsylvania (CAUSE-PA), to develop a CAP that addressed the unaffordable aspects of their current plan. Together, the parties filed a Joint Petition on September 15, 2017 to modify Duquesne's CAP in addition to requesting a waiver from Commission regulations that would have allowed the proposed plan to be effective through 2022. Earlier this year, the Commission approved, for various reasons, only the aspects of the proposed CAP design that would be effective through 2019. Vice Chairman Place and I had a statement applauding the collaborative efforts that brought forth this consensus-driven plan. Yet, at the time, we believed it was premature for Duquesne to make extensive policy changes given the open dockets regarding universal service and energy affordability.

While I remain concerned about the timing of approving Duquesne's plan and have expressed similar concerns in other recent universal service proceedings that have proposed major policy changes, I am compelled by the points raised by CAUSE-PA in their Petition for Reconsideration. The interdependent and integrated nature of their five-year plan – an outcome that developed over more than six months of meetings, negotiations and planning by the parties is, upon further reflection, akin to a settlement in my mind. Rather than upend these efforts, I am inclined to support the implementation of Duquesne's two-phase, five-year customer assistance program on reconsideration,¹ and I am reminded that the Company, unlike other utilities, is in this unique position because of Commission action directing the kinds of changes defined in the Company's revised Plan.

I would like to once again thank the parties for all their hard work in this proceeding. I believe these efforts will help inform this Commission as we move forward with our larger examination of universal service and energy affordability.

Date: April 19, 2018



Commissioner David W. Sweet

¹ Per Commission Order, the Joint Petition's request for a waiver of Section 54.74(a)(1-2) is denied.