

HOUSE BILL NO. 4978

September 17, 2025, Introduced by Reps. McFall, McKinney, Grant, B. Carter, Hoskins, Morgan, Dievendorf, Miller, Byrnes, Wegela, Edwards, Wooden, Price, Cavitt, Wilson, Myers-Phillips, Longjohn, Rheingans, Hope, T. Carter and Young and referred to Committee on Energy.

A bill to amend 1939 PA 3, entitled

"An act to provide for the regulation and control of public and certain private utilities and other services affected with a public interest within this state; to provide for alternative energy suppliers and certain providers of electric vehicle charging services; to provide for licensing; to include municipally owned utilities and other providers of energy under certain provisions of this act; to create a public service commission and to prescribe and define its powers and duties; to abolish the Michigan public utilities commission and to confer the powers and duties vested by law on the public service commission; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state governmental officers and entities; to provide for the continuance, transfer, and completion of certain

matters and proceedings; to abolish automatic adjustment clauses; to prohibit certain rate increases without notice and hearing; to qualify residential energy conservation programs permitted under state law for certain federal exemption; to create a fund; to encourage the utilization of resource recovery facilities; to prohibit certain acts and practices of providers of energy; to allow for the securitization of stranded costs; to reduce rates; to provide for appeals; to provide appropriations; to declare the effect and purpose of this act; to prescribe remedies and penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts,"

by amending section 6a (MCL 460.6a), as amended by 2023 PA 231.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 6a. (1) A gas utility, electric utility, or steam utility
 2 shall not increase its rates and charges or alter, change, or amend
 3 any rate or rate schedules, the effect of which will be to increase
 4 the cost of services to its customers, without first receiving
 5 commission approval as provided in this section. A utility shall
 6 coordinate with the commission staff in advance of filing its
 7 general rate case application under this section to avoid resource
 8 challenges with applications being filed at the same time as
 9 applications filed under this section by other utilities. In the
 10 case of electric utilities serving more than 1,000,000 customers in
 11 this state, the commission may, if necessary, order a delay in
 12 filing an application to establish a 21-day spacing between filings
 13 of electric utilities serving more than 1,000,000 customers in this
 14 state. The utility shall place in evidence facts relied upon to
 15 support the utility's petition or application to increase its rates
 16 and charges, or to alter, change, or amend any rate or rate
 17 schedules. The commission shall require notice to be given to all
 18 interested parties ~~within~~**in** the service area to be affected, and
 19 allow interested parties a reasonable opportunity for a full and
 20 complete hearing. A utility may use projected costs and revenues

1 for a future consecutive 12-month period in developing its
2 requested rates and charges. The commission shall notify the
3 utility ~~within~~**not later than** 30 days after filing, whether the
4 utility's petition or application is complete. A petition or
5 application is considered complete if it complies with the rate
6 application filing forms and instructions adopted under subsection
7 (8). If the application is not complete, the commission shall
8 notify the utility of all information necessary to make that filing
9 complete. If the commission has not notified the utility within 30
10 days of whether the utility's petition or application is complete,
11 the application is considered complete. Concurrently with filing a
12 complete application, or at any time after filing a complete
13 application, a gas utility serving fewer than 1,000,000 customers
14 in this state may file a motion seeking partial and immediate rate
15 relief. After providing notice to the interested parties ~~within~~**in**
16 the service area to be affected and affording interested parties a
17 reasonable opportunity to present written evidence and written
18 arguments relevant to the motion seeking partial and immediate rate
19 relief, the commission shall make a finding and enter an order
20 granting or denying partial and immediate relief ~~within~~**not later**
21 **than** 180 days after the motion seeking partial and immediate rate
22 relief was submitted. The commission has 12 months to issue a final
23 order in a case in which a gas utility has filed a motion seeking
24 partial and immediate rate relief.

