



January 21, 2020

Joel H. Peck, Clerk
State Corporation Commission
c/o Document Control Center
P.O. Box 2118
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118

RE: Case No. PUR-2019-00154

Mr. Peck,

In my 20 years as a leader on grid transformation, I have dedicated my time to advocate and advance developments in the power sector designed to meet economic, environmental, and energy policy mandates. My work has involved both public and private sector partners and my role as the Chief Executive Officer for the GridWise Alliance has led to numerous engagements with companies and organizations across the United States.

Our mission at GridWise Alliance is to champion the principle concepts, policies, and investments needed to transform the electricity grid by understanding the diverse perspectives and priorities of all stakeholders involved. We strive to construct actionable plans and prudent strategies to articulate the benefits of required changes to the electricity grid. My decades of work in this field along with GridWise's vision and mission are why I support Dominion Energy's "Phase IB" of its Grid Transformation Plan, currently under your review.

Following the Virginia State Corporation Commission's 2019 Final Order, Dominion Energy quickly went to work to address the advice they were given. This involved soliciting customer feedback, engaging an experienced third-party partner to develop a cost-benefit analysis, and significant work on designing this phase of the Grid Transformation Plan (GTP) with specific scopes and targeted improvements for each proposed project. This phase of Dominion's GT Plan is vital for Virginia to bring its electrical power system into the 21st century while responding to industry-changing developments related to electricity generation, transportation and battery storage. Today's electricity grid cannot manage the challenges created by an increase in distributed energy resources, which will only continue to grow as more solar, wind, electric vehicles and battery storage come on line in Virginia. Additionally, Dominion's service territory is highly impacted by increased hurricanes and extreme weather events, further supporting the urgent need to modernize and strengthen the grid ahead of these often-unpredictable challenges.

Fortunately for Virginia, the 2018 Grid Transformation and Security Act, along with the Governor's recently issued Executive Order 43, establish pathways and incentives for an overhaul of the existing electrical grid. The broad deployment of smart meters (this phase calls for roughly the deployment of nearly 900,000 meters) is a key investment if the goals of the Executive Order are to be met on time and in a manner that fully benefits Dominion Energy's customers. Smart meters give customers the information many now demand to better manage their energy bills and will help Dominion react to and resolve outages much more quickly. Other proposed investments include a new customer information platform that will further improve consumer's ability to learn more about cost-saving measures and programs as well as provide self-service interactions from the convenience of their mobile devices.

For many Virginians, Dominion's plan to harden the grid may be immediately impactful. In a world as interconnected as ours, access to reliable electricity is essential to the daily life of both commercial and residential customers. Investments designed to upgrade assets that affect a high number of customers while preparing the grid to handle severe weather events and cut down the length and frequency of outages are an important part of grid modernization. Fewer outages mean less disruptions of daily life and are a top priority for many customers. Grid hardening is even more important in light of a recently released report by Moody's Investors Service and its climate-risk affiliate Four Twenty Seven. In that report which ranked utilities based upon their risk for impact from hurricanes and climate change, Dominion Energy was ranked second, with over a quarter of its footprint falling in the "red flag" risk area. Grid hardening and modernization will allow Dominion Energy to prepare, mitigate and minimize impacts from hurricanes and other severe weather events in its service territory, and smart grid technology will allow for rapid restoration of outages when they occur.

The GridWise Alliance supports other timely and important topics addressed in the proposed plan. For new modes of transportation and electric vehicle deployment to succeed, utilities like Dominion must take the lead in upgrading equipment to handle any increased load that charging systems may generate. Local government, state government, and businesses may be able to establish incremental changes to support this growing trend towards electric vehicles, but utilities must lead the way in updating the electrical infrastructure needed to support this market and consumer driven change.

GridWise understands the State Corporation Commission previously had concerns related to the costs and benefits of the GTP. Dominion Energy has completed a thorough study by West Monroe Partners, describing how these investments benefit customers while bringing additional benefits like reduced greenhouse gas emissions, essential to comply with Executive Order 43. GridWise urges that the steps being taken by Dominion are necessary to prepare for changes already happening to our electric grid and must be implemented in a timely manner for Virginia

to stay ahead of changing market demands and technology advances. Utilities across the country have been making similar investments with beneficial results. Dominion Energy is proposing to do the same.

Last year GridWise [completed its' 5th assessment of progress](#) toward grid modernization across the country; ranking all 50 states and the District of Columbia based upon the degree they have moved toward a modernized grid. While Virginia ranked right in the middle at 25th, nearby states such as Maryland ranked higher (3rd). Modernizing the electric grid is a national, not just a local priority. As customers increase calls for more control over their energy spending and expect additional capacity for electric vehicles, transforming Virginia's grid is critical.

On behalf of the members of the GridWise Alliance, thank you again for taking time to consider our strong support for this proposal by Dominion Energy. The challenges we face together are immediate; the investments urgent and the positive results are clear.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Hauser".

Steve Hauser
Chief Executive Officer
GridWise Alliance