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Iowa Utilities Board

The IUB Spectrum

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Mission: The Iowa Utilities Board regulates utilities to ensure that reasonably priced, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe utility services are available to all Iowans. **Vision:** The Iowa Utilities Board is valued as the regulatory expert and solutions-oriented partner regarding utility issues.

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The Iowa Utilities Board newsletter is produced by IUB staff and provides information to Iowans and utility industry stakeholders about various dockets, programs, and functions of the IUB. The IUB newsletter is published quarterly.



IUB continues review of Iowa utilities' winter preparedness plans for 2023-2024

On November 28, 2023, the IUB held a Winter Preparedness Meeting to discuss Iowa utilities' plans for responding to potential extreme weather during the Winter of 2023-2024. Representatives from Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), Southwest Power Pool (SPP), MidAmerican, Alliant, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, and the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, among others, participated in the meeting. Participants indicated they expected a mild winter and did not foresee threats to electric service reliability during the winter season. Additional information about specific utilities' winter preparedness plans can be found in the IUB's electronic filing system under Docket No. [INU-2023-0002](#).

The November winter preparedness meeting was the fourth seasonal preparedness meeting held by the IUB. The IUB has been holding seasonal preparedness meetings before each summer and winter since May 2022, and the meetings serve as forums for the IUB, utilities, regional transmission operators, trade organizations, and any other interested parties to identify challenges and solutions for maintaining the reliability of the electric system in Iowa.

IUB's Josh Byrnes appointed to national and regional utility organizations

As of January 1, 2024, and in addition to his duties as an IUB Board Member, Josh Byrnes was appointed as the Vice President of the Organization of MISO States (OMS), which represents the collective interests of state and local utility regulators in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, and provides a seat at the table on electric transmission conversations. He was also [recently appointed](#) as the new Treasurer of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), and serves on the Executive Committee of the Mid-America Regulatory Conference (MARC).



IUB delivers legislative report regarding utility ratemaking law and procedures

The IUB recently completed a review of Iowa utility ratemaking laws and procedures. The Iowa Legislature in 2023 directed that the review study be undertaken through the passage of House File 617. The IUB opened Docket No. [NOI-2023-0001](#) and engaged an independent consultant, London Economics International, LLC (LEI), to research issues, perform the study, and seek input from stakeholders.

The study process and timeline were designed to ensure robust results in a limited timeline, while also maximizing stakeholder involvement. With this in mind, the study was conducted in two parallel paths. In the first, LEI conducted independent research and analysis on the policy objectives, drawing upon its utility expertise. IUB staff worked with LEI throughout this process to ensure accuracy and to answer questions on current ratemaking laws, rules, and procedures.

In the second path, a series of oral discussion sessions was conducted with the opportunity for participants to provide written comments prior to and following each session. Discussion sessions were held on August 30-31, September 26-27, and November 1, 2023. These sessions were well attended, both in person and virtually, and produced valuable insight, dialogue, and debate. During these sessions, participants were provided topical prompts and data related to Iowa's current law and process and information related to the policies of states with similar energy profiles. Over the span of four months, approximately 90 written comments were received from a diverse group of participants that included representatives of Iowa utilities, business and industry, environmental organizations, renewable energy businesses and organizations, the Office of Consumer Advocate, municipalities, citizens, legislative participants, and others.

LEI has prepared a final report entitled "Review of Current Iowa Code Provisions and Ratemaking Procedures." The IUB was required to submit the [final LEI report](#) to the Iowa Legislature by January 1, 2024.

IUB prepares to review evidentiary record for proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline permit

The IUB's public evidentiary hearing for the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline began in Fort Dodge, Iowa, on August 22, 2023, and concluded on November 8, and the evidentiary record is closed. The IUB issued an [order](#) on November 17, 2023, with deadlines for the docket parties to file their briefs and reply briefs. Once those are filed with the IUB, the Board will review the record in Docket No. [HLP-2021-0001](#) and base its final decision on Iowa law and the evidence, testimony, exhibits, and written comments, objections, and letters of support filed on or before the close of the evidentiary record in the docket, and will later issue its final decision order in the docket regarding the

permit application. Under [Iowa Code chapter 479B](#), the IUB can grant the permit, grant the permit with modifications, or deny the permit. There is no deadline for the IUB to issue its final decision.



IUB to begin public evidentiary hearing January 9 on MidAmerican's proposed natural gas rate increase

On June 12, 2023, MidAmerican Energy Company (MidAmerican) filed with the IUB a proposal to increase its annual revenue requirement for retail natural gas service rates in Docket No. [RPU-2023-0001](#). MidAmerican's application requests approximately \$39.4 million under Iowa Code § 476.6 and chapter 26 of the IUB's administrative rules. In addition, MidAmerican filed a proposed tariff reflecting a temporary increase in rates in Docket No. [TF-2023-0216](#), effective June 22, 2023 and permanent proposed tariff revisions in Docket No. [TF-2023-0217](#). The IUB has scheduled a hearing on MidAmerican's rate increase request to begin on January 9, 2024. Parties in the case will have the opportunity at the hearing to call witnesses and present evidence to the IUB about the proposed rate increase.



