



NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION *NORTHERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS*

For Immediate Release:
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PSC to Review State's Public Utility Infrastructure in Light of Recent Winter Storms

(JACKSON, MS) – The three Mississippi Public Service Commissioners unanimously announced today the launching of a comprehensive review of the Magnolia State's public utility infrastructure in light of horrifying events in other areas of the nation and the lingering after-effects of the recent winter storm. The Commission's review will begin immediately.

The Commissioners stated that their goal was to ensure that all reasonable steps be taken to protect the reliability of electric, gas, water and sewer service at all times. While Mississippi utilities are accustomed to extreme weather events like hurricanes and tornadoes, winter storms are much rarer. The latest winter storm presented new challenges to Mississippi utilities that the Commission feels must be addressed immediately and forthrightly.

The Commissioners stressed the fact that our State's electric utilities performed incredibly well during recent, unprecedented weather, even producing more electricity than needed on the coldest day of the year. Additionally, preparations were made in advance to secure resources to assess outages and begin the restoration of electrical service as soon as safely able to do so. Natural gas utilities avoided supply disruptions and kept supplies flowing to their customers. However, the Commission said, these facts do not negate the responsibility of state regulators to ensure that utilities are doing all they can ensure its systems are resilient, services are reliable and that Mississippians avoid experiencing large-area outages that take a long time to recover from.

"Grid resiliency and reliability is an incredibly important issue and we must maintain a proactive approach to protect our systems and infrastructure," Chairman Dane Maxwell said. "The extreme winter weather last week brought to light many issues throughout the region that must be addressed to ensure forced outages on a massive scale do not happen here in Mississippi like we saw in other parts of the country."

"Although the majority of utilities performed well during the recent extreme weather, the events have raised the bar of preparation and preventative actions utilities should take to minimize outages," Commissioner Brent Bailey said. "Our emphasis remains on providing Mississippi residents with effective communication, ensuring reliability and preventing the loss of vital public utility services during any inclement weather conditions, particularly for the most vulnerable of customers."



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“It is our highest duty as Commissioners to make sure that we not only solve problems but anticipate them ahead of time,” Commissioner Brandon Presley said. “This latest winter storm has presented challenges that must be addressed in a formal and thorough manner. Mississippians deserve to have every assurance that the public and private power grid, water and other utility services will be there at all times. After all, the customers are the ones paying for it. Working families and small businesses are already financially struggling because of the pandemic, we must protect their pocketbooks along the way.”

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