



State of Utah

Department of Commerce
Division of Public Utilities

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Action Request Response

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

Artie Powell, Manager

Brenda Salter, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Paul Hicken, Technical Consultant

Date: December 16, 2021

Re: **Docket No. 21-035-65**, In the Matter of Rocky Mountain Power's 2022 Strategic Communications and Outreach Action Plan and Budget for Demand Side Management (DSM).

Recommendation (Approval)

The Division of Public Utilities (Division) recommends that the Public Service Commission of Utah (Commission) approve Rocky Mountain Power's (Company) 2022 Strategic Communications and Outreach Action Plan and Budget for Demand Side Management.

Issue

On December 3, 2021, the Company filed with the Commission its Annual Strategic Communications and Outreach Action Plan and Budget for Demand Side Management for January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, (2022 Campaign). The Company proposes a budget of \$1.5 million, and the expenses associated with the 2022 Plan were included in the Company's forecast of expenses in the DSM Forecast Report filed November 1, 2021, in

Docket No. 21-035-45. The Company requests an order approving the 2022 Campaign with an effective date of January 3, 2022.

Background

On June 11, 2009, in Docket No. 09-035-36, the Commission issued an Order approving the implementation of an outreach and communications program in Utah for the Company's energy efficiency and peak management programs (Campaign) for a period of three years. The intent of the Campaign was to increase awareness and participation in the Company's energy efficiency and peak reduction programs. Since that time, the Company has sought and received approval from the Commission for outreach and communications plans on an annual basis in separate dockets.

The Commission issued an Action Request on December 3, 2021, for the Division to review and make recommendations on the 2022 Campaign by December 27, 2021. In addition, the Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Comment Period on December 3, 2021, providing interested parties the opportunity to submit comments by December 27, 2021. This memorandum is in response to the Commission's Action Request and Notice of Filing and Comment Period.

Discussion

The 2022 Campaign's objective is to promote energy efficiency and energy conservation through education as well as increased awareness of the benefits associated with the efficient use of energy and participation in the Company's programs. While the Company's marketing and communication outreach efforts are having a positive impact on residential and business customers it is important to note the lasting and detrimental impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had in keeping energy efficiency and conservation at a lesser priority. Nevertheless, the awareness level of energy efficiency communication has remained consistent for business customers, with more than half of customers saying they have taken action to reduce energy use. Additionally, two thirds of residential customers said they have taken action to reduce energy use. Moreover, all customers continue to rely on Rocky Mountain Power as a credible source for energy efficiency information.

The Company has developed an action plan for 2022 that includes increased direct email and targeted mail activity. In addition, trade shows, school programs, TV advertising, digital media, social media, online and radio advertising will be utilized to help reach business and residential customers. The Company also included a draft budget detailing the allocation of funds into each activity area of the 2022 Campaign. Also, the 2022 Campaign will continue to target customers with ads in Spanish and translating other promotional materials into Spanish where appropriate.

The Company will continue to use market research and customer surveys to improve awareness efforts for energy efficiency and to measure the effectiveness of the 2022 Campaign.

Specifically, the strategy going forward is as follows:

- Continue to advertise and promote Wattsmart choices as an expression of Rocky Mountain Power's "Powering Your Greatness" brand essence that empowers customers with options to save energy and money;
- Increase targeted media channels based on trends, impact, cost-effectiveness, reach and frequency, focusing on energy conservation and efficiency. Methods of advertising will include but are not limited to TV, social networking, online, radio and print;
- Inspire the next generation of energy savers through the school programs;
- Give customers the tools to manage their energy usage by offering energy insight reports and energy efficiency strategies, programs and incentives;
- Engage customers online and through direct email;
- Continue research and program evaluation to measure successful implementation and awareness.

The Company will continue to utilize market research and conduct customer surveys using third-party independent marketing research firms. Survey results from the third quarter of 2021 show that over 83% of residential customers say the Company does a good job of offering solutions that help customers use energy efficiently and in providing information on how to control electricity costs. Likewise, about 77% of commercial customers reported positively regarding the Company's efforts in offering solutions that help customers use energy efficiently and in

providing information on how to control electricity costs. The Company also plans in 2022 to continue participation in the “Be wattsmart, Begin at Home” campaign with schools. This is a popular program that in the fall of 2021 provided one-hour interactive assemblies to about 15,618 fourth-grade students in more than 201 schools.

The proposed budget for 2022 of \$1.5 million is consistent with past Campaign budgets and is also in compliance with the budget amount of \$1.5 million set in the 09-035-36 docket of June 11, 2009. The Division notes that the 2022 Campaign is comparatively similar to previous years and seems to be effectively accomplishing the goals of the program.

Conclusion

Based on its review of the Company’s filing, the Division concludes that the Company’s 2022 Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan and Budget for DSM complies with the Commission’s order in Docket No. 09-035-36, to promote energy saving programs and encourage participation through various media campaigns. The Division recommends approval of the filing.

Cc: Michael Snow, Rocky Mountain Power
Michele Beck, Office of Consumer Services
Service List