

# THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE POWERFORWARD  
COLLABORATIVE.

CASE NO. 18-1595-EL-GRD

IN THE MATTER OF THE POWERFORWARD  
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM PLANNING  
WORKGROUP.

CASE NO. 18-1596-EL-GRD

IN THE MATTER OF THE POWERFORWARD  
DATA AND MODERN GRID  
WORKGROUP.

CASE NO. 18-1597-EL-GRD

## ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on April 22, 2020

### I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} In this Entry, the Commission provides guidance on grid modernization proceedings, noting that future steps in grid modernization continue to merit both thoughtful consideration and public education as the Commission plans for investment into cost-effective measures in the future. The Commission also finds that the work of the Collaborative, the Distribution System Planning Workgroup, and the Data and Modern Grid Workgroup has been completed and directs that these cases be closed of record.

### II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

{¶ 2} Ohio Power Company; Duke Energy of Ohio, Inc.; The Dayton Power and Light Company; The Toledo Edison Company; Ohio Edison Company; and The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company (collectively, the EDUs) are public utilities, as defined in R.C. 4905.02, and, as such, are subject to the jurisdiction and general supervision of the Commission, in accordance with R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, and 4905.06.

{¶ 3} In 2017, the Commission announced its intention to advance a comprehensive grid modernization endeavor. This endeavor is built upon the pairing of two pillars: (i) innovation, and the concept that this innovation should serve to (ii) enhance the customer electricity experience. Three multiday open meetings were held by the Commission: Phase 1: A Glimpse of the Future; Phase 2: Exploring Technologies; and Phase 3: Ratemaking and

Regulation. Over the duration of these Phases, 127 industry experts provided approximately 100 hours of education to Commissioners and members of the Staff regarding a variety of grid modernization topics.

{¶ 4} On August 29, 2018, the Commission released PowerForward: A Roadmap to Ohio's Electricity Future (Roadmap). The Roadmap makes a number of recommendations about the future of the distribution grid, and further recommends the creation of a PowerForward Collaborative (Collaborative) along with two additional workgroups, the Distribution System Planning Workgroup (PWG) and the Data and Modern Grid Workgroup (DWG). The Collaborative, the PWG, and the DWG served to continue the robust discussion had during the three Phases, and addressed specific tasks articulated in the Roadmap.

{¶ 5} By Entry issued on October 24, 2018, the Commission, among other things, established the Collaborative (Case No. 18-1595-EL-GRD), PWG (18-1596-EL-GRD), and DWG (18-1597-EL-GRD), and ordered that separate dockets be opened for each workgroup. The Commission established the PWG to identify issues that currently exist or that may arise in the integrated distribution planning (IDP) process. The DWG is focused on addressing the following tasks: create protocol for data privacy protections; drive toward real-time or near real-time data becoming available to customers; prescribe methodology for third parties to obtain customer energy usage data (CEUD), including a method for competitive retail electric service (CRES) providers to obtain total hourly energy obligation, peak load contribution, and network service peak load values.

{¶ 6} On January 23, 2019, the Commission selected EnerNex, LLC (EnerNex) to assist the Commission with the facilitation of the both the PWG and DWG for the period of January 16, 2019, through January 16, 2020.

{¶ 7} EnerNex filed its report regarding the DWG in Case No. 18-1597-EL-GRD on December 13, 2019. Therein, EnerNex details the key elements, discussions, and

recommendations gathered as a result of the DWG stakeholder meetings held between March and September 2019.

{¶ 8} On January 16, 2019, EnerNex filed its report regarding the PWG in Case No. 19-1596-EL-GRD. Therein, EnerNex details the key elements, discussions, and recommendations gathered as a result of the DWG stakeholder meetings held between March 2019 and January 2020.

### III. CONCLUSION

{¶ 9} The Commission would like to thank all participants for their contributions and involvement toward the development of the Collaborative, PWG, and DWG. Through these discussions and resulting reports, the Commission has been able to develop a more complete and nuanced understanding of the issues surrounding grid modernization topics in Ohio, based on the contributions of each participant. We believe that future steps in grid modernization continue to merit both thoughtful consideration and public education as we plan for investment into cost-effective measures in the future. Therefore, now that EnerNex has filed its respective reports regarding the PWG and DWG for the period of January 16, 2019, through January 16, 2020, the Commission finds it appropriate to review the future roles of the Collaborative, the PWG and the DWG. The Commission will take into consideration the respective reports in their entirety. However, the current state of grid modernization for each individual EDU in this state is substantially different from the other EDUs; therefore, although the recommendations contained in each report will be the starting point, such recommendations will need to be adapted to each EDU on a case-by-case basis, based upon the differing facts and circumstances of each EDU.

