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## State of Utah

### Department of Commerce Division of Public Utilities

CHRIS PARKER  
*Interim Executive Director*

CHRIS PARKER  
*Director, Division of Public Utilities*

## Comments

**To:** Utah Public Service Commission

**From:** Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

Artie Powell, Manager

Doug Wheelwright, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Brenda Salter, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Abdinasir Abdulle, Utility Technical Consultant

**Date:** May 7, 2020

**Re:** **Docket No. 20-035-19**, Rocky Mountain Power Major Event Report for March 18, 2020 – Major Event No. 47.

### **Recommendation (Approval)**

The Division of Public Utilities (“Division”) recommends that the Public Service Commission (“Commission”) approve Rocky Mountain Power’s (“RMP”) application for Major Event exclusion for the event that took place on March 18, 2020. The System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) value for the event exceeded the threshold that defines a major event under the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers’ (IEEE) 2.5 Beta method adopted by the Commission in 2005 in Docket No. 98-2035-04.

## **Issue**

On April 10, 2020, RMP filed with the Commission its Major Event Report for the event that took place on March 18, 2020, requesting that this event be excluded from its network performance reporting and customer guarantee failure payments. On April 13, 2020, the Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Comment Period in which it indicated that any interested party may submit comments on or before Monday, May 11, 2020, and may submit reply comments on or before Tuesday, May 26, 2020. This memorandum represents the Division's comments on RMP's request for major event exclusion.

## **Event Description and Restoration Effort**

On March 18, 2020, a 5.7 magnitude earthquake in Magna, Utah caused customers in Salt Lake and Tooele Valleys to experience outages. The earthquake resulted in 13,888,993 customer minutes lost and 56,421 customers experiencing sustained interruptions.

In addition to its local crews, crews from other operating areas and contractors were called in to assist in restoration efforts. According to the Company, a total of 200 employees were mobilized in the restoration efforts. The Company replaced approximately 14,184 feet of conductor, 3 distribution poles, 5 transformers, 2 crossarms, 36 line splices, 30 insulators, and other materials. In addition, there were a number of substations that were affected and required visual inspection and manual reset of protective relay lockouts. During the restoration effort, approximately 44% of all customer outages were restored within 3 hours and 56% were restored within 3 to 24 hours.

The restoration effort was impacted by the volume of substations and lines that were impacted by the event. COVID-19 guidelines also posed a problem. There were a number of closed commercial properties due to COVID-19 which delayed access to overhead lines in some residential and commercial areas.

## **Discussion**

The Division reviewed the Company's calculations of the threshold that defines a major event under the IEEE 2.5 Beta method adopted by the Commission in 2005 in Docket No. 98-2035-04. Based on the data the Company provided to the Division, the Division determined that the

threshold for the Daily SAIDI value for the year calculated by the Company, 5.08 minutes, is correct. For this event, the Company calculated the daily SAIDI value for Utah to be 14.6 minutes. Based on the above discussion, the Division concludes that the March 18, 2020 event exceeded the daily SAIDI value threshold.

The Company's Network Performance Standard No. 4 states that "*The Company will restore power outages due to loss of supply or damage to the distribution system within three hours to 80% of customers on average.*" The Division understands this standard to be applicable to normal conditions. In the case of a Major Event, the Division would determine whether a satisfactory level of effort was expended by the Company to restore power to comply with this standard. Given the nature of the event and having reviewed the Company's filing, including its restoration efforts, the Division concludes that the Company's restoration efforts were adequate.

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, since the Utah SAIDI value for this event, 14.6 minutes, exceeded the daily SAIDI value threshold limit of 5.08 minutes, and the restoration effort was adequate, the Division concludes that this event was a Major Event and should be excluded from the network performance reporting.

Cc: Jana Saba, RMP  
Michele Beck, OCS