1	STAFF CONFERENCE March 22, 2021
2	CHAIR MITCHELL: Good morning, everyone.
3	Let's come to order and go on the record, please. I'm
4	Charlotte Mitchell, Chair of the Utilities Commission,
5	and with me this morning are the following
6	Commissioners. When I call your name, please announce
7	your presence. Commissioner Gray.
8	COMMISSIONER GRAY: Present. Good morning.
9	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Clodfelter.
10	COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER: Yes, good morning.
11	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Duffley.
12	COMMISSIONER DUFFLEY: Good morning.
13	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Good morning.

CHAIR MITCHELL: And Commissioner McKissick.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Good morning.

CHAIR MITCHELL: In compliance with the State Government Ethics Act, I remind all members of the Commission of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest, and inquire at this time as to whether any member of the Commission has a known conflict of interest with respect to matters coming before us this morning?

(No response)

The record will reflect that no conflicts have been identified, so we will proceed with Public Staff, Communications Item P1. Ms. Proffitt, you're up.

MS. PROFFITT: Okay. Can you hear me now?

CHAIR MITCHELL: We can hear you.

MS. PROFFITT: My name is Karen Proffitt of the Public Staff, Water, Telephone -- Water, Sewer and Telephone Division. I'm presenting Item P1 which presents the filing, the July 17th filing of the Application of Atlantic Telecom Multimedia

Consolidated, LLC, seeking designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier for the purpose of qualifying to receive Universal Service Fund support to provide voice and broadband services in certain areas defined by census blocks that lack these services, and to allow it to offer discounts to qualifying low income customers through the FCC's Lifeline program.

In its July 17th Application, and as specified in its supplemental filing on February 27th, ATMC seeks designation for the census blocks located in Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus Counties, and also Duplin, Pender and Robeson Counties.

The Public Staff has investigated ATMC's

Application and supplement filings, including its

review of responses to the Public Staff data requests.

The Public Staff concludes that ATMC satisfies the requirement for designation as an ETC.

The Public Staff recommends that the Commission issue an order finding that ATMC has met the requirements to serve as an ETC in the requested census blocks in Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, Pender, and Robeson Counties, and designating ATMC as an ETC for those census blocks as requested.

 $\label{thm:commissioner} \mbox{COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND:} \mbox{ Move approval of } \\ \mbox{the recommendation.}$ 

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and seconded that the item be approved as recommended by the Public Staff. Are there any questions or discussion?

(No response)

Hearing none, I'll call the roll for a vote.

Indicate your support for the motion with an aye and your opposition with a no. Commissioner Brown-Bland.

COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Aye.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Gray.

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1	COMMISSIONER GRAY: Aye.
2	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Clodfelter.
3	COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER: Aye.
4	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Duffley.
5	COMMISSIONER DUFFLEY: Aye.
6	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Hughes.
7	COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Aye.
8	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner McKissick.
9	COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Aye.
10	CHAIR MITCHELL: And for the record I
11	support the motion as well and the motion carries.
12	(MOTION PASSES)
13	CHAIR MITCHELL: The record will reflect
14	that Commissioner Brown-Bland has joined us. And
15	we'll cut her a little slack this morning since on
16	this morning since it is her birthday, so Happy
17	Birthday to Commissioner Brown-Bland.
18	Thank you, Ms. Proffitt.
19	We will proceed now
20	COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Thank you.
21	CHAIR MITCHELL: We will proceed now with
22	Public Staff, Electric Item P1. Mr. Saillor, I
23	believe you're up.
24	MR. SAILLOR: I'm Scott Saillor with the

