

**THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS**

Before Commissioners:                   Dwight D. Keen, Chair  
  Shari Feist Albrecht  
  Jay Scott Emler

In the Matter of a General Investigation to    )  
Fully Investigate the Parameters and        )  
Intricacies of a Customer Opt-Out Program    )       Docket No. 19-GIME-012-GIE  
for Advanced Metering Infrastructure Digital   )  
Electric Meters.                                 )

**ORDER CLOSING GENERAL INVESTIGATION**

This matter comes before the State Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas (Commission). Having examined its files and records, and being fully advised in the premises, the Commission finds and concludes as follows:

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. In April of 2018, the Commission concluded a multi-year investigation of complaints filed against Westar Energy, Inc. and Kansas Gas and Electric Co. (Westar) and Kansas City Power & Light Company (KCP&L).<sup>1</sup> As a result, the Commission opened this general investigation to fully investigate the parameters and intricacies of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) opt-out programs.<sup>2</sup> An AMI opt-out program would allow a customer to select a different meter for recording his or her usage than an AMI meter, commonly referred to as a “smart meter,” provided by the utility.

**II. SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION**

2. The Commission found all electric public utilities subject to the Commission’s rate and terms of service regulation should be made a party to this proceeding. These utilities included

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<sup>1</sup> See *Order*, Docket No. 15-WSEE-211-COM, *et al.* (Apr. 5, 2018) (Smart Meter Order).

<sup>2</sup> See *id.*

Westar, KCP&L, The Empire District Electric Company, a Liberty Utilities Company (Empire) and Southern Pioneer Electric Company (Southern Pioneer). Additionally, the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB) and the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC) petitioned for, and were granted, intervention.<sup>3</sup>

3. Commission Staff prepared a Report and Recommendation that recommended a review of the following items:<sup>4</sup>

- a. The types of meters that would be preferred in a meter opt-out program;
- b. The installation costs associated with each meter type and/or billing strategy;
- c. The operating costs associated with each meter type and/or billing strategy; and
- d. The effects of economy of scale on the costs of an opt-out program.

### III. COMMENTS FROM THE PARTIES

4. The procedural schedule allowed parties to submit Initial and Reply Comments on opt-out programs and Staff's proposed areas of inquiry. KCP&L, Westar, Southern Pioneer, CURB, Staff, KEC, and Empire filed Initial Comments.<sup>5</sup> Southern Pioneer, CURB, Staff, and KEC filed Reply Comments.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See *Order Granting CURB's Petition to Intervene* (Aug. 9, 2018); *Order Granting Petition to Intervene of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.* (Sep. 18, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> *Order Opening General Investigation*, Attachment A, pp. 1-2 (Jul. 24, 2018) (Order Opening General Investigation).

<sup>5</sup> Kansas City Power & Light Company and Westar Energy, Inc. Initial Comments (Nov. 16, 2018) (KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments); Initial Comments of Southern Pioneer Electric Company (Nov. 16, 2018) (Southern Pioneer Initial Comments); CURB's Initial Comments (Nov. 16, 2018) (CURB Initial Comments); Commission Staff Initial Comments (Nov. 16, 2018) (Staff Initial Comments); Initial Comments of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (Nov. 16, 2018) (KEC Initial Comments); The Empire District Electric Company's Initial Comments in Response to Commission Order (Nov. 19, 2018) (Empire Initial Comments). Empire filed a motion to late-file comments. The Empire District Electric Company Motion for Leave to File Comments Out of Time, p. 1 (Nov. 19, 2018). The Commission grants Empire's request and accepts Empire's Initial Comments.

<sup>6</sup> Reply Comments of Southern Pioneer Electric Company (Jan. 18, 2019) (Southern Pioneer Reply Comments); CURB's Reply Comments (Jan. 18, 2019) (CURB Reply Comments); Commission Staff's Reply Comments (Jan. 18, 2019) (Staff Reply Comments); Reply Comments of Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (Jan. 18, 2019) (KEC Reply Comments).

