

## CHAPTER 25. SUBSTANTIVE RULES APPLICABLE TO ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDERS.

### Subchapter E. CERTIFICATION, LICENSING AND REGISTRATION.

#### §25.107. Certification of Retail Electric Providers (REPs).

- (a) **Applicability.** This section applies to all persons who provide or seek to provide electric service to retail customers in an area in which customer choice is in effect and to retail customers participating in a customer choice pilot project authorized by the commission. This section does not apply to the state, political subdivisions of the state, electric cooperatives or municipal corporations, or to electric utilities providing service in an area where customer choice is not in effect. An electric cooperative or municipally owned utility participating in customer choice may offer electric energy and related services at unregulated prices directly to retail customers who have customer choice without obtaining certification as a REP.
- (1) A person must obtain a certificate pursuant to this subsection before purchasing, taking title to, or reselling electricity in order to provide retail electric service.
  - (2) A person who does not purchase, take title to, or resell electricity in order to provide electric service to a retail customer is not a REP and may perform a service for a REP without obtaining a certificate pursuant to this section.
  - (3) A REP that outsources retail electric functions remains responsible under commission rules for those functions and remains accountable to applicable laws and commission rules for all activities conducted on its behalf by any subcontractor, agent, or any other entity.
  - (4) All filings made with the commission pursuant to this section, including a filing subject to a claim of confidentiality, shall be filed with the commission's filing clerk in accordance with the commission's Procedural Rules, Chapter 22, Subchapter E, of this title (relating to Pleadings and other Documents).
- (b) **Definitions.** The following words and terms when used in this section shall have the following meaning unless the context indicates otherwise:
- (1) Affiliate -- An affiliate of, or a person affiliated with, a specified person, is a person that directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controls or is controlled by, or is under the common control with, the person specified.
  - (2) Continuous and reliable electric service -- Retail electric service provided by a REP that is consistent with the customer's terms and conditions of service and uninterrupted by unlawful or unjustified action or inaction of the REP.
  - (3) Control -- The term control (including the terms controlling, controlled by and under common control with) means the possession, direct or indirect, of the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of a person, whether through ownership of voting securities, by contract, or otherwise.
  - (4) Customer -- Any entity who has applied for, has been accepted for, or is receiving retail electric service from a REP on an end-use basis.
  - (5) Default -- As defined in a transmission and distribution utility (TDU) tariff for retail delivery service, Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) qualified scheduling entity (QSE) agreement, or ERCOT load serving entity (LSE) agreement.
  - (6) Executive officer -- When used with reference to a person means its president or chief executive officer, a vice president serving as its chief financial officer, or a vice president serving as its chief accounting officer, a vice president in charge of a principal business unit, division or function, any other officer of the person who performs a policy making function for the person, or any other person who performs similar policy making functions for the person. Executive officers or subsidiaries may be deemed executive officers of the person if they perform policy making functions for the person.
  - (7) Guarantor -- A person providing a guaranty agreement, business financial commitment, or a credit support agreement providing financial support to a REP or applicant for REP certification pursuant to this section.

