

February 16, 2022



**FROM THE DESK OF
COMMISSIONER
BRENT BAILEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE**



The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.

Brent Bailey



NARUC Winter Policy Summit

For the past three days, I have been in Washington, D.C. participating in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Winter Policy meetings. These meetings involve Commissioners, utility providers, technology services, policy makers, and a wide range of other stakeholders. This meeting allows the opportunity to engage with federal officials and gain knowledge on the most pressing issues affecting utility regulatory matters. The weather was quite cold and snowy the day I arrived in D.C., so I did not do any sight-seeing. However, I did get to see lots of my colleagues from around the nation and used the time to compare notes, share challenges, and learn from others' experiences. The days at a typical NARUC meeting can run long due to so much material being covered and deep dives into complex matters. Below are photos and captions from my time at the NARUC Meeting.

Got started on Sunday afternoon in the Committee on Critical Infrastructure with comprehensive briefings from representatives of the Dept. of Energy's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER), the Dept. of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and EEL's SVP of Security and Preparedness. Commissioner Floyd McKissick of North Carolina and I asked questions regarding the proper role of state commissions in cybersecurity reporting.



Maryland Commissioner Anthony O'Donnell is the Chair of the Subcommittee on Nuclear Issues at NARUC. At our Sunday afternoon meeting, we received an update on the plans for the NARUC-DOE Nuclear Energy Partnership for the remainder of 2022. On tap are plans to visit one or more Small Modular Reactor (SMR) projects. We also heard from the Nuclear Energy Institute and the Nuclear Waste Storage Coalition on state of the nuclear industry across the globe and the domestic challenges associated with the permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel. The Dept. of Energy is currently pursuing proposals for consent-based siting of an interim storage location for much of the nation's spent nuclear fuel.

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On Monday morning the Committee on Energy Resources and the Environment held a session to discuss and explore the use of low-carbon fuels such as renewable natural gas and hydrogen to help states achieve clean energy goals while balancing affordability and reliability. Existing natural gas infrastructure can help enable emissions reductions in addition with energy efficiency measures and distribution system modernization.



Monday also included a meeting of the Organization of MISO States (OMS) Board of Directors where we heard updates on cost allocation, distributed energy resources, regional seams, transmission planning, and resource adequacy. There was also discussion on the comments that OMS will be filing in response to MISO's Long Range Transmission Planning Cost Allocation tariff submitted to FERC as well as an update on the SPP-MISO Joint Targeted Interconnection Queue. The OMS Board was also honored that Ms. Patricia Hoffman, DOE Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary joined our meeting to share her thoughts on transmission planning resources, potential influence of electric vehicles on electricity demand, and how to approach resiliency from a climate change perspective.

The members of the Southeast Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC) met to discuss the plan of work for 2022-2023. Technical sessions, webinars and annual meetings are on the schedule. The new logo for SEARUC was introduced and adopted. Thanks to Rachael Ring of the Central District for designing a logo that encompasses all member jurisdictions.



In addition to connecting with state commissioners, I also had the opportunity to visit with two Commissioners of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Commissioner James Danly and Commissioner Allison Clements were in attendance and were very accommodating in sharing their time with me. Commissioner Clements and Commissioner Danly encourage state commissions to engage in matters at the FERC and to keep infrastructure resiliency and reliability top of mind.



Rachel Moore (pictured left) is a Staff Writer for Public Utilities Fortnightly, the premier periodical that reports on all things dealing with utility regulation and commission operations. She was capturing quotes from Commissioners regarding their experiences at the Summit and key takeaways from the sessions.



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I also got the chance to see a great friend, Mandy Mahoney. Mandy was previously the President of the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance. She is now a Principal and the Director of U.S. Programs for the Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP). The RAP team consists of former commissioners, former commission staff, and other experts in the field of utility regulation, rate design, energy efficiency and other programs that provide benefits to consumers. I am excited that Mandy is in this new role at RAP, and I hope that the MPSC can tap into the multitude of technical assistance resources available through RAP and its partners.



