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Public Counsel

State of Missouri

Michael L. Parson
Governor

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United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington DV 20585

On November 10, 2022, the Missouri Office of the Public Counsel (“OPC”) opened a working docket encouraging the Commission to order Missouri investor owned utilities (“IOUs”) to, among other things, provide information on their planning regarding federal funds and tax credits made available by H.R. 3684 and H.R. 5376, and to make sure that their planning takes advantage of said federal funds and tax credits where applicable.

Missouri’s IOUs have stated that it is a goal to transition to renewable generation sources, and upgrade the transmission and distribution aspects of the grid with new, automated technology. Because of the increase in demand in such generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades, the cost of such a transition is also increasing. Without access to federal funds and tax credits, the rate base of IOUs would increase and burden ratepayers. By applying for as many federal funds and tax credits as are available, Missouri’s IOUs can shift the burden off of ratepayers.

Empire District Electric Company has proposed an application for funds from DOE, for Distribution Automation Deployment. The company looked at its depreciated, aging, and deteriorated switches and distribution infrastructure and determined that upgrading the distribution system with automated reclosers would ensure reliability and reduce costs of maintenance and service. This would be achieved by the reclosers by reducing which customer blocks between substations are affected by faults on the distribution lines. These reclosers would also effectively be switches which could automatically close if they detect a momentary fault. Because these reclosers are automated, they would save truck rolls as well as reduce the duration of outages.

Much of the funds and tax credits in both H.R. 3684 and H.R. 5376 are either dependent on or their eligibility is increased by their use in “disadvantaged communities”. Using the US Federal Inter-agency Geospatial Platform tool¹ to identify “disadvantaged communities” shows that much of Empire’s service territory falls under that specific designation. The upgrades increasing reliability and reducing maintenance and service costs would benefit customers in areas designated as “disadvantaged”. Because of the need for replacement of depreciated, aged, and deteriorated transmission and distribution infrastructure, Empire’s application to DOE is warranted and prudent.

OPC fully supports Empire’s Distribution Automation Deployment application for funding from the United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office for this worthwhile and needed investment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Geoff Marke", written over a horizontal line.

Geoff Marke, PhD
Chief Economist
Missouri Office of the Public Counsel
(314) 956-4487
(573) 751-5563
Geoff.Marque@OPC.MO.GOV

¹ Federal Inter-Agency GeoSpatial Platform, www.geospatialplatform.gov.

Aurora R-8 School District

Home of the Houn' Dawgs
201 S. Madison
Aurora MO 65605
(417) 678-3373

Date: March 9, 2023

To: United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office

From: Aurora R-VIII School District

Re: 2021 Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act Grant

To Whom It May Concern:

This purpose of this letter is to wholeheartedly endorse Liberty Utilities' request for funds to achieve significant infrastructure upgrades through the Distribution Automation project.

Approval of this endeavor would decrease the challenges experienced by both Liberty and our school system that stem from a less than reliable power service. While Liberty is quick to respond to any outages, the system improvements would decrease the need for fixes and provide consistent, on-going power.

When the possibility of the Distribution Automation project was brought to our attention, I was very excited due to the possible benefits. Among these are increased reliability, reduction of outage frequency, improved public safety and energy savings. Since Aurora, and the surrounding area, fall within the Department's List of Vulnerable Communities, this would also benefit our area economically, socially and in many other ways from this focused, multi-year effort.

Again we are excited and committed to exploring any possible avenue for partnership and support that may be feasible and acceptable under the grant rules. If you have further questions, please contact me at 417-678-3373 (office), 417-229-0277 (cell) or by email at bredus@aurorar8.org.

Sincerely,



Billy Redus
Superintendent

Our mission is to ensure that all students are successful learners.



SPARTA SCHOOL DISTRICT

113 Division Street, Sparta, MO, 65753

417-634-4284

www.sparta.k12.mo.us

Dr. Landon Gray
Superintendent

Ms. Gwenda Barton
High School Principal

Mr. Ely Parker
Middle School Principal

Mrs. Ashley Parent
Elementary Principal

March 13, 2023

Re: Distribution Automation for Liberty Utilities

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Liberty Utilities as a quality candidate for the “Distribution Automation” grant that is part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act. Sparta Schools utilizes Liberty Utilities for several of our school buildings within our district. Sparta R-III Schools is a rural school district in Southwest Missouri approximately 25 miles east, southeast of Springfield. Our approximate student enrollment is 745 (PK-12). We rely on Liberty’s efforts when power outages occur to get electricity back to these buildings. By increasing the capacity and speed at which Liberty can restore power to customers like Sparta Schools, this grant could help Liberty continue to ensure school days and instruction are not interrupted long term due to potential power outages. This letter serves as a show of support for Liberty Utilities from Sparta Schools to help secure this “Distribution Automation” grant opportunity. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Landon Gray

