



Joint Action News

SPRING 2023

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A PUBLICATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL WHOLESALE ELECTRIC COMPANY (MMWEC)

MMWEC Files Motion with FERC in Mystic/Everett Case

MMMWEC has filed a motion at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) asking that it force the disclosure of information concerning the exorbitant charges being imposed on New England ratepayers under a fuel security cost-of-service agreement. Joining MMWEC in that request are the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, Vermont Public Power Supply Authority, Energy New England, and a group of Massachusetts public power systems known collectively as the Eastern New England Consumer-Owned Systems.

In 2018, the region's grid operator, ISO New England (ISO-NE), executed a two-year agreement (which began June 1, 2022 and ends May 31, 2024) requiring the continued operation of Mystic Units 8 & 9, which are owned by Constellation Mystic Power, LLC. ISO-NE says that the units are needed to ensure regional "fuel security." Mystic is paid under the agreement both its full cost of service and nearly all of the costs of Mystic's affiliated liquefied natural gas (LNG) fuel supplier, the Everett Marine Terminal. The agreement protects customers against unreasonable fuel charges by requiring that ISO-NE audit Mystic's fuel procurement practices. The audits are conducted

to ensure that service under the agreement is being provided at the lowest possible cost.

Over the first ten months of the two-year term of the Mystic agreement, consumers have been charged more than \$436 million in fuel costs, most of which resulted from Constellation's LNG purchases, and then selling at a loss, burning uneconomically, or otherwise disposing of fuel that it turns out Mystic did not need.

In the ten months since the Mystic agreement went into effect, the only document concerning the audits that ISO-NE has released is an uninformative, three-page summary of the conclusions of a consultant retained by the grid operator. The consultant concludes that the charges are appropriate under the agreement, but provides no insight into what MMWEC and the other public systems say is a key driver of the fuel-related charges: Mystic's fuel purchasing decisions and the terms of its liquefied natural gas supply contracts. The motion requests that FERC direct ISO-NE to release additional information concerning the variable charges passed through the agreement, including redacted copies of any reports, studies or other analyses produced by or for ISO-NE in connection with the audit.

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Value of Seabrook Nuclear Power Station Quantified in New Study

A new study has confirmed the economic and decarbonization value of Seabrook station to MMWEC Seabrook Project Participants and the region.

The Boston-based economic consulting firm Analysis Group has released a study estimating Seabrook's economic impact on the region. MMWEC owns 11.59% of the 1,244-megawatt station's output. Twenty-eight Massachusetts municipal utilities are Project Participants in Seabrook through MMWEC. In 2019, all outstanding bonds related to MMWEC's ownership interests in Seabrook were retired. It is believed that MMWEC is the only public power entity in the country that owns nuclear generation debt-free.

According to Analysis Group's study, Seabrook's ongoing operation through 2032 results in an estimated \$2 billion to \$2.91 billion contribution to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' economy. While reducing electricity and natural gas price volatility and lowering regional greenhouse gas emissions by 5 million tons a year, Seabrook station provides tremendous value to the region through both direct ownership or through contracts.

Using commercially available power market and regional economic impact modeling software, Analysis Group economists

provided two estimates of Massachusetts' electricity generation between 2023 and 2032 – one that included and one that excluded Seabrook's capacity. Modeling scenarios were created to estimate the impact of Seabrook's operation on the state's economy and its consumers, on GHG emissions, and on fossil fuel consumption under both conservative and optimistic regional natural gas price forecasts.

Seabrook plays a significant role in the Commonwealth's Roadmap to net zero carbon emissions in 2050, as well as in MMWEC Project Participants' MMWEC-customized power portfolio "roadmaps." The study, commissioned by the plant's lead owner NextEra Energy Resources, confirms that Seabrook is critical to reaching these decarbonization goals. According to the study, the major environmental benefits of Seabrook's continued operation include: an estimated 49-million-ton reduction in carbon emissions over ten years – the equivalent of operating 2,500 megawatts of offshore wind or the removal of nearly 1 million cars from the road, and the plant's ability to generate the equivalent output of three 400-megawatt gas-fired facilities, which account for approximately 20% of the daily natural gas supply consumed by Massachusetts power generators during the winter. ∞

Six MMWEC Members Recognized for Operational Practices

Six MMWEC Members have been recognized recently by the American Public Power Association (APPA) and the Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA).

Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E) is one of 14 utilities nationwide that earned a spot on the SEPA 2023 Utility Transformation Leaderboard. Biannually, SEPA conducts and analyzes surveys designed to measure meaningful progress across multiple dimensions of utility infrastructure, programs, strategy, and operations. This cycle's survey responses were received from 118 individual utilities representing more than 51% of all U.S. electric customer accounts across 41 states. The report examines the utility industry's transition to a clean and modern energy system by exploring four dimensions of utility transformation: clean energy resources, corporate leadership, modern grid enablement, and aligned actions and engagement.

Out of the 118 utilities surveyed, SEPA recognized 14 utilities, including HG&E, for exceptional leadership in carbon reduction. Through energy production projects, such as solar and hydro, over 65% of electricity sold by HG&E is produced from local renewable resources and 95% of electricity sold was carbon-free in 2021. HG&E participated in SEPA's inaugural Utility Transformation Challenge in 2020/2021 and earned a spot on the leaderboard in 2021. HG&E plans to continue to participate.

"SEPA standards evolve with each application period, and HG&E welcomes the feedback from the process and the challenge of continuously improving our processes," said HG&E Director of Marketing and Communications Kate Sullivan Craven. "It is one of the ways that we can ensure we are constantly moving forward - which ultimately translates to our overall goal of offering our customers the best service we can."

Boylston Municipal Light Department (BMLD) and Sterling Municipal Light Department (SMLD) each earned the 2022 Safety Award of Excellence from APPA, which recognizes utilities' incident rates and the overall state of their safety programs and culture. Utilities are divided into groups determined by worker-hours of exposure and both BMLD and SMLD were categorized in Group A with less than 15,000 worker-hours of exposure.

SMLD earned third place in Group A and BMLD earned Honorable Mention. This is not the first time either MLP has been recognized for its outstanding safety practices. SMLD has received the Safety Award of Excellence nine times and BMLD has earned the award 21 times.

"At the SMLD we try to provide the latest equipment and safety products they need to do their job safely, but safety really starts with the line crew themselves," says former SMLD Interim Manager Sean Hamilton. "They recognize the dangerous job they have and procedures in place such as the morning briefings, on the job tailgate discussions, and attention to the job at hand all contribute to a safe environment."

SMLD, Ashburnham Municipal Light Plant (AMLP), Marblehead Municipal Light Department (MMLD), and South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD) were recognized by APPA for excellence in reliability. Each year, APPA recognizes utilities that subscribe to APPA's eReliability Tracker tool for excellence in reliability determined by comparing the utilities' reliability data from the tracker against national reliability data published by the Energy Information Administration (EIA). To receive the Certificate of Excellence in Reliability, the utility must be in the first quartile of utilities for System Average Interruption Duration Index based on the last five years of the EIA data.

SHELD Senior Engineer Mark Gilmore says the tracker tool provides valuable information for the light department. "The eReliability tracker tool provides a web-based platform for outage tracking and historical analysis," Gilmore says. "The APPA also produces special reliability analysis, such as temporal analysis, which tracks the time of day/day of the week of outage events."

AMLP Acting General Manager Brooke Czasnowski agrees. "The eReliability tracker is an important tool that allows us to benchmark our system's reliability with other utilities as well as against our own utility year after year. The AMLP takes great pride in providing our customers with reliable power and we are excited to have received the Certificate of Excellence in Reliability from APPA for yet another year." ∞

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In support of this request, the motion states that because of the lack of data made public, neither FERC, the New England States, nor consumers have had the opportunity to assess what contributed to these enormous charges and to determine if they are justified and reasonable. MMWEC and its supporters ask that FERC direct Mystic and ISO-NE to release data related to the excessive charges, and continue to do so on a quarterly basis. The motion states that this information will help MMWEC and the public systems determine whether certain charges are warranted, whether there should be enhanced auditing, or if the agreement should be amended.

