

**BEFORE THE  
LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
CLAIBORNE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**

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*In Re: Follow-Up Questions to Electric Utilities on 2021 Winter Storm Event*

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**CLAIBORNE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.'S RESPONSES TO COMMISSION STAFF'S  
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO ELECTRIC UTILITIES ON 2021 WINTER STORM EVENT**

Claiborne Electric Cooperative, Inc. (“**Claiborne**” or the “**Company**” or the “**Cooperative**”) responds to the Follow-Up Questions to Electric Utilities on the 2021 Winter Storm Event propounded by Louisiana Public Service Commission (“**Commission**”) Staff with the Objections and Answers that follow.

**GENERAL OBJECTIONS**

Claiborne objects to Staff’s questions to the extent that the questions seek information beyond that which is permitted by the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Louisiana Public Service Commission and/or the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure. Claiborne further objects to the extent any question seeks information that is confidential, protected by the attorney client privilege, the work product privilege, the attorney work product privilege or any other privilege recognized by applicable law. Furthermore, Claiborne objects to any and all questions that are vague, overly broad, unclear, and/or not limited in time. Claiborne reserves the right to supplement its responses.

**Questions pertaining to the Distribution Grid:**

1. How many MW of generation were offline or otherwise subject to unplanned outages during the Winter Storms?
  - a. **Claiborne owns no generation facilities.**
2. What were all identified causes of storm related outages for generation during the Winter Storms for your system? Please also indicate what was the main contributing factor.
  - a. **Claiborne owns no generation facilities.**
3. How many miles of distribution and transmission lines do you own and manage in Louisiana? Please separate your response by distribution and transmission.
  - a. **Claiborne owns and operates approximately 91 miles of transmission lines, 3600 miles of overhead distribution lines and 65 miles of underground distributions lines.**

4. Did any part of your bulk transmission system suffer unplanned outages as a result of the Winter Storm? Please include the following in your response: **No**
  - a. The length of lines affected;
  - b. The specific cause of the outage;
  - c. The time span each line was offline;
  - d. The expected return to full service time and date; and/or
  - e. The actual return to service of these lines.
5. Was any of the utility's bulk transmission system or generating units offline due to planned maintenance when the Winter Storm event was declared? If yes, please provide: **Claiborne owns no bulk transmission or generation facilities.**
  - a. The name of the transmission system and/or generating unit(s);
  - b. The size (KV) and length of the transmission lines, if applicable;
  - c. Why such maintenance was scheduled in February 2021 as opposed to another time period.
6. What was the average restoration time for power outages due to storm damage from the Winter Storms?
  - a. **Two to three hours per outage event.**
7. How heavily do you rely on contracted crews (compared to your own linemen) to restore power during normal<sup>1</sup> outages?
  - a. **Claiborne occasionally makes use of contract labor in the restoration of "normal" outages.**
8. How heavily did you rely on contracted crews (compared to your own linemen) to restore power during the Winter Storms?
  - a. **Claiborne relies heavily upon outside contractor crews to aid in the recovery of extreme outage events.**
9. Could any of those outages been prevented with different preparation or enhanced vegetation maintenance prior to the Winter Storms? **No**
  - a. If outages were caused by fallen or sagging tree limbs, could those outages have been prevented with better vegetation maintenance by your company? **No. Claiborne utilizes a right-of-way maintenance rotation system to maintain its rights-of-way. That system makes use of four means of controlling tree and brush growth within the right-of-way, drum mowers, side trimming, chemical application and spot trimming with a**

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<sup>1</sup> Normal outages would be non-emergency events, whereas emergency events are hurricanes or a scenario like the Winter Storms.

**bucket truck. The entire system is on a 10-year cycle wherein every mile of line is worked by all four methods within that time frame.**

- b. Please provide all locations within your service area that were included within your vegetation maintenance schedule over the past two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.

i. **See a. above.**

- c. Please provide the locations in your service area that received the most scheduled vegetation maintenance within the two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.

i. **See a. above.**

- d. Please provide the locations in your service area that received the least scheduled vegetation maintenance within the past two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.

i. **See a. above.**

- e. Please provide the locations with the most distribution grid damage due to fallen or sagging trees or tree limbs during the Winter Storms.

i. **See a. above.**

- ii. If possible, please explain how many customers lost power due to the vegetation damage in these locations?

