

July 6, 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

***MDEQ and MSDH Move Forward to
Disburse Water and Wastewater Funds***

Water systems are considered one of the nation's critical infrastructures. Communities need safe drinking water and properly treated wastewater in order to grow and thrive. However, the nation, states and local entities have underinvested in water and wastewater infrastructure for far too long. Insufficient water and wastewater infrastructure threatens America's security, and it risks people's health, jobs, peace of mind, and future prosperity.

States were allocated approximately \$195 billion dollars through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Among other things, the SLFRF program provides governments across the country with the resources needed to invest in water, sewer and stormwater systems. These investments will improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and maintain vital public services.

Mississippi received just over \$1.8 billion in SLFRF program dollars and could use the funding to meet local needs per eligible use categories. During the 2022 legislative session, lawmakers decided to create two pathways for public drinking water systems to obtain these grant funds. [House Bill 1421](#), directed the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) to establish the ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure (ARPA Rural) Grant Program to assist private, non-profit water associations and water utilities in the construction of eligible infrastructure projects. \$300 million dollars was allocated to the ARPA Rural Grant Program by the Mississippi Legislature.

In addition, the Mississippi Municipality & County Water Infrastructure (MCWI) Grant Program, as set forth in [Senate Bill 2822](#) and managed by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), provides the opportunity for grant funding for counties, municipalities and public utilities that are not regulated by the Public Service Commission for qualifying drinking water, wastewater and/or stormwater infrastructure projects. The MCWI Grant Program received \$450 million from the Mississippi Legislature and will require the county, municipality or public utility to match the MCWI grant funds with ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Learn more about the MSDH's [ARPA Rural Water Associations Infrastructure Grant Program](#) and review eligibility criteria, important project planning considerations, [program regulations](#), program timeline and elements needed for a complete application.



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Learn more about the MDEQ's [Mississippi Municipality & County Water Infrastructure Grant Program](#) to review eligibility and compliance information, required application information, and [program regulations](#). MDEQ will also be hosting an [informational webinar on July 28](#) and an [in-person meeting](#) on August 18 at 1:30 pm at MDEQ headquarters building.

The infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill) will also deliver more than \$50 billion dollars to the Environmental Protection Agency and to the states through various [State Revolving Fund programs](#) to improve our nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. Mississippi is eligible to receive nearly \$75 million in 2022 State Revolving Fund Grants and \$171,000 in Clean Water Act 604(b) Grants.



Federal News

SCOTUS Rules on West Virginia vs EPA

In a [ruling issued last week](#) in *West Virginia vs EPA*, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) significantly curtailed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulatory authority under the Clean Air Act. The SCOTUS's 6-3 ruling limits the EPA's ability to regulate carbon emissions from power plants under Clean Air Act Section 111(d) and stalls the EPA's effort to compel generation shifting to reduce carbon emissions. While the decision was focused on EPA's authority to regulate GHG emissions in the power sector, it could have much broader implications for the administrative state as a whole and, in particular, on the Biden administration's recent attempts to transform the transportation sector through administrative rulemakings.

DOE Releases 2022 U.S. Energy & Employment Report

The Department of Energy (DOE) recently released the 2022 U.S. Energy and Employment Report (USEER), a comprehensive study designed to track and understand employment trends across the energy sector and within key energy technologies. Despite challenges from the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, the report shows the energy sector experienced positive job growth, increasing 4.0% from 2020 to 2021, outpacing overall U.S. employment, which climbed 2.8% in the same period. Download the full report, executive summary, and fact sheet [here](#). You can also download the 2022 USEER State Report for Mississippi [here](#). Mississippi had 67,022 energy sector workers statewide in 2021, representing the sectors of Electric Power Generation (4,792), Fuels (9,028), Transmission, Distribution and Storage (11,877), Energy Efficiency (14,032) and Motor Vehicles (27,293). The energy sector in Mississippi represents 6% of total state employment.