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    Public Staff, Energy Division. Item P1 consists of
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    Applications for Amended Certificates of Public
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    Convenience and Necessity for solar PV electric
 4
    generating facilities.
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               The Public Staff recommends that the
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    Commission approve the Applications and issue the
 7
    Amended Certificates.
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               COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of
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    the recommendation.
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               COMMISSIONER GRAY: And I'll second.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
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    seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
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    the Public Staff. Any there any questions or
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    discussion?
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                          (No response)
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               Hearing none, I'll call the roll for a vote.
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    Indicate your support with an aye and your opposition
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    with a no. Commissioner Brown-Bland.
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               COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Aye.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Gray.
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               COMMISSIONER GRAY:
                                   Aye.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Clodfelter.
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               COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER: Aye.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Duffley.
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1	COMMISSIONER DUFFLEY: Aye.
2	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Hughes.
3	COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Aye.
4	CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner McKissick.
5	COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Aye.
6	CHAIR MITCHELL: And for the record I
7	support the motion as well and the motion carries.
8	(MOTION PASSES)
9	CHAIR MITCHELL: We'll proceed now with
10	Public Staff, Electric Item P2.
11	MR. LUCAS: Good morning. I'm Jay Lucas
12	with the Public Staff's Energy Division. Item P2
13	consists of a request to waive the master metering
14	prohibition in North Carolina General Statute
15	§ 143-151.42.
16	The Public Staff recommends that the
17	Commission issue the Public Staff's proposed order
18	allowing a waiver of the master metering prohibition.
19	COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: I'll move the
20	recommendation of the Public Staff.
21	COMMISSIONER GRAY: And second.
22	CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and
23	seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
24	the Public Staff Are there any questions or

discussion?

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Madam Chair, I do have a couple of questions.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Proceed, Commissioner McKissick.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: The way I read this particular item it's going to allow for the master metering I guess of electricity as well as I believe it might have been gas as well.

MR. LUCAS: I don't believe this one is allowing master metering of natural gas.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Okay. So it was just -- okay. So, even if it's just for electricity, but they are charging for it through their HOA fees; is that correct?

MR. LUCAS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Now, let me ask this question because typically when HOA's assess property they are allowed in North Carolina, if for some reason you don't pay your HOA fee, to actually sell your home or townhome as the case may be to satisfy a delinquency. Is there anything that's in any of the restrictive covenants that would prohibit the sale of a property for a portion of the HOA fees

as attributed to the utility cost?

MR. LUCAS: I am not sure of that. I didn't get a copy of the HOA's rules and regulations. But I know there is a separate General Statute, I don't have the number in front of me, but for disconnecting utilities for non-payment of utility items is prohibited by law in North Carolina. It's called self-help eviction. I can dig deeper and find that General Statute and let you know. I can also contact the Applicant and get a copy of the planned covenants of the HOA.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: The restrictive covenants of the HOA and look to see if that other General Statute that you've mentioned would prohibit an eviction -- excuse me, the sale of the property as a result of the non-payment of a component of the HOA fee that's attributable to the utilities. That would certainly address my concern. I mean --

MR. LUCAS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: -- as you're aware, if it was one of the other, you know, investor-owned utility companies in our state, certainly if it was Duke we wouldn't allow that, any of the Duke entities or any of the private water and sewer companies, and

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that's the concern I had when I -- the way it read
when it's a part of the HOA assessment because
typically with the HOA assessment you -- the remedy
you have to collect it is the sale of the property.
         MR. LUCAS: Yes. Yes. I've -- but I will
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find out. I will get the affiliate agreement. (Audio feedback).

And about the prohibition on self-help eviction, that was for customers who didn't pay utility bills and a landlord disconnecting utility service for non-payment of rent. It wasn't for non-payment of some kind of other fee. It was a disconnection of utility for non-payment of rent. I will dig deeper into that to find you that General Statute.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Is there any time sensitivity to this particular request that's before us today. I mean, if it's possible to bring it back say next week so we can get some answers I'd feel a whole lot better.

MR. LUCAS: I can do that. They wanted to start construction in March/April, but it was somewhat of a late filing. They didn't file this request until February 4th, and we did have some back and forth with the Applicant regarding some other issues that we got resolved. But I will dig deeper. I think the Applicant would be motivated to supply my request pretty quickly. So, yeah, we can bring it back on the 29th.

excellent, and at least that can be addressed and, you know, if there's something in the restrictive covenants that addresses it or even if somebody -- if they do plan to be able to collect it as an assessment and they plan to use the traditional remedy of selling property, if somebody is going to do that, then I would want to make sure that when people are buying into this community that this is prominently and conspicuously stated in documents even, you know, because --

