
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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Council approves scrutiny of We Energies' acquisition, weighs in on deregulation

The Common Council today adopted a resolution directing various city departments to evaluate and report on the economic impact to the city of the proposed acquisition of Integrys Energy Group by Wisconsin Energy Corp. (We Energies) so the city can determine whether to oppose the acquisition.

Authored by Alderman Robert J. Bauman, chair of the Council's Public Works Committee, the resolution adopted today directs the Department of Administration-Budget and Management Division and the Office of Environmental Sustainability, in conjunction with the City Attorney's Office and the Department of Public Works, to evaluate and report on the economic impact of the proposed Integrys acquisition.

On June 23, 2014, Milwaukee-based We Energies announced that it has agreed to buy Integrys Energy Group, the Chicago-based parent company of Green Bay-based utility Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. If approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, the Illinois Commerce Commission and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, as well as anti-trust regulators and the shareholders of We Energies and Integrys, the transaction could be approved by summer 2015.

Alderman Bauman, whose district includes the downtown headquarters of We Energies, said the utility has been mum about whether it will move its headquarters if the acquisition is approved. "Very simply it is in the best interest of the City of Milwaukee that the impact of the proposed acquisition be evaluated, including its effects on the city, energy customers, utility rates and possible job and employment impacts," he said.

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We Energies acquisition/ADD ONE

If approved, the combined company will create the 8th largest natural gas distribution company in America, with customers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Minnesota and nearly 71,000 miles of electric distribution lines and more than 44,000 miles of gas transmission and distribution lines.

On another We Energies matter taken up today, the Council adopted a resolution directing the Department of Administration - Intergovernmental Relations Division to seek introduction and passage of state legislation relating to energy procurement regulations to allow the city to expand retail choice for utility customers and expand competition within the energy industry by offering customers the opportunity to purchase energy from their current utility or an alternative supplier.

The resolution – also authored by Alderman Bauman -- also seeks state approval to allow the city to use its group power in negotiating lower utility rates for residential and eligible small business ratepayers. The measure would also seek state approval allowing the city to use reverse auctions for the procurement of energy.

Alderman Bauman said the resolution is in step with the city's first sustainability plan, *ReFresh Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee Sustainability Plan 2013-2023* (which has targets to reduce city energy use 20% by 2020 and increase reliance on renewable energy to 25% by 2025) and Council file #131576 (adopted in April 2014) directing the Office of Environmental Sustainability and the Department of Public Works to create an energy independence plan that will, among other things, reduce reliance on We Energies for the supply of electricity, natural gas and heat to operate city facilities.

"It is pretty simple -- this resolution asks the state to afford the city the means to seek alternative cost-effective ways of meeting its energy demands," Alderman Bauman said.

Rate case resolution

Today the Council also adopted a resolution putting the Council on record in opposition to a requested We Energies rate increase that could boost electric rates for homeowners and other residential customers of We Energies by nearly 5% in January 2015.

Authored by Alderman Tony Zielinski, chair of the Council's Licenses Committee, the measure notes that if granted by the Public Service Commission, the We Energies rate increase and changes would mean that all new and all existing renewable energy systems could be impacted, including residential, business, and non-profit or government installations.

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We Energies acquisition/ADD TWO

The increase would also impact all distributed generation in We Energies territory including solar, wind and biogas/bio-digesters. Solar and wind system owners would be charged roughly \$4/kW/month. Bio-digester owners would see a new surcharge of \$8.60/kW/month.

The rate case resolution was co-sponsored by Alderman Bauman, **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, **Alderman Nik Kovac** and **Alderman Terry L. Witkowski**.

Full-time staffing at parking structures

Under an ordinance approved by the Council today, Milwaukee's four city-owned parking structures will now be required to keep at least one attendant on premises at all times while they are in operation. The ordinance was authored by Alderman Bauman and co-sponsored by **Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.** and **Alderman Willie C. Wade**.

The city owns the parking structures, but contracts out their management, and the legislation adopted today specifies that management firms would be required to pay parking attendants a living wage of \$10.10 per hour in accordance with the city's Service Contract Wage Requirements ordinance. Alderman Bauman said maintaining a 24-hour-a-day human presence in the parking ramps will increase customer satisfaction, bolster public safety and provide good-paying, full-time job opportunities.