25 (2) If the commission has not issued an order within 180 days
26 after the filing of a complete application, the utility may
27 implement up to the amount of the proposed annual rate request
28 through equal percentage increases or decreases applied to all base
29 rates. If the utility uses projected costs and revenues for a

1 future period in developing its requested rates and charges, the
2 utility may not implement the equal percentage increases or
3 decreases before the calendar date corresponding to the start of
4 the projected 12-month period. For good cause, the commission may
5 issue a temporary order preventing or delaying a utility from
6 implementing its proposed rates or charges. If a utility implements
7 increased rates or charges under this subsection before the
8 commission issues a final order, that utility shall refund to
9 customers, with interest, any portion of the total revenues
10 collected through application of the equal percentage increase that
11 exceed the total that would have been produced by the rates or
12 charges subsequently ordered by the commission in its final order.
13 The commission shall allocate any refund required by this
14 subsection among primary customers based ~~upon their~~ **on the**
15 **customer's** pro rata share of the total revenue collected through
16 the applicable increase, and among secondary and residential
17 customers in a manner to be determined by the commission. The rate
18 of interest for refunds is 5% plus the London interbank offered
19 rate (LIBOR) for the appropriate time period. For any portion of
20 the refund that, exclusive of interest, exceeds 25% of the annual
21 revenue increase awarded by the commission in its final order, the
22 rate of interest is the authorized rate of return on the common
23 stock of the utility during the appropriate period. Any refund or
24 interest awarded under this subsection must not be included, in
25 whole or in part, in any application for a rate increase by a
26 utility. This subsection only applies to completed applications
27 filed with the commission before April 20, 2017.

28 (3) This section does not impair the commission's ability to
29 issue a show cause order as part of its rate-making authority. An

1 alteration or amendment in rates or rate schedules applied for by a
2 public utility that will not result in an increase in the cost of
3 service to its customers may be authorized and approved without
4 notice or hearing. There shall be no increase in rates based upon
5 changes in cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased steam unless
6 notice has been given ~~within-in~~ the service area to be affected,
7 and there has been an opportunity for a full and complete hearing
8 on the cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased steam. The rates
9 charged by any utility under an automatic fuel, purchased gas, or
10 purchased steam adjustment clause ~~shall-must~~ not be altered,
11 changed, or amended unless notice has been given ~~within-in~~ the
12 service area to be affected, and there has been an opportunity for
13 a full and complete hearing on the cost of the fuel, purchased gas,
14 or purchased steam.

15 (4) The commission shall adopt rules and procedures for the
16 filing, investigation, and hearing of petitions or applications to
17 increase or decrease utility rates and charges as the commission
18 finds necessary or appropriate to enable it to reach a final
19 decision with respect to petitions or applications within a period
20 of time allotted by law to issue a final order after the filing of
21 the complete petitions or applications. The commission shall not
22 authorize or approve adjustment clauses that operate without notice
23 and an opportunity for a full and complete hearing, and all such
24 clauses are abolished. The commission may hold a full and complete
25 hearing to determine the cost of fuel, purchased gas, purchased
26 steam, or purchased power separately from a full and complete
27 hearing on a general rate case and may hold that hearing
28 concurrently with the general rate case. The commission shall
29 authorize a utility to recover the cost of fuel, purchased gas,

1 purchased steam, or purchased power only to the extent that the
2 purchases are reasonable and prudent.

3 (5) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and
4 subsection (1), if the commission fails to reach a final decision
5 with respect to a completed petition or application to increase or
6 decrease utility rates within the 10-month period following the
7 filing of the completed petition or application, the petition or
8 application is considered approved. If a utility makes any
9 significant amendment to its filing, the commission has an
10 additional 10 months after the date of the amendment to reach a
11 final decision on the petition or application. If the utility files
12 for an extension of time, the commission shall extend the 10-month
13 period by the amount of additional time requested by the utility.

14 (6) A utility shall not file a general rate case application
15 for an increase in rates earlier than 12 months after the date of
16 the filing of a complete prior general rate case application. A
17 utility may not file a new general rate case application until the
18 commission has issued a final order on a prior general rate case or
19 until the rates are approved under subsection (5).