## A. Initial Comments

5. KCP&L and Westar agreed with Staff's previous recommendation that utilities not be required to establish opt-out programs.<sup>7</sup> KCP&L and Westar argued they should not be required to create an opt-out program for AMI meters when the Commission has found AMI meters do not pose health risks, cybersecurity risks, or fire hazards.<sup>8</sup> KCP&L and Westar's AMI meter system uses unique network IDs and encryption protocols.<sup>9</sup> No customer identifiable data is stored on KCP&L and Westar's AMI meter system.<sup>10</sup>

6. Southern Pioneer agreed with prior Commission findings that use of AMI meters has not been shown to cause health or privacy concerns.<sup>11</sup> Utilizing all features available to it, Southern Pioneer's AMI meters transmit data for less than one minute per 24-hour period and the AMI meters do not collect customer-specific data (other than energy use data).<sup>12</sup> Southern Pioneer agreed with Staff's prior recommendation that an opt-out program should not be implemented at this time.<sup>13</sup>

7. CURB's Initial Comments noted the utilities were best positioned to answer the four questions recommended by Commission Staff.<sup>14</sup> Because of this, CURB reserved its right to respond to other parties' Initial Comments in CURB's Reply Comments.<sup>15</sup>

8. Empire provided succinct Initial Comments responsive to the four questions recommended by Commission Staff. The Commission will summarize those comments at the appropriate time in this Order.

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<sup>7</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> See *id.* at p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> See *id.* at p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> See *id.*

<sup>11</sup> See Southern Pioneer Initial Comments, pp. 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> See *id.* at p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> See *id.*

<sup>14</sup> See CURB Initial Comments, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> See *id.*

9. KEC conducted an informal survey of its members to determine which members utilized AMI or AMR technology (the latter emphasizing meter *reading*) and which members offered AMI opt-out programs.<sup>16</sup> Based on responses to KEC's survey, the overwhelming majority of KEC's members utilize AMI or AMR metering technology, with varying degrees of meter reading frequency and savings.<sup>17</sup> Some of KEC's members offer opt-out programs.<sup>18</sup> In addition to comments responsive to the four questions recommended by Commission Staff, KEC offered comments on the benefits of AMI technology and challenges associated with opt-out programs.<sup>19</sup> KEC recommended the Commission "allow each utility to fashion its own solution based on the specific characteristics of its system and the needs of its customers, including whether to implement an opt-out program at all."<sup>20</sup>

10. Staff's Initial Comments referenced its previous recommendation that the Commission should not mandate a program that allows customers to select the type of meter reading service for their accounts.<sup>21</sup> Like others, Staff noted that its previous recommendations emphasized customers utilizing opt-out programs should be required to bear the costs of implementing and operating non-standard metering approaches.<sup>22</sup> At the time Staff filed its Initial Comments, Staff continued to support its prior recommendations regarding opt-out programs. "Specifically, Staff believes no opt-out program is necessary but asserts the Commission maintains the authority to require such a program if it so chooses. In this event, Staff believes the opting-out customers should bear the costs of implementing and maintaining the program."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See KEC Initial Comments, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See *id.* at pp. 3-5.

<sup>18</sup> See *id.* at p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> See *id.* at pp. 9-11.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> See Staff Initial Comments, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> See *id.* at pp. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at p. 3.

*i. Types of Meters Preferred in a Meter Opt-Out Program*

11. In the event the Commission required utilities to establish an opt-out program, KCP&L and Westar noted their Missouri operations utilize digital meters without radio capabilities for customers electing to opt-out.<sup>24</sup> However, KCP&L and Westar noted a total of five customers have enrolled in the Missouri opt-out program while AMI meters have been deployed for hundreds of thousands of customers.<sup>25</sup>

12. Southern Pioneer recommended utilizing either: (1) an AMI meter with limited 2-way communication or (2) an AMI meter with no 2-way communication.<sup>26</sup> This recommendation stemmed, in part, from Southern Pioneer highlighting the difficulty in finding analog meters to begin with.<sup>27</sup>

13. Empire recommended using an AMI meter, but limiting its functionality so that the meter can be read by a hand-held device.<sup>28</sup> Empire noted the difficulties associated with maintaining an inventory of different meters for separate customers, as well as potential inefficiencies associated with customer turnover and meter switching.<sup>29</sup>

14. KEC noted that its members that did provide opt-out programs primarily utilized digital meters with communication capabilities disabled.<sup>30</sup> KEC noted metering technology is moving away from analog meters and analog meters are not expected to be available for purchase, including parts necessary for maintenance and repair.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> See *id.* at pp. 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> See Southern Pioneer Initial Comments, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> See *id.*

<sup>28</sup> See Empire Initial Comments, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> See *id.* at pp. 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> See KEC Initial Comments, pp. 5-6.