Dr. Landon Gray
Sparta Schools Superintendent
(417)634-4284 lgray@sparta.k12.mo.us



Economic Development Partnership

Building a brighter future for Bolivar & Polk County

Board of Directors

Nick Seiner, Chairman
Southwest Electric
Cooperative

Shannon Hancock, Vice
Chairman,
Polk County
Commissioners

Todd Earl, Secretary
Southwest Baptist
University

Tracy Slagle, Treasurer
Liberty Utilities

Dr. Richard Asbill,
Bolivar R-1 Schools

Michael Calhoun,
Citizens Memorial
Healthcare

Pat Douglas,
Industrial Development
Authority

Paul Folbre,
Bolivar Area Chamber
of Commerce

Janieca Hancock,
Mid-Missouri Bank

Stephen Skopec,
Tracker Marine

Micah Titterington,
Community Outreach
Ministries

Chris Warwick,
City of Bolivar

Staff

Gail Noggle,
President/CEO

Rebecca Baker,
Administrative
Assistant

Thursday, March 9, 2023

United States Department of Energy
Grid Deployment

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Economic Development Partnership, I want to extend my support to Liberty Utilities in their application for this grant from the 2021 Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act.

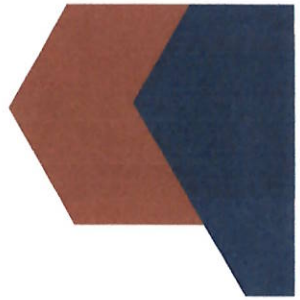
It is obvious that the Distribution Automation Grant can provide increased reliability to our citizens. It will also provide economic benefits in that outages to businesses in our community could be resolved more quickly. The opportunity to complete this project in one-fourth the anticipated time is an incredible assistance as businesses look at our community for growth opportunities.

Polk County is a growing community in the greater Springfield Missouri MSA. We recognize the benefit to our economy that can occur from seeing these projects come to fruition within a significantly shorter time frame than would occur without the benefit of this grant.

Sincerely

Gail Noggle

President/Economic Development Partnership



March 10, 2023

United States Department of Energy
Grid Deployment Office

To whom it may concern:

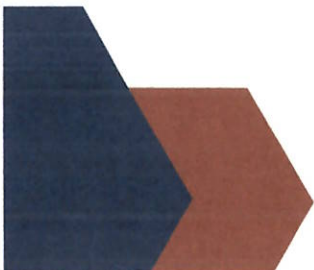
Please accept this letter from the City of Gravette in support of the application from Liberty Utilities for Distribution Automation. Gravette is a city of nearly 4,000 residents, with most receiving electric services from Liberty Utilities. More than 150 businesses call Gravette home, including several manufacturing facilities.

This project will install hundreds of auto reclosers that would be capable of automatically restoring power for a wide variety of outages without the need to mobile personnel. In Gravette, this will help keep power on in homes, businesses, and medical facilities and improve reliability for customers. It is estimated that this project will provide an average reduction of 50% in outage frequency and duration and result in increased economic activity during the program's installation timeframe. Customers will see economic benefits due to outage cost avoidance.

Liberty Utilities is an asset to our community, and I support their initiative to improve reliability for customers.

Respectfully,

Kurt Maddox, Mayor
City of Gravette



City of Sarcoxie

111 N. 6th Street | PO Box 130 | Sarcoxie, MO 64862

Phone: 417-548-7242 | Fax: 417-548-3108

Website: www.sarcoxie.mo.gov



Tanner Rice
City of Sarcoxie
111 N. 6th Street
Sarcoxie, MO 64862

March 12, 2023

U.S. Department of Energy
% Grid Deployment Office
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20585

To whom this may concern:

I am Tanner Rice, Assistant City Manager of the City of Sarcoxie, and I write to express my full support for the pending decision to grant Empire-Liberty funding for their Distribution Automation program.

As a municipal government, our focus is towards the safety and well-being of our residents while providing a prosperous environment in economic development. Empire-Liberty's project proposes the installation of 400 auto-reclosers that would be capable of restoring power for a wide variety of outages in a much timelier manner.

