

Aug 8, 2025

**Via Electronic Mail**

Aisha Collier  
Assistant Clerk of Council  
Room 1E09, City Hall  
1300 Perdido St  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Re: **Advisors' Report on VPP** (Docket No. **UD-24-02**)

Dear Ms. Collier,

Together New Orleans respectfully submits the attached filing in docket **UD-24-02** pertaining to the City's **Distributed Energy Resource Program**.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions related to this filing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B/B' followed by a stylized flourish.

Broderick Bagert, Jr.  
Together New Orleans

**BEFORE THE  
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS  
UTILITY DOCKET NO. UD-24-02**

**COMMENTS OF TOGETHER NEW ORLEANS ON THE ADVISORS' JULY 16, 2025 REPORT**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The most dangerous crises communities confront are those that require either long memories or substantial foresight. The crisis facing New Orleans requires both: the memory to recall what has already happened to us and the foresight to act before it happens again.

## **II. THE VULNERABILITY WE FACE**

We live with a profound and growing vulnerability to power outages. In New Orleans, outages do not merely inconvenience — they kill. They take the lives of our neighbors in the heat. They bankrupt families forced to throw out food or pay for hotels. They shutter small businesses. They drive insurers from our market.

We also face an inadequacy of local electricity supply and transmission constraints that make our power both more expensive and less reliable. Every year the cost rises, and the likelihood of cascading outages grows.

Both threats are accelerating. Worsening storms and intensifying heat intersect with a national explosion in electric load. We are moving toward more frequent, longer and deadlier outages — and the infrastructure that connects us to power is being pushed toward its breaking point.

## **III. THE SOLUTION IS BEFORE US**

A substantial contribution to solving both crises is already in our midst, through the work of non-profits and community leaders — solar-plus-battery microgrids. During outages, they keep critical facilities running. On blue-sky days, they function as distributed, dispatchable power plants: reducing peak demand, cutting costs, and strengthening the grid.

In a few short years, grassroots non-profits have expanded this concept into the largest network of community-based resilience microgrids in the country. The utility system has moved at a comparative snail's pace. A proposal to incorporate microgrids into the utility system has been under consideration at the Council for more than three years, initially in its resilience docket. Two years ago, the Council declared its intent to open a separate docket to fund and expand microgrids. Nearly a year ago, it opened this docket to move beyond verbal support and provide funding and a plan to implement.

## **IV. THE ADVISORS' REPORT**

The Advisors' July 16, 2025 Report could have been a decisive point: the moment when the Council's own technical experts pulled together the strongest elements from every party's proposal, incorporated best practices and laid out a clear, funded path forward to meet the urgent crises we face.

What the Report proposed instead is, essentially: nothing. It identifies no funding, dismissing a potential source on highly dubious grounds, while offering no alternative. It cherry-picks from the benefit-cost analyses submitted in the docket, including some elements of the analyses while excluding others, with no clear rationale, all to find "inconclusive" results. It conjures up hypothetical risks of microgrids to the distribution system without providing any evidence that they are real.

Our community needed a light. The Advisors' Report delivered a shrug. It was written, we imagine, with the intent of being cautious. In reality, the Report is reckless — failing to propose action with anything like the urgency the circumstances demand. We should not take its lead.

## **V. THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACT**

The Council and CURO have before them all the evidence any regulator could need to act decisively, including plans submitted by both TNO-AAE and the utility, the Report's own acknowledgement that the scale of incentives needed over the next decade is of the same order regardless of who administers the program and the consensus Energy Smart battery pilot is a workable platform to support expansion, not deferral.

Choosing delay is not neutral; it is a decision to accept preventable losses of life, health, and livelihood — and to forfeit tens of millions of dollars in federal support that will vanish after 2027 if projects are not operational. Each quarter lost now reduces attainable enrollment, supply-chain priority and the total outside dollars captured for New Orleans.

The twentieth anniversary of Katrina approaches. Two decades after our city drowned, after neighborhoods were scattered, after elders died in the heat and silence, we now possess the technology, the financing pathways and the civic capacity to ensure we are never so vulnerable again.

Together New Orleans calls upon the Council to reject the paralysis and incrementalism of the July 16 Advisors' Report and to act with urgency to adopt, fund, and implement the Distributed Energy Resource Program — which we refer to now as the Neighborhood Power Plan. We have the chance to ensure that, when the next disaster strikes, our neighborhoods are powered, our elders are protected and our city's future is no longer left to chance. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to lose.

**Before  
The Council of the City of New Orleans**

**Re: Advisors' Report on VPP**

**(Docket No. UD-24-02)**

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I do hereby certify that I have, this Aug 8, 2025, served the foregoing correspondence upon all other known parties of this proceeding by electronic mail.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'BB' followed by a stylized flourish.

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Broderick Bagert, Jr.  
Together New Orleans