<sup>31</sup> See *id.* at p. 6.

ii. *Installation Costs, Operating Costs, and Billing Strategy*

15. Staff’s Reply Comments concisely summarized the installation and operating costs recommended by the parties. Figure 3 of Staff’s Reply Comments is as follows:

<b>Utility</b>	<b>Initial Installation Cost (Urban)</b>	<b>Initial Installation Cost (Rural)</b>	<b>Monthly Fee (Urban)</b>	<b>Monthly Fee (Rural)</b>	<b># Current Opt-out Customers</b>
KCP&L-KS* and Westar	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	0
Southern Pioneer	\$41.14	\$184.77	\$41.14	\$184.77	4
Empire	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	0
KEC	see Note 1		see Note 2		

\*Based on MO fees<sup>32</sup>

16. KCP&L and Westar identified negative costs for creating an opt-out program such as: (1) requiring the purchase of meters that do not have AMI capability or have had AMI capability disabled; (2) the creation of special meter reading routes and cycles; (3) additional costs associated with meter-reader dispatch; (4) lack of service outage information; and (5) reduced customer troubleshooting capability.<sup>33</sup> Based on KCP&L’s Missouri operations, customers are required to pay an initial fee of \$150 and an additional monthly fee of \$45 to participate in the opt-out program.<sup>34</sup>

17. Southern Pioneer strongly agreed with Staff’s cost-causation recommendations (i.e. the costs of any opt-out program should be recovered from customers participating in the program).<sup>35</sup> Southern Pioneer broke down installation and operating costs depending on whether currently deployed AMI meters (with varying degrees of radio communications) or analog meters were used in an opt-out program. Southern Pioneer’s installation and operating costs vary from no

<sup>32</sup> See Staff Reply Comments, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 7. See also KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, note 16.

<sup>34</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, pp. 7-8.

<sup>35</sup> See Southern Pioneer Initial Comments, p. 13.

cost (assuming it is permitted to use its existing AMI infrastructure) to significant costs (using analog or non-communicating AMI meters). Assuming a 3% opt-out rate, the installation of analog meters would total nearly \$70,000. Southern Pioneer further detailed operating costs. If an analog or AMI meter with no radio communications capability whatsoever were utilized, Southern Pioneer's approximate annual cost to institute an opt-out program would be over \$700,000.<sup>36</sup>

18. Empire proposed assessing a one-time fee of \$150 for customers exchanging an AMI meter for a digital meter.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Empire indicated it would incur costs for an employee to drive to the customer's premises each month to read the meter.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, this cost would be influenced by Empire's applicable meter reading labor rate and travel time.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Empire estimated it would need to assess a monthly fee of \$45 for customers utilizing an opt-out program.<sup>40</sup>

19. KEC noted that installation cost and billing strategies vary from member to member. Costs imposed vary depending on the replacement meter, labor costs, disconnection fees, meter-type/voltage/service requirements, and site.<sup>41</sup> KEC's members wanted customers choosing to opt-out to be required to pay the costs associated with opting out – customers not opting out should not be required to pay additional costs.<sup>42</sup> KEC noted the operating costs associated with meter types vary among its membership. Generally, KEC commented these costs include: (1) the costs to have the meter physically read each month; (2) the purchasing of new meters; (3) the changing of an automated billing system back to a manually entered system; and (4) the hiring of more Staff.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *See id.* at p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> *See* Empire Initial Comments, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> *See id.* at p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> *See id.*

<sup>40</sup> *See id.*

<sup>41</sup> *See* KEC Initial Comments, pp. 6-7.

