

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

The Application of Duke Energy Kentucky, Inc.)
for an Order to Enter into up to \$25,000,000)
Principal Amount of Capital Lease Obligations) Case No. 2020-00322
)

APPLICATION FOR CAPITAL LEASE AUTHORITY

Pursuant to KRS 278.300 and 807 KAR 5:001 Sections 12 and 18, Duke Energy Kentucky, Inc. (Duke Energy Kentucky) respectfully requests that the Commission authorize Duke Energy Kentucky to issue capital leases and enter into all necessary agreements and other documents relating thereto, as more fully described herein. In support of this Application, Duke Energy Kentucky states as follows:

1. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(1)(a).** Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:001, Section 14(2), Duke Energy Kentucky is a Kentucky Corporation that was originally incorporated on March 20, 1901, is in good standing, and, as a public utility, as that term is defined in KRS 278.010(3), is subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction. Duke Energy Kentucky is engaged in the business of providing retail gas and electric service to its customers in Northern Kentucky in various municipalities and unincorporated areas of Kenton, Campbell, Boone, Gallatin, Grant, and Pendleton Counties. Duke Energy Kentucky is thus subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction. Duke Energy Kentucky’s business address is 139 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. The Company’s local office in Kentucky is the Duke Energy Erlanger Operations Center, 1262 Cox Road, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018. Duke Energy Kentucky’s email address is

KYfilings@duke-energy.com. Duke Energy Kentucky's articles of incorporation are on file with the Commission in Case No. 2013-00097 and are hereby incorporated by reference.

2. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(1)(b)**. As of June 30, 2020, the original cost of Duke Energy Kentucky's property was \$2,818,802,000. The Company's principal properties consist of electric generating plants, and gas and electric distribution facilities.

3. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(1)(c)**. Duke Energy Kentucky proposes, with the necessary consent and authority of this Commission, to enter into from time to time over a period ending December 31, 2022, up to \$25 million principal amount of capital lease obligations (Capital Leases). Duke Energy Kentucky proposes to utilize Capital Leases purely as another form of financing its capital requirements. The Capital Leases will have structures and terms similar to other forms of debt financing, but with the potential, in certain instances, to lower the overall cost associated with financing property acquisitions.

Capital Leases will be used to finance new property, including construction, or re-finance existing property, in order to optimize the cost of financing commensurate with such property's expected life (such property being more fully described in "Property Expected to be Leased" below).

Advantages of Leasing. Leasing can allow Duke Energy Kentucky to access lower cost funds. One reason for this is because lessors may have a higher credit rating than Duke Energy Kentucky, and therefore, may secure capital at a lower cost. Capital leasing may also deliver lower cost funds because the lessor may be better able to use the tax depreciation benefits than the lessee, thus lowering the cost of financing. Some portion of this lower cost may be passed on to Duke Energy Kentucky, along with a spread for profit to the lessor, which usually is at a cost below what Duke Energy Kentucky could have obtained otherwise.

Established financing practices are employed to determine whether ownership or lease (including sale/leaseback) of certain assets is the appropriate method of financing. The impact on earnings and cash flow for available financing alternatives are analyzed.

Capital lease financing is similar to debt except that for certain acquisitions it can be more easily tailored to match the useful life of the acquisition. It is often more effective to enter into a capital lease whose maturity is concurrent with an asset's useful life than to issue a large amount of bonds for a basket of assets having various useful lives. When compared to bonds, the effective cost of capital lease financing may be lower due to reduced transaction costs. And, in the case of variable rate leases, small interest spreads over short-term borrowing indexes such as London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) may be negotiated, thus making Capital Leases a cost-effective source of financing which may lower overall utility costs.

Property Expected to be Leased. The property expected to be leased will consist of equipment used in Duke Energy Kentucky's operations including, but not limited to, meters, computers, and office equipment, and intangible property such as software and site licenses (collectively, the Property). The Property may also include land, plant or equipment in service, plant under construction or land, plant or equipment to be acquired or constructed.

Accounting. Duke Energy Kentucky proposes to account for the Capital Leases as prescribed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Uniform System of Accounts as currently in effect.

The amount financed under each Capital Lease, excluding transaction costs, is not expected to be more than the net capitalized cost of the Property or the appraised value of the Property (in the event more than the capitalized cost is financed).

