

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**In the Matter of:**

**ELECTRONIC 2023 INTEGRATED RESOURCE  
PLAN OF BIG RIVERS ELECTRIC  
CORPORATION**

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) **Case No. 2023-00310**  
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**SIERRA CLUB’S MOTION TO INTERVENE**

Pursuant to K.R.S. § 278.310 and 807 K.A.R. 5:001 Section 4(11), Sierra Club respectfully moves for full intervention in the above-captioned proceeding filed by Big Rivers Electric Corporation (“Big Rivers”). Big Rivers has filed its 2023 Integrated Resource Plan, including its analysis of changes in load forecast, transmission, the regulatory climate, and MISO. The IRP specifically discusses potential opportunities created by the Inflation Reduction Act (“IRA”).

Sierra Club has extensive experience evaluating the issues raised in Big Rivers’ integrated resource plan (“IRP”). Sierra Club has regularly successfully intervened in matters before the Kentucky Public Service Commission and in other jurisdictions nationwide, including numerous proceedings regarding IRPs. In fact, Sierra Club has previously successfully intervened in proceedings by Big Rivers in Kentucky. As the Commission has previously recognized, Sierra Club’s motion to intervene should be granted because Sierra Club possesses “special knowledge and expertise in multiple areas” and is thus “likely to present issues and

develop facts that will assist the Commission in considering this matter without unduly complicating or disrupting the proceedings.”<sup>1</sup>

## **I. MOVANT**

Sierra Club moves to intervene in this proceeding on behalf of itself and its members who live and purchase utility services in Kentucky, many of whom are residential customers of Big Rivers. Sierra Club is a national, non-profit environmental and conservation organization. Sierra Club has approximately 3.5 million members and supporters across its sixty-four chapters, covering all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. More than 5,500 Kentuckians belong to Sierra Club’s Kentucky Chapter.<sup>2</sup> Sierra Club’s Kentucky address is: Sierra Club, Kentucky Chapter, P.O. Box 1368, Lexington, KY 40588.

Sierra Club seeks to participate in this proceeding in order to protect (1) its organizational interests and (2) the interests of Sierra Club members who (a) are customers of Big Rivers and/or (b) live, work, and recreate in and around Big River’s power units, and who will be directly affected by any Commission order regarding the proposed IRP.

Sierra Club and its members who are Big Rivers customers or otherwise directly impacted by Big Rivers facilities have economic and environmental interests in ensuring that Big Rivers’ plans provide for the least-cost means of meeting customer energy and reliability needs while also avoiding unnecessary pollution. Sierra Club and its members have economic and

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *In re: Electronic Applic. of Louisville Gas and Elec. Co. for an Adjustment of Its Elec. Rates and for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity*, Case No. 2016-00371, Order (Jan. 11, 2017) at 3; *In re: Electronic Applic. of Ky. Utils. Co. for an Adjustment of Its Elec. Rates and for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity*, Case No. 2016-00370, Order (Jan. 11, 2017) at 3; *In re: Applic. of Ky. Utils. Co. for an Adjustment of Its Elec. Rates*, Case No. 2014-00371, Order (Jan. 13, 2015) at 4-5; *In re: Applic. of Louisville Gas and Elec. Co. for an Adjustment of Its Elec. Rates*, Case No. 2014-00372, Order (Jan. 13, 2015) at 4.

<sup>2</sup> Requiring member names infringes on Sierra Club members’ rights of free association. However, if required by Commission order, Sierra Club will provide the names of one or more specific members.

environmental interests in whether further clean energy alternatives would be more affordable or lower risk, while maintaining reliability. Sierra Club members who are Big Rivers customers have an economic interest in ensuring that future electricity rates truly represent the least-cost option, and an interest in the safety and reliability of the electric grid.

Sierra Club and its members also have environmental and health interests in transitioning away from polluting fossil fuel generation resources as soon as possible. Continued burning of fossil fuels contributes to polluting the surrounding communities and to climate change. These outcomes adversely impact the environment and public health, contrary to the interests of Sierra Club and its members.

Finally, Sierra Club and its members have procedural and organizational interests in exercising their rights to participate in this proceeding to advocate for accelerating the electric sector's transition from high-cost, harmful fossil fuel-based generation to cleaner, more affordable energy sources to save customers money, preserve reliability, and assist impacted communities and workers. Sierra Club seeks full intervention to ensure that its and its members' interests in ensuring that Big Rivers' investment, operational, and resource decisions are reasonable are fully represented. Specifically, Sierra Club will investigate, among other issues, if Big Rivers' proposed portfolio is the least-cost option for customers, and particularly if Big Rivers has taken full advantage of the IRA; and if Big Rivers could avoid costs by investing more in renewable energy, storage, or efficiency measures and planning for a faster transition from its existing fossil fuel-fired fleet. Sierra Club may advance other positions as it conducts discovery in this proceeding.