1. **No such records are maintained.**

10. How much of your total operating budget is dedicated to vegetation maintenance in Louisiana? Please provide both a percent of total budget and dollar amount.

- a. For the calendar year 2020, Claiborne dedicated \$3,339,884.03 or 15.3% of its Operating Budget on Right-of-Way maintenance.

11. Please provide a narrative explanation of the “winterization” procedures and protocols utilized by the utility for each of its generating facilities and verification that those procedures and protocols were followed.

- a. **Claiborne owns no generation facilities.**

- b. Please indicate whether there are any winterization procedures that were not performed on any of the utility’s generating units for this winter season and why such procedures were not performed.

**Questions Pertaining to Rolling Blackouts:**

12. Please describe the procedures used by the RTOs and by you to determine which load should be shed and for what duration.

- a. **Claiborne has no view into the process utilized in making these decisions.**

13. Did your utility undergo in any mandated or self-imposed rolling blackouts?

a. **Yes**

a. If you did execute rolling blackouts, how much time lead time did you receive from when you knew a blackout would occur to when the blackout took place for the end user? Please include a timeline of all notices received from MISO or SPP (as applicable) regarding the necessity to begin load shedding. **Claiborne receive no direct notice from MISO of any proposed blackout. We did receive a notice from CLECO-CAJUN of a possible blackout but received no prior notice of the actual blackout imposed on our system.**

i. **In that time, were the effected customers notified in preparation? Members were notified of the possibility of a blackout on the day of the blackout however, no prior notice was given to Claiborne of the actual planned outage until CLECO-CAJUN initiated the blackout.**

ii. Were the effected customers notified during or after the rolling blackout? **Yes**

iii. If effected customers were notified of a rolling blackout, what mode of communication was used? **Members were notified as they called in the outage and a notice was posted on the Cooperative's Facebook page.**

iv. If effected customers were notified before or during, were they given a timeline of how long the blackout would occur? **Yes** Was that timeline accurate? **Yes**

b. If the blackout was mandated, who made that decision and was a recommended time period given for how long the blackouts needed / should last? **We believe MISO makes those decisions although we have no visibility into that process.**

c. If you did execute rolling blackouts, how long did the blackouts last? Please provide a shortest, longest, and average time of the rolling blackouts. **Claiborne did not initiate rolling blackouts.**

d. Please indicate the amount of industrial, commercial and/or residential load tripped off/shed during the Winter Storms, including the number of customers in each class and the number of MW by region and/or location.

a. **6-8 MW of load was shed as a result of the blackout event during the most recent Winter Storm.**

e. If you did execute rolling blackouts, were you able to target those blackouts in order to: **Claiborne did not initiate any rolling blackouts.**

i. Lessen the impact on vulnerable customers, such as, but not limited to, those needed electricity for health reasons or those customers who were just getting their power back after multiple days?

2. If not, is there something different that can be done in the future to potentially achieve this?

- ii. Ensure the most power was conserved during a rolling black while potentially affecting the least customers? For instance, were you able to conserve energy by shutting off closed commercial customers and therefore spare shutting off residential customers trying to stay warm in their home?
    - 3. If not, is there something different that can be done in the future to potentially achieve this?
- 14. How many of your meters were turned off intentionally due to rolling blackouts versus lost power naturally due to storm damage from the Winter Storms? **Approximately 2,000 meters were affected by the blackout initiated by MISO.**
- 15. Were any Load Modifying Resources (“LMRs”), including interruptible load, utilized during the Winter Storms? **No**
  - a. If yes, please provide:
    - i. The type of LMR;
    - ii. The total number of MW of LMR; and
    - iii. The duration of their use.
  - b. If no, please provide identify any interruptible customers who were not interrupted during the Winter Storm and provide a narrative as to why they were not interrupted. Included with this response, please also identify any interruptible load that did not fulfill its obligation to interrupt load when called. **Claiborne has no interruptible members.**

