

# HOUSE BILL NO. 6538

November 30, 2022, Introduced by Reps. Rabhi, Cynthia Johnson, Aiyash, Stone, Markkanen, Cavanagh, Steven Johnson, Rogers and Yancey and referred to the Committee on Energy.

A bill to amend 1939 PA 3, entitled

"An act to provide for the regulation and control of public and certain private utilities and other services affected with a public interest within this state; to provide for alternative energy suppliers; to provide for licensing; to include municipally owned utilities and other providers of energy under certain provisions of this act; to create a public service commission and to prescribe and define its powers and duties; to abolish the Michigan public utilities commission and to confer the powers and duties vested by law on the public service commission; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state governmental officers and entities; to provide for the continuance, transfer, and completion of certain matters and proceedings; to abolish automatic adjustment clauses;

to prohibit certain rate increases without notice and hearing; to qualify residential energy conservation programs permitted under state law for certain federal exemption; to create a fund; to encourage the utilization of resource recovery facilities; to prohibit certain acts and practices of providers of energy; to allow for the securitization of stranded costs; to reduce rates; to provide for appeals; to provide appropriations; to declare the effect and purpose of this act; to prescribe remedies and penalties; and to repeal acts and parts of acts,"

by amending section 6a (MCL 460.6a), as amended by 2016 PA 341.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1           Sec. 6a. (1) A gas utility, electric utility, or steam utility  
 2 shall not increase its rates and charges or alter, change, or amend  
 3 any rate or rate schedules, the effect of which will be to increase  
 4 the cost of services to its customers, without first receiving  
 5 commission approval as provided in this section. A utility shall  
 6 coordinate with the commission staff in advance of filing its  
 7 general rate case application under this section to avoid resource  
 8 challenges with applications being filed at the same time as  
 9 applications filed under this section by other utilities. ~~In the~~  
 10 ~~ease of~~ **For** electric utilities serving more than 1,000,000  
 11 customers in this state, the commission may, if necessary, order a  
 12 delay in filing an application to establish a 21-day spacing  
 13 between filings of electric utilities serving more than 1,000,000  
 14 customers in this state. The utility shall place in evidence facts  
 15 relied upon to support the utility's petition or application to  
 16 increase its rates and charges, or to alter, change, or amend any  
 17 rate or rate schedules. The commission shall require notice to be  
 18 given to all interested parties within the service area to be  
 19 affected, and **allow** all interested parties ~~shall have a~~ reasonable  
 20 opportunity for a full and complete hearing. A utility may use  
 21 projected costs and revenues for a future consecutive 12-month

1 period in developing its requested rates and charges. The  
2 commission shall notify the utility within 30 days after filing,  
3 whether the utility's petition or application is complete. A  
4 petition or application is considered complete if it complies with  
5 the rate application filing forms and instructions adopted under  
6 subsection (8). If the application is not complete, the commission  
7 shall notify the utility of all information necessary to make that  
8 filing complete. If the commission has not notified the utility  
9 within 30 days ~~of~~ **after filing** whether the utility's petition or  
10 application is complete, the application is considered complete.  
11 Concurrently with filing a complete application, or at any time  
12 after filing a complete application, a gas utility serving fewer  
13 than 1,000,000 customers in this state may file a motion seeking  
14 partial and immediate rate relief. After providing notice to the  
15 interested parties within the service area to be affected and  
16 ~~affording~~ **providing** interested parties a reasonable opportunity to  
17 present written evidence and written arguments relevant to the  
18 motion seeking partial and immediate rate relief, the commission  
19 shall make a finding and enter an order granting or denying partial  
20 and immediate relief within 180 days after the motion seeking  
21 partial and immediate rate relief was submitted. The commission has  
22 12 months to issue a final order in a case in which a gas utility  
23 has filed a motion seeking partial and immediate rate relief.