<sup>42</sup> *See id.* at p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> *See id.*

*iii. Economies of Scale*

20. KCP&L and Westar indicated their experience showed opt-out programs were difficult to administer.<sup>44</sup> Given the incredibly small number of customers participating in the company's Missouri opt-out program, KCP&L and Westar questioned the value of the program.<sup>45</sup>

21. Southern Pioneer noted that a small potential group of opting-out customers could erode benefits associated with the deployment of AMI infrastructure.<sup>46</sup> In essence, Southern Pioneer anticipated saving money by deploying AMI meters for its customers (e.g. reduction of meter reading costs, improved billing accuracy, reduction in meter theft and tampering costs).<sup>47</sup> As indicated above,<sup>48</sup> requiring Southern Pioneer to implement an opt-out program would reduce the very cost savings that were anticipated when Southern Pioneer implemented AMI meters.

22. Empire noted that more customers utilizing an opt-out program should reduce the program's cost, but in any event, the costs of an opt-out program would be higher than the costs associated with an AMI installation.<sup>49</sup>

23. KEC commented that the benefits of economies of scale would not be present with an opt-out program. Few customers would take advantage of the program, and based on the principles of cost-causation, enrolling customers would be required to bear the costs of the program.<sup>50</sup> These costs would only continue to grow as additional changes would need to be made to a utility's billing system.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, devoting employees to administering an opt-out program would increase operational costs in other areas (e.g. investigation of power quality issues).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> See *id.*

<sup>46</sup> See Southern Pioneer Initial Comments, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> See Staff Reply Comments, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> See *supra* ¶ 18.

<sup>49</sup> See Empire Initial Comments, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> See KEC Initial Comments, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> See *id.*

<sup>52</sup> See *id.*



Similar to Southern Pioneer, KEC highlighted that the shift to AMI meters was an effort to reduce costs on customers – not increase them.<sup>53</sup>

## **B. Reply Comments**

24. Staff's Reply Comments provided a summary of the Initial Comments provided by the utilities and expanded the four areas of inquiry. Staff provided a high-level summary of the differences between AMI and AMR metering technology, and how data is transmitted back to a utility.<sup>54</sup> Regarding AMI meter deployment, Staff noted approximately 96% of meters used by KCP&L, Westar, Southern Pioneer, and Empire, combined, are AMI meters.<sup>55</sup> Summarizing comments provided by the utilities, Staff noted that analog meters are not readily available, become less accurate over time, and the capability of testing and repairing analog meters is no longer realistic.<sup>56</sup> Staff recommended the opt-out meter-of-choice be an AMI meter with radio transmission capabilities disabled, and the utilities be permitted to retain their existing inventory of AMI repair parts.<sup>57</sup>

25. Regarding installation and operating costs, Staff evaluated cost data from other jurisdictions. Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas have opt-out programs with varying costs assessed for start-up (i.e. one-time setup fees) and ongoing monthly costs.<sup>58</sup> Combined with economy of scale data provided by the utilities, Staff believes the actual costs of a Kansas opt-out program are unknown, and there is a low probability of a popular opt-out program reducing these costs.<sup>59</sup> Like Southern Pioneer, Staff noted that as an opt-out program's utilization increases, a

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<sup>53</sup> *See id.*

<sup>54</sup> *See* Staff Reply Comments, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> *See id.*

<sup>56</sup> *See id.* at p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *See id.* at pp. 5-6.

<sup>58</sup> *See id.* at p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> *See* Staff Reply Comments, p. 7.

utility will be required to hire additional meter readers, thereby diminishing AMI-generated savings.<sup>60</sup>

26. To summarize, Staff was unable to find any instance where a utility customer could select the type of equipment the utility utilizes to measure the customer's electric usage.<sup>61</sup> To date, Staff was unable to locate any scientific studies that clearly indicate the radio frequency emissions used by AMI meters to transmit data are harmful to humans.<sup>62</sup> Staff agreed with the utilities regarding the reduced costs and additional benefits provided by AMI meters, and "an opt-out program would only increase the costs to the Utility and its ratepayers while providing no tangible safety or health benefits to the utility's customers."<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, Staff did not believe it was in the public interest to create a special metering program that caters to unproven concerns of a minority of ratepayers.<sup>64</sup> However, if the Commission did require that an opt-out program be established in Kansas, Staff recommended Missouri's costs be used as a starting point (i.e. \$150 installation/setup charges per meter with a \$45 additional monthly charge) with utilities tracking the costs to be adjusted during a utility's next rate case.<sup>65</sup>