Electric transmission lines cross a swath of Iowa farmland. Photo/Don Tormey

U.S. Department of Energy grant to benefit Iowa, six other Midwest states for transmission grid projects

In October 2023 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) approved \$464 million to fund a joint proposal by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Great Plains Institute, and two regional electricity transmission operators, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator and Southwest Power Pool for DOE's Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program.

The grant award will be used to help build five high-voltage transmission lines that will span seven states – Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The federal grant is expected to spur more than \$1 billion in additional private sector investments, to reduce the costs to ratepayers across the region, and to provide communities with a range of benefits. For additional details, review the Minnesota Commerce Department's [news release](#).

IUB launches redesigned Electronic Filing System

On December 18, 2023, the IUB [launched](#) a redesign of its electronic filing system (EFS) at efs.iowa.gov. In addition to a cleaner look that visually aligns with the IUB's website and new agency branding, the enhanced site features upgrades that make it easier for industry stakeholders, utility customers, and the general public to submit or search filings with quicker results.

The new EFS homepage features navigation options to browse the daily filing summary, search docket information, or submit filings. Topics are now grouped together to improve the user experience in searching for dockets, filings, tariffs, companies, or electric franchises. Users are encouraged to use the "on behalf of" functionality when filing for someone (example: paralegal to attorney and consultant to client). Staff is currently working on additional enhancements, including expanding the number of results on the document search page and condensing scrolling needed to navigate when using smaller screens.

Users can also file a comment, objection, or letter of support in an open docket pending with the IUB, or contact IUB Customer Service staff to file a complaint about utility service. Visit the [Information about EFS](#) webpage for additional information.

For questions about the new EFS site, contact IUB IT support by calling (515) 725-7337 or emailing ITsupport@iub.iowa.gov.

Utility Annual Reports Available mid-January

Utility annual reports will be completed again this year in [IUB 24/7](#), a self-service portal for companies and utilities to maintain their company and contact information with the IUB. Read more about [how to file a utility annual report](#) on the IUB's website.

The utility annual reports covering calendar year 2023 will be available mid-January in IUB 24/7 in your company's record. The company administrators and annual report submitters are able to see and edit the annual report information and should have received system notifications that the reports are available. The filing deadline is April 1 for all companies required to submit utility annual reports.

If you have any questions about the annual reports covering calendar year 2023 or your company in IUB 24/7, please contact customer service at ITsupport@iub.iowa.gov or (877) 565-4450 during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



A central Iowa wind turbine farm. Photo/Don Tormey

IUB approves settlement agreement for MidAmerican Energy's Wind PRIME project

On December 14, 2023, the IUB issued its [rehearing final order and concurrence](#) that approved a settlement agreement entered into by MidAmerican Energy Company; the Office of Consumer Advocate, a division of the Iowa Department of Justice; the Environmental Law & Policy Center; the Iowa Environmental Council; and the Sierra Club regarding MidAmerican's Wind PRIME project in Docket No. [RPU-2022-0001](#). The IUB originally granted ratemaking principles on April 27, 2023; however, reconsideration or rehearing was requested by MidAmerican and another party to the proceeding. The IUB held the rehearing on October 10, 2023.

On January 19, 2022, MidAmerican filed with the IUB its application for a determination of ratemaking principles in this docket. The proposed ratemaking principles would apply to MidAmerican's self-named Wind PRIME project, which consists of 2,042 megawatts (MW) of wind-generating facilities and 50 MW of solar-generating facilities.

IUB FY 2024 billing rates established

The IUB is funded in part by utility companies under its regulatory jurisdiction. To collect operational revenues, the IUB issues direct bills to all parties associated with billable dockets under [Iowa Code 476.10](#). The IUB recently finalized its FY 24 billing rates, which can be reviewed on our ["Industry Billing & Assessments"](#) webpage.

"Billable dockets" are projects with associated costs paid by outside parties. IUB staff charge applicable time and expenses to billable dockets and these costs are directly invoiced to the parties responsible.

To ensure uniform and fair billing to all parties, the IUB annually calculates billing rates for each job classification. These billing rates are used to charge time to utilities and state agencies through quarterly direct invoices and are calculated to include direct salary, fringe benefits and overhead costs.

IUB Hearing and Meeting Calendar

Public Hearings are scheduled in the following dockets:

- [RMU-2023-0006](#) Chapter 6 Rules: 1 p.m. January 8, IUB Hearing Room
- [RPU-2023-0001](#) MidAmerican Energy Natural Gas Rate Case: 9 a.m. January 9-12, IUB Hearing Room
- [RPU-2023-0002](#) Alliant Energy-Interstate Power & Light Scheduling Conference: 9-11 a.m. January 22, IUB Hearing Room
- [RMU-2023-0033](#) & [RMU-2023-0034](#) Chapter 33 and Chapter 34 Rules: 9 a.m. January 23, IUB Hearing Room

Public Informational Meetings are scheduled in the following dockets:

- [E-22553](#) MidAmerican Energy: 3:30-6 p.m. February 20, Sac Community Recreation Center, Sac City

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Iowa Utilities Board

1375 E. Court Ave. | Des Moines, IA 50319

515.725.7300 or 877.565.4450

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