24 (2) If the commission has not issued an order within 180 days  
25 ~~of~~ **after** the filing of a complete application, the utility may  
26 implement up to the amount of the proposed annual rate request  
27 through equal percentage increases or decreases applied to all base  
28 rates. If the utility uses projected costs and revenues for a  
29 future period in developing its requested rates and charges, the

1 utility may not implement the equal percentage increases or  
2 decreases before the calendar date corresponding to the start of  
3 the projected 12-month period. For good cause, the commission may  
4 issue a temporary order preventing or delaying a utility from  
5 implementing its proposed rates or charges. If a utility implements  
6 increased rates or charges under this subsection before the  
7 commission issues a final order, that utility shall refund to  
8 customers, with interest, any portion of the total revenues  
9 collected through application of the equal percentage increase that  
10 exceed the total that would have been produced by the rates or  
11 charges subsequently ordered by the commission in its final order.  
12 The commission shall allocate any refund required by this  
13 subsection among primary customers based upon their pro rata share  
14 of the total revenue collected through the applicable increase, and  
15 among secondary and residential customers in a manner to be  
16 determined by the commission. The rate of interest for refunds  
17 ~~shall equal~~ **is** 5% plus the London interbank offered rate (LIBOR)  
18 for the appropriate time period. For any portion of the refund  
19 that, exclusive of interest, exceeds 25% of the annual revenue  
20 increase awarded by the commission in its final order, the rate of  
21 interest ~~shall be~~ **is** the authorized rate of return on the common  
22 stock of the utility during the appropriate period. Any refund or  
23 interest awarded under this subsection ~~shall~~ **must** not be included,  
24 in whole or in part, in any application for a rate increase by a  
25 utility. This subsection only applies to completed applications  
26 filed with the commission before ~~the effective date of the~~  
27 ~~amendatory act that added section 6t.~~ **April 20, 2017.**

28 (3) This section does not impair the commission's ability to  
29 issue a show cause order as part of its rate-making authority. An

1 alteration or amendment in rates or rate schedules applied for by a  
2 public utility that will not result in an increase in the cost of  
3 service to its customers may be authorized and approved without  
4 notice or hearing. There ~~shall~~**must** be no increase in rates based  
5 upon changes in cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased steam  
6 unless notice has been given within the service area to be  
7 affected, and there has been an opportunity for a full and complete  
8 hearing on the cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased steam. The  
9 rates charged by any utility under an automatic fuel, purchased  
10 gas, or purchased steam adjustment clause ~~shall~~**must** not be  
11 altered, changed, or amended unless notice has been given within  
12 the service area to be affected, and there has been an opportunity  
13 for a full and complete hearing on the cost of the fuel, purchased  
14 gas, or purchased steam.

15 (4) The commission shall adopt rules and procedures for the  
16 filing, investigation, and hearing of petitions or applications to  
17 increase or decrease utility rates and charges as the commission  
18 finds necessary or appropriate to enable it to reach a final  
19 decision with respect to petitions or applications within a period  
20 of time allotted by law to issue a final order after the filing of  
21 the complete petitions or applications. The commission shall not  
22 authorize or approve adjustment clauses that operate without notice  
23 and an opportunity for a full and complete hearing, and all such  
24 clauses are abolished. The commission may hold a full and complete  
25 hearing to determine the cost of fuel, purchased gas, purchased  
26 steam, or purchased power separately from a full and complete  
27 hearing on a general rate case and may hold that hearing  
28 concurrently with the general rate case. The commission shall  
29 authorize a utility to recover the cost of fuel, purchased gas,

1 purchased steam, or purchased power only to the extent that the  
2 purchases are reasonable and prudent.

3 (5) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and  
4 subsection (1), if the commission fails to reach a final decision  
5 with respect to a completed petition or application to increase or  
6 decrease utility rates within the 10-month period following the  
7 filing of the completed petition or application, the petition or  
8 application is considered approved. If a utility makes any  
9 significant amendment to its filing, the commission has an  
10 additional 10 months after the date of the amendment to reach a  
11 final decision on the petition or application. If the utility files  
12 for an extension of time, the commission shall extend the 10-month  
13 period by the amount of additional time requested by the utility.

14 (6) A utility shall not file a general rate case application  
15 for an increase in rates earlier than 12 months after the date of  
16 the filing of a complete prior general rate case application. A  
17 utility may not file a new general rate case application until the  
18 commission has issued a final order on a prior general rate case or  
19 until the rates are approved under subsection (5).