**Questions Pertaining to Fuel and Generation Needs throughout the Winter Storms:**

- 16. Please describe the impact of the Winter Storms on fuel costs and the expected impact on upcoming utility bills. **Claiborne expects no increase in fuel costs or impact on upcoming utility bills as a result of this winter storm event. Some bills may be higher than normal due to increased usage but not due to increased fuel costs.**
- 17. Please describe any factors that limited the ability to import fuel to serve load and quantify the level of imports that were limited. **We know of no such limitations.**
- 18. Please indicate whether there were any fuel suppliers who failed or refused to deliver the contracted quantities of fuel during the Winter Storms. If there were any failures or refusal of delivery, please indicate: **We know of no such situations.**
  - a. The name of the fuel supplier;
  - b. The amount of fuel that was not delivered;
  - c. The generating unit(s) to which fuel was not delivered;
  - d. The reason provided by the fuel counterparty for failure to deliver; and

- e. Whether or not that generating unit had to cease or curtail operations as a result of the failure of the fuel supplier to deliver contracted-for quantities.
19. What are your suggestions on how to spread the fuel costs through the Fuel Adjustment Clause (“FAC”) such that these costs are not incurred on a single bill? **We have no suggestions related to this situation.**
  20. What are your suggestions on other ways to share the risk of such effects to the FAC rather than flowing those costs through to customer bills? **We have no suggestions related to this situation.**
  21. How much did the price of fuel go up during the Winter Storms and for how long did it stay at those peak prices? **We saw no increases in price.**
  22. Ultimately, who bears the risk of Locational Marginal Pricing (“LMP”) changes throughout MISO? Throughout SPP? **We believe the member does.**
  23. Could different measures have been taken in preparation for the Winter Storms in order to prevent fuel shortages? If so, why were those measures not taken? **We experienced no shortages.**
    - a. Should these measures have been taken when the Winter Storms were forecasted in weather reports?

**Questions pertaining to customer service and communication:**

24. How many customers do you serve in the state of Louisiana? **Claiborne currently serves 24,015 meters in Louisiana.**
25. How many customer service representatives<sup>2</sup> do you have in Louisiana answering phone calls or making live calls to your customers? Please provide the job title and business address for each of these employees. **During extreme outage conditions we employ 14 members of our team to answer outage calls. We also make use of an automated answering system capable of taking up to 24 additional calls simultaneously. For those members electing to receive calls, emails or text messages, outage notifications are also provided.**
26. Do you make live phone calls (non-recording) to communicate to your customers? **No**
27. Do you answer phones with live personnel or use pre-recorded messages to answer phone calls? **We use both means of answering member outage reports.**
28. Do you have a local (area code within your Louisiana service territory) customer service number, or do you utilize a 1-800 number? **We have both available.**
  - a. Please explain the advantages or disadvantages of utilizing a local number over a 1-800 number or vice versa. **We have no opinion on this issue.**

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of these questions, answering parties should understand that “customer representatives” refer to live, human-being employees of the utility (not a third-party contractor), who are trained to handle customer issues that may arise in the utility’s duty to provide service to their customers.

