



COLORADO ELECTRIC UTILITY REGULATION

WHAT IS UTILITY REGULATION?

In most areas of the economy, companies compete with each other for your business. This competition and other market forces can keep prices relatively stable and make companies responsive to customer needs and concerns. **Most electric utilities are different.** They do not face any competition for your business. In exchange for their monopoly status, they are regulated by a state agency.

State regulators are charged with protecting consumers' interests and enacting state laws. State regulators monitor and have some control over investments, consumer costs, and the profits earned by electric utilities. The result is meant to be **a regulated monopoly that acts in the public interest.**

WHAT DOES UTILITY REGULATION DO?

The **Colorado Public Utilities Commission** (PUC) regulates investor-owned electric utilities and has some authority over municipal electric utilities and co-ops. Across the country, regulating bodies like the PUC create and oversee the rules that utilities must follow. For example, the PUC oversees your electricity rates, the terms of service with customers, customer safety and utility infrastructure projects.

The PUC also oversees the development of new electricity generation. One of the main ways electric utilities earn a profit is by building new assets like power plants and power lines. Those investments are paid for by you, the ratepayer, and directly impact your electric bill.

The cost of current operations and building new assets is spread over all ratepayers' electric bills. **State regulatory bodies, like the PUC, control how much a utility is allowed to build, profit, and how costs are spread over ratepayers' electricity bills.**

COLORADO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Chairman Jeffrey P. Ackermann
Commissioner John C. Gavan
Commissioner Megan Gilman

Utilities regulated by the Colorado PUC include:

- Two Investor-Owned Utilities
 - Xcel Energy
 - Black Hills
- Partial regulatory authority over municipal electric utilities and 24 electric cooperative associations

Xcel Energy, is one of two investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in the state of Colorado. Xcel must operate its business under the oversight of the PUC. This means that if you are an Xcel customer living in Colorado, your electric bills are regulated by the PUC.

COLORADO PUC'S PROCESS

A significant amount of energy, environmental and economic policy is enacted through regulations at Colorado PUC. While their processes are complicated and lengthy, there are opportunities built into the system for the public and stakeholders to weigh in and influence regulation. **The typical process is:**

1. Proceeding begins with the utility submitting a proposal or application.
2. Different parties can apply to be intervenors. Intervenors submit written testimony explaining their opinion and can ask utilities for data to support their proposals.
3. The PUC schedules a public hearing with intervenors to hear arguments. Public comments written or oral are typically part of the proceeding after formal testimony. It is critical for the PUC to hear directly from public stakeholders to ensure they are acting in the public interest.
4. The PUC issues its final ruling.

VOTE SOLAR AT THE PUC

Vote Solar has been actively involved in utility regulation since 2012, through testimony, audits, and examinations. **Vote Solar protects ratepayers from increased electric bills and ensures that customers have access to local renewable energy including rooftop solar.**

As we continue our work, we commit to advancing policies, partnerships, and internal practices that foster broad participation and equitable distribution of the benefits of clean energy that reflect and honor the diverse communities that make up our state, and that enhance our collective interests through widely shared decision-making power. This fact sheet and Vote Solar are here to help advocates and citizens participate in these important proceedings.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Right now, you have the opportunity to **make a public comment to ensure an equitable transition to electric vehicles (EVs) in Colorado.** Xcel Energy is seeking approval of their 2021-2023 Transportation Electrification Plan through proceeding No. 20A-0204E. The Environmental Justice Coalition (Vote Solar, GRID Alternatives, Inc., Colorado Latino Forum, and GreenLatinos) are intervening in this proceeding to ensure that the transition to EVs reflects the needs and preferences of all residents, including income-qualified residents and environmental justice communities.

It's critical that the PUC hear a chorus of strong support for greater incentives for low-income and environmental justice communities.

Take Action: VoteSolar.org/ColoradoEVs

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