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State and Regional News

Hy Stor Partners with Hancock County

Renewable hydrogen hub developer Hy Stor Energy LP has announced that it is entering into [a strategic partnership](#) with the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission (HCPHC) to develop a green H₂ hub and provide zero-carbon, zero-methane hydrogen to the Port Bienville Industrial Park and Stennis International Airport. The project's first phase involves the production of approximately 350 tons of green hydrogen per day. Moreover, over 71,000 tons of the zero-carbon emission fuel will be stored for later use in underground salt caverns. Green hydrogen is produced using processes powered by renewable energy.

HYSTOR
ENERGY



Entergy Arkansas Issues 1,000 MW Renewable Energy RFP

Entergy Arkansas officials [announced](#) they have issued a [request for proposals](#) for 1,000 megawatts of solar and wind generation resources and emissions-free renewables. The new projects would more than triple Entergy Arkansas' current alternative energy capacity. Entergy Arkansas currently has 281 megawatts of solar power in service. The renewable resources to be procured through the RFP could be build-own-transfer agreements, self-build alternatives, and/or power purchase agreements that would be in operation between May 2025 and December 2026. Entergy Arkansas serves 728,000 customers.



The MPSC's July Regular Docket Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, July 12. The meeting is open to the public and will be streamed online.

Meet PUF's
2022
Under
Forties



Davis Gates, Mississippi Public Service Commission, Legal & Policy Advisor, engages with both utilities and consumers to constructively craft policies, rules, and the advancement of the state. He approaches tasks and projects with a proactive attitude, actualizing the vision of the agency while demonstrating competency in the sector. He also recently pioneered data requests from the state's utilities following the February 2021 catastrophic Winter Weather Event to assist the review of the reliability and resiliency of the state's infrastructure.



Upcoming Hearings in the Central District

East Brandon Transmission Expansion Public Hearing

Date/Time: Thursday, July 7 at 5:30 p.m.

Location: Rankin Co. Municipal Board Room, Rankin Co. Municipal Building

L&F Water Association Public Hearing

Date/Time: Thursday, July 14 at 6:00 p.m.

Location: Ludlow Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

Congratulations to Davis Gates, our Legal and Policy Advisor! Davis was selected as one of the 80 Under Forties up-and-coming stars of the utilities industry and utility regulation. [Check out the full version!](#)



Last Week at the MPSC

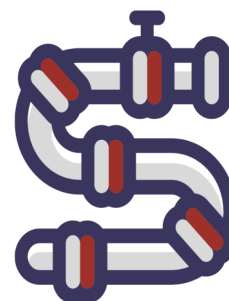
- ✎ **Peerless Network of Mississippi, LLC** filed an [Update](#) on several developments regarding the Proposed Transaction regarding the Joint Application of **Peerless Network Holdings, Inc.** and **Open Market Inc.**, for Approval of Indirect Transfer of Control of **Peerless Network of Mississippi, LLC** and **Airus, Inc.**
- ✎ **The Commission** issued an [Order](#) in regard to its Investigation into Acts Done or Omitted to be Done by **L & F Water Association** ordering **L & F Water** to Notice its customers of the hearing being brought by the **Commission** on Thursday July 14th at 6 pm at the Ludlow Baptist Church and file verification of such Notice with the **Commission**.

Our Pipeline Safety Division completed **7** construction inspections in the Central District during the month of June.

The total amount of construction notices that were received by the Commission in the Central District during the month of June is approximately **\$5,189,000**.

“Reporting of Construction Work”- The rule is found in Chapter 57.1: All Construction work involving gas facilities in which the estimated cost of proposed facilities is in excess of eight thousand dollars are related facilities that would be governed by the Federal Minimum Safety Requirements, will be reported in writing, or via telephone to the MS Public Service Commission prior to starting date of such construction. (There are exceptions for emergencies.)

The Commission encourages all intra-state natural gas operators to comply with the rule.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **32** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	24
Telecommunications	5
Water/Sewer	3

Last week, the Central District received a total of **179** 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.