

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

In the Matter of a Determination of Special )  
Contemporary Resource Planning Issues to be )  
Addressed by The Empire District Electric ) File No. EO-2025-0079  
Company d/b/a Liberty in its Next Triennial )  
Compliance Filing or Next Annual Update Report )

**LIBERTY’S RESPONSES TO SUGGESTED ISSUES**

COMES NOW The Empire District Electric Company d/b/a Liberty (the “Company” or “Liberty”) and provides its Responses to Suggested Issues. In this regard, Liberty respectfully states as follows to the Missouri Public Service Commission (“Commission”):

1. On September 4, 2024, the Commission issued its *Order Opening a File Regarding Special Contemporary Resource Planning Issues and Offering an Opportunity to File Suggestions*. This file was opened to facilitate the process established by Commission Rule 20 CSR 4240-22.080(4) regarding evolving electric resource planning issues – or special contemporary issues (“SCIs”) – for Liberty to analyze and document in its integrated resource planning (“IRP”) triennial compliance filing due April 1, 2025.

2. Pursuant to the referenced *Order*, suggestions regarding SCIs for Liberty to address in its next triennial filing were submitted herein by the Office of the Public Counsel (“OPC”), and Liberty’s specific responses to the issues suggested by OPC are attached hereto.

3. In general, Liberty urges the Commission to apply a reasonableness standard in arriving at its list of SCIs. Pursuant to Rule 20 CSR 4240-22.020(55), SCIs ordered by the Commission shall be “evolving new issues, which may not otherwise have been addressed by the utility or are continuations of unresolved issues from the preceding triennial compliance filing or annual update filing.” The list of SCIs ordered by the Commission for consideration and analysis by Liberty should be specific to Liberty and its particular planning process and appropriately

limited in number and scope, so that the issues may be adequately analyzed and the Company's resources used wisely. Ordered SCIs should not already be covered or contemplated by the IRP rules and should not conflict with the directives of the IRP rules.

WHEREFORE, Liberty submits its Responses to Suggested Issues and requests such relief as is just and proper under the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Diana C. Carter

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the above document was filed in EFIS on this 1<sup>st</sup> day of October, 2024, and sent by electronic transmission to all counsel of record.

/s/ Diana C. Carter

## **Special Contemporary Issues**

### **Liberty's Responses to the Suggestions of the Office of the Public Counsel**

**OPC Issue 1:** OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty to perform a literature review of best practices from around the country on how other utilities are accounting for the addition of data centers in their IRPs and on how risks can be minimized. OPC recommends this topic be included as a separate appendix in Liberty's 2025 triennial IRP filing and include, at a minimum, a set of bullet points provided in OPC's proposal.

**Liberty's Response:** The Company agrees this issue is a special contemporary issue and that it should be addressed in the next IRP filing. Utilities across the country are modeling data center load differently, as it remains a developing topic. Since there may not be any published best practice documents regarding load forecasting for data centers, the Company should be able to respond with a narrative related to its analysis of data center load, which may not meet the OPC's specified method.

**OPC Issue 2:** OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty to include in its 2025 triennial IRP filing an analysis of varying levels of new data center loads in the load forecasting section of its IRP.

**Liberty's Response:** The Company agrees this issue should be included as a special contemporary issue. However, the Company does not agree with the prescriptive methodology proposed by OPC. The Company was already planning to evaluate the prospects of data center load outside the base load forecast for this IRP filing, possibly as an alternate plan or a set of alternate plans. OPC is requesting six (6) data center scenarios based on varying size of data center additions, which brings in a new variable about the timing of the additions. Six scenarios would be redundant; and once load scenarios are generated, the supply planning portion of the IRP would have to study the generation and transmission needs of each case. We recommend the selecting relevant and feasible load scenarios which correspond more with the size of the Company's system rather than speculative load levels. Additionally, the Liberty IRP should be primarily focused on the Liberty system and should not be engaged in speculative modeling about what, if any, impact data centers will have on ratepayers if the load materializes in neighboring utilities within SPP instead of Liberty.

**OPC Issue 3:** OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty to provide a review of the technology and methods currently available as well as the dollar impact for relevant and projected resources to be compliant with the law (i.e., on April 25, 2024, the EPA announced a series of final rules targeting reduction of fossil fuel-fired power plant pollution).

**Liberty's Response:** This should not be ordered as a special contemporary issue since it is an item that is already covered as part of the Commission's resource planning rule and would already be analyzed during the normal course of the IRP development. Environmental impacts have been a critical uncertain factor in most if not all of the Company's IRP filings. The Company is already planning to address this issue in its next IRP filing.

**OPC Issue 4:** OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty to investigate the option of a supercritical carbon dioxide power cycle plant as a resource candidate in future supply-side generation planning and modeling scenarios.

**Liberty's Response:** The resource option referred to by OPC seems to be a nascent technology with only a pilot project in operation. A cursory investigation found that a pilot project of this specific technology was very expensive, and it would most likely not be a viable resource option in the near term. The resource planning rule states that a variety of potential supply-side resource options which the utility can reasonably expect to use, develop, implement, or acquire should be considered. As a result, this should not be ordered as a special contemporary issue for Liberty's upcoming IRP filing.

**OPC Issue 5:** OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty to include a model of low, medium, and high interconnection cost estimates that are supported by historic total interconnection costs by fuel type for SPP in its resource adequacy planning scenarios; additionally, OPC requests that the Commission order Liberty articulate the estimated project length for all generation resources given the current SPP backflow, and the overall demand for generation resources across the United States.

**Liberty's Response:** Evaluation of interconnection costs is already covered as part of the resource planning rule and should therefore not be considered a special contemporary issue. The Company is planning to model interconnection costs by generator type at low, medium, and high levels. The Company is also planning to provide estimated project timelines for the new generator resources taking into account the current SPP backflow and demand in the United States.