



SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Division of Public Utilities

MARGARET W. BUSSE
Executive Director

CHRIS PARKER
Division Director

Action Request Response

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

Brenda Salter, Assistant Director

Doug Wheelwright, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Tyler McIntosh, Utility Analyst

Date: November 30, 2023

Re: **Docket No. 23-031-03**, Mt. Wheeler Power Cooperative Wildland Fire Protection Plan.

Recommendation (Approval With Conditions)

The Division of Public Utilities (Division) recommends the Public Service Commission (Commission) acknowledge with conditions, Mt. Wheeler Power's November 2, 2023, filing as complying with Utah Code § 54-24-203 (1-3).

Issue

On November 2, 2023, Mt. Wheeler Power filed its annual Wildland Fire Protection Plan (WFPP). On the same date, the Commission issued an Action Request to the Division asking the Division to review the filing for compliance and make recommendations. The Commission asked the Division to report back by December 4, 2023. This memorandum represents the Division's response to the Action Request.

Discussion

Mt. Wheeler Power is a non-profit rural electric distribution cooperative. Utah Code § 54-24-203 (1-3) requires electric cooperatives to prepare a Wildland Fire Protection Plan in June

Division of Public Utilities

Heber M. Wells Building • 160 East 300 South • P.O. Box 146751 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6741
www.dpu.utah.gov • telephone (801) 530-7622 • toll-free in Utah (877) 874-0904 • fax (801) 530-6512

2020 and every third year thereafter. The WFPP submitted by Mt. Wheeler includes content relating to wildfire risk analysis, wildfire prevention strategies and protocols, community outreach and education, etc. The purpose of this filing was to comply with Utah code, protect the public, minimize the chance of the cooperatives power lines starting wildfires, and speed up the recovery from any wildfires that may occur. The WFPP was reviewed at the Board of Directors meeting that was held on November 28, 2023, and it was not approved. The company will be presenting the plan again in the next Board of Directors meeting that will be held on December 11, 2023. Mt. Wheeler will notify the Commission of the Board of Directors approval of the plan and provide any additional documents or changes that need to be made to the plan after the meeting on December 11, 2023. .

The Division's review of the WFPP included a comparison of the 2023 WFPP to the original WFPP that was filed in 2020. The 2023 WFPP had very minimal changes other than Millard, County's miles of UG Distribution went from 1.4 to 4.24. Mt. Wheeler stated that it will continue to do inspections to identify aging and deteriorating poles and will replace them with new upgraded structures.¹ Mt. Wheeler indicated that it has created an electrical system that is reliable, and safe and has had no lost time accidents and a very low workers compensation fund for more than seven years.² The 3 main points of the WFPP are:³

1. Protect the public.
2. Minimize the chance of the cooperative's powerlines starting wildfires.
3. Speed the recovery from any wildfires that may occur.

Mt. Wheeler has outlined its WFPP for wildfire prevention, and the Division has reviewed the filing and determined that it contains a point-by-point discussion of the requirements of the code. Based on its review, the Division concludes that Mt. Wheeler Power's filing complies with Utah Code § 54-24-203 (1-3).

¹ Mt. Wheeler Power Wildland Fire Protection Plan, November 2023, Page 10

² Mt. Wheeler Power Wildland Fire Protection Plan, November 2023, Page 10

³ Mt. Wheeler Power Wildland Fire Protection Plan, November 2023, Page 6.

Conclusion

Based on its review, the Division recommends the Commission conditionally acknowledge Mt. Wheeler Power's WFPP pending the outcome of the Board of Directors meeting scheduled for December 11, 2023.

cc: Michele Beck, Office of Consumer Services
Kevin Robison, Chief Executive Officer
Trish Stanton, Finance Manager
Shellie Watts, Member services/Communications Manager
William Ricci, Operations Manager
Tim Uhalde, Substation Manager