MR. LUCAS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: -- it's an extreme remedy for non-payment of the utility component of someone's HOA assessment because it appears to be that way. And the Statute you mentioned earlier about landlords and rent, I'm familiar with it even though I can't say I can point to the Statute number, but I've read about it and heard of it previously. So I --

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MR. LUCAS: It's not in General Statute 62,
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     it's somewhere else, but I'll find it.
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               COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Okay. Excellent.
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    Thank you very much.
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               Madam Chair, if we could carry this over for
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    a week, I would appreciate it.
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               COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND:
                                          Madam Chair, I
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    will withdraw my motion for the time being and move
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    that we bring this back to Staff Conference next week,
    March 29th.
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               COMMISSIONER GRAY:
                                   I agree.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: We've got a motion --
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    Commissioner Brown-Bland has withdrawn her initial
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    motion and has moved that the item be considered in
    next week Staff Conference and that motion has been
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    seconded. Any additional questions or discussion?
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                         (No response)
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               All in favor of the motion indicate with an
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    aye.
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                   (All Commissioners say aye)
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Anyone opposed?
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                          (No response)
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               The motion carries.
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                         (MOTION PASSES)
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CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Lucas.

We'll proceed now to Public Staff, Electric

3 Item P3. Mr. Williamson, you're up.

MR. WILLIAMSON: Good morning. I'm David Williamson with the Energy Division. If it's all right, I'm going to handle Items 3 and 4 at the same time.

CHAIR MITCHELL: You may do so.

MR. WILLIAMSON: So Items P3 and P4 are filings made on February 3rd, 2021, by both Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress, LLC, for approval of certain modifications to their multi-family EE programs. These modifications that are being proposed are to add upgraded low flow water measures and smart thermostats to the existing list of measures offered by these programs.

The programs are expected to be cost-effective under both the Total Resource Cost Test and the Utility Cost Tests. Therefore, the Public Staff recommends that the Commission issue our proposed orders approving these program modifications.

COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: I move approval of the Public Staff's recommendation for Electric Items P3 and P4.

COMMISSIONER GRAY: Second.

CHAIR MITCHELL: It's been moved and seconded that the items be approved as recommended by the Public Staff. Questions or discussion?

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Chair Mitchell, I have a few questions.

CHAIR MITCHELL: You may proceed, Commissioner Hughes.

Mr. Williamson, you talked about the Programs meeting the Cost Effectiveness Test. Could you describe some other cost information about the Programs? What would be the annual expenditure change? Is this an addition or a substitution of a measure that is currently given out by the Program? And how do these programs compare just in the portfolio of EE? Is this one of the larger programs or mid-size?

MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure. Well, so these programs -- these measures that are being added, again they are just going to be an addition to the current list. The Program currently offers other water measures. So, for instance, in this case it's an upgraded low flow water showerhead. Currently, they have a one and a half gallon-per-minute showerhead and

this one, the new measure, is going to be one and a quarter gallon per minute.

As far as the other information that you're asking about how this program as far as increase in cost, I don't have that information readily available to me, but I do know that I see Bob Evans with the Company who'd probably be a lot better at answering that question off the top of his head.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: If that's okay and it's appropriate, Chair Mitchell, can Mr. Evans address that question?

CHAIR MITCHELL: Do you have, Commissioner
Hughes, any additional questions for the Public Staff?

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Well, most of them are a follow on to that first --

CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: -- first question, so at this point -- yeah.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Ms. Fentress, I see that you are on camera. If you would handle Commissioner Hughes' questions or Mr. Evans may handle them as appropriate.

MS. FENTRESS: Certainly. Thank you, Chair Mitchell. And good morning, Commissioners. I am

Kendrick Fentress appearing on behalf of Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress. And I am going to hand these questions, after introducing myself, to Mr. Evans who is the subject matter expert on these questions. Thank you.

