

April 14, 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

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Thank a Lineman on National Lineman Appreciation Day!

National Lineman Appreciation Day is celebrated each year on April 18th and honors the hard work, innovation and dedication of America's electrical line workers. The MPSC Central District is proud to join in on the celebration to honor the hard-working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the power flowing to our homes, businesses and other places where power is needed. Electric utility linemen and their bucket trucks are often the most recognizable aspect of any utility. Not only must linemen work quickly and safely to restore services and maintain grid reliability, they also must interact with the public in a professional manner.

This week, I had the opportunity to visit with the linemen of Southern Pine Electric's Brandon District. Whether it is the detrimental effects of hurricanes, ice storms or tornado-producing thunderstorms, the linemen of Southern Pine Electric work quickly to restore power to their customers in what is likely the largest rural electric cooperative service area by geographic footprint in the state. During the Lineman Appreciation Breakfast, Southern Pine leadership also introduced a [new Lineman Video](#) showcasing the grueling conditions that linemen must work in to restore electric service to its member-customers. Check it out and turn up the volume! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIaJ4QvUtYU>



Sharing words of appreciation with Southern Pine Electric linemen at the Brandon District location.

The MPSC Central District proudly recognizes all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep the power flowing, to protect the public's safety and to keep the state's economy moving forward. These men and women undergo years of training so that they know how to work around power lines safely and efficiently.



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The past few weeks have put their training to the test as Mississippi has experienced dozens of tornadoes all across the state putting outages into the tens of thousands on multiple occasions. Utilities shared resources and brought in extra manpower, going above and beyond to restore power to communities, sometimes far from their families.

Our Mississippi-based linemen, as well as linemen across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition. On April 18 (or anytime during the year), use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support for the men and women who light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do. I will be on the road on April 18 visiting various utilities and their linemen crews to express the Central District's appreciation for their dedication to their craft. Finally, check out this [National Lineman Appreciation Day Tribute Video](#) by Northwest Lineman College. You should recognize the voice behind the narration.

Legislative Session 2022 Summary

When this legislative session ended last Tuesday, the legislators accomplished most of their pre-session to-do list with only few exceptions. A good bit of what was done in the 2022 session followed from hearings during the summer and fall of last year. But this session appeared to have one pressing question that loomed over the legislators from beginning to end, and that was what to do with all the federal money directed to the state. This question is what kept legislators in town past the scheduled end of April 3.

Conferees agreed on the creation of new funds to allocate the federal money and revenue surplus. The surplus permitted the state to fund construction, renovation, and repair of facilities at state agencies and universities without the need to issue bonds. Lawmakers were able to appropriate about 84 percent of the \$1.8 billion in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, forbearing roughly \$300 million for next session. Mississippi was one of the last four states to allocate its ARPA funds which must be spent by Dec. 31, 2026. A part of the \$1.5 billion went into the current fiscal year and the other half into the fiscal year starting July 1. A large portion of the money in the current fiscal year will go to water and sewer projects. \$450 million will be overseen by the Miss. Department of Environmental Quality for cities' water and sewer projects and \$300 million by the Miss. Department of Health for rural water systems.

Once the Legislature has adjourned, Governor Tate Reeves has a 15-day window, not counting Sundays, to sign, veto or let the bills become law without his signature. Below is a summary of what was accomplished and accompanying details:

- [HB 1029SG](#): Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) Act; create.
 - This created the Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM) within the Department of Finance and Administration for the purpose of reviewing applications for funding broadband infrastructure projects using federal and state funds. As the State Broadband Office, BEAM will coordinate all broadband expansion efforts on behalf of the state, develop grant application programs, develop rules to guide grantmaking, coordinate broadband mapping efforts to determination extent of unserved and underserved areas, apply for federal funds, and provide the Legislature an Annual Report. The bill signed by Governor Reeves does not mention the Mississippi Public Service Commission or the Mississippi Public Utilities Staff. The bill authors recognized that the MPSC is prohibited by Mississippi Code Section 77-3-3(d)(iii) from regulating broadband services. The bill authors also recognized that per Mississippi Code Section 77-2-9(6) the MS Public Utilities Staff shall not exercise duties or expend resources on matters not within the jurisdiction of the MPSC. During the bill signing ceremony, Gov. Reeves announced that current MPUS Executive Director Sally Doty will be the new Director of BEAM and will be working everyday to make broadband accessibility better for the people of Mississippi.