## **II. THE COMMISSION SHOULD GRANT SIERRA CLUB'S MOTION.**

Sierra Club satisfies either of the two independently sufficient bases for timely intervention. First, Sierra Club will smoothly aid the Commission's full consideration of the matters at hand—as it has done uniformly in the past. Second, Sierra Club has a special interest not otherwise adequately represented in this case. The Commission may grant intervention on either basis without opining on the other, and has done so on the former ground without reaching the latter.

### **A. Movants Will Assist the Commission's Consideration Without Complication.**

Sierra Club should be granted intervention because it is “likely to present issues or to develop facts that assist the commission in fully considering the matter without unduly complicating or disrupting the proceedings.” 807 K.A.R. 5:001 § 4(11)(b).

Sierra Club routinely intervenes in public utility commission proceedings nationwide and in Kentucky. *See supra* n.1. In these interventions, Sierra Club advocates for utility practices, investments, and policies that promote the development of cost-effective energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy, which can reduce overall system costs, electricity rates, and pollution while also maintaining reliability.

Particularly in light of that experience, Sierra Club respectfully submits that its participation will help develop a thorough record, stimulate a robust evaluation of the issues to be decided, and inform the Commission's ultimate decision about the prudence, necessity, and public interest in Big Rivers' proposed integrated resource plan. Through discovery, the filing of expert testimony, examination of witnesses, and legal briefing, Sierra Club will help to illuminate the economic and environmental risks associated with continued reliance on fossil fuel-fired generation, as well as the potential benefits of meeting energy and capacity needs with

additional affordable, renewable energy generation or storage capacity. Sierra Club has knowledge of and experience with these kinds of questions, having previously studied, argued, and helped resolve them in Commissions in this state and other states. The organization has particular expertise with analysis of how utilities can avail themselves and their customers of the full benefits of the IRA. Sierra Club will aid the Commission by helping to identify, clarify, and apply key principles that bear on whether Big Rivers' proposals "furnish adequate, efficient, and reasonable service" and otherwise comport with all applicable laws and regulations. K.R.S. § 278.030(2).

Moreover, Sierra Club's participation will not unduly complicate or disrupt the proceedings, and will not be unduly duplicative of that of any other party to this case. Sierra Club will comply with all Commission rules and deadlines, as it has in the past. The Commission has not yet set a case schedule for this proceeding, and this motion for intervention predates such a schedule. Except for Big Rivers' filing of the integrated resource plan, no other substantive pleadings or testimony have been filed. In sum, Sierra Club's participation here will "assist the commission in fully considering" these important issues without any "undu[e] complicati[on]." 807 K.A.R. 5:001 § 4(11)(b).

**B. Movants Have Special Interests Not Otherwise Adequately Represented.**

Sierra Club should also be granted intervention for the independently sufficient reason that it "has a special interest in the case that is not otherwise adequately represented." 807 K.A.R. 5:001 § 4(11)(b). No other party to this docket adequately represents the institutional and policy interests of Sierra Club and its members, including as pertains to the environment and public health. Sierra Club's members have a unique interest in avoiding continued investment in expensive fossil fuel energy resources and infrastructure, especially in light of current and

impending environmental regulations and the rapid development of renewable energy and storage technology. Sierra Club and its members possess the economic, environmental, and public health interests described above. *Supra* section I.

Sierra Club is uniquely situated to represent its interests and the interests of its members in this proceeding as a result of its expertise and experience in energy policy and law, renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, and environmental regulations. Sierra Club's interests are "special," K.A.R. 5:001 § 4(11)(b), because they are quantitatively unique—Sierra Club and its members value their interests more deeply on average than the community at large—and qualitatively unique—Sierra Club publicly advocates for, invests in, and otherwise champions these interests in exceptional ways. These interests are implicated "in the case," *id.*, due to the proposed supply-side and demand-side management plans.

Finally, Sierra Club's special interests in the case are "not otherwise adequately represented," *id.*, because no other party has either the same expertise or the inclination to advocate in the same ways that Sierra Club will. The Attorney General, for instance, has neither the capacity nor the inclination (as his office has stated on the record in the past) to fully represent Sierra Club's more focused interests in conservation and the like, because he must represent the values and prerogatives of ratepayers generally—a broad, mixed obligation that has at times caused his office to take positions at odds with Sierra Club. Sierra Club's intervention is necessary to adequately represent its unique interests in these proceedings.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Sierra Club respectfully requests that the Commission permit Sierra Club to fully intervene in these proceedings, as it has in other recent proceedings.

Dated: October 26, 2023

*Of counsel*  
(not licensed in Kentucky)

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Respectfully submitted,

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that the foregoing copy of Sierra Club's motion to intervene in this action is being electronically transmitted to the Commission on October 26, 2023, and that there are currently no parties that the Commission has excused from participation by electronic means in this proceeding.

/s/ Joe F. Childers  
JOE F. CHILDERS