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MR. EVANS: Good morning Commissioners. Μv name is Bob Evans representing Duke Energy Progress and Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC. In terms of the cost of the Programs -- well, let me -- this is a medium-sized program, I guess that was one of the questions initially, as well as the cost effectiveness of this program is significantly in the upper echelon relative to other programs. The cost associated with this is -- we're looking at in terms of the water measures, there are no water measure increases in Now, there is a smart thermostat as well. will depend on the type of thermostat desired by the property owners. We're looking at anywhere from \$50 to \$100 a thermostat in terms of the cost, but that's after the buy down from the property owners themselves. I've seen expectations of 200, 400, 600 in different lots, and so you would multiple those amounts by, let's say, the \$50 which would be a low-cost Nest, economy model. They all -- these do,

in fact, exceed the cost -- the additional costs are exceeded by the avoided cost which is why we are looking at providing these measures in this program.

Did I answer your questions appropriately or are there further follow ups?

just -- I'm just curious, not with the cost-effectiveness or the net cost, but just the gross annual expenditures, what did you model for the first of year of this? Is it going to -- how many millions of dollars or thousands of dollars will -- does the program cost implement now, just gross cost, not net cost? And then what is the adding of thermostats going to do to the Program?

MR. EVANS: I do not have that information printed out in front of me right now. Maybe David Williamson, I hate to refer it back to you, would you have these, the R8-69, 68 attachments printed out and available? If not, I will supply that information for the Commission as a subsequent follow up.

MR. WILLIAMSON: I am looking now. I do have it pulled up. I just need to find the right line item.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: And just for both of

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you, I don't -- I'm not questioning the Program. I just am interested in the increment cost as we possibly introduce smart thermostats into more of our EE programs, and I think that's a great idea. I'm just curious what the expenditure change would be.
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MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure. I do have it pulled up. I guess the best place to look on this would be, it's page 8 of -- it's Attachment C and it's page 8 of their Application. It gets into an annual breakdown, because they do, whenever they file for modifications or new programs, they project out five years of expenses and benefits for these programs. And so looking at implementation costs, it's looking like it's around \$500,000 or so annually, just for the implementation. But the Total Utility costs anywhere between \$1.5 and low, almost \$2 million on an annual basis.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: And that's for each utility?

MR. WILLIAMSON: I am looking specifically at Duke Energy Progress, excuse me. I do not have the Duke Carolinas filing up, but I would expect that it would be somewhere similar.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. And maybe this

is a question for you, last one. For the cost test, I saw that there is a required statement that the property owner or building owner has to say that they wouldn't have installed these devices otherwise. Are they permitted to install one smart thermostat if another one already exists and it's just a little outdated? I don't see that, that they have to say that they replaced an old thermostat with a smart thermostat. Is that part of the Program?

MR. WILLIAMSON: So you're asking if the Program is going to include participation from apartment owners that have recently upgraded their smart thermostat or --

think there's a lot of penetration of smart
thermostats now and for modeling, you know, and I
think for the maximum energy savings is of course an
old thermostat that has no controls at all is replaced
with a smart thermostat. I'm just curious what the
modeling and assumptions were for this program. Is it
assuming that a smart thermostat is going to replace
an old thermostat, or can a smart thermostat just
replace a slightly older smart thermostat? Can a new
smart thermostat under this program replace a slightly

older smart thermostat that's already installed?

MR. WILLIAMSON: I would probably ultimately defer to Bob for this, but my understanding is that it could as long as the application of the smart thermostat, the functions of it, were more up to date with standards now. It's -- I guess to put it, it's almost like in a lightbulb situation where we have three different tiers of lightbulbs but you're in the middle tier but you're trying to go up to the top tier, you're not going to get the same incremental impacts as you would going from the bottom tier, but you would still get some impacts.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. And is that -- Mr. Evans, is that how the Program runs?

MR. EVANS: You have a very low -
Commissioner, we have a very low penetration of smart
thermostats in multi-family. I'm in a multi-family
structure as we speak. It has a smart thermostat in
it because I put it there, much to the disappointment
of my land or property owner.

We did not look at replacement of new or recent upgrades, because of the technology and the lifespan of these thermostats that was not considered. It could exist -- it could occur. I guess that is the

beauty of the copay now. The landlords do not get these for free. They will actually have to pay out of pocket a certain amount for them but that's not to say that forestall reasons or other reasons that they would replace them. I can't say.

