

# LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION - RECENT ISSUES CONCERNING ELECTRIC UTILITIES

by  
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1. District 1 - Commissioner Eric Skrmetta
2. District 2 - Commissioner Scott A. Angelle
3. District 3 - Commissioner Lambert C. Boissiere, III
4. District 4 - Commissioner Clyde C. Holloway
5. District 5 - Commissioner Foster L. Campbell

SOURCE: The Louisiana Public Service Commission

The Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) is the regulatory agency that oversees public utilities and motor carriers in the state. The LPSC consists of five elected Commissioners and a staff. The goal of the Commission is balanced regulation. That is, a regulatory environment where safe, reliable service is provided to customers at reasonable rates while allowing utilities to earn a fair rate of return.

Public meetings are usually held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month in the Natchez Room of the Galvez Building. The schedule is available on the website. The agenda is published on the website prior to the meeting, and subsequently, the minutes are also available on the website. Court reporters record and prepare transcripts for all hearings and Commission and Executive Sessions. The document access feature on the LPSC website allows dockets to be accessed as well.<sup>1</sup>

Recent LPSC issues concerning electric utilities:

1. Net Metering (Docket R-31417) – allows customers to produce on site electricity, usually by

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<sup>1</sup> The LPSC website can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org>.

installing photovoltaic panels (PV) and sell excess generation to the utility at a set rate, resulting in a credit on the monthly bill. The Commission implemented net metering rules in 2005 and is revisiting those rules as a result of increased subsidies associated with installation, purchased power, and distribution cost recovery, as well as concerns over third-party ownership and meter aggregation.

2. Financial incentives for the promotion of energy efficiency by electric utilities (Docket R-31106) – incentives to people to make their homes more energy-efficient. When a program is to be paid for by passing the costs along to all of the utility’s customers, the commission is obligated to determine whether the program benefits of using electricity more efficiently, by eliminating waste or loss for example, balance out those costs. Even a program with merit should not place an undue burden on the utility or their rate payers. Continued discussion for possible development of these incentives was passed to the June Business and Executive Session.
3. Regional Transmission Organizations (Dockets U-32675, U-32628, U-32631, U-32300) – RTOs are independent, membership-based, non-profit organizations that operate bulk electric power systems across North America. Entergy Louisiana, Entergy Gulf States Louisiana, and Cleco Power are joining the MISO RTO.<sup>2</sup> The LPSC is involved in handling the transition to the MISO. The Commission voted to elect Chairman Eric Skrmetta to be the LPSC Organization of MISO States Representative for 2013.
4. Renewable Energy Pilot Program (R-28271 Subdocket B) – Re-study of the feasibility of a renewable portfolio standard for the State of Louisiana. Currently, there is a pilot program intended to determine what renewable resources found in Louisiana can be used to meet a federal or state RPS while protecting Louisiana ratepayers from a significant rate increase. The pilot has two major components: 1) a research component, and 2) an RFP Component for larger new renewable resources. All jurisdictional electric utilities will participate in the RFP. Only investor owned utilities will participate in the research component. The LPSC staff report on the Renewable Energy Pilot is planned for the July 2013 B & E Meeting.

The Louisiana State Energy Office (SEO) disseminates information focused on energy-related economic development.

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<sup>2</sup> Each of Entergy’s six utility operating subsidiaries, which do business in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Orleans, and Texas, has filed for approval to join MISO with its regulatory body.