

year compound annual growth basis, assuming no sales growth and before consideration of other changes to the cost of service.³ The Evergy Kansas Metro Capital Investment Plan reflects an overall increased spending in CapEx projections of \$1 million or 0%, on a five-year compound annual growth basis, from the previous 2022-2026 plan.⁴ The additional investment in the Evergy Kansas Metro Capital Investment Plan is projected to slightly decrease rates (by 0.1%), on a five-year compound annual growth basis, before consideration of other changes to the cost of service.⁵

3. On June 15, 2023, Evergy filed 2023 Annual Update to its Integrated Resource Plan. On July 5, 2023, Evergy filed an errata to its IRP to correct the amount of solar additions in its 2023 IRP annual update.

4. On July 6, 2023, the Commission granted Staff's motion to extend the deadline to July 10, 2022, for all parties to respond to the Capital Investment Plan.⁶

5. On July 10, 2023, Commission Staff (Staff) filed a Report and Recommendation and the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board (CURB) filed its comments on Evergy's Capital Investment Plan.

6. Staff advises Evergy complied with the requirements of the Capital Investment Plan framework approved by the Commission,⁷ but Staff remains concerned with the continued growth in Evergy's five-year Capital Plan. Evergy's five-year Capital Plan, covering years 2023-2027, contains \$824 million more (12.14%) capital expenditures for the combined Evergy Kansas Central and Evergy Kansas Metro, than was contained in the 2022 five-year Capital Plan, covering years 2022-2026.⁸ The combined Evergy Kansas Central and Evergy Kansas Metro five-year

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Order Granting Staff's Motion for Extension to File Capital Investment Plan Comments, June 23, 2022, ¶ 3.

⁷ Staff's Report and Recommendation, July 10, 2023, p. 1.

⁸ *Id.*, p. 2.

Capital Plan has grown from \$4.639 billion in 2020 to \$7.606 billion in 2023, an increase of 63.95% in just four years.⁹ Even with that increase, Evergy's Capital Plan remains below the average electric-only utility Capital Plan in terms of percentage increase in Net Plant and relative to existing levels of Depreciation and Amortization.¹⁰ Evergy's increase in Net Plant relative to existing Net Plant ranks 14th out of 17 electric-only utilities nationally, and 5th out of 6 regional peer electric-only utilities. Evergy's capital expenditures should allow it to continue to make progress towards achieving regionally competitive rates and reliable service.¹¹

7. CURB agrees the 2023 CIP Update filing is in compliance with the framework structure and purpose established by the Commission,¹² but CURB believes Evergy's continued reliance upon ownership status to evaluate resources versus as a PPA should be reexamined by the Company ahead of its triennial update. CURB and other parties have expressed interest in using the IRA as a source of investment to pursue renewable resources.¹³ Like Staff, CURB reiterates its previously expressed concerns with transmission spending levels and the commensurate benefits for ratepayers.¹⁴

8. On July 20, 2023, the Commission granted Staff's motion to extend the deadline to August 31, 2023, for all parties to respond to the Integrated Resource Plan.

9. On August 31, 2023, Staff, the Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (KEPCo), Climate + Energy Project (CEP), CURB, the New Energy Economics, and the Sierra Club filed comments on Evergy's IRP. In its August 31, 2023 Report and Recommendation, Staff expressed a lack of confidence that the basic analysis framework represented in the 2021 Triennial IRP and

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Comments of the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board Regarding the Evergy Kansas Metro and Evergy Kansas Central Capital Investment Plan 2023 Update Filing, July 10, 2023, ¶ 16.

¹³ *Id.*, ¶ 9.

¹⁴ *Id.*, ¶ 22.

the subsequent 2022 and 2023 Annual Updates sufficiently address the range and magnitude of uncertainties that Evergy has identified.¹⁵ Staff encourages Evergy to think expansively and creatively about how to enhance the IRP modeling and analysis to identify plans that are robust over highly uncertain potential futures.¹⁶ Staff recommends the Commission find that Evergy's 2023 IRP Update filing meets the Commission authorized IRP Process Framework.¹⁷

10. KEPCo commends Evergy for significant improvements from its 2022 annual update and 2021 IRP,¹⁸ but suggests additional improvements to the IRP process, relating to Jeffrey Energy Center Units, and staggering retirement dates that extend beyond the 20-year planning period.¹⁹

