

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service Commission held at its office in Jefferson City on the 25th day of March, 2026.

In the Matter of the Application of)
The Empire District Electric)
Company d/b/a Liberty for an Order)
Granting Approval to Encumber)
Assets in Association with the DOE)
GRIP Program)

Case No. EM-2026-0209

**ORDER APPROVING APPLICATION TO ENCUMBER ASSETS IN
ASSOCIATION WITH THE DOE GRIP PROGRAM**

Issue Date: March 25, 2026

Effective Date: April 4, 2026

On February 27, 2026, The Empire District Electric Company d/b/a Liberty filed an application seeking to encumber assets in relation to its application to participate in the US Department of Energy's (DOE) Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program, which could provide federal matching funds of up to 50% for certain utility projects.

Liberty's GRIP proposal, known as "Project DA", would deploy distribution automation (DA) equipment while also renewing and upgrading Liberty's line and station infrastructure to support new DA functionalities. Liberty's application stated this would be a significant digitalization of its field operations. To qualify for the GRIP program matching funds, Liberty must execute a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) financing statement in favor of the DOE on the assets of the project. That financing statement, or encumbrance, is the subject of the present case.

Liberty also requested expedited treatment of its application and requested waiver of the 60-day notice requirement under Commission Rule 20 CSR 4240-4.017.

Legal Standard

Section 393.190.1, RSMo (2016), requires Commission authorization prior to any regulated utility mortgaging or otherwise encumbering assets that are part of its system. The standard to approve an encumbrance on public utility property is whether the transfer is detrimental to the public interest.¹

Staff Recommendation

The Staff of Commission (Staff) filed its Recommendation on March 17, 2026. Staff recommended the Commission approve the application. Staff stated that Liberty requires no external financing and will use its current assets. Staff stated that the requested encumbrance would not be detrimental to the public interest. Staff further stated it had no objection to the request for expedited treatment. No other party responded to Liberty's application.

Discussion

After reviewing Liberty's application, Staff's Recommendation, and the relevant statutes and Commission rules, the Commission concludes that Liberty's requested encumbrance would not be detrimental to the public interest. The Commission will approve the application.

Waiver

The Commission will grant the request for waiver of the 60-day notice requirement under 20 CSR 4240-4.017. The Commission finds good cause exists for waiver, based

¹ *State ex rel. City of St. Louis v. Public Service Commission*, 73 S.W.2d 393, 400 (Mo. banc 1934).

on their verified declaration that they have had no communication with the Office of the Commission regarding substantive issues in the application within 150 days before it filed its application.

Lastly, the Commission finds it reasonable based on the application to make this order effective in less than 30 days.²

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The 60-day notice of case filing requirement is waived for good cause found pursuant to 20 CSR 4240-4.017(1)(D).
2. Liberty's application is granted. Liberty is authorized to encumber assets in association with the DOE GRIP Program.
3. This order will become effective on April 4, 2026.
4. This file shall be closed on April 5, 2026.

BY THE COMMISSION



Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

Hahn, Ch., Coleman, Kolkmeier,
and Mitchell CC., concur.

Hatcher, Senior Regulatory Law Judge

² Section 386.490, RSMo (2016).

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 25th day of March 2026.



Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

March 25, 2026

Case No: EM-2026-0209

MO PSC Staff

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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).¹

Sincerely,



Nancy Dippell
Secretary

¹

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.