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We thank Director Doty for her service and wish her the best at BEAM. There will soon be an opening at the MPUS Executive Director position, and the Commission will be acting as necessary to request and review applicants.

Current Status: **Signed by Governor 04/13/22**

- **HB 1031SG**: Capital City Water/Sewer Projects Fund; create and require DFA to develop plan for improvements projects.
 - This will create The Capital City Water/Sewer Projects Fund as a special fund in the state treasury to be administered by DFA for the purpose of providing funds to assist the city of Jackson in paying costs associated with construction, reconstruction, repairs, upgrades and improvements to Jackson's water and sewer systems and related facilities. It also provides that if the City desires assistance under this act, the city must establish a plan for the project or projects for which it desires assistance and submit the plan and an application.

Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/23/22**

- **HB 1421SG**: Establish ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure Grant Programs under Department of Health.
 - This states that the state Department of Health shall establish a grant program to be known as the ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure Grant Program to assist Rural Water Associations in the construction of eligible drinking water infrastructure projects under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

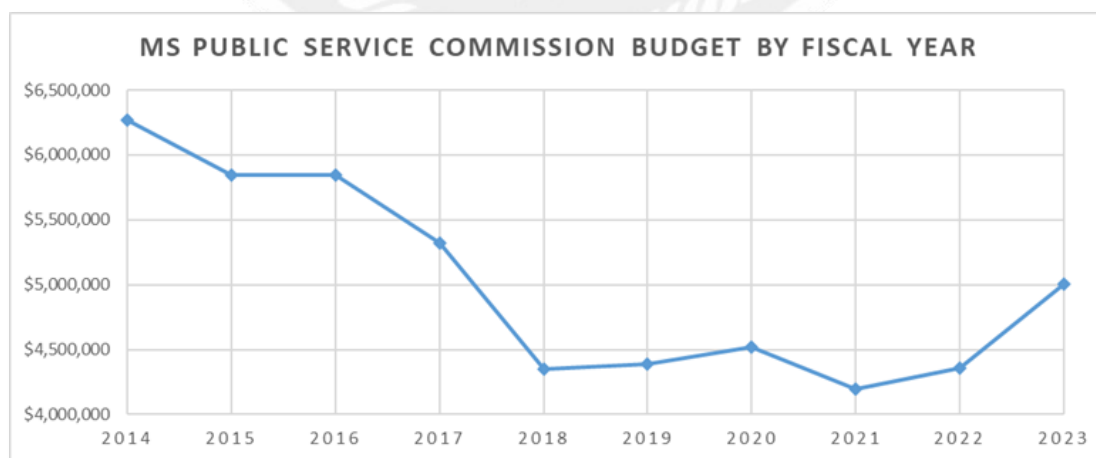
Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/25/22**

- **HB 1538SG**: Appropriation to the MS State Department of Health for the purpose of funding the ARPA Drinking Water Infrastructure Grant Program.
 - This makes an additional appropriation to the State Department of Health for the purpose of funding the ARPA Rural Water Associations infrastructure grant program established under House Bill no. 1421, in the 2022 regular session, for the period beginning on the passage of this act through June 30, 2023.

Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/25/22**

- **HB 1609SG**: Mississippi Public Service Commission Annual Appropriation.
 - The Legislature authorized an FY2023 appropriation of \$5,005,703 with 52 permanent authorized positions and 5 time-limited positions. Increases are primarily to cover SEC2 pay reclassifications and increases in health insurance. The chart below illustrates the evolution of the MPSC's annual appropriation.

Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/25/22**





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- [HB 1748](#): Town of Shuqualak; authorize expansion of water services.
 - This authorizes the governing authorities of the Town of Shuqualak to expand its water distribution system within a certain distance outside the corporate limits of the town.
Current Status: **Approved by Governor**
- [HB 1762](#): Creates the Clinton/Raymond/Bolton Wastewater Authority.
 - This act is for the purpose of authorizing a cooperative effort by an area within Hinds County, including the areas situated within the corporate boundaries of the Cities of Clinton, Raymond, and the Town of Bolton, and all public agencies, and public utilities for the acquisition, construction, and operation of one or more systems for the collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of wastewater; including sewerage systems, sewage disposal systems, and industrial wastewater, in order to prevent and control the pollution of the waters in by the creation of a Clinton/Raymond/Bolton Wastewater Authority.
Current Status: **Approved by Governor**
- [HB 1763](#): Kemper County; authorize to enter into certain contracts to fund capital costs to extend natural gas services.
 - This authorizes the Board of Supervisors of Kemper County, to enter into appropriate binding contracts to fund the capital costs necessary to extend natural gas services within the county.
Current Status: **Approved by Governor**
- [SB 2822SG](#): Establish the Mississippi Water and Wastewater Transformation Infrastructure Grant Program to be administered by the MDEQ.
 - The act, among other things, establishes the "Mississippi Municipality and County Water Infrastructure Grant Program Act of 2022" administered by MDEQ utilizing coronavirus state fiscal recovery funds made available under the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and provide that such grants shall be made available to municipalities, counties, and certain utilities on a one-to-one matching basis and to provide an additional grant to smaller municipalities.
Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/26/22**
- [SB 2898SG](#): Certain municipalities allowed to establish overdue water/sewer payment programs; extend repealer on code section.
 - This extends the automatic repealer on the section allowing certain municipalities to adopt rules and procedures for accounting system accommodation of certain uncollectible indebtedness owed by a customer for water and sewer services.
Current Status: **Enrolled Bill Signed by House and Senate; Due From Governor 04/23/22**
- Lastly, if [HB 1426SG](#) is signed by the Governor then the PSC Commissioners will join other statewide elected officials in a long overdue raise. By the time the raises go into effect in 2024, it will have been 20 years since the last pay increase for PSC commissioners.

This will be the last installation of the Legislative Tracker for 2022, unless a Special Session is called. Thank you for following our weekly updates on the status of legislation impacting consumers, utilities and state agencies.

New Reports of Interest

US Solar Market Insight Report 2021 Year in Review

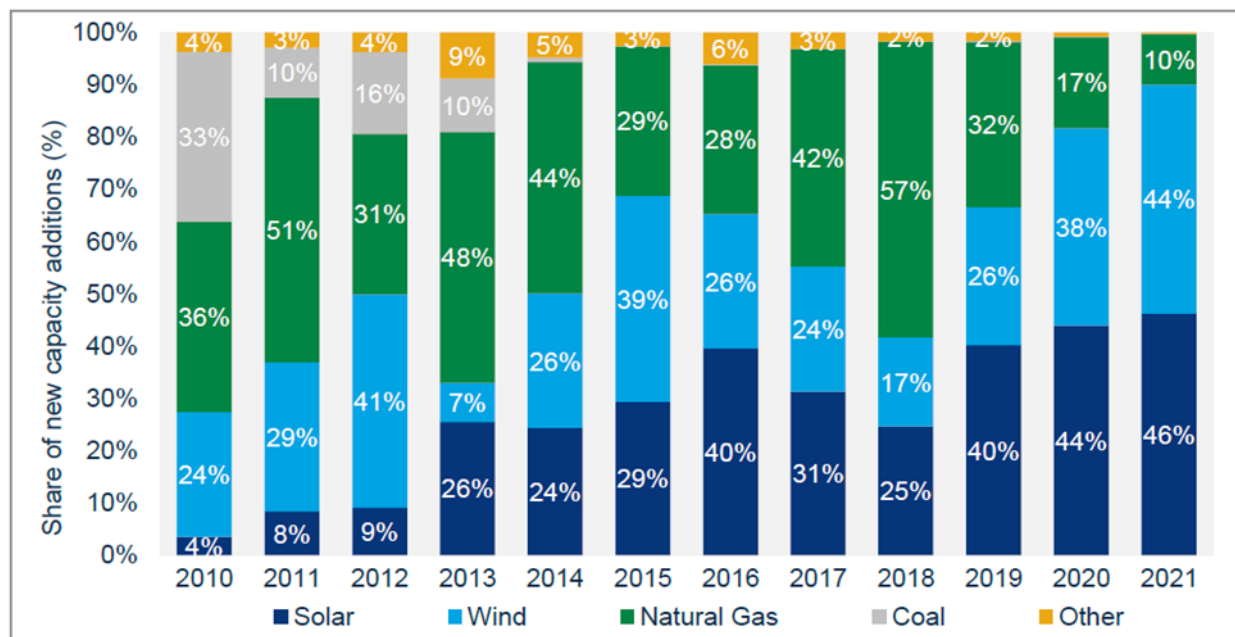
In 2021, the US solar market installed a record 23.6 GW_{dc} of solar capacity, a 19% increase over 2020. Solar accounted for 46% of all new electricity-generating capacity added in the US in 2021. This represents the third year in a row that solar has made up the largest share of new generating capacity in the US.