{¶ 10} Further, although we will continue to investigate the remaining issues raised in the Roadmap, these issues should be addressed in discrete, individual proceedings. In some instances, these issues may require new proceedings. For example, statewide interconnection standards are being addressed in the five-year rule review for Ohio Adm.Code Chapter 22. *In the Matter of the Commission's review of Chapter 4901:1-22 of the Ohio*

*Administrative Code*, Case No. 18-884-EL-ORD. Likewise, the Commission is investigating our jurisdiction over electric vehicle charging services in this state. *In the Matter of the Commission's Investigation into Electric Vehicle Charging Service*, Case No. 20-434-EL-COI. In regard to data access, it is the policy of this state to encourage cost-effective, timely, and efficient access to and sharing of customer usage data with customers and competitive suppliers to promote customer choice and grid modernization. R.C. 4928.02(O). The Commission believes that timely and efficient access to and sharing of customer usage data with customers and competitive suppliers is necessary to promote customer choice and grid modernization, subject to appropriate consumer privacy protections. Thus, we anticipate that the pursuit of this goal will continue through the issuance of staff recommendations in appropriate dockets, along with staff recommendations on implementation of other specific measures that are directed at broadening the opportunity for customers to act on their supply side and demand side preferences regarding the delivered price, mix and availability of innovative competitive and non-competitive products and services. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the work of the Collaborative, the PWG and the DWG has been completed and that these cases should be closed of record.

#### IV. ORDER

{¶ 11} It is, therefore,

{¶ 12} ORDERED, That Case Nos. 18-1595-EL-GRD, 18-1596-EL-GRD, and 18-1597-EL-GRD, be closed of record. It is, further,

{¶ 13} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon all interested persons and parties of record.

**COMMISSIONERS:**

*Approving:*

Sam Randazzo, Chairman

M. Beth Trombold

Lawrence K. Friedeman

Daniel R. Conway

Dennis P. Deters

GJP/mef

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### CONCURRING OPINION OF COMMISSIONER TROMBOLD

Entered in the Journal on April 22, 2020

{¶ 1} I concur with the majority opinion in this case; however, I offer additional comments with regard to Ohio’s grid modernization efforts entitled “PowerForward.”

{¶ 2} As many of you know, PowerForward was a robust discussion that took place over several years about how the electric distribution system in Ohio can be improved through innovation. This discussion was not unlike those occurring across the country, focused, among other things, on pairing innovation with customer expectations and giving customers control over their energy usage through enhanced data access options in the same manner they have come to expect from other industries.

{¶ 3} We set out to work with Ohio’s electric distribution utilities and interested stakeholders to better understand near and long-term technologies being developed and how these technologies could be deployed to advance state policy, e.g. improve reliability, develop more innovative products and services, etc. We worked with the U.S. Department of Energy, our partners at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), the national labs and other experts on complex concepts like grid architecture, interoperability, distribution system planning, and cyber and physical security. Understanding that down the road important questions on grid modernization will make

their way to the Commission for decision, we discussed what questions to ask and information to consider before approving cost recovery for grid modernization investments, and how to consider “future proofing” investments so customers receive the greatest value from long-term utility investments.

{¶ 4} PowerForward was a tremendous period of learning, resulting in a *Roadmap*, or summary document, that articulates the principles and objectives the Commission used to express a vision for Ohio to pursue grid modernization responsibly. The dialogue then continued over the course of another year through two workgroups in the docketed cases before us. The final reports docketed by these workgroups provide important input on next steps for Ohio as we continue to investigate the issues raised in the *Roadmap* in individual case proceedings.

{¶ 5} To be sure, grid modernization issues are more complicated in a restructured state than in states that are vertically integrated. Ohio restructured its electric market in 1999. I worked on Senate Bill 3 and have worked on issues related to its implementation my entire career at the PUCO. Much has changed over 20 years; however, the data access issues at the forefront of the data workgroup report are not new, and their solutions are not novel. Electric Distribution Utilities (EDUs) that have deployed advanced meters--for the benefit of customers and with ratepayer dollars--must make the interval data readily available to customers and to Competitive Retail Electric Service (CRES) providers authorized by the customer to receive it. The interval data must also be used by the EDUs for wholesale settlement so that CRES providers have the opportunity to build a better business case in Ohio. To not do these things is to devalue the investment made across the state in advanced meters and to move away from—instead of towards—greater customer engagement.