27. CURB commented it believed the Commission had the authority to establish, or not establish, an AMI opt-out program in Kansas.<sup>66</sup> CURB did not advocate for any one specific policy option over the other. CURB detailed an AMI opt-out program may result in: (1) an administratively burdensome program; (2) loss of optimization; and (3) unlawful subsidization depending on how the program is structured.<sup>67</sup> CURB stressed flexibility when designing opt-out programs, and noted the customers choosing to opt-out should bear the costs associated with

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<sup>60</sup> *See id.*

<sup>61</sup> *See id.* at p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> *See id.*

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

<sup>64</sup> *See* Staff Reply Comments, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> *See id.*

<sup>66</sup> *See* CURB Reply Comments, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> *See id.* at pp. 5-6.

implementing and maintaining AMI out-out programs.<sup>68</sup> Particularly, CURB found reasonable KEC's position of allowing each utility to decide whether to implement an opt-out program based on the specific characteristics of each utility.<sup>69</sup>

28. Southern Pioneer's Reply Comments agreed with positions taken by other parties. Specifically, incumbent utilities are best positioned to determine which meters should be used on their respective systems or quantify costs for their specific systems, and that no AMI opt-out program was necessary.<sup>70</sup> Southern Pioneer's Reply Comments also restated positions taken in its Initial Comments.<sup>71</sup>

29. KEC noted that all parties in the docket were in similar agreement on substantive issues and views on opt-out programs.<sup>72</sup> KEC presented two principles to guide the Commission in its determinations in this docket. As a general point, the Commission should not require utilities to implement an opt-out program.<sup>73</sup> KEC reiterated the lack of evidence demonstrating perceived harmful effects of AMI meters, difficulty in maintaining analog meters, and increased costs with managing customer accounts utilizing an opt-out program.<sup>74</sup> But in the event the Commission did require such a program, each utility should be allowed to develop its own program and be given flexibility in determining the meter and customer class(es) eligible to participate in the program.<sup>75</sup> KEC argued opt-out programs should be developed on a utility-by-utility basis with: (1) opting-out customers paying the associated costs for any opt-out program; (2) the utility determining the meter used for opting-out customers; and (3) limiting opt-out eligibility to residential customers.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *See id.* at p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> *See id.*

<sup>70</sup> *See* Southern Pioneer Reply Comments, pp. 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> *See id.*

<sup>72</sup> KEC Reply Comments, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *See id.* at p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> *See id.* at pp. 3-4.

<sup>75</sup> *See id.* at p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *See id.* at pp. 4-7.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

30. K.S.A. 66-101d authorizes the Commission to initiate general investigations of electric public utilities and requires hearings to be held in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas administrative procedure act, unless the Commission orders otherwise for good cause. Pursuant to K.S.A. 66-101d, the Commission may establish or substitute rates, rules and regulations, measurements, practices, services or acts the Commission deems just and reasonable.

31. The comments submitted by the parties provide the Commission necessary insight into the deployment of the utilities' respective AMI-based metering operations. The Commission thanks the parties for their comments on the matter. The comments submitted reaffirm the Commission's previous findings, and further confirm that establishing a mandatory opt-out program for Kansas' electric utilities is not required or necessary.

32. The Commission previously investigated whether the use of AMI meters by KCP&L and Westar presented health, privacy or fire-related risks. The Commission consolidated nine complaints of KCP&L and Westar customers who presented similar claims against the utilities' practice of utilizing AMI meters.<sup>77</sup> Upon dismissal of the formal complaints, the Commission opened this general investigation to ascertain additional information associated with implementing an opt-out program.<sup>78</sup>

33. Based on the comments provided by the parties, the Commission believes there is no basis for requiring electric public utilities to maintain an inventory of analog meters necessary to implement an opt-out program. As indicated by numerous utilities, analog meters pose unique maintenance and reliability challenges and provide fewer benefits to customers than more advanced digital meters. The comments provided by the parties indicate that customers benefit

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<sup>77</sup> See Smart Meter Order.

<sup>78</sup> See Order Opening General Investigation

from improved metering, communication (e.g. billing inquiries and outage notification), and rate design options. Customers cannot benefit from the improvements to metering infrastructure while utilizing legacy equipment.