20 (7) The commission shall, if requested by a gas utility,
21 establish load retention transportation rate schedules or approve
22 gas transportation contracts as required for the purpose of serving
23 industrial or commercial customers whose individual annual
24 transportation volumes exceed 500,000 decatherms on the gas
25 utility's system. The commission shall approve these rate schedules
26 or approve transportation contracts entered into by the utility in
27 good faith if the industrial or commercial customer has the
28 installed capability to use an alternative fuel or otherwise has a
29 viable alternative to receiving natural gas transportation service

1 from the utility, the customer can obtain the alternative fuel or
2 gas transportation from an alternative source at a price that would
3 cause them not to use the gas utility's system, and the customer,
4 as a result of their use of the system and receipt of
5 transportation service, makes a significant contribution to the
6 utility's fixed costs. The commission shall adopt accounting and
7 rate-making policies to ensure that the discounts associated with
8 the transportation rate schedules and contracts are recovered by
9 the gas utility through charges applicable to other customers if
10 the incremental costs related to the discounts are no greater than
11 the costs that would be passed on to those customers as the result
12 of a loss of the industrial or commercial customer's contribution
13 to a utility's fixed costs.

14 (8) The commission shall adopt standard rate application
15 filing forms and instructions for use in all general rate cases
16 filed by utilities whose rates are regulated by the commission. For
17 cooperative electric utilities whose rates are regulated by the
18 commission, in addition to rate applications filed under this
19 section, the commission shall continue to allow for rate filings
20 based on the cooperative's times interest earned ratio. The
21 commission may modify the standard rate application forms and
22 instructions adopted under this subsection.

23 (9) If, on or before January 1, 2008, a merchant plant entered
24 into a contract with an initial term of 20 years or more to sell
25 electricity to an electric utility whose rates are regulated by the
26 commission with 1,000,000 or more retail customers in this state
27 and if, before January 1, 2008, the merchant plant generated
28 electricity under that contract, in whole or in part, from wood or
29 solid wood wastes, then the merchant plant shall, ~~upon~~**on** petition

1 by the merchant plant, and subject to the limitation set forth in
2 subsection (10), recover the amount, if any, by which the merchant
3 plant's reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable
4 operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount that the merchant
5 plant is paid under the contract for those costs. This subsection
6 does not apply to landfill gas plants, hydro plants, municipal
7 solid waste plants, or to merchant plants engaged in litigation
8 against an electric utility seeking higher payments for power
9 delivered pursuant to contract.

10 (10) The total aggregate additional amounts recoverable by
11 merchant plants under subsection (9) in excess of the amounts paid
12 under the contracts must not exceed \$1,000,000.00 per month for
13 each affected electric utility. The \$1,000,000.00 per month limit
14 specified in this subsection must be reviewed by the commission
15 ~~upon~~ on petition of the merchant plant filed no more than once per
16 year and may be adjusted if the commission finds that the eligible
17 merchant plants reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and
18 variable operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount that
19 those merchant plants are paid under the contract by more than
20 \$1,000,000.00 per month. The annual amount of the adjustments must
21 not exceed a rate equal to the United States Consumer Price Index.
22 The commission shall not make an adjustment unless each affected
23 merchant plant files a petition with the commission. If the total
24 aggregate amount by which the eligible merchant plants reasonably
25 and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable operation and
26 maintenance costs determined by the commission exceed the amount
27 that the merchant plants are paid under the contract by more than
28 \$1,000,000.00 per month, the commission shall allocate the
29 additional \$1,000,000.00 per month payment among the eligible

1 merchant plants based ~~upon~~**on** the relationship of excess costs
2 among the eligible merchant plants. The \$1,000,000.00 limit
3 specified in this subsection, as adjusted, does not apply to actual
4 fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs that are incurred
5 due to changes in federal or state environmental laws or
6 regulations that are implemented after October 6, 2008. The
7 \$1,000,000.00 per month payment limit under this subsection does
8 not apply to merchant plants eligible under subsection (9) whose
9 electricity is purchased by a utility that is using wood or wood
10 waste or fuels derived from those materials for fuel in ~~their~~**its**
11 power plants. As used in this subsection, "United States Consumer
12 Price Index" means the United States Consumer Price Index for all
13 urban consumers as defined and reported by the United States
14 Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

15 (11) The commission shall issue orders to permit the recovery
16 authorized under subsections (9) and (10) ~~upon~~**on** petition of the
17 merchant plant. The merchant plant is not required to alter or
18 amend the existing contract with the electric utility ~~in order to~~
19 obtain the recovery under subsections (9) and (10). The commission
20 shall permit or require the electric utility whose rates are
21 regulated by the commission to recover from its ratepayers all fuel
22 and variable operation and maintenance costs that the electric
23 utility is required to pay to the merchant plant as reasonably and
24 prudently incurred costs.

