

ORDER NO. 89525

In the Matter of the Review of Annual	*	BEFORE THE
Performance Reports on Electric Service	*	PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Reliability Filed Pursuant to COMAR	*	OF MARYLAND
20.50.12.11	*	_____
	*	
	*	CASE NO. 9353
	*	_____

Issue Date: March 6, 2020

On February 3, 2020, in response to the Commission’s November 4, 2019 letter order, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (“BGE”) filed with the Commission two options for Commission consideration for spending the \$210,000 in civil penalty payments submitted by BGE pursuant to Order No. 89260.¹ The civil penalty payments have been placed into the Electric Reliability Remediation Fund (“Fund”) established under Public Utilities Article § 7-213(j). The purpose of the Fund is to provide resources to target remediation efforts to improve electric service quality and reliability for the worst performing electric distribution lines in the State. The Commission is charged with administering the Fund.

In Option 1, BGE proposes to employ “hot spot” vegetation management on 14 locations on 12 feeders to reduce the number of sustained outages experienced by certain BGE customers.² BGE contends that Option 1 focuses on “near-term reliability improvements” for certain customers experiencing seven or more outages in back to back

¹ See Order No. 89260 at 20-23.

² Hot spot vegetation management involves trimming beyond BGE’s routine four-year cyclical trimming under applicable RM43 standards to address unusual vegetation growth that has caused service interruptions.

years (utilizing the CEMI7R metric).³ BGE states that irrespective of the Commission's decision on how to spend the civil penalty payments, it will spend at least \$420,000 to perform hot spot vegetation management on CEMI7R feeders in 2020, and that Option 1 involves spending an additional \$210,000 in hot spot trimming on CEMI7R feeders.

In Option 2, BGE proposes to spend the civil penalty payment on a capital project and hot spot trimming. Specifically, BGE would reconnector approximately 850 feet of Feeder 7443 with Hendrix cable.⁴ Feeder 7443 is located in Anne Arundel County and serves approximately 1,100 customers. With the remainder of the funds, BGE would perform hot spot vegetation management along CEMI7R feeders.

On February 25, 2020, Commission Staff submitted comments supporting Option 2. Staff observes that the Hendrix cable installation is expected to have a life expectancy of 40 years, which will produce both near-term and long-term reliability benefits. In contrast, Option 1 focuses on short-term benefits.⁵ Staff conducted an analysis of the expected reliability benefits over the lifecycle of each option, and found elevated reliability benefits from Option 2. BGE also recommends that the Commission select Option 2.⁶

The Commission approves BGE's proposed Option 2 to reconnector approximately 850 feet of Feeder 7443 with Hendrix cable and utilize hot spot vegetation management along CEMI7R feeders with the remainder of the civil penalty funds. The

³ BGE February 3, 2020 correspondence, Mail Log No. 228438, at 2. CEMI stands for Customers Experiencing Multiple Interruptions, with CEMI7R referring to customers experiencing seven or more sustained interruptions two years in a row.

⁴ Hendrix cable is a covered conductor with a messenger line that, according to BGE, is "significantly less prone to vegetation-related outages than standard overhead cable." BGE February 3, 2020 correspondence at 2.

⁵ Staff February 25, 2020 comments at 4.

⁶ BGE February 3, 2020 correspondence at 2.

Commission also notes that BGE has committed to spending \$420,000 of funds not associated with civil penalties to perform hot spot vegetation management on CEMI7R feeders in 2020.

IT IS, THEREFORE, this 6th day of March, in the year Two Thousand Twenty,

ORDERED: (1) That the proposal of Baltimore Gas and Electric Company to reconductor approximately 850 feet of Feeder 7443 with Hendrix cable and utilize hot spot vegetation management along CEMI7R feeders with the remainder of the \$210,000 in civil penalty funds (Option 2) is approved.

By Direction of the Commission,

/s/ Andrew S. Johnston

Andrew S. Johnston
Executive Secretary