34. The information provided in this general investigation, when examined with previous Commission holdings, indicates that a Commission-mandated opt-out program is not appropriate at this time. This general investigation focused on the feasibility and intricacies of implementing an opt-out program. The parties to the docket, particularly the utilities, have demonstrated considerable effort would be required to implement an opt-out program with little perceived benefits.

35. For example, a key concern during the Commission's investigation of Westar and KCP&L's use of AMI meters was cyber-security threats. In short, customers were concerned their personal information could be revealed in the event of a meter-related breach.<sup>79</sup> KCP&L and Westar's AMI Meter System uses unique network IDs, depending on the utility, as well as encryption protocols.<sup>80</sup> No customer-identifiable data is stored on KCP&L and Westar's AMI Meter System.<sup>81</sup> Other than energy usage data, Southern Pioneer's AMI meters do not collect customer-specific data.<sup>82</sup> Together, Westar, KCP&L, and Southern Pioneer's AMI meters represent 100% of the AMI installations in Kansas.<sup>83</sup> Use of an AMI meter cannot pose a threat to a customer's personally identifiable information if the information is not part of the AMI metering system.

36. Moreover, the information provided by KCP&L, which has an opt-out program in Missouri, indicates sparse usage. Out of KCP&L's-Greater Missouri Operations and KCP&L-

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<sup>79</sup> See Staff Reply Comments, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> See *id.*

<sup>82</sup> See Southern Pioneer Initial Comments, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> See Staff Reply Comments, Figure 2, p. 5. Empire will begin installation of AMI meters in 2019. See Staff Reply Comments, p. 5.

Missouri's customers (i.e. 473,976 customers), a combined total of five customers participate in the opt-out program.<sup>84</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that the Commission has found no health, safety, or privacy risks or legitimate threats faced from the use of AMI meters, it makes little sense to mandate that Kansas public utilities create a new program for such a small subset of customers.

37. Regarding health risks, evidence presented to the Commission indicated AMI meters and associated radio frequency exposure was safe, and any radio frequency exposure was much lower than that received from cell phones, wireless phones, or microwave ovens.<sup>85</sup> The facts presented in previous Commission dockets indicated AMI meters are as harmful as everyday appliances. Hence, it is not in the public interest to require utilities to implement opt-out programs that solve a non-existent threat.

38. In summary, previous Commission orders have highlighted the speculative, remote, and unestablished harms that come from the use of AMI meters. Nevertheless, to promote the public interest the Commission undertook this general investigation to determine how difficult it would be to implement an AMI opt-out program, notwithstanding the unproven concerns held by a fraction of customers. The evidence presented by the utilities in this investigation indicates it would be difficult and costly to implement such an AMI opt-out program. Given the costs, administrative burden, reduced efficiencies, degradation of utility operations (e.g. outage monitoring), and so forth, the Commission finds and concludes an AMI opt-out program should not be mandated in Kansas at this time.

39. However, in the event a utility wishes to propose an AMI opt-out program, the Commission will reserve its judgment as to that specific utility until a unique docket with particular facts comes before the Commission.

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<sup>84</sup> See KCP&L and Westar Initial Comments, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> See Staff Reply Comments, pp. 2-3.

**THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

A. This general investigation of the parameters and intricacies of an AMI opt-out program is concluded. No further action shall be required from Kansas' electric public utilities at this time. Thus, this docket is closed.

B. Any party may file and serve a petition for reconsideration pursuant to the requirements and time limits established by K.S.A. 77-529(a)(1).<sup>86</sup>

C. The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and parties for the purposes of entering further orders as it deems necessary.

**BY THE COMMISSION IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Keen, Chair; Albrecht, Commissioner; Emler, Commissioner

Dated: 03/14/2019



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Lynn M. Retz  
Secretary to the Commission

MJD/rev

<sup>86</sup> K.S.A. 66-118b; K.S.A. 77-503(c); K.S.A. 77-531(b).

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

19-GIME-012-GIE

I, the undersigned, certify that the true copy of the attached Order has been served to the following parties by means of electronic service on 03/14/2019.

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19-GIME-012-GIE

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