

May 6, 2013

Senator Alberta Darling, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 317 East – State Capitol

Representative John Nygren, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 309 East – State Capitol

Dear Co-Chairs Darling and Nygren and members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

On behalf of the Citizens Utility Board (CUB), Customers First! Coalition (CFC), Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group (WIEG), Wisconsin Paper Council (WPC), Wisconsin Utilities Association (WUA) and Wisconsin Utility Investors (WUI), we are writing to urge the Joint Committee on Finance to maintain current Public Service Commission (PSC) staff levels in Assembly Bill 40.

Our respective organizations want to control the costs of utility infrastructure projects and have good decisions made in a timely fashion. The position authority for the PSC is already at the lowest levels in more than two decades. However, because the PSC is funded by program revenue, reducing staff levels at the agency will not provide relief regarding the state's overall GPR budget situation.

There have been a significant number of retirements at the PSC in recent years. There are ever increasing demands upon agency expertise and requirements for rapid completion of dockets. There will be tremendous cost pressure from a number of different issues. For example, EPA air emissions rulemaking and the regional MISO market have significant new costs which require unique skill sets to analyze and necessitate ongoing PSC involvement.

The Legislature's decision on PSC staffing levels should recognize the new expectations placed on the PSC staff and the need for timely decisions, while safeguarding the ability of the Commission to achieve an appropriate balance of interests between customers and regulated utilities. Our respective organizations urge you to maintain current staff levels at the PSC.

Sincerely,

Charlie Higley
Executive Director
CUB

Matt Bromley
Executive Director
CFC

Todd Stuart
Executive Director
WIEG

Earl Gustafson
VP – Energy
WPC

Bill Skewes
Executive Director
WUA

Bob Seitz
Executive Director
WUI