20 (7) The commission shall, if requested by a gas utility,  
21 establish load retention transportation rate schedules or approve  
22 gas transportation contracts as required for the purpose of serving  
23 industrial or commercial customers whose individual annual  
24 transportation volumes exceed 500,000 decatherms on the gas  
25 utility's system. The commission shall approve these rate schedules  
26 or approve transportation contracts entered into by the utility in  
27 good faith if the industrial or commercial customer has the  
28 installed capability to use an alternative fuel or otherwise has a  
29 viable alternative to receiving natural gas transportation service

1 from the utility, the customer can obtain the alternative fuel or  
2 gas transportation from an alternative source at a price that would  
3 cause ~~them~~**the customer** not to use the gas utility's system, and  
4 the customer, as a result of their use of the system and receipt of  
5 transportation service, makes a significant contribution to the  
6 utility's fixed costs. The commission shall adopt accounting and  
7 rate-making policies to ensure that the discounts associated with  
8 the transportation rate schedules and contracts are recovered by  
9 the gas utility through charges applicable to other customers if  
10 the incremental costs related to the discounts are no greater than  
11 the costs that would be passed on to those customers as the result  
12 of a loss of the industrial or commercial customer's contribution  
13 to a utility's fixed costs.

14 (8) The commission shall adopt standard rate application  
15 filing forms and instructions for use in all general rate cases  
16 filed by utilities whose rates are regulated by the commission. For  
17 cooperative electric utilities whose rates are regulated by the  
18 commission, in addition to rate applications filed under this  
19 section, the commission shall continue to allow for rate filings  
20 based on the cooperative's times interest earned ratio. The  
21 commission may modify the standard rate application forms and  
22 instructions adopted under this subsection.

23 (9) If, on or before January 1, 2008, a merchant plant entered  
24 into a contract with an initial term of 20 years or more to sell  
25 electricity to an electric utility whose rates are regulated by the  
26 commission with 1,000,000 or more retail customers in this state  
27 and if, before January 1, 2008, the merchant plant generated  
28 electricity under that contract, in whole or in part, from wood or  
29 solid wood wastes, then the merchant plant shall, upon petition by

1 the merchant plant, and subject to the limitation set forth in  
2 subsection (10), recover the amount, if any, by which the merchant  
3 plant's reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable  
4 operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount that the merchant  
5 plant is paid under the contract for those costs. This subsection  
6 does not apply to landfill gas plants, hydro plants, municipal  
7 solid waste plants, or to merchant plants engaged in litigation  
8 against an electric utility seeking higher payments for power  
9 delivered pursuant to contract.

10 (10) The total aggregate additional amounts recoverable by  
11 merchant plants under subsection (9) in excess of the amounts paid  
12 under the contracts ~~shall~~**must** not exceed \$1,000,000.00 per month  
13 for each affected electric utility. The \$1,000,000.00 per month  
14 limit specified in this subsection ~~shall~~**must** be reviewed by the  
15 commission upon petition of the merchant plant filed no more than  
16 once per year and may be adjusted if the commission finds that the  
17 eligible merchant plants reasonably and prudently incurred actual  
18 fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount  
19 that those merchant plants are paid under the contract by more than  
20 \$1,000,000.00 per month. The annual amount of the adjustments ~~shall~~  
21 **must** not exceed a rate equal to the United States ~~consumer price~~  
22 ~~index.~~**Consumer Price Index.** The commission shall not make an  
23 adjustment unless each affected merchant plant files a petition  
24 with the commission. If the total aggregate amount by which the  
25 eligible merchant plants reasonably and prudently incurred actual  
26 fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs determined by the  
27 commission exceed the amount that the merchant plants are paid  
28 under the contract by more than \$1,000,000.00 per month, the  
29 commission shall allocate the additional \$1,000,000.00 per month



1 payment among the eligible merchant plants based upon the  
2 relationship of excess costs among the eligible merchant plants.  
3 The \$1,000,000.00 limit specified in this subsection, as adjusted,  
4 does not apply to actual fuel and variable operation and  
5 maintenance costs that are incurred due to changes in federal or  
6 state environmental laws or regulations that are implemented after  
7 October 6, 2008. The \$1,000,000.00 per month payment limit under  
8 this subsection does not apply to merchant plants eligible under  
9 subsection (9) whose electricity is purchased by a utility that is  
10 using wood or wood waste or fuels derived from those materials for  
11 fuel in their power plants. As used in this subsection, "~~United~~  
12 ~~States consumer price index~~" **Consumer Price Index**" means the United  
13 ~~States consumer price index~~ **Consumer Price Index** for all urban  
14 consumers as defined and reported by the United States Department  
15 of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

16 (11) The commission shall issue orders to permit the recovery  
17 authorized under subsections (9) and (10) upon petition of the  
18 merchant plant. The merchant plant is not required to alter or  
19 amend the existing contract with the electric utility ~~in order to~~  
20 obtain the recovery under subsections (9) and (10). The commission  
21 shall permit or require the electric utility whose rates are  
22 regulated by the commission to recover from its ratepayers all fuel  
23 and variable operation and maintenance costs that the electric  
24 utility is required to pay to the merchant plant as reasonably and  
25 prudently incurred costs.