{¶ 6} Similarly, the issues contained in the planning workgroup report present many opportunities for us to continue dialogue among our numerous stakeholders. The increased use of distributed energy resources (DER) will present new challenges for our utilities. It also presents the kind of opportunities at the very heart of this endeavor.

{¶ 7} In concert with PowerForward, Ohio has been participating in a national discussion through the NARUC/NASEO Task Force on Comprehensive Electricity Planning. The two year initiative is a forum that brings states together to develop new approaches to aligning distribution system and resource planning processes to optimize the integration of DER. As investments change and modernization increasingly calls for new approaches beyond the traditional, a greater emphasis is needed on *planning* to address system complexities, leverage new technologies, and maximize benefits to ratepayers. Modernizing the grid also means modernizing how we plan for it.

{¶ 8} Grid modernization is not a conversation that will soon end, in Ohio or likely anywhere else. Technology permeates our lives--and that was true even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the new reality of stay at home orders and teleworking. We saw in 2017 that we needed to better understand what the future holds for the electric industry and its customers, both the challenges and the opportunities. It is incumbent on this Commission to take the lessons learned from PowerForward, the *Roadmap*, the workgroups, and the NARUC/NASEO Task Force into ongoing and future cases.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/ M. Beth Trombold

By: M. Beth Trombold  
Commissioner



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### CONCURRING OPINION OF COMMISSIONER CONWAY

Entered in the Journal on April 22, 2020

{¶ 1} While I join today's Entry and am in agreement with the comments that Commissioner Trombold makes in her concurring opinion, I write separately in order to provide additional comments regarding the importance, in my view, of taking concrete steps, as soon as practicable, and where possible, to realize the benefits of grid modernization for consumers. The work accomplished by the Collaborative, the Data and Modern Grid Working Group (DWG), and the Distribution System Planning Working Group (PWG), provide guidance where progress can be made in the near term. For example, EnerNex's Final Report for the DWG indicates that where Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is deployed it is now possible to make available to customers on a real-time (or near real-time) basis access to their energy usage data (CEUD), so that they can better manage their energy consumption. EnerNex's DWG report also indicates that enabling access to CEUD to customers' CRES providers and third parties, where the customers consent to the access, is practical and can be accomplished while maintaining appropriate data privacy protections.

{¶ 2} An additional benefit that I believe can result from access to CEUD on a real-time (or near real-time) basis is that the off-peak energy (and transmission service) consumption patterns that it would encourage will coincidentally encourage off-peak use of the EDUs' distribution networks. With the potential increase in usage of those networks

that many believe will result from the increased deployment of electric vehicle charging station equipment and their use by EV owners, encouraging the off-peak use of the distribution network will be beneficial for all distribution system customers.

{¶ 3} The customer benefits that result from CEUD access are a significant component of the value proposition that convinced the Commission to support the deployment of AMI. I think that it is time to follow through on and start realizing those benefits. It is in all stakeholders' interests to increase the benefits that customers obtain from the AMI deployments.

{¶ 4} Another example where I believe that progress can be made in the near term is in regard to standards for interconnection of distributed energy resources with the EDU's networks. Specifically, EnerNex's Final Report for the PWG identifies as a logical step forward at this time the definition of the required functions and settings for inverters used in solar panel installations that customers seek to interconnect with the EDU's distribution networks. As our entry today indicates, we have a proceeding in progress that provides a vehicle to move forward now on this task. Completing this step also appears to me to be the type of concrete progress that we can make now to enhance the value of the distribution system for customers.

{¶ 5} These are not an exhaustive list of improvements that can be made now, but as we move forward from this more educational and conceptual stage of our grid modernization exercise, they are ones that should be front and center in the execution phase.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/ Daniel R. Conway

By: Daniel R. Conway  
Commissioner

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Summary: Entry providing guidance on grid modernization proceedings and finding the work of the Collaborative, the Distribution System Planning Workgroup, and the Data and Modern Grid Workgroup has been completed and directing that these cases be closed of record. electronically filed by Ms. Mary E Fischer on behalf of Public Utilities Commission of Ohio