25 (12) Subject to subsection (13), if requested by an electric
26 utility with less than 200,000 customers in this state, the
27 commission shall approve an appropriate revenue decoupling
28 mechanism that adjusts for decreases in actual sales compared to
29 the projected levels used in that utility's most recent rate case

1 that are the result of implemented energy waste reduction,
2 conservation, demand-side programs, and other waste reduction
3 measures, if the utility first demonstrates the following to the
4 commission:

5 (a) That the projected sales forecast in the utility's most
6 recent rate case is reasonable.

7 (b) That the electric utility has achieved annual incremental
8 energy savings at least equal to the lesser of the following:

9 (i) The incremental energy savings requirement of section 77(1)
10 of the clean and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act,
11 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1077.

12 (ii) The amount of any incremental savings yielded by energy
13 waste reduction, conservation, demand-side programs, and other
14 waste reduction measures approved by the commission in that
15 utility's most recent integrated resource plan.

16 (13) The commission shall consider the aggregate revenues
17 attributable to revenue decoupling mechanisms, financial
18 incentives, and shared savings mechanisms the commission has
19 approved for an electric utility relative to energy waste
20 reduction, conservation, demand-side programs, peak load reduction,
21 and other waste reduction measures. The commission may approve an
22 alternative methodology for a revenue decoupling mechanism
23 authorized under subsection (12) or a financial incentive
24 authorized under section 75 of the clean and renewable energy and
25 energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1075, if the
26 commission determines that the resulting aggregate revenues from
27 those mechanisms would not result in a reasonable and cost-
28 effective method to ensure that investments in energy waste
29 reduction, demand-side programs, peak load reduction, and other

1 waste reduction measures are not disfavored when compared to
2 utility supply-side investments. The commission's consideration of
3 an alternative methodology under this subsection must be conducted
4 as a contested case in accordance with chapter 4 of the
5 administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.271 to
6 24.288.

7 (14) By April 20, 2018, the commission shall conduct a study
8 on an appropriate tariff reflecting equitable cost of service for
9 utility revenue requirements for customers who participate in a net
10 metering program or distributed generation program under the clean
11 and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295,
12 MCL 460.1001 to 460.1211. In any rate case filed after June 1,
13 2018, the commission shall, subject to section 173(7) of the clean
14 and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295,
15 MCL 460.1173, approve such a tariff for inclusion in the rates of
16 all customers participating in a net metering or distributed
17 generation program under the clean and renewable energy and energy
18 waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 to 460.1211. A
19 tariff established under this subsection does not apply to
20 customers participating in a net metering program under the clean
21 and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295,
22 MCL 460.1001 to 460.1211, before the date that the commission
23 establishes a tariff under this subsection, who continues to
24 participate in the program at their current site or facility.

25 **(15) The commission shall conduct any review of an electric**
26 **utility's investment and maintenance distribution plans as a**
27 **contested case in accordance with chapter 4 of the administrative**
28 **procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.271 to 24.288.**

29 **(16)** ~~(15)~~ Except as otherwise provided in this act, "utility"

1 and "electric utility" do not include a municipally owned electric
2 utility.

3 (17) ~~(16)~~ As used in this section:

4 (a) "Full and complete hearing" means a hearing that provides
5 interested parties a reasonable opportunity to present and cross-
6 examine evidence and present arguments relevant to the specific
7 element or elements of the request that are the subject of the
8 hearing.

9 (b) "General rate case" means a proceeding initiated by a
10 utility in an application filed with the commission that alleges a
11 revenue deficiency and requests an increase in the schedule of
12 rates or charges based on the utility's total cost of providing
13 service.

14 (c) "Steam utility" means a steam distribution company
15 regulated by the commission.