26 (12) Subject to subsection (13), if requested by an electric  
27 utility with less than 200,000 customers in this state, the  
28 commission shall approve an appropriate revenue decoupling  
29 mechanism that adjusts for decreases in actual sales compared to

1 the projected levels used in that utility's most recent rate case  
2 that are the result of implemented energy waste reduction,  
3 conservation, demand-side programs, and other waste reduction  
4 measures, if the utility first demonstrates the following to the  
5 commission:

6 (a) That the projected sales forecast in the utility's most  
7 recent rate case is reasonable.

8 (b) That the electric utility has achieved annual incremental  
9 energy savings at least equal to the lesser of the following:

10 (i) One percent of its total annual retail electricity sales in  
11 the previous year.

12 (ii) The amount of any incremental savings yielded by energy  
13 waste reduction, conservation, demand-side programs, and other  
14 waste reduction measures approved by the commission in that  
15 utility's most recent integrated resource plan.

16 (13) The commission shall consider the aggregate revenues  
17 attributable to revenue decoupling mechanisms, financial  
18 incentives, and shared savings mechanisms the commission has  
19 approved for an electric utility relative to energy waste  
20 reduction, conservation, demand-side programs, peak load reduction,  
21 and other waste reduction measures. The commission may approve an  
22 alternative methodology for a revenue decoupling mechanism  
23 authorized under subsection (12), a financial incentive authorized  
24 under section 75 of the clean and renewable energy and energy waste  
25 reduction act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1075, or a shared savings  
26 mechanism authorized under section 6x, if the commission determines  
27 that the resulting aggregate revenues from those mechanisms would  
28 not result in a reasonable and cost-effective method, to ensure  
29 that investments in energy waste reduction, demand-side programs,

1 peak load reduction, and other waste reduction measures are not  
2 disfavored when compared to utility supply-side investments. The  
3 commission's consideration of an alternative methodology under this  
4 subsection shall ~~must~~ be conducted as a contested case pursuant to  
5 chapter 4 of the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA  
6 306, MCL 24.271 to ~~24.287~~. **24.288**.

7 ~~(14) Within 1 year after the effective date of the amendatory~~  
8 ~~act that added this subsection, the commission shall conduct a~~  
9 ~~study on an appropriate tariff reflecting equitable cost of service~~  
10 ~~for utility revenue requirements for customers who participate in a~~  
11 ~~net metering program or distributed generation program under the~~  
12 ~~clean and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA~~  
13 ~~295, MCL 460.1001 to 460.1211. In any rate case filed after June 1,~~  
14 ~~2018, the commission shall approve such a tariff for inclusion in~~  
15 ~~the rates of all customers participating in a net metering or~~  
16 ~~distributed generation program under the clean and renewable energy~~  
17 ~~and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 to~~  
18 ~~460.1211. A tariff established under this subsection does not apply~~  
19 ~~to customers participating in a net metering program under the~~  
20 ~~clean and renewable energy and energy waste reduction act, 2008 PA~~  
21 ~~295, MCL 460.1001 to 460.1211, before the date that the commission~~  
22 ~~establishes a tariff under this subsection, who continues to~~  
23 ~~participate in the program at their current site or facility.~~

24 **(14)** ~~(15)~~ Except as otherwise provided in this act, "utility"  
25 and "electric utility" do not include a municipally owned electric  
26 utility.

27 **(15)** ~~(16)~~ As used in this section:

28 (a) "Full and complete hearing" means a hearing that provides  
29 interested parties a reasonable opportunity to present and cross-

1 examine evidence and present arguments relevant to the specific  
2 element or elements of the request that are the subject of the  
3 hearing.

4 (b) "General rate case" means a proceeding initiated by a  
5 utility in an application filed with the commission that alleges a  
6 revenue deficiency and requests an increase in the schedule of  
7 rates or charges based on the utility's total cost of providing  
8 service.

9 (c) "Steam utility" means a steam distribution company  
10 regulated by the commission.

11 Enacting section 1. This amendatory act does not take effect  
12 unless Senate Bill No.\_\_\_\_ or House Bill No. 6539 (request no.  
13 02337'21) of the 101st Legislature is enacted into law.