This proposed project would greatly benefit our community as we have several residents that significantly rely on the electricity to live in their daily lives and operate their businesses. This makes restoring power in our community an utmost importance during an outage. Power reliability is also a great benefit with this project to the economic impact in our community. Keeping the power on reliably would help avoid outage costs for businesses and keep our economic activity operational and growing.

Currently, these plans are slated to be completed within the next 20 years by Empire-Liberty. With your funding support, this timeline can be dramatically improved to 5 years.

I ask you to strongly consider granting Empire-Liberty the funding they need to improve our infrastructure, community's livelihood, and our economic development.

Thank you,

Tanner Rice
Assistant City Manager
City of Sarcoxie, Missouri



Unified School District 493

Board of Education Office

March 3, 2023

United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to support the Liberty Utilities Distribution Automation grant funding application. During my tenure as superintendent of the Columbus School District, I have found one of the greatest issues affecting learning time loss is electrical outages. I believe this grant would provide Liberty Utilities the resources needed to upgrade their infrastructure, and alleviate many of our outage issues. I also believe it would be beneficial for our community economically due to the increased economic stimulus from the installation process. Because we reside in an economically depressed region of the United States, this stimulus would benefit our community immensely.

Again, I would like to stress the importance of this grant opportunity, and I encourage you to consider Liberty's application. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Smith, Ed.D.
Superintendent



216 W. Spring Street • PO Box 605 • Neosho, MO 64850
www.neoshocc.com • 417-451-1925

March 10, 2023

To: United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office

Re: 2021 Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act

On behalf of the Neosho Area Chamber of Commerce, please accept this letter of support to the Empire District Electric-Liberty, in their application for the 2021 Infrastructure Investments and Job Act.

The Neosho Area Chamber of Commerce is made up of 540 members from the Neosho/Newton County Area and surrounding areas. These members include small to large businesses, educational facilities, manufacturers, non-profit organizations and individuals. We are daily working with our members and the community to support growth and prosperity.

Our members depend on reliable power supply to conduct business, to provide quality education, and maintain quality of life. We understand that the Distribution Automation Project would help reduce interruptions in power. Because our community falls within the Department's List of Vulnerable Communities, we hope that you will see the benefit of approving Empire-Liberty's application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Lauri Lyerla'.

Lauri Lyerla
CEO
Neosho Area Chamber of Commerce
lauri@neoshocc.com



March 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as a positive recommendation for the Liberty Utilities Infrastructure Grant, specifically the Distribution Automation project. This project would provide immense benefits to our District.

Benefits include:

- Increased reliability
- An average reduction of 50% in outage frequency and duration
- Economic benefits to customers due to outage cost avoidance
- Ability to complete planned work at 50% of the cost with grant approval
- Increased economic activity during the program's installation timeline

If you have any questions or require additional information in favor of the Distribution Automation project, please feel free to contact me at 417-673-6000.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony Rossetti
Superintendent



March 8, 2023

United States Department of Energy
Grid Deployment Office

Re: Distribution Automation Grant

To whom it may concern,

Arvest Bank of Joplin, Missouri is a regional bank that serves customers in same footprint as Liberty Utilities. Our bank has 12 branches in southwest Missouri and is a user of power supplied by Liberty. Our branches and customers depend on reliable power daily to assist with the access to finances to operate their businesses and households. We believe the Distribution Automation grant will provide the following benefits for our community:

- Will ensure that the businesses and individuals in Southwest Missouri will have an increased reliability of power
- A reduction of outages frequency and duration
- The economic benefits of avoiding power outages
- Increased economic activity that will happen as a result of the installation of the auto-reclosers

Arvest Bank is in favor of the opportunities the grant can provide and fully support Liberty Utilities in pursuing this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Winesburg".

Richard Winesburg
Executive Vice President
Arvest Bank, Joplin



P.O. Box 99 | 618 Commerce Ave. | Commerce, Ok 74339 | 918-675-4373 | Fax 918-675-4039 | commerceokla.com

March 8, 2023

To: United States Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office

RE: Liberty Utilities

Greetings,

Please accept this letter of support from the City of Commerce for Liberty Utilities and the Distribution Automation grant they are seeking. The City has been a longstanding community partner with Liberty and enjoys the working relationships we have. By receiving the grant for which they are submitting, they will be able to help the businesses and residents in our community more efficiently with increased reliability and response time in the event of an outage.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email at mhart@commerceokla.com or by phone at 918-533-0228. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Michael Hart
City Administrator