In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the net capitalized cost of property usually includes installation, training, allowance for funds, administrative overhead and

other costs capitalized in connection with acquiring and placing the property in service. Such costs are expected to be included in the Property cost financed under a Capital Lease.

Method of Transacting Capital Leases. To effectuate the lease transactions, Duke Energy Kentucky will: (1) obtain third-party lease financing for Property acquisitions; or (2) in the case of existing Property, sell the Property to a third-party finance lessor (Lessor), and simultaneously therewith Duke Energy Kentucky will lease the Property back from the Lessor. In connection therewith, the terms of each Capital Lease will be approved by Duke Energy Kentucky's Board of Directors, or by such persons authorized by the Board, and it is anticipated that an agreement setting forth the terms of each Capital Lease will be executed.

In the case of new Property that is acquired or constructed, the Lessor will either: (a) pay the vendor and Duke Energy Kentucky for their respective costs associated with the acquisition; or (b) reimburse Duke Energy Kentucky for the capitalized cost of the property, with Duke Energy Kentucky concurrently paying the vendor the invoice cost; this latter option being undertaken solely to allow for administrative efficiencies.

Related Agreements. Duke Energy Kentucky may enter into one or more participation agreements with its affiliates and the Lessor in connection with the Capital Leases, with such agreements defining Duke Energy Kentucky's role as principal and, as applicable, agent on behalf of its affiliates for billing and payment remittance purposes. Such arrangements will be undertaken solely for administrative efficiencies and convenience of the parties involved.

End of Term Options. At the end of each initial or renewal lease term, it is anticipated that Duke Energy Kentucky will have an option to either: (a) renew each Capital Lease pursuant to arm's length negotiation with the then existing Lessor or other lessors; (b) purchase the Property; or (c) terminate the Capital Lease.

Pricing Parameters. Duke Energy Kentucky has parameters within which the final negotiated Capital Leases, including sale and leasebacks, and rental obligations will fall, and requests authority to execute Capital Leases of the Property within such parameters. The parameters, as set forth in Exhibit A, would allow Duke Energy Kentucky to consummate transactions when it believes it is prudent to do so provided the terms are within the parameters.

Commission Authorization. Duke Energy Kentucky requests that the Commission issue its order authorizing the Capital Leases now, prior to the time Duke Energy Kentucky reaches specific agreement with respect to the terms of such lease transactions, to provide the Company flexibility in entering into the leases. Such Commission approval will not relieve Duke Energy Kentucky of its responsibility to obtain the best terms available for the structure selected and, therefore, it is appropriate and reasonable for this Commission to authorize Duke Energy Kentucky to agree to such terms and prices consistent with said parameters.

4. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(1)(d).** The proceeds from the Capital Lease obligations are expected to be used: (a) for necessary acquisitions of property, and estimated capital expenditures of approximately \$229 million in 2020 and \$149 million in 2021 and \$202 million in 2022; (b) for re-financing existing property; (c) for such additional expenditures as contemplated by KRS 278.300; or (d) for other lawful corporate purposes. Therefore, Capital Lease transactions are necessary and appropriate for and consistent with the proper performance by Duke Energy Kentucky of its services to the public, will not impair its ability to perform those services, and are reasonably necessary and appropriate for such purposes.

5. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(1)(e).** See Exhibit B concerning estimated capital expenditures, attached hereto, and made a part hereof. Duke Energy Kentucky does not currently have any specific agreements other than those entered into under the existing authority and as reported to the Commission in 2018-00323. Duke Energy Kentucky requests that the

Commission issue its order authorizing the Capital Leases now, prior to the time Duke Energy Kentucky reaches specific agreement with respect to the terms of such lease transactions, to provide the Company flexibility in entering into the leases. Duke Energy Kentucky will notify the Commission of the terms of any such agreements if and when the Company enters into a Capital Lease.

6. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 12(1)(f).** This section is not applicable, since no specific discharge of obligations is contemplated at this time from transacting the Capital Leases.

7. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 12(1)(g).** In Case No. 2018-00323, the Commission approved up to \$25 million in principal amount of Capital Lease obligations for the period ending December 31, 2020. As of June 30, 2020, there remained approximately \$25 million of available authority.

8. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 12 and Section 18(2)(a).** Duke Energy Kentucky is filing the following information in Exhibit C, which is incorporated herein and made a part of this application:


<u>Exhibit C</u> <u>Page</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>807 KAR 5:001</u> <u>Section Reference</u>
	Financial Exhibit	12 and 18(2)(a)
1	Amount and kinds of stock authorized	12(2)(a)
1	Amount and kinds of stock issued and outstanding	12(2)(b)
1	Terms of preference or preferred stock	12(2)(c)
1	Brief description of each mortgage on property of Duke Energy Kentucky	12(2)(d)
1-2	Amount of bonds authorized and issued and related information	12(2)(e)
2	Notes outstanding and related information	12(2)(f)
2-3	Other indebtedness and related information	12(2)(g)
3	Dividend information	12(2)(h)
4-6	Detailed Income Statement and Balance Sheet	12(2)(i)

9. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(2)(b).** This section is not applicable, as there are no related deeds of trust or mortgage documents relevant to this application.

10. **807 KAR 5:001 Section 18(2)(c).** The proposed construction is primarily comprised of installations, improvements and extensions in the ordinary course of business as a utility. It is therefore impractical to submit maps and plans pertaining thereto.

WHEREFORE, Duke Energy Kentucky respectfully requests that the Commission issue an order authorizing Duke Energy Kentucky to enter into up to \$25 million principal amount of Capital Leases, including sale and leasebacks, for the purposes herein stated and in a manner as herein set forth, and authorizing Duke Energy Kentucky to account for such Capital Leases in the manner as herein set forth.

DUKE ENERGY KENTUCKY, INC.

By: 
Karl W. Newlin
Senior Vice President,
Corporate Development and Treasurer

Its Attorney:

/s/ Rocco D'Ascenzo
Rocco D'Ascenzo
Deputy General Counsel
Duke Energy Kentucky, Inc.
139 East Fourth Street, 1303-Main
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513-287-4359 (telephone)
513-287-4385 (facsimile)
Email: rocco.d'ascenzo@duke-energy.com

Duke Energy Kentucky, Inc.

Capital Lease Parameter Summary

Property Description:	The property expected to be leased will consist of equipment used in Duke Energy Kentucky's operations including, but not limited to, meters, computers and office equipment, and intangible property such as software and site licenses (collectively, the "Property"). The Property may also include land, plant or equipment in service, plant under construction or land, plant or equipment to be acquired or constructed.
Use of Proceeds:	To acquire property, fund construction expenditures, refinance existing property or for other general corporate purposes.
Principal Amount:	Up to \$25 million, depending on the capitalized cost or appraised value of the property, plus transaction costs.
Lessor:	One or more lessors to be named.
Lease Term:	To be determined.
Lease Cost:	Aggregate cost of rental payments, commitment fees and closing costs during each initial or renewal period that results in an interest rate (implicit or otherwise) that is equal to or less than those generally obtainable on capital lease financing having the same or reasonably similar terms offered to, or entered into, by utility companies or utility holding companies of the same or reasonably comparable credit quality.

Duke Energy Kentucky
 Capital Expenditures
 (\$ in thousands)

	2020	2021	2022
Environmental	8,121		2,413
Customer additions	29,325	19,470	19,695
Grid modernization	22,361	19,629	21,093
Major projects	55,538	32,289	83,715
Maintenance	96,745	75,574	72,514
Other transmission & distribution expansion	16,566	2,210	2,184
Total Forecasted Capital Expenditures*	\$ 228,656	\$ 149,171	\$ 201,613

*includes capital, retirements, and AFUDC

FINANCIAL EXHIBIT

(1) **Section 12(2)(a) Amount and kinds of stock authorized.**

1,000,000 shares of Capital Stock \$15 par value amounting to \$15,000,000 par value.

(2) **Section 12(2)(b) Amount and kinds of stock issued and outstanding.**

585,333 shares of Capital Stock \$15 par value amounting to \$8,779,995 total par value. Total Capital Stock and Additional Paid-in Capital as of June 30, 2020:

Capital Stock and Additional Paid-in Capital
As of June 30, 2020
(\$ per 1,000)

Capital Stock	\$8,780
Premiums thereon	18,839
Total Capital Contributions from Parent (since 2006)	83,594
Contribution from Parent Company for Purchase of Generation Assets	<u>140,061</u>
Total Capital Stock and Additional Paid-in-Capital	<u>\$251,274</u>

(3) **Section 12(2)(c) Terms of preference or preferred stock, cumulative or participating, or on dividends or assets or otherwise.**

There is no preferred stock authorized, issued or outstanding.