MMWEC, joined by the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, called FERC's attention to the issue in a joint filing last

December, in which they stated the charges had become much larger and more volatile than anticipated. Since that time, the charges have grown even larger. In January and February 2023 alone, ISO-NE has passed on more than \$220 million in charges under the agreement. The \$120 million supplemental capacity payment to Mystic for January 2023 was more than a quarter of the value of the entire New England wholesale energy market for that month.

The motion concludes by requesting that FERC direct Mystic and ISO-NE to release more robust and useful information about the bases for the extraordinary charges and ISO-NE's audit of them, as was promised during the 2018 proceeding. ∞

Matthew Stelmach Returns to SMLD as General Manager

Sterling Municipal Light Department (SMLD) is now under new leadership. Matthew Stelmach assumed the position of general manager in March 2023.

Stelmach is no stranger to the field of public power. After earning his Bachelor of Science in engineering from Drexel University, his first job post-college was as a service planner and distribution engineer for Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) in St. Augustine where he also interacted with JEA, the neighboring public power utility of Jacksonville, staff.

"I remember being impressed with public power even back then, seeing how much more flexible the policies were and the level of discretion given to JEA staff," Stelmach says.

After his position at FPL Stelmach worked in engineering roles primarily in the private sector including the positions of electrical engineer at Cannon Design in both Boston, MA and Washington, DC, electrical department head at TRO in Newton, MA, and vice president/engineering manager at the Maricor Group New England Inc. in Boston.

Stelmach relocated to the town of Sterling, Mass. and was happy to learn that the town had a municipal light department. He began attending SMLD Light Board meetings as a way to become involved in the community and through attending those meetings, decided to run for a commissioner role.



Matthew Stelmach

"I was surprised to see that not one of the commissioners had any background in electrical engineering or utility operations," Stelmach says. "I was inspired to run for the elected position to offer my expertise to the town."

Stelmach was elected to the board in 2009 and served until 2018, including six years as chair of the board. During his tenure, the board oversaw and approved many changes to the light department including the hiring of a new manager, the

reorganization of the light department, and the approval of three solar projects and two innovative battery projects.

Stelmach also worked at the UMass Chan Medical School in Worcester, which contains a power plant and distribution center that is owned and operated by the Commonwealth. He most recently worked as chief electrical engineer for NV5 in Andover, Mass. before applying for the role of general manager at SMLD. Stelmach succeeded SMLD general manager Darren Borge, who held the position since 2021, after longtime general manager Sean Hamilton retired.

"I was inspired to apply to SMLD because of the opportunity to serve and make a difference on a local level, similar to what I had been able to do as a commissioner," Stelmach says. "I am most looking forward to expanding SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) and introducing smart grid technology to the distribution system." ∞

MMWEC Members Provide Mutual Aid After March Storm

Many areas of Massachusetts and New England were hard hit after the March 14 snow storm that left thousands without power, but several MMWEC Members stepped up to the plate to provide mutual aid to nearby public power utilities in need of assistance.

The town of Holden received some 23 inches of snow, causing downed trees and wires. Approximately 1,000 customers were without power as a result. Holden Municipal Light Department (HMLD) requested assistance and Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO) responded.

SELCO sent a four-person lineworker crew to clear lines and perform primary and secondary wire repairs.

"Mutual aid is a staple of the public power business model and essential to supporting the public when they need it most," says SELCO General Manager Christopher Roy. Thanks to SELCO's assistance, all power was restored to HMLD customers by 10 p.m. that evening.

