

UNDER THE DOME

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STATE UPDATE

2013 Wisconsin Act 274

As of the date of publication, 18 utilities have filed with the PSC to no longer offer DPAs to residential tenants under the pre-approved conditions. Diane Hermsen (Kaukauna), Paula Maurer (Menasha), and Zak Bloom (MEUW) attended a meeting on Jan. 8 with other stakeholder groups to prepare guidance on the tax roll and lien reporting process for 2015. The meeting was productive but there remains confusion on how the lien reporting process will work. MEUW hopes to have guidance prepared for members by the end of March. MEUW thanks Diane and Paula for their attendance and input at the meeting.

Distributed Generation

Distributed Generation (DG), specifically solar PV, continues to be an area of focus. The Legislative and Regulatory Committee approved MEUW's participation in Fair Rates for Wisconsin's Dairyland (FRWD) and Zak Bloom will be serving on FRWD's Executive Committee. FRWD's mission is to tell the other side of the DG story, and the initial membership will be comprised of several labor organizations and utilities (investor and municipally owned). This coalition will allow MEUW to carry out the customer education component at a fraction of the cost compared to the cost MEUW would incur alone; especially at a time when members are pushed to increase residential customer fixed charges. In addition, MEUW has hired KW2 Consulting to assist in creating a DG whitepaper for member education on this issue.

EPA Clean Power Plan

On Jan. 28, MEUW testified at a hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Clean Power Plan under Section 111d of the Clean Air Act. This was a joint informational hearing with the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Public Works, and Military Affairs, and the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities. The hearing included invited testimony exclusively from representatives of the DNR, PSC, Wisconsin Utilities Association (WUA), Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), MEUW, Clean Wisconsin, Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group and the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce.



The state Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities held a public hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan.

The DNR and PSC testified to the technical aspects and requirements of the proposed rule, as well as the potential cost impacts to Wisconsin's ratepayers. WUA, WECA and MEUW testified together and answered many questions related to the proposed rule's impacts on reliability, premature coal plant retirements and stranded costs, lack of credit for early action, and the front-loaded compliance requirements. Other testimony included discussion on the impacts to Wisconsin's manufacturing sector given the fact that Wisconsin's average electric prices have increased 86 percent since 2000 while manufacturing jobs decreased 26 percent in the same time period. Clean Wisconsin testified to the environmental and health benefits of the proposed rule. Committee member reactions were split along party lines. Republicans were concerned about costs and the relative impact on global warming if the United States acts alone while Democrats touted positive impacts to the environment and health. [Click here](#) for a copy of MEUW's testimony or [view](#) live news coverage of the event.

Also, Governor Walker announced in his 2015 State of the State Address on Jan. 13 that he will work with the Attorney General to prepare a lawsuit challenging the EPA's Clean Power Plan because of its potential impact on manufacturing and hard-working families.

Presque Isle Power Plant

On Jan. 12, Michigan officials announced an agreement between multiple electric utilities to solve the Presque Isle Power

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Safety Tip: Impact vs. Non-impact Sockets

Impact wrenches were designed with higher torque in mind - they bust bolts loose or torque them up in excess of 1000-foot pounds. Impact sockets are designed and built with that power in mind. So it would seem natural that when a person uses an impact wrench, they would use an impact socket. However, there's nothing physically preventing anyone from using regular non-impact sockets with impact wrenches. The problem is that non-impact sockets aren't designed for that amount of torque, and the socket can shatter and become a safety hazard.

Part of this is due to the materials used to make standard sockets. Standard sockets have a thin wall which allows for clearance in general applications and are usually chrome plated which is fairly brittle and can split and shatter with too much vibration. This can injure you and the people around you. You may also lose control of the impact wrench, causing it to fly off the bolt. When you consider that some impact wrenches turn 5,000 - 6,000 rpm, shattering pieces can go far.

Impact sockets are designed to handle the torque and flexibility without the product failing or shattering. Impact sockets are made from a softer, more flexible material, allowing it to absorb the higher impact in situations where regular sockets would shatter like an ice cube. That's not to say

that an impact socket can't split open. The important thing to remember is that they won't shatter and send debris flying. Most impact sockets are gray or black in color and usually have a matte finish. Some are even labeled as "IMPACT" directly on the socket; see image.



So why would someone opt for a standard socket on an impact wrench? Some employees are unaware of which socket they're using or don't realize the difference between the two. An employee might go to their tool box looking for a 9/16" impact socket. If they don't have access to that, they might use the standard socket in the same size with the

justification of "it's just this one time." After a few of those "just this one time" situations, the integrity of that socket can be compromised. You may think it was just used that one time, but it could be weakened so much that your own "one time" could be that socket's breaking point.

When using an impact wrench, ensure the sockets you are using are designed specifically for the job. By knowing the difference between the various types of sockets and using them appropriately, you will be able to ensure a safer and more efficient work environment.

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Plant (PIPP) issues in the Upper Peninsula. Under the proposal, Upper Peninsula Power Co. will purchase We Energies' (WE) customers and assets that include PIPP. In addition, a major mining company would discontinue its electric choice contract with Integrys, thereby eliminating the need for the existing System Support Resource (SSR) payment to WE. The mining companies also reached agreement with Invenergy to build a natural gas power plant to replace PIPP after it closes in five years. There are a number of issues to work through, but this is a very positive development for all parties involved.

2015-2016 State Legislature

The 2015-2016 Wisconsin Legislature kicked off with the first floor session on Jan. 7. The first three weeks of the legislative session have focused on the Government Accountability Board, competing school accountability bills and the governor's proposed budget, which will be unveiled Feb. 3. UW System funding and consolidation of several state agencies are a couple of items that have been reported to be in the budget to date. MEUW will update members on any issues that may impact members or be of concern as more details are released.

At the time of this article, no bills have been introduced and no hearings have been scheduled on bills that impact municipal utilities.



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