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In 2021, 3.9% of all US electricity generation came from solar. Mississippi ranked 50th in solar capacity installed in 2021. However, Mississippi is poised to make a jump in the rankings in 2022 with the completion of a couple of sizeable solar projects later this year. Check out the [U.S. Solar Market Insight 2021 Year in Review Executive Summary](#).

New US Electricity-Generating Capacity Additions, 2010 - 2021



Source: Wood Mackenzie, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (for all other technologies)

Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change

Last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the 6th assessment “Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change” [report](#). The 17 Chapters of the Working Group III Report assess the mitigation of climate change, examine the sources of global emissions, and explain developments in emission reduction and mitigation efforts. It warns that unless there are immediate and deep cuts in emissions, the world’s climate will have irreversible impacts.

Mini Guides on Decision-Making for Transmission Siting

The [Mini Guide on Transmission Siting: State Agency Decision Making](#) identifies which state agencies are responsible for reviewing and approving or denying electric transmission line siting. The entities responsible for transmission siting are organized into four major categories: public utility commissions, siting boards, other state agencies, and local decision-making. Across these categories, the mini guide outlines the interests that must be balanced, organizational approaches being used, and insights into different state processes.

The second mini guide, [Engagement between States and Regional Transmission Organizations](#), provides insights into the relationships among regional transmission organizations, independent system operators and regional state committees across four regions: the Midcontinent Independent System Operator and the Organization of MISO States, ISO-New England and the New England States Committee on Electricity, Southwest Power Pool and the SPP RSC, and finally, PJM and the Organization of PJM States. The mini guide provides a succinct background and overview of the functions of the RTOs and RSCs, explores engagement within states related to RTOs, and shares examples of effective collaboration.



Federal Actions

Last week, the National Highway Transportation Administration released a [Final Rule](#) covering Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards for Model Years 2024-2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks. As was widely expected, the final rule further increases stringency by imposing an 8 percent annual increase in fuel efficiency for model years 2024 and 2025 and a 10 percent annual increase for model year 2026. NHTSA projects that the revised standards would require an industry fleet-wide average of roughly 49 mpg in MY 2026. While the sharp increase in fuel economy requirements will create major engineering challenges for the autos, the rule, in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency's rule setting emission limits for cars and trucks, is expected to spur electric vehicle (EV) production and adoption. Utilities and regulatory bodies across the U.S. are now evaluating the impact of a large influx of EVs on the electric grid and resource adequacy.



Last Week at the MPSC

- 📁 **Entergy Mississippi, LLC** filed its 2022 Formula Rate Plan (FRP) [Notice](#) to Customers for Docket 2018-UN-205.
- 📁 **Mississippi Power Company** filed Objections to the following entities Motion to Intervene [in the Docket to Review Community Solar](#): [Gulf State Renewable Energy Industries Association \(GSREIA\)](#); [Arcadia Power, Inc.](#); [ECA Solar LLC](#)
- 📁 **Entergy Mississippi LLC** also filed Responses to the following entities motions/petitions to for late intervention and inclusion in the Docket to Review Community Solar: [Gulf State Renewable Energy Industries Association \(GSREIA\)](#); [Arcadia Power Inc.](#)
- 📁 [Entergy Mississippi, LLC](#) also filed a [Response](#) to **Rankin County's** Motion to Intervene in **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** Notice of Intent to Implement Revisions to the Formula Rate Plan.
- 📁 **Lingo Management, LLC, Lingo Communications, LLC, and B. Riley Principal Investments, LLC, BullsEye Telecom, Inc., and Matrix Telecom, LLC** filed their [Joint Petition](#) for the transfer of control of BullsEye to the Lingo Entities.
- 📁 **Matrix Telecom, LLC d/b/a Trinsic Communications d/b/a Excel Telecommunications d/b/a VarTec Telecom** filed its [Notice](#) that the Company is changing its corporate name to **Lingo Telecom, LLC**. Included with this filing are the Company's replacement local and interexchange, and access [Tariff](#) to reflect the name change, and a copy of the bill message notifying customers of the name change.
- 📁 **Bellsouth Telecommunications, LLC d/b/a AT&T Mississippi** filed its [Reply](#) to **Airus'** Response in opposition to AT&T'S Motion for Summary Judgement.
- 📁 **Spire Mississippi** filed its [Certificate of Notice](#) of Filing in regards to its Application for Approval of an Automated Meter Reading System.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **28** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	21
Telecommunications	3
Water/Sewer	3
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **182** 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.