HMLD General Manager Barry Tupper said the department is grateful for mutual aid, and is happy to reciprocate.

"You never know when you're going to need the safe, fast, reliable and skillful help only a NEPPA (Northeast Public Power Association) mutual aid crew can offer," Tupper says. "We have increased our efforts to respond when called, whether it be next door or as far as Florida and the Virgin Islands."

New Hampshire Electric Cooperative (NHEC) also re-

quested assistance with power restoration after the state was hit with heavy snow up to 24 inches in certain areas. Nineteen public power utilities in Massachusetts sent crews, including Ipswich Electric Light Department (IELD), Mansfield Municipal Electric Department (MMED), Marblehead Municipal Light Department (MMLD), and Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department (WMGLD).

IELD sent a two-person crew that worked for two full days restoring long stretches of rural, single-phase lines and re-fusing transformers to restore services. IELD Manager Jonathan Blair says IELD was happy to provide mutual aid to NHEC as it is a learning opportunity for both utilities.

"Mutual aid provides a fantastic opportunity for lineworkers to work with other crews and experience new systems," Blair says. "Mutual aid often creates an atmosphere where skills are tested. It brings out the best in our lineworkers, and they are proud to be able to help those in need."

MMED sent a three-person crew that worked two days to replace a primary lateral feed and provide extensive electric service restorations to homes. MMED General Manager Joseph Sollecito says mutual aid is pivotal to providing quick power restoration.

"Participating in that 'mutual aid' response is such a valued critical service and key to getting as many customers back in service as soon as possible," Sollecito says. ∞

Directors, Officers Elected to MMWEC Board

Several officers and three directors were elected to new terms at May 4 meetings of the MMWEC membership and Board of Directors.

Peter D. Dion, general manager of Wakefield Municipal Gas & Light Department, was re-elected by the MMWEC membership to his 15th one-year term as president of MMWEC.

Michael J. Flynn, a gubernatorial appointee and Town of Wilbraham representative to the MMWEC board, was elected by the board to another one-year term as chairman. Flynn has been board on the for 21 years, and has served as chairman since 2014.

Representatives of MMWEC's 20 member municipal utilities also voted to reelect three directors each to a three-year term. They reelected Jonathan Blair, Manager of the Ipswich Electric Light Department, John Driscoll, General Manager of Templeton Light & Water Plant, and James Lavelle, General Manager of

Holyoke Gas & Electric.

Additional MMWEC officers for the coming year, as elected by the board, are Ronald C. DeCurzio, chief executive officer and secretary; Matthew J. Ide, treasurer; Maria McCarthy, assistant treasurer; Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinas, LLC, general counsel; and Kathryn M. Roy, assistant secretary.

Other MMWEC directors, elected previously by the membership, are Tara Rondeau, general manager of Paxton Municipal Light Department; Kevin Kelly, manager of Groton Electric Light Department; Joseph Sollecito, general manager of Mansfield Municipal Electric Department; and Christopher Roy, general manager of Shrewsbury Electric & Cable Operations.

Charmaine White of Springfield is a gubernatorial appointee to the MMWEC board. James Gennette, the newly appointed representative for the Town of Ludlow, is also on the board.∞

5 MMWEC Members Honored for Community Engagement

In May, District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr. visited Holden Municipal Light Department headquarters to honor the municipal light departments of Boylston, Holden, Princeton, Sterling, and West Boylston for their efforts to educate the youth in their communities on electrical safety.



Representatives from all five light departments with District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr. and safety consultant Ray Gouley

MMWEC Presents Pipeline Safety to Ludlow Seniors

In March, MMWEC teamed up with safety consultant Ray Gouley of the R.F. Gouley Company to discuss pipeline safety with residents at the Ludlow Senior Center. Nearly 40 seniors attended the event presented by Gouley and MMWEC Nuclear and NERC Oversight Engineer Michael Russell. This was the first time MMWEC was able to hold this presentation since before the COVID-19 pandemic.



MMWEC's Michael Russell