Now, going back to Mr. Williamson's lightbulb example. Lightbulbs under this program, we do not replace an LED with an LED. We will replace a five-year old CFL, for example, but not -- in that the five year is the criteria by the way. So I don't see that happening, but it could happen. So I guess it's not something that we would anticipate happening but that doesn't mean it can't happen. So I apologize for the round-about response to your question, Commissioner, but it could happen, it's just not likely.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: No, and I -- that's the answer I was looking for. I mean, you answered it. And I have no more questions. Thank you both for your variances.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Any additional questions for the Applicant?

(No response)

Mr. Evans, I do have one question for you.

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I read in the Application that the EM&V for this program involves the use of AMI. Is this -- can you tell me how -- is this the only program -- are these two the only programs that you all have proposed to use AMI so far or are there other programs that also use AMI for EM&V purposes?
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MR. EVANS: Commissioner, I'd like to think that all of our programs are going to be relying on AMI data in the future. We tracked -- we do engineering analyses, which is not AMI, but that is the preferred is a billing analysis. In order to perform that billing analysis effectively, you really got to use AMI data to the extent you possibly can. So this is -- it's just another tool and a resource, AMI, for determining the evaluation of the Programs themselves.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Understood. So is this the first program -- are these two the first programs that will be using AMI or are your other programs using AMI at this point in time?

MR. EVANS: Our other programs are employing AMI.

23 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. That's all I
24 wanted --

MR. EVANS: There are several other programs -- let me qualify that, several of other programs are.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Understood. So this would not be the only program that's utilizing or making use of the AMI?

MR. EVANS: That is correct. Thank you.

CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you.

Any additional questions for the Applicant?

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Madam Chair?

CHAIR MITCHELL: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Simply one question to the Public Staff. One thing that I would request in some of these future reports, perhaps providing a little more specificity in terms of projected cost to the Programs, projected energy savings to the Programs, and provide a little more context for these types of matters that are coming before us, and it might provide greater clarity, and in terms of what's anticipated and address some of the questions that Commissioner Hughes raised up earlier. Just something for future reference so that -- you know, the data is there and perhaps we can analyze it a little bit more clearly in advance. Thank you.

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MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes, sir, we'll try and do
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    that.
               CHAIR MITCHELL: If there's nothing further,
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    I'll go ahead and -- we've got a motion that's been
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    seconded that the item be approved as recommended by
    the Public Staff, the items be approved as recommended
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    by the Public Staff. One last time with a roll call
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    for the vote. Commissioner Brown-Bland.
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               COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Aye.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Gray.
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               COMMISSIONER GRAY:
                                   Aye.
              CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Clodfelter.
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              COMMISSIONER CLODFELTER: Aye.
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              CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Duffley.
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              COMMISSIONER DUFFLEY: Aye.
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              CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner Hughes.
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              COMMISSIONER HUGHES:
                                    Aye.
               CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioner McKissick.
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              COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Aye.
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: And for the record I
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    support the motion as well and the motion carries.
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                         (MOTION PASSES)
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               CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Williamson;
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    thank you, Mr. Evans; thank you, Ms. Fentress; for
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1	your presentation today.
2	The Commission has before it its minutes of
3	March 15th Staff Conference for approval.
4	COMMISSIONER BROWN-BLAND: Move approval of
5	the minutes from March 15th.
6	COMMISSIONER GRAY: And a second.
7	CHAIR MITCHELL: Any questions or discussion
8	on the minutes?
9	(No response)
10	All in favor of approving our minutes
11	indicate with an aye.
12	(All Commissioners say aye)
13	CHAIR MITCHELL: Any opposed?
14	(No response)
15	Our minutes of March 15th Staff Conference
16	are approved.
17	Any additional business for the Commission
18	this morning before we adjourn?
19	(No response)
20	Hearing none, we will be adjourned. Thank
21	you very much everybody. Let's go off the record,
22	please.
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WHEREUPON, this conference is adjourned. CERTIFICATE I, KIM T. MITCHELL, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the Proceedings in the above-captioned matter were taken before me, that I did report in stenographic shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription to the best of my ability. Kim Mitchell Kim T. Mitchell Court Reporter