Cybersecurity News

Due to current geopolitical tensions, the **Dept. of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS/CISA)** has issued a "Shields-Up!" message and launched the <https://www.cisa.gov/shields-up> website for information on threats, mitigations, and response information. You are strongly encourage to review the information on the Shields-Up website and the recent Joint Cybersecurity [Advisories](#) published on this topic and discuss them with your employees. The following is excerpted from the Shields-Up website:

"Every organization in the United States is at risk from cyber threats that can disrupt essential services and potentially result in impacts to public safety. Over the past year, cyber incidents have impacted many companies, non-profits, and other organizations, large and small, across multiple sectors of the economy.

Notably, the Russians have used cyber as a key component of their force projection over the last decade, including previously in Ukraine in the 2015 timeframe. The Russians understand that disabling or destroying critical infrastructure—including power and communications—can augment pressure on a country's government, military and population and accelerate their acceding to Russian objectives.

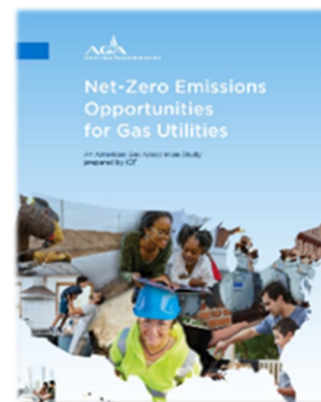
While there are not currently any specific credible threats to the U.S. homeland, we are mindful of the potential for Russia to consider escalating its destabilizing actions in ways that may impact others outside of Ukraine.

CISA recommends all organizations—regardless of size—adopt a heightened posture when it comes to cybersecurity and protecting their most critical assets."



Other News

The **American Gas Association** released a new study, [Net-Zero Emissions Opportunities for Gas Utilities](#), a comprehensive analysis detailing how America's natural gas utilities will be essential to meeting emissions reduction goals, including achieving net-zero. Americans want affordable, reliable energy and a cleaner environment. AGA shares this goal and believes affordable energy, decarbonization and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. The report demonstrates how gas utilities and their customers can achieve the goal of significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions using natural gas, gas infrastructure assets and technologies.





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Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funding for Broadband

The **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** includes \$65 billion in broadband investment, of which \$42.45 billion is directed toward physical network infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas. The bulk of the remaining amount is to fund the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides a \$30 monthly subsidy for qualifying households to obtain broadband connectivity at home.

As states apply to draw down these federal funds to provide broadband infrastructure deployment grants, states must also assign responsibility to allocate funding, monitor compliance and accurately identify unserved households. Specifically, states should: 1) Develop a statewide strategic broadband plan; 2) Define a grant strategy; 3) Map unserved and underserved households; 4) Remove barriers to economical deployment; 5) Develop grant application forms; 6) Evaluate applications; 7) Monitor grant compliance. There are currently two comprehensive broadband bills working their way through the Mississippi Legislature. Whichever bill is adopted, the state needs to begin positioning itself now to efficiently and rapidly disburse grant dollars to expand broadband.



Legislation Tracker

The House and Senate are having long days to consider and vote on the bills that have come out of committee. Thursday, February 10 was the deadline for floor action on general bills originating in a chamber's own house. The Commission continues watching numerous bills that could impact customers, certain utilities or the MPSC.

- [HB 939](#): Municipalities, certain; extend repealer on authority to create program addressing delinquent customer water bills. ***Passed the House.***
- [HB 1028](#): Public Service Commission; remove from the provisions of the Mississippi Budget Transparency and Simplification Act. ***Passed the House; Transmitted to Senate; Referred to Energy and AET Committee.***
- [HB 1029](#): Mississippi Broadband Accessibility Act; create. ***Amended; Passed House as Amended; Transmitted to Senate.***
- [HB 1031](#): Capital City Water/Sewer Projects Fund; create and require DFA to develop plan for improvements projects. ***Passed the House; Transmitted to Senate.***
- [HB 1376](#): MS Consumer Privacy Act; create to prohibit any agency, department or institution from releasing any personal information. ***Transmitted to Senate; Referred to Judiciary, Division A Committee.***
- [HB 1421](#): Establish ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure Grant Programs under Department of Health. ***Transmitted to Senate.***
- [HB 1425](#): Establish ARPA Wastewater and Drinking Water Infrastructure Grant Programs under DEQ and Department of Health. ***Transmitted to Senate.***
- [HB 1609](#): Mississippi Public Service Commission Annual Appropriation
- [SB 2474](#): Municipally owned electric utilities; shall have same powers as electric power cooperatives. ***Referred to Energy, Municipalities Committee.***
- [SB 2604](#): Mississippi Broadband Expansion Act; enact. ***Transmitted to House.***
- [SB 2814](#): Mississippi Water Quality Commission; create for the purpose of providing oversight of certain water and sewer systems. ***Transmitted to House; Referred to Conservation and Water Resources Committee.***