(4) **Section 12(2)(d) Brief description of each mortgage on property of applicant, giving date of execution, name of mortgagor, name or mortgagee, or trustee, amount of indebtedness authorized to be secured, and the amount of indebtedness secured, together with any sinking fund provision.**

Duke Energy Kentucky does not have any liabilities secured by a mortgage.

(5) **Section 12(2)(e) Amount of bonds authorized, and amount issued, giving the name of the public utility which issued the same, describing each class separately, and giving the date of issue, face value, rate of interest, date of maturity and how secured, together with the amount of interest paid thereon during the last fiscal year.**

The Company has fourteen (14) outstanding issues of unsecured senior debentures issued under an Indenture dated December 1, 2004, between itself and Deutsche Bank Trust Company Americas, as Trustee, as supplemented by three Supplemental

Indentures. The Indenture allows the Company to issue debt securities in an unlimited amount from time to time. The Debentures issued and outstanding under the Indenture are the following:

Supplemental Indenture	Date of Issue	Principal Amount Authorized and Issued	Principal Amount Outstanding	Rate of Interest	Date of Maturity	Interest Paid Year 2019
1 st Supplemental	3/7/2006	65,000,000	65,000,000	6.200%	3/10/2036	4,030,000
3 rd Supplemental	1/5/2016	45,000,000	45,000,000	3.420%	1/15/2026	1,539,000
3 rd Supplemental	1/5/2016	50,000,000	50,000,000	4.450%	1/15/2046	2,225,000
4 th Supplemental	9/7/2017	30,000,000	30,000,000	3.350%	9/15/2029	1,005,000
4 th Supplemental	9/7/2017	30,000,000	30,000,000	4.110%	9/15/2047	1,233,000
4 th Supplemental	9/7/2017	30,000,000	30,000,000	4.260%	9/15/2057	1,278,000
5 th Supplemental	10/3/2018	25,000,000	25,000,000	4.010%	10/15/2023	1,035,917
5 th Supplemental	10/3/2018	40,000,000	40,000,000	4.180%	10/15/2028	1,727,733
5 th Supplemental	12/12/2018	35,000,000	35,000,000	4.620%	12/15/2048	1,630,475
6 th Supplemental	7/17/2019	40,000,000	40,000,000	4.320%	7/15/2049	-
7 th Supplemental	9/26/2019	95,000,000	95,000,000	3.230%	10/01/2025	-
7 th Supplemental	9/26/2019	75,000,000	75,000,000	3.560%	10/01/2029	-
8 th Supplemental	9/15/2020	35,000,000	35,000,000	2.650%	9/15/2030	-
8 th Supplemental	9/15/2020	35,000,000	35,000,000	3.660%	9/15/2050	-
			630,000,000			15,704,125

(6) **Section 12(2)(f) Each note outstanding, giving date of issue, amount, date of maturity, rate of interest, in whose favor, together with amount of interest paid thereon during the last fiscal year.**

Not applicable.

(7) **Section 12(2)(g) Other indebtedness, giving same by classes and describing security, if any, with a brief statement of the devolution or assumption of any portion of such indebtedness upon or by person or corporation if the original liability has been transferred, together with amount of interest paid thereon during the last fiscal year.**

The Company has two series of Pollution Control Revenue Refunding Bonds issued under a Trust Indenture dated as of August 1, 2006 and a Trust Indenture dated as of December 1, 2008, between the County of Boone, Kentucky and Deutsche Bank National Trust Company as Trustee. The Company's obligation to make payments equal to debt service on the Bonds is evidenced by a Loan Agreement dated as of August 1, 2006 and December 1, 2008 between the County of Boone, Kentucky and Duke Energy Kentucky. The Bonds issued under the Indentures are as follows:

Indenture	Date of Issue	Principal Amount Authorized and Issued	Principal Amount Outstanding	Rate of Interest	Date of Maturity	Interest Paid Year 2019
Series 2010	11/24/2010	26,720,000	26,720,000	3.86% ⁽¹⁾	8/1/2027	1,031,392
Series 2008A	12/01/2011	50,000,000	<u>50,000,000</u>	2.27% ⁽²⁾	8/1/2027	<u>1,136,202</u>
			<u>76,720,000</u>			<u>2,167,594</u>

⁽¹⁾ The bonds were issued at a variable-rate and were swapped to a fixed rate of 3.86% for the life of the debt. The average floating-rate of interest on the bonds for 2019 was 1.52%.