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- (8) Investment-grade credit rating -- A long-term unsecured credit rating of at least “Baa3” from Moody’s Investors’ Service, or “BBB-” from Standard & Poor’s or Fitch, or “BBB” from A.M. Best.
  - (9) Permanent employee -- An individual that is fully integrated into a REP’s business organization. A consultant is not a permanent employee.
  - (10) Person -- Includes an individual and any business entity, including and without limitation, a limited liability company, a partnership of two or more persons having a joint or common interest, a mutual or cooperative association, and a corporation, but does not include an electric cooperative or a municipal corporation.
  - (11) Principal -- An executive officer; partner; owner; director; shareholder of a privately held company; shareholder of a publicly traded company who owns more than 10 % of a class of equity securities; or a person that controls the person in question.
  - (12) Retail electric provider -- A person that sells electric energy to retail customers in this state. As provided in Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA) §39.353(b), a REP is not an aggregator.
  - (13) Shareholder -- The term shareholder means the legal or beneficial owner of any of the equity of any business entity, including without limitation and as the context and applicable business entity requires, stockholders of corporations, members of limited liability companies and partners of partnerships.
  - (14) Tangible net worth -- Total shareholders’ equity, determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, less intangible assets other than goodwill.
  - (15) Working day -- A day on which the commission is open for the conduct of business.
- (c) **Application for REP certification.**
- (1) A person applying for certification as a REP must demonstrate its capability of complying with this section. A person who operates as a REP or who receives a certificate under this section shall maintain compliance with this section.
  - (2) An application for certification shall be made on a form approved by the commission, verified by oath or affirmation, and signed by an executive officer of the applicant.
  - (3) Except where good cause exists to extend the time for review, the presiding officer shall issue an order finding whether an application is deficient or complete within 20 working days of filing. Deficient applications, including those without necessary supporting documentation, will be rejected without prejudice to the applicant’s right to reapply.
  - (4) While an application for a certificate is pending, an applicant shall inform the commission of any material change in the information provided in the application within ten working days of any such change.
  - (5) Except where good cause exists to extend the time for review, the commission shall enter an order approving, rejecting, or approving with modifications, an application within 90 days of the filing of the application.
- (d) **REP certification requirements.** A person seeking certification under this section may apply to provide services under paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection, and shall designate its election in the application.
- (1) **Option 1.** This option is for a REP whose service offerings will be defined by geographic service area.
    - (A) An applicant must designate one of the following categories as its geographic service area:
      - (i) The geographic area of the entire state of Texas;
      - (ii) A specific geographic area (indicating the zip codes applicable to that area);
      - (iii) The service area of specific TDUs or specific municipal utilities or electric cooperatives in which competition is offered; or

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- (iv) The geographic area of ERCOT or other independent organization to the extent it is within Texas.
  - (B) A REP with a geographic service area is subject to all subsections of this section, including those pertaining to basic, financial, technical and managerial, customer protection, and reporting and changing certification requirements.
  - (C) The commission shall grant a certificate to an applicant proposing to provide retail electric service to a geographic service area in Texas if it demonstrates that it meets the requirements of this section.
  - (D) The commission shall deny an application if the configuration of the proposed geographic area would discriminate in the provision of electric service to any customer because of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, lawful source of income, disability, or familial status; because the customer is located in an economically distressed geographic area or qualifies for low income affordability or energy efficiency services; or because of any other reason prohibited by law.
- (2) **Option 2.** This option is for a REP whose service offerings will be limited to specifically identified customers, each of whom contracts for one megawatt or more of capacity. The applicant shall be certified as a REP only for purposes of serving the specified customers. The commission shall grant a certificate under this paragraph if the applicant demonstrates that it meets the requirements of this paragraph.
  - (A) A person seeking certification under this paragraph must file with the commission a signed, notarized affidavit from each customer, with whom it has contracted to provide one megawatt or more of capacity. The affidavit must state that the customer is satisfied that the REP meets the standards prescribed by PURA §39.352 (b)(1)-(3) and (c).
  - (B) The following subsections apply to REPs certified pursuant to this paragraph:
    - (i) Subsection (e) of this section (relating to Basic Requirements);
    - (ii) Subsection (f)(5) of this section (relating to Billing and Collection of Transition Charges); and
    - (iii) Subsection (i) of this section (relating to Requirements for Reporting and Changing Certification).
- (3) **Option 3.** This option is for a REP that sells electricity exclusively to a retail customer other than a small commercial and residential customer from a distributed generation facility located on a site controlled by that customer. The following subsections do not apply to REPs certified pursuant to this paragraph: subsections (f), (g), (h), and (i)(4)-(5) of this section, except that a person seeking certification under this paragraph shall file an application with the commission that identifies a power generation company that owns the distributed generation facilities and provides the information required in subsection (g)(2)(A) of this section. A person seeking certification under this paragraph shall ensure that the distributed generation facility from which it buys electricity is owned by a power generating company (PGC) that has registered in accordance with §25.109 of this title (relating to Registration of Power Generation Companies and Self Generators), and
  - (A) Conforms to the requirements of §25.211 of this title (relating to Interconnection of On-Site Distributed Generation (DG)) and §25.212 of this title (relating to Technical Requirements for Interconnection and Parallel Operation of On-Site Distributed Generation);
  - (B) Is installed by a Licensed Electrician, consistent with the requirements of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; and
  - (C) Is installed in accordance with the National Electric Code as adopted by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and in compliance with all applicable local and regional building codes.