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- [SB 2822](#): "Mississippi Water and Wastewater Transformation Infrastructure Grant Program Act of 2022"; establish. **Transmitted to House.**
- [SB 2898](#): Certain municipalities allowed to establish overdue water/sewer payment programs; extend repealer on authority for. **Passed the Senate; Transmitted to House; Referred to Municipalities Committee.**

Please note that identification of a bill in this newsletter does not indicate support or opposition to a measure. Each bill is simply identified as an example of legislation that has been assigned to Energy, Public Utilities or other committees with oversight of these matters. Bills being tracked could change from week to week.

Last Week at the MPSC

-  The following entities filed motions to intervene in the Docket to Review Community Solar Proposals. This docket invites parties to file a proposed rule or plan related to low income and public entity community solar programs. From the date of the Order creating the docket (January 18, 2022), parties will have 20 days to intervene and 60 days to file a proposed rule or plan: [2 CMississippi](#); [Coalition for Community Solar Access](#); [Solar Energy Industries Association](#); [Nautilus Solar Energy, LLC](#); [Sundial Solar Power Developers, Inc.](#); [Ameresco, Inc.](#); [Mississippi Solar Energy Society \(MSES\) Chapter of the American Solar Energy Society \(ASES\)](#);
- ✎ **Entergy Mississippi, LLC** filed responses to **Rankin County's** Motions to Intervene in regards to its n Entergy Mississippi, LLC's Grid Modernization Rider ([GMR-1](#)), Restructuring Credit Rider Schedule ([RC-1](#)), MISO Cost and Revenue Schedule ([MISO-2](#)), Power Management Rider ([PMR-12](#)) and Unit Power Cost Recover Rider ([UPC-4](#)).
 - ✎ **Entergy Mississippi, LLC** filed its [Revised Compliance Filing](#) in regards to its Notice of Intent to Implement Revision to the Formula Rate Plan in compliance with the Commission's January 18, 2022, Order that was established to Review the Efficacy and Fairness of the Net Metering and Interconnection Rules. **The Commission** also filed an [Order Approving](#) Compliance Filing for **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** Notice of Intent to Implement Revisions to the Formula Rate Plan.
 - ✎ **The Commission** filed a [Suspension Order](#) in regards to the Notice of Intent of **Entergy Mississippi, LLC**, to Change Rates by Filing Renewable Community Option (Schedule RCO).
 - ✎ **The Commission** filed a [Suspension Order](#) in regards to the Notice of Intent of **Entergy Mississippi, LLC**, to Change Rates By Offering a Municipal Owned and Maintained Street Lighting Rate Schedule.
 - ✎ **The Commission** filed an [Order Approving](#) Compliance Filing for **Mississippi Power Company's** Notice of Intent to Change Rates Pursuant to the Performance Evaluation Plan, Rate Schedule PEP-6.
 - ✎ **Mississippi Power Company** filed its [Notice](#) of Its 2022 Eco Filing Pursuant to the Company's Environmental Compliance Overview Plan. The Company's Environmental Compliance Overview Plan requires the Company to annually provide its actual cost of compliance for the prior year, to file its projected costs of compliance for the current year, to file the factors that will allow the Company to recover its cost of compliance, and to petition for any environmental Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity for equipment facilities not previously certificated. All of this is then subject to approval by the **Commission**. If approved, this will result in a residential customer with monthly usage of 1,000 kWh, having an increase of \$0.64 per month from the current charge.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **43** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	28
Water/Sewer	8
Telecommunications	5
Natural Gas	2

Last week, the Central District received a total of **170** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our no call app, website and mail-ins.

We encourage consumers to file telemarketing complaints with the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.donotcall.gov/> in addition to filing complaints with the Mississippi Public Service Commission.