



Gretchen Whitmer, Governor

Dan Scripps, Chair

Sally Talberg, Commissioner

Tremaine Phillips, Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE

Twitter: [@MichiganPSC](https://twitter.com/MichiganPSC)
www.michigan.gov/mpsc

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Nov. 19, 2020

Media contact: [Matt Helms](mailto:Matt.Helms@mpsc.state.mi.us) 517-284-8300

Customer Assistance: 800-292-9555

MPSC OKs Consumers Energy's \$550M Mid-Michigan Pipeline upgrade to ensure safety, boost system resilience and flexibility

The Michigan Public Service Commission today approved Consumers Energy Co.'s application to build the Mid-Michigan Pipeline, a 36-inch natural gas pipeline costing an estimated \$550 million, replacing the existing Line 100A between Ovid and Chelsea ([Case No. U-20618](#)).

As part of the company's investment in upgrading its natural gas infrastructure, Consumers proposed replacing the existing 20-inch pipeline that's more than 70 years old with a 36-inch pipeline that would increase Consumers' overall system resilience and remove a gas-supply bottleneck in the smaller pipeline. Construction of the new 56-mile pipeline is expected to occur in 2023 to 2024. Consumers proposed rerouting portions of the pipeline to avoid more densely populated areas, particularly around Chelsea, to more rural areas with farms and woodlands, along a route spanning Clinton, Ingham, Livingston, Shiawassee and Washtenaw counties.

The Commission's order found that the replacement pipeline will address corrosion issues and seam weld and other anomalies on the pipeline, remove the bottleneck and otherwise provide a more resilient and flexible natural gas system, therefore serving the public convenience and necessity. The order also found that the proposed pipeline's engineering specifications meet or exceed Michigan Gas Safety Standards, with appropriate inspections done within six months, and any necessary remediation performed within a year, of the pipeline's service date.

The Commission also found that the pipeline would not detrimentally affect the environment or state's natural resources. Where appropriate, Consumers will restore affected wetlands along the pipeline route to preconstruction conditions. Intervenors in the case were Ruth and Robert Hummell and Michael Wieschowski, landowners along the pipeline's route, along with the Association of Businesses Advocating Tariff Equity. Moon Lakes Estates was granted permissive intervention. MPSC Staff also participated in the proceeding.

The Hummells and Mr. Wieschowski raised concerns about the route and its impact on their properties and provided alternative route suggestions. The Commission found that Consumers had considered alternate routes but the plan the company proposed was the most reasonable and practicable and directed Consumers to work with the affected landowners to lessen the project's impact.

The Commission also determined that approval of costs associated with the project, including construction and contingency costs and whether Consumers should be allowed to recover the remaining undepreciated plant balance on Line 100A, should be decided in a Consumers rate case following the completion of the pipeline, and declined to propose a cap on the pipeline's capital costs as requested by ABATE.

MPSC OKs EMERGENCY RULE SUSPENDING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR 911 WORKERS TO PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY DURING PANDEMIC

Moving to prevent a crisis in public safety dispatching, the MPSC today issued an emergency order that suspends through January 2021 deadlines for 911 workers to complete training and continuing education required under state rules (Case No. U-20926). The State 911 Committee alerted the MPSC, which has regulatory authority in telecommunication matters including 911 service, about a training backlog that could leave 911 dispatchers unable to perform their jobs. The committee noted that on Oct. 2 the Michigan Supreme Court struck down Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's executive orders related to the pandemic, including those allowing for the suspension of training and continuing education deadlines for telecommunicators and trainee telecommunicators, potentially leaving 500 or more 911 workers legally unable to perform their duties by year's end, jeopardizing emergency dispatching across the state. The Commission today ordered the emergency rule to be sent to Governor Whitmer for her concurrence and to the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules and the Legislative Service Bureau for their approvals.

MPSC AUTHORIZES Q LINK WIRELESS TO EXPAND SERVICE TERRITORY TO INCLUDE MICHIGAN TRIBAL AREAS

The MPSC today authorized Q Link Wireless LLC to expand its designated service area as an eligible telecommunications carrier permitted to provide Lifeline and Link-up discounted service for low-income Michiganders to include multiple Tribal areas in the state ([Case No. U-16940](#)). The approval will allow Q Link to provide service to the Bay Mills Indian Community; the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi; the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians; the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians; the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Q Link said it will seek to meaningfully engage with the Tribes to enhance the provision of Lifeline service on Tribal lands.