29. Does your company have local, customer service offices or facilities within your Louisiana service area? **Yes, we have two such offices.**
- a. If so, please explain any perceived or realized advantages of such local facilities. **Our members prefer to deal with local representatives.**
30. On average, when a customer calls your customer service number, how long does it take for them to reach a live person who can answer their questions? **Typically, they are answered by a “live” person before the system switches to an automated system.**
- a. Will that live person always be in Louisiana? **Yes**
  - b. Do customers have to press extension numbers to reach a live person? **No**
31. Are your customer service representatives able to communicate directly to other departments of your utility operations in order to get helpful, accurate information efficiently for customers calling in? **Yes**
32. Do you utilize text notifications to communicate with your customers? **Yes** Did this service work during these past Winter Storms? **Yes**
33. Do you utilize automated phone calls to communicate with your customers? **Yes**
34. Do you utilize email notifications to communicate with your customers? **Yes**
35. Do you have personnel dedicated to monitoring social media pages related to your company as well as social media pages in general and social media trends within your service territory in order to further understand any problems that may be arising for your customers and/or communicate directly with customers? **Yes**
- a. Do you answer questions your customers post on social media? **Yes**
  - b. Do you find a social media presence is helpful in responding to your customers? **Yes**
36. Do you have an automated or advanced meter system? **Yes**
- a. If so, did it function/perform properly during the Winter Storms? Why or why not? Please support with examples and evidence. **Yes**
37. Does your utility utilize an online outage map accessible to customers? **Yes**
- a. Was that map accurate during the Winter Storms? Why or why not? **Yes**
38. Are your systems able to identify whether a customer has power or does not have power? **Yes**
- a. If yes, was this function working properly during the Winter Storms? **Yes**
  - b. If yes, are you able to therefore communicate with customers who have power differently than customers who do have power? **Yes**
  - c. At any point during the Winter Storms, did your company ask customers who did not have service to curtail their usage? **No**

39. If your company realizes their customer service or communications systems are not working, what is your company's response to this issue? What mitigation measures are taken to address any malfunctions? What mitigation measures are taken to explain any deficiencies to your customers? **Claiborne's systems functioned properly.**
40. Do you have a public relation, customer service, or other team in charge of crafting and sending out notifications and public outreach messages to your customers? **Yes**
41. Do you target messages based on relevancy to your customers or simply send general notifications across your entire service territory, regardless of its relevancy for each customer? **Not applicable.**
- If the answer depends on a scenario, please expand on those different scenarios to provide a full understanding of how your teams attempt to best communicate with customers.
  - Does your company believe that targeted messages (or different forms of messaging) are more useful in ensuring accurate, relevant communication to customers? Why or why not? **We have no opinion on this subject.**
  - What are barriers to communicating tailored, relevant information to each customer that would cause a company to rely only on general communications? **In the presence of widespread outages, it is impossible to accurately report in every situation what the problem is and how much time will be required to restore power.**
42. Were you able to get accurate information to your customers before, during and after the Winter Storms? **In many cases, yes.**
43. What is your utility's total yearly operating budget? **Claiborne's total Cost of Service minus Wholesale Power Cost was (\$54,041.169 - \$32,206,286) \$21,834,883 for the calendar year 2020.**
44. How much of your utility's total yearly operating budget is allocated to customer service? Please provide dollar number and percentage.
- Please break down the dollars allocated to customer service based on categories your utility spends in, such as, but not limited to:
    - How much money is spent on human customer service representatives? **Claiborne does not track expenses in this category in this manner.**
    - How much money is spent on automated systems? **Claiborne does not track expenses in this category in this manner.**
    - How much money is spent on physical customer service locations (places where the public can contact either physically or by telephone an individual dedicated to handling their customer service issue)? **Claiborne does not track expenses in this category in this manner.**
45. How much does it cost (rough estimate based on current employment) to hire and maintain one customer service representative? **Approximately 60K/year.**



46. Do you feel your customer service and communication allowed for your customers to adequately prepare for events that unfolded during the Winter Storms? **Yes**
47. Do you believe useful and helpful customer service was provided by your company to your customers during the Winter Storms? **Yes**
48. Based on your company's customer service performance in the Winter Storms, does your company plan on increasing the amount of budget they allocate to customer service? **No**
- a. Will your company ask for a rate increase to do so? **N/A**

**Closing Questions:**

49. Please provide all temperature forecasts you received for your Louisiana service territory (and the source of those forecasts) for February 14-20, 2021 and the actual temperatures experienced on those dates. **Claiborne does not maintain those records.**
50. In your opinion, was your utility adequately prepared for the Winter Storms? **Yes**
- a. Did you customers benefit from your level of preparedness? **Yes**
51. In your opinion, was your response to the Winter Storms sufficient or to a standard of excellence your customers deserve? **Yes**

**Individual primarily responsible for these responses: Mark Brown, General Manager of Claiborne.**