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NJ utilities plan multimillion-dollar investments

Dawn Furnas (<https://njbiz.com/author/dfurnas/>) // November 14, 2023 //

Two New Jersey utility companies have filed multimillion-dollar proposals with the **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities** (<https://www.nj.gov/bpu/>) aimed at strengthening infrastructure and improving upon clean-energy efficiency.

Jersey Central Power and Light (JCP&L): \$935 million

The Holmdel-based subsidiary (https://www.firstenergycorp.com/jersey_central_power_light.html) of FirstEnergy Corp. announced Nov. 9 it was filing a five-year, \$935 million proposal with the NJBPU for EnergizeNJ, a new infrastructure improvement program “that would strengthen the backbone of its local electric system and provide the foundation for smart grid capabilities in the future.”

The program includes plans for key investments in grid modernization, system resiliency and substation modernization. JCP&L said it is the largest infrastructure upgrade investment in company history.

“This plan represents a transformational upgrade of our electric grid infrastructure, using modern technology and smart devices to help reduce the size and duration of outages,” JCP&L President Jim Fakult said in a statement.



Fakult

According to the company, EnergizeNJ builds upon its 2019 Reliability Plus plan (<https://njbiz.com/jersey-central-power-light-installing-automated-devices-to-help-reduce-duration-of-power-outages/>), which has resulted in improved outage restoration times for customers in areas where smart technology was installed and prevented or reduced the length of outages.

Some of the EnergizeNJ initiatives are:

- Upgrading more than 600 miles of overhead power lines with wiring that supports increased capacity and added resistance to high-impact storms;
- Replacing nearly 50 miles of aging underground lines with modern and more protected wiring;
- Installing 2,175 programmable devices that work like a home’s circuit breaker and automatically re-energize a power line within seconds to keep power safely flowing to customers, reducing the size and duration of outages;
- Upgrading 18 substations to support additional backup power feeds;
- Purchasing additional mobile substations to provide redundancy and emergency back-up in the event of significant power outages.

JCP&L also said the upgrades will help ensure the grid is prepared to accommodate the connection of additional resources, such as solar development and the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. (<https://njbiz.com/jcpl-launches-ev-charging-incentive-program/>)

If approved, the typical JCP&L residential customer using 783 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month, whose bill is currently \$116.88, could expect to see a total increase of \$4.16, or 3.6%, on their monthly electric bill over the the five-year plan. The rate adjustments would take place incrementally, with seven rate adjustments ranging from approximately \$0.10 to \$0.99, the company said.

JCP&L said the EnergizeNJ proposal is expected to deliver an estimated \$3.08 billion return on investment in electric service reliability benefits to JCP&L customers by helping prevent non-storm-related outages and expediting power restoration during significant storm events.

JCP&L serves 1.1 million customers in Burlington, Essex, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren counties.

PSE&G: \$306 million

Also on Nov. 9, Newark-based PSE&G (<https://nj.pseg.com/>) submitted a proposal for a six-month extension of its Clean Energy Future-Energy Efficiency program. This extension is slated to run from July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with a proposed investment of approximately \$306 million.

Building on the company’s \$1 billion CEF-EE program approved in September 2020, the proposed extension would ensure that PSE&G can continue to offer (<https://njbiz.com/pseg-touts-success-of-clean-energy-jobs-program/>) energy-efficiency programs to its customers, the company said.

In May, NJBPU approved a \$280 million, nine-month extension of the program.

PSE&G also plans to file an additional, two-and-half-year extension proposal Dec. 1 that would expand current program offerings and introduce initiatives to promote energy efficiency and sustainability, such as building decarbonization and demand response measures.

According to its website (<https://corporate.pseg.com/aboutpseg/companyinformation/thepsegfamilyofcompanies>), PSE&G serves 2.3 million electric customers and 1.9 million gas customers in New Jersey, as of February of this year.