

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF THE )  
DELAWARE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., )  
FOR APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT A SAMPLE ) PSC DOCKET NO. 05-324  
TESTING PLAN OF ITS NEW ELECTRICITY )  
METERS (FILED AUGUST 31, 2005) )

**ORDER NO. 6808**

This 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2006, the Commission determines and Orders the following:

1. A little more than two years ago, the Commission approved the Delaware Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s ("DEC") move to use "sampling" methods to judge the accuracy and reliability of its in-service, single-phase self-contained, non-demand watt hour meters. See PSC Order No 6275 (Sept. 23, 2003).<sup>1</sup> DEC has now returned, asking for approval to expand the use of sampling methodologies to encompass not just its in-service non-demand single-phase meters but also the newly purchased non-demand, single-phase meters. It proposes, and has submitted, a "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters," detailing the sample testing method that it would use and the levels of "acceptability" that would govern meter lots under such testing procedure.<sup>2</sup>

2. DEC's plan for "sampling" the accuracy of newly purchased meters has many of the same attributes that surrounded its application for sample testing of its non-demand, in-service meters. First, DEC's proposal is similar to a sampling plan that the Commission allowed

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<sup>1</sup>Section 8.4 of DEC's P.S.C. DEL. No. 7 Electric Tariff references (and hence incorporates) this previously approved "Statistical Meter Testing Program."

<sup>2</sup>In Order No. 6275, the Commission summarized the evolution of its regulation of electric utilities' "meter testing" in light of technological advances in meters.

Delmarva Power & Light Company to implement eight years ago for testing its newly acquired meters. See PSC Dckt. No. 97-32T. Moreover, DEC's plan is not without other backstops to ensure the accuracy and reliability of newly acquired meters. First, by the time of delivery of new meters to DEC, the manufacturers will have performed their own accuracy tests (consistent with national standards) on each meter and will have certified those results to DEC. Second, once installed, the "new" meters will be subject to testing under the sampling method for in-service meters. And finally, if after installation, a customer suspects inaccuracy in a particular new meter, the customer can request a free test of that specific meter.<sup>3</sup>

3. Staff has recommended approval of the expanded sampling process. According to Staff, DEC's sampling plan for new meters conforms to the requirements articulated in two national standards.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Staff says, not only have statistical sampling methods for testing meters now become an accepted utility practice (with little report of problems), but sampling plans comparable to the one now proposed here by DEC have been approved for use by utilities in neighboring Maryland and Virginia.

4. In sum, for much the same reasons as outlined in Order No. 6275, the Commission finds DEC's proposed "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters" reasonable, appropriate, and in the public interest. It is approved for use by DEC. And just as in Order No. 6275, the Commission finds no reason to delay implementation of this sampling methodology for "new" DEC meters until the completion of costly public

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<sup>3</sup>See P.S.C. DEL. No. 7 Electric § 8.5.

<sup>4</sup>See Staff Memo. at p. 2 ¶ 1 (Dec. 9, 2005).

notices or protracted proceedings. Instead, the Commission approves use of this sampling method beginning February 1, 2006.

Now, therefore, **IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters," submitted by the Delaware Electric Cooperative, Inc., on August 31, 2005, is hereby accepted and approved. The Delaware Electric Cooperative, Inc., shall implement such program as an addition, and supplement, to the "Statistical Meter Testing Program" approved in PSC Order No. 6275 (Sept. 23, 2003).

2. That the Delaware Electric Cooperative, Inc., shall make and promptly file conforming revisions to its P.S.C. DEL. No. 7 Electric Tariff to reference the adoption and implementation of the "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters." Such revised tariff sheet and the now approved "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters" shall, for good cause shown, become effective on February 1, 2006.

3. That the Delaware Electric Cooperative, Inc., shall file with the Commission, by the end of each calendar year, a report summarizing the results of the tests performed in that year under the approved "Statistical Sample Test Plan for New Electricity Meters." Such document shall include a report of the number of shipped lots and meters, the sample test results, and the number of lots of new meters accepted and rejected. This report shall be filed concurrently with the annual report related to the testing of in-service non-demand meters that is now required under PSC Order No. 6275 (Sept. 23, 2003).

4. That the Commission reserves the jurisdiction and authority to enter such further Order or Orders in this matter as may be deemed necessary or proper.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

/s/ Arnetta McRae  
Chair

/s/ Joann T. Conaway  
Commissioner

/s/ Dallas Winslow  
Commissioner

/s/ Jaymes B. Lester  
Commissioner

/s/ Jeffrey J. Clark  
Commissioner

ATTEST:

/s/ Karen J. Nickerson  
Secretary