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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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August 11, 2025

Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks  
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Leader Brinks,

I am writing as a member of the House Energy Committee to respectfully urge the Michigan Senate to promote government transparency and accountability – while lending a voice to those struggling with higher energy costs – by holding a public hearing on the recent appointment of Ms. Shaquila Myers to one of Michigan’s most impactful bodies, the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC).

As you know, the MPSC is a three-member commission and the state regulatory agency that oversees our investor-owned public utilities, including electric, natural gas, and telecommunications companies in Michigan. The MPSC is tasked with ensuring that these services are safe, reliable, and accessible at reasonable rates for Michigan residents. However, Michigan residents currently pay the highest residential energy costs in the Midwest ([MLive, 6/22/25](#)) to utility corporations that are ranked as being among the least reliable in the nation ([MLive, 1/3/25](#)) – and utility costs are increasingly on the rise.

Earlier this year, the MPSC approved a \$153.8 million rate hike for Consumers Energy ([Detroit Free Press, 3/21/25](#)). This was just a year after approving their previous \$92 million rate hike request ([Detroit Free Press, 3/1/24](#)), and Consumers has already requested another rate hike of \$436 million ([Fox 2 Detroit, 6/3/25](#)). It is their sixth rate hike request in six years that will be reviewed by the MPSC. Also pending review by the MPSC is the request of Michigan’s other major corporate utility provider, DTE Energy, to once again raise rates on their customers, this time by \$574.1 million ([Michigan Public, 5/1/25](#)). This is the second highest rate increase request in the company’s history and would be their fourth rate increase in five years. The new MPSC appointee will have a vote on whether to approve these rate increases. Should the MPSC approve DTE’s request, the average customer’s bill would increase by \$13.50 per month ([WXYZ Detroit, 4/25/25](#)).

The utility companies claim that the revenue raised from these rate increases are then used to maintain, upgrade, and build out their infrastructure to increase services, affordability, and reliability. However, the utilities have not been meeting their own goals. In fact, an independent audit released last year confirmed that Consumers and DTE have a pattern of lengthy and widespread power outages, heightened electric shock risk to workers and the public, outdated electronic equipment, and often overgrown power line rights-of-way zones ([MLive, 9/26/24](#)). At the same time, Consumers CEO Garrick Rochow received \$9.6 million in

compensation in 2023 ([MLive, 10/9/24](#)) as Consumers' parent company CMS Energy posted net income of \$947 million ([Planet Detroit, 3/5/25](#)). DTE CEO Jerry Norcia received over \$12 million in compensation in 2024, a 22.5% increase over his 2023 compensation of over \$10 million ([MLCV, 4/8/25](#)), while DTE reported \$1.4 billion in profits that same year ([Detroit News, 2/13/25](#)).

Meanwhile, 41% of Michigan households are living paycheck to paycheck or even at or below the poverty line ([MLive, 7/21/24](#)) and still paying some of the highest energy costs for some of the least reliable energy.

As elected officials trusted with action in the public interest, we must also acknowledge the longstanding elephant in the room when it comes to utility spending. Organizations tied to DTE and Consumers spent over \$970,000 on campaign contributions to candidates, party committees, leadership PACs, 527 groups and other outside political groups during the 2024 election cycle alone ([Michigan Public, 4/28/25](#)). The utilities are well known for big political spending in Michigan's elections over many years, and it should be stated that this total does not reflect all expenses from utility lobbying activities and salaries, PR campaigns, and other spending that does not benefit rate payers. The total also does not include dark money spending, such as in 2023 when a DTE-linked nonprofit made a \$100,000 donation to an account linked to the then-House Speaker at a time when over 900,000 Michiganders went without power for days on end and a legislative package designed to improve utility accountability and reliability stalled out ([Detroit News, 12/16/24](#)). In 2020, DTE employees also directed the transfer of \$100,000 from that same dark money nonprofit to another tied to the then-Senate Majority Leader, contradicting years of the utility denying or downplaying its involvement in secretive political giving. Some of these actions were only discovered in recent criminal court filings, but since 2014, the DTE-connected dark money nonprofit has reported receiving over \$51 million in contributions but is not required to publicly list its donors ([Energy & Policy Institute, 6/23/25](#)).

At a time when Michiganders are struggling to afford their bills, this model of customers paying more for less in the name of corporate greed is not sustainable, nor is it inevitable. The MPSC has the ability to approve or reject rate hikes and enforce accountability for utility providers. Right now, the state Senate has the power to ensure that any new appointee to the MPSC can acknowledge that the commission's previous attempts to rein in costs for utility customers, while promoting reliability and utility accountability, have not worked. Any new MPSC appointee must understand that a new approach is warranted.

Under state law, the state Senate is the one body with the power to ensure this, by using its power to hold hearings and give advice and consent to gubernatorial appointments to the MPSC. Public Act 3 of 1939 (MCL 460.1) states that members of the MPSC are "appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate." The Michigan Constitution also provides that, "Appointment by and with the advice and consent of the senate when used in this constitution or laws in effect or hereafter enacted means appointment subject to disapproval by a majority vote of the members elected to and serving in the senate if such action is taken within 60 session days after the date of such appointment. Any appointment not disapproved within such period shall stand confirmed."

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I respectfully urge you to use your authority as Senate Majority Leader to hold a public hearing in the Michigan Senate for the governor's new appointee to the MPSC, using the Senate's "advice and consent" powers to make recommendations on this appointment within the 60-day window for input. For such a crucial role, I urge the Senate to do so for this and all future MPSC appointments.

This is the sole opportunity provided by law for our citizens and lawmakers to ensure that any appointee to the MPSC is an expert on the industry they are regulating, a proven champion for the public interest on energy policy, and is committed to protecting the interests of Michigan rate payers. This is also an opportunity for the appointee to demonstrate their understanding of the financial challenges that Michigan residents are facing right now, as well as their commitment to holding our utility providers accountable for delivering reliable, affordable utility services to Michigan residents.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Michigan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Coffia".

Betsy Coffia

State Representative

House District 103

CC: Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II, Senate President

Senator Sam Singh, Senate Majority Floor Leader

Senator Jeremy Moss, Senate President Pro Tempore