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July 5, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Ann E. Gravatt and Jennifer Light

SUBJECT: Utility Commissioner Panel

BACKGROUND:

Presenters: James Brown, president, Montana Public Service Commission; Megan Decker, chair, Oregon Public Utility Commission; David Danner, chair Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission; and Edward Lodge, commissioner, Idaho Public Utilities Commission

Summary: Council staff invited the commissioners to share their current priorities and key work over the next year. They will address some of the same issues the Council grapples with, including adequacy with an evolving system, reserves, and decarbonization policies.

Relevance: State utility commissions regulate investor-owned or for-profit utilities that provide electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and some transportation services. (Which specific industries are regulated varies by state.). They also have a role in ensuring the safe operation of these industries in their state. Their mission is to ensure that their state's utility customers have access to affordable and reliable utility service.

They collectively represent over half of the electric load served in the region. In addition to their critical rate-setting role, utility commissions also help implement relevant state and federal policies, including electrification,

fossil fuel retirements, and addressing the impacts of extreme weather on the electric system and customers.

Understanding public and investor-owned utility loads and resources is a critical component of the Council's analyses. Hearing from the commissioners in each state provides important context as we implement the 2021 Power Plan and as preparation for the next power plan.

More Info:

James Brown, President, [Montana Public Service Commission](#)

James Brown was elected to the Montana Public Service Commission in 2020. Brown represents District 3 on the Commission. He is a 4th generation Montanan, and a graduate of the University of Montana. Brown also earned a law degree from Seattle University School of Law and an LLM in Tax from the University of Washington. Brown worked for six years on Capitol Hill, clerked for the Chief Justice of the Washington State Supreme Court, and represented agriculture producers and small businesses as an attorney in private practice. Brown is also an avid outdoorsman, spending time hiking, backcountry camping, fishing, and mountaineering. President Brown represents Montana on the gas and internal relations committees for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

Megan Decker, Chair, [Oregon Public Utility Commission](#)

Megan Decker was appointed to the Oregon Public Utility Commission by Governor Kate Brown in April 2017 and appointed Commission chair one year later. Prior to her appointment, Chair Decker was an assistant general counsel with the Port of Portland. She developed expertise in energy policy and regulation at Renewable Northwest, where she managed utility commission advocacy in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana and served as board chair of the NW Energy Coalition. Chair Decker's legal experience also includes private practice in land use and a clerkship with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She holds a bachelor of arts from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of Washington.

Chair Decker represents Oregon as co-chair of the Committee on Regional Electric Power Cooperation, as well as a member of the Western Interconnection Regional Advisory Body and the Enrolled Parties and States Committee of NorthernGrid, a regional transmission planning organization. She also previously served as co-vice chair of the Energy Resources and the Environment Committee for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

David Danner, Chair, [Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission](#)

Governor Jay Inslee appointed David Danner chair of the Utilities and Transportation Commission in February 2013 and re-appointed him to a second term in December 2018. Prior to his appointment, Danner worked as the executive director of the UTC. Danner also served as a policy advisor to Governor Gary Locke on energy,

telecommunications, finance, and elections issues. Danner has also been a telecommunications attorney in private practice, counsel to the Washington Senate Energy and Utilities Committee, and senior policy advisor at the Washington State Department of Information Services.

Danner serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, and the National Regulatory Research Institute. He is chair of the International Consortium of Energy Regulators and a member of the State Technology Services Board and the Executive Council of the National Council on Energy Policy.

Danner graduated from Columbia University. He has a master's degree in communications from the University of Washington and a law degree from George Washington University.

Edward Lodge, Commissioner, [Idaho Public Utilities Commission](#)

Edward Lodge was appointed to his first six-year term with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission by Governor Brad Little in February 2023. Before joining the Commission, Lodge was director of government and regulatory affairs for Qwest/CenturyLink and a government affairs specialist for Connolly and Smyser Chartered. He served as special assistant to Governor Dirk Kempthorne and a policy assistant and communications director to Governor Philip Batt. Lodge also serves as president of Lodge Cattle Company and Random Ventures and sits on the executive board for Caldwell Night Rodeo, Western Idaho Fair, and the Western Heritage Foundation. Lodge serves on the water committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

Lodge received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in business administration from George Fox University.