AMENDED SALES AGREEMENT APPROVED BETWEEN DETROIT THERMAL, OPERATOR OF TCF CENTER

Detroit Thermal was authorized today to amend its 2017 steam sales agreement with the Detroit Regional Convention Facility Authority, operator of TCF Center, formerly known as Cobo Center ([Case No. U-18420](#)). Detroit Thermal generates steam used primarily for space and hot water heating and absorption cooling of more than 100 buildings in greater downtown Detroit. The amended sales agreement, for an initial 5-year term, lowers costs to TCF Center to \$16.48 per thousand pounds (Mlb) of steam from the \$22.50 approved by the Commission in 2017. The amended agreement, which

also may be extended by two additional 5-year terms if both parties agree, does not impact rates for other Detroit Thermal customers.

MPSC APPROVES DTE GAS CO'S ENERGY WASTE REDUCTION CAPITALIZATION BUT REJECTS INCENTIVE ON CAPITALIZED COSTS

The MPSC today resolved outstanding issues not included in an earlier partial settlement agreement in DTE Gas Co.'s energy waste reduction (EWR) plan, rejecting challenges to DTE Gas's proposed capitalization of costs. However, the Commission found that allowing the company to earn an incentive on already capitalized costs is neither reasonable nor prudent and directed the incentive be applied only to the uncapitalized portion of the EWR costs ([Case No. U-20429](#)). EWR encompasses a broad range of efforts to cut waste, improve efficiency and reduce energy use to save utility costs for customers and make energy more affordable. Intervenors in the case were the Natural Resources Defense Council; the National Housing Trust; the Ecology Center; Soulardarity; Ecoworks, and the Association of Businesses Advocating Tariff Equity. DTE Gas and MPSC Staff also participated.

MPSC APPROVES UPPER PENINSULA POWER CO.'S VOLUNTARY GREEN PRICING PROGRAM

Upper Peninsula Power Co. (UPPCO) today received approval for its voluntary green pricing (VGP) program, which allows customers to specify the amount of electricity purchased from renewable energy resources such as solar and wind, with costs billed to participating customers ([Case No. U-20652](#)). UPPCO reduced the cost of the VGP program, which does not affect the rates of customers not participating in the program, to \$2.30 per 100-kilowatt-hour renewable energy block, from \$2.40. The reduction was based on a revised calculation of the difference between what the company pays for a renewable energy block compared to what it pays for the same amount of energy the non-renewable and hydroelectric elements of its power supply.

MPSC AUTHORIZES ALTERNATIVE GAS SUPPLIER LICENSE FOR SUNWAVE

Sunwave USA Holdings Inc. today won approval to operate as an alternative gas supplier (AGS) in Michigan ([Case No. U-20863](#)). The MPSC in August 2020 authorized the company to begin providing service to electric choice customers in Michigan. The Commission today found that Sunwave, which provides natural gas and electricity to nearly 8,000 customers in 11 states including Ohio, Illinois and New York, meets all requirements to operate as an AGS and will maintain a Michigan office in Dearborn.

MPSC APPROVES ACCOUNTING MOVE FOR NORTHERN STATES POWER CO. IN LIEU OF ELECTRIC RATE INCREASE IN 2021

The MPSC today approved a request for accounting treatment that allows Northern States Power Co. of Wisconsin (NSP-W) to not implement a rate increase for customers in 2021 ([Case No. U-20901](#)). The Commission authorized NSP-W, which serves part of the Upper Peninsula, to accelerate amortization of \$478,463 in unprotected excess deferred income tax balances related to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 beginning Jan. 1, 2021, over the calendar year 2021, and, beginning Jan. 1, 2021, to defer up to \$400,000 related to depreciation and interest expense over the calendar year 2021.

NSP-W's last rate increase was approved in April 2018. The company said it had intended to file a rate case in June 2020 but held off because of concerns about raising rates during the coronavirus pandemic.

To look up cases from today's meeting, access the MPSC's [E-Dockets filing system](#). Watch recordings of MPSC meetings on its [YouTube channel](#).

For information about the MPSC, visit www.Michigan.gov/MPSC, sign up for its [monthly newsletter](#) or other [listservs](#), or follow the Commission on [Twitter](#).

DISCLAIMER: *This document was prepared to aid the public's understanding of certain matters before the Commission and is not intended to modify, supplement, or be a substitute for the Commission's orders. The Commission's orders are the official action of the Commission.*

###