⁽²⁾ The interest rate represents the average floating-rate of interest on the bonds for 2019. The interest rate on the bonds resets on the first day of every month based on 70% of the sum of one-month LIBOR and a credit spread of 1.125%.

The Company has no outstanding financing leases as of June 30, 2020.

The Company also has \$105,660,000 of money pool borrowings outstanding as of June 30, 2020, \$25,000,000 of which is classified as Long-Term Debt payable to affiliated companies. This obligation, which is short-term by nature, is classified as long-term due to Duke Energy Kentucky's intent and ability to utilize such borrowings as long-term financing.

(8) **Section 12(2)(h) Rate and amount of dividends paid during the last five (5) previous fiscal years, and the amount of capital stock on which dividends were paid each year.**

DIVIDENDS PER SHARE

Year Ending	Per Share	Total	No. of Shares	Par Value of Stock
December 31, 2015	93.96	55,000,000	585,333	8,779,995
December 31, 2016	17.08	10,000,000	585,333	8,779,995
December 31, 2017	0.00	0	585,333	8,779,995
December 31, 2018	0.00	0	585,333	8,779,995
December 31, 2019	0.00	0	585,333	8,779,995

(9) **Section 12(2)(i) Detailed Income Statement and Balance Sheet**

See the attached pages for the detailed Income Statement for the twelve months ended June 30, 2020 and the detailed Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2020.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DUKE ENERGY KENTUCKY, INC.
Condensed Statements of Operations
(Unaudited)

(in thousands)	Six Months Ended June 30,	
	2020	2019
Operating Revenues		
Electric	\$ 164,815	\$ 182,750
Natural gas	56,383	62,387
Total operating revenues	221,198	245,137
Operating Expenses		
Fuel used in electric generation and purchased power	47,002	59,033
Cost of natural gas	15,124	26,937
Operation, maintenance and other	66,801	74,220
Depreciation and amortization	38,840	37,650
Property and other taxes	8,916	7,858
Total operating expenses	176,683	205,698
Gains on Sales of Other Assets and Other, net	60	78
Operating Income	44,575	39,517
Other Income and Expenses, net	1,747	3,783
Interest Expense	12,464	11,253
Income Before Income Taxes	33,858	32,047
Income Tax Expense	5,618	4,573
Net Income	\$ 28,240	\$ 27,474

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**DUKE ENERGY KENTUCKY, INC.
Condensed Balance Sheets
(Unaudited)**

(in thousands, except share amounts)	June 30, 2020	December 31, 2019
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 3,499	\$ 7,146
Receivables (net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$602 at 2020 and \$314 at 2019)	4,785	6,659
Receivables from affiliated companies	10,145	26,116
Inventory	47,286	50,653
Regulatory assets	13,019	14,300
Other	10,530	9,254
Total current assets	89,264	114,128
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Cost	2,818,802	2,739,794
Accumulated depreciation and amortization	(1,003,305)	(991,145)
Net property, plant and equipment	1,815,497	1,748,649
Other Noncurrent Assets		
Regulatory assets	111,070	110,995
Operating lease right-of-use assets, net	8,970	9,152
Other	12,827	11,489
Total other noncurrent assets	132,867	131,636
Total Assets	\$ 2,037,628	\$ 1,994,413
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 37,211	\$ 54,987
Accounts payable to affiliated companies	20,058	12,534
Notes payable to affiliated companies	80,660	82,509
Taxes accrued	12,178	16,336
Interest accrued	7,064	7,146
Asset retirement obligations	4,838	1,428
Regulatory liabilities	15,318	16,112
Other	19,150	20,338
Total current liabilities	196,477	211,390
Long-Term Debt	633,949	633,807
Long-Term Debt Payable to Affiliated Companies	25,000	25,000
Other Noncurrent Liabilities		
Deferred income taxes	240,997	231,695
Asset retirement obligations	45,401	48,352
Regulatory liabilities	133,348	137,624
Operating lease liabilities	8,847	8,989
Accrued pension and other post-retirement benefit costs	29,418	28,360
Other	25,858	24,103
Total other noncurrent liabilities	483,869	479,123
Commitments and Contingencies		
Minority Interests		
Equity		
Common stock, \$15.00 par value, 1,000,000 shares authorized and 585,333 shares outstanding	8,780	8,780
Additional paid-in capital	242,494	217,494
Retained earnings	447,059	418,819
Total equity	698,333	645,093
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$ 2,037,628	\$ 1,994,413