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PSC Approves Biennial Strategic Energy Assessment

PSC Chairperson Strand reiterates need for legislative changes to enable comprehensive, long-term energy planning

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) approved the final biennial Strategic Energy Assessment (SEA). The SEA is a report published every two years that contains data and technical analysis about Wisconsin's current and future electricity supply. However, it is not a comprehensive, long-term energy planning tool.

The SEA provides a snapshot in time of current and future electricity supply in Wisconsin using historical and forecasted electric system operation information submitted by Wisconsin electric providers. Due to SEA reporting timelines required by state statute and administrative code, some parts of the SEA may be outdated by the time it's published. This timing misalignment hinders the development of accurate electrical system analysis and resource planning transparency.

In many states, utility commissions use Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) or other long-term planning processes to review and analyze utilities' generation and capital spending plans, gather robust stakeholder and public input, and in some cases, exercise regulatory authority over resource additions, retirement decisions, and other aspects of utility and infrastructure planning. However, in 1998, the Wisconsin legislature eliminated the state's energy planning process, known as the "Advanced Plan," and replaced it with the SEA. While the energy and utility industries have undergone massive change over the last three decades, the Commission's role in energy planning has never been restored, and the SEA has endured.

Current PSC commissioners have repeatedly called for the creation of modern, comprehensive long-term planning processes to provide appropriate oversight and greater insight and transparency into energy planning decisions. Moreover, in previous state budgets, Gov. Evers proposed requiring utilities to submit IRPs for Commission review, but those provisions were ultimately removed by the Republican-led legislature.

"Despite its limitations, the Strategic Energy Assessment does illustrate what we know —Wisconsin is in the throes of an energy evolution that has brought about significant challenges, including increasing electricity demand, rising costs, and limited progress toward clean energy goals," said PSC Chairperson Summer Strand. "Under the current legislative framework, the Commission cannot seek a comprehensive, timely, and accurate resource-planning roadmap from the utilities it regulates. Without actual tools

like Integrated Resource Planning, the Commission has only limited, fragmented oversight of these significant decisions, making it extremely difficult to develop durable and collaborative solutions to the present challenges. Moving forward, the addition of comprehensive, long-term energy planning processes and related measures are essential to ensuring safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible utility services in Wisconsin."

The Final SEA is available here.

Additional Information on the 2026-2032 SEA

In November 2025, as part of the biennial SEA development process, 10 Wisconsin electric providers submitted historical information through that date to the PSC, along with forward-looking forecasts covering Fall 2025 through 2032. This information included goals and efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions; utility resource planning analysis and decisions; demand response offerings; trends in transmission costs; and details on the Commission's work to analyze and address customer affordability.

PSC staff analyzed this data, along with other information available at the time, to develop a draft SEA for public review. The PSC held a public comment period on the draft SEA from August 20, 2026 to September 28, 2026. Public comments received and updated actual and forecasted information from electric providers were incorporated into the Final SEA.

Background on the Public Service Commission

The PSC is a quasi-judicial body composed of three full-time Commissioners who make decisions in cases brought to the PSC related to utility operations, rates, and construction projects. In each case, the Commissioners are responsible for independently reviewing the application and the full record of evidence, analyzing and weighing the evidence, and ultimately reaching a decision that complies with state law.

Additional information about the PSC is available here.

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