11. CEP identifies two deficiencies in the IRP: (1) Evergy did not select a plan with the lowest reasonable cost, and (2) Evergy did not consider emissions reduction appropriately in its analysis and selection of its preferred plans.²⁰

12. CURB believes Evergy's 2023 IRP Update complies with the Commission-approved framework, but asserts that Evergy needs to reevaluate its continued reliance upon ownership status to evaluate resources rather than as a PPA ahead of its triennial update²¹

13. The Council for New Energy Economics relies on a report from Energy Futures Group (EFG), a consulting company that performs IRP modeling and reviews IRPs.²² EFG notes its review of Evergy's 2023 IRP Annual Update was more limited than its typical review due to

¹⁵ Staff Report and Recommendation, Aug. 31, 2023, p. 6.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Comments of Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. on the Evergy Kansas Central and Evergy Metro 2023 Annual Update, Aug. 31, 2023, ¶ 4.

¹⁹ *Id.*, ¶ 5.

²⁰ Comment of Climate + Energy Project Regarding Evergy's 2023 Integrated Resource Plan, July 31, 2023, ¶ 18.

²¹ Comments of the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board Related to the 2023 Annual Update to Evergy's Integrated Resource Plan, Aug. 31, 2023, ¶¶ 8-9.

²² Comments of the Council for the New Energy Economics Regarding Evergy's 2023 Annual Update, Aug. 31, 2023, ¶ 2.

the comment timeframe and the timeframe for receiving discovery responses.²³ In future IRPs and Annual IRP updates, EFG recommends Evergy: (1) provide its PLEXOS modeling files with future Triennial IRP filings and IRP Annual Updates to facilitate transparency and stakeholder review; (2) update thermal capital costs to account for the current inflationary environment; (3) loosen build constraints for new renewables and battery storage resources; (4) evaluate the impact of the Energy Community bonus adder for projects that could be located at retiring coal plants; (5) explore earlier retirement dates and broaden the combination of retirements evaluated; (6) include the evaluation of coal to gas conversion options; (7) explore the impacts of securitization on those plans that advance coal retirement dates; (8) model renewable and storage assets under owned and contracted ownership assumptions, and (9) explore reusing injection rights of retiring generators.²⁴

14. The Sierra Club identifies some deficiencies to fix in Evergy's 2024 triennial IRP, namely that Evergy used several unsupportable assumptions in its modeling, which favors expensive fossil-fired generation.²⁵ The Sierra Club argues as a result, ratepayers can likely expect to face incessantly rising rates caused by stranded assets and inefficient generation that could be curtailed by more realistic planning.²⁶

15. On October 2, 2023, Evergy filed its Responses to Intervenor Comments regarding its 2023 IRP Annual Update. In response to CURB, Evergy explained the purpose of the IRP is to evaluate generic resource options, rather than determine ownership or financial structures.²⁷

16. The question before the Commission is whether Evergy's 2023 IRP Update complies with the Commission-approved framework. Both Staff and CURB believe it does.

²³ A Review of Evergy Kansas Central and Evergy Metro 2023 Annual IRP Update Prepared by Chelsea Hotaling of EFG (EFG Report), Aug. 2023, p. 4 (Attached to Comments of the Council for the New Energy Economics Regarding Evergy's 2023 Annual Update).

²⁴ EFG Report, p. 19.

²⁵ Sierra Club's Comments on Evergy's 2023 Integrated Resource Plan Annual Update, Aug. 31, 2023, p. 1.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Evergy Kansas Responses to Intervenor Comments, Oct. 2, 2023, ¶ 13.

While other intervenors allege deficiencies in the IRP, none of them allege the IRP fails to comply with the Commission's requirements. Thus, the Commission finds Evergy's 2023 Capital Investment Plan and IRP filings meet the requirements of the Capital Investment Plan and IRP Framework.

THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

A. Evergy's 2023 Capital Investment Plan and IRP filings meet the requirements of the Capital Investment Plan and the IRP Framework.

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).²⁸

BY THE COMMISSION IT IS SO ORDERED.

French, Chairperson; Keen, Commissioner; Kuether, Commissioner.

Dated: 11/21/2023



Lynn M. Retz
Executive Director

BGF

²⁸K.S.A. 66-118b; K.S.A. 77-503(c); K.S.A. 77-531(b).

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19-KCPE-096-CPL

I, the undersigned, certify that a true copy of the attached Order has been served to the following by means of electronic service on 11/21/2023.

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