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#### (e) **Basic requirements.**

- (1) **Names on certificates.** All retail electric service shall be provided under names set forth in the granted certificate. If the applicant is a corporation, the commission shall issue the certificate in the corporate name of the applicant.
  - (A) No more than five assumed names may be authorized for use by any one REP at one time.
  - (B) Business names shall not be deceptive, misleading, vague, otherwise contrary to §25.272 of this title (relating to Code of Conduct for Electric Utilities and Their Affiliates), or duplicative of a name previously approved for use by a REP certificate holder.
  - (C) If the commission determines that any requested name does not meet the requirements of subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, it shall notify the applicant that the requested name shall not be used by the REP. An application shall be dismissed if an applicant does not provide at least one suitable name.
- (2) **Office requirements.** A REP shall continuously maintain an office located within Texas for the purpose of providing customer service, accepting service of process and making available in that office books and records sufficient to establish the REP's compliance with PURA and the commission's rules. The office satisfying this requirement for a REP shall have a physical address that is not a post office box and shall be a location where the above three functions can occur. To evaluate compliance with requirements in this paragraph, the commission staff may visit the office of a REP at any time during normal business hours. An applicant shall demonstrate that it has made arrangements for an office located in Texas.

#### (f) **Financial requirements.**

- (1) **Access to capital.** A REP must meet the requirements of subparagraphs (A) or (B) of this paragraph.
  - (A) A REP or its guarantor electing to meet the requirements of this subparagraph must demonstrate and maintain:
    - (i) an investment-grade credit rating; or
    - (ii) tangible net worth greater than or equal to \$100 million, a minimum current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) of 1.0, and a debt to total capitalization ratio not greater than 0.60, where all calculations exclude unrealized gains and losses resulting from valuing to market the power contracts and financial instruments used as supply hedges to serve load, and such calculations are supported by an affidavit from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy of the calculation.
  - (B) A REP electing to meet the requirements of this subparagraph must demonstrate shareholders' equity, determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, of not less than one million dollars for the purpose of obtaining certification, and the REP or its guarantor must provide and maintain an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit payable to the commission with a face value of \$500,000 for the purpose of maintaining certification.
    - (i) The required shareholders' equity of one million dollars shall be determined net of assets used for collateral pledged to secure the irrevocable stand-by letter of credit of \$500,000.
    - (ii) For the period beginning on the date of certification and ending two years after the REP begins serving load, a REP shall not make any distribution or other payment to any shareholders or affiliates if, after giving effect to the distribution or other payment, the REP's shareholders' equity is less than one million dollars, net of assets used for collateral pledged to secure the

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irrevocable stand-by letter of credit of \$500,000. The restriction on distributions or other payments contained in this subparagraph includes, but is not limited to, dividend distributions, redemptions and repurchases of equity securities, or loans to shareholders or affiliates.

- (iii) A REP that began serving load on or before January 1, 2009 is not required to demonstrate the shareholders' equity required pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, and is not subject to the restrictions on distributions or payments to shareholders or affiliates contained in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(2) **Protection of customer deposits and advance payments.**

- (A) A REP certified pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection shall keep customer deposits and residential advance payments in an escrow account or segregated cash account, or provide an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit payable to the commission in an amount sufficient to cover 100% of the REPs outstanding customer deposits and residential advance payments held at the close of each month.
- (B) A REP certified pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection shall keep customer deposits and residential advance payments in an escrow account or segregated cash account, or provide an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit payable to the commission in an amount sufficient to cover 100% of the REP's outstanding customer deposits and residential advance payments held at the close of each month. For purposes of this subparagraph only, to qualify as a segregated cash account, the account must be with a financial institution whose deposits, including the deposits in the segregated cash account, are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the account is designated as containing only customer deposits, the account is subject to the control or management of a provider of pervasive and comprehensive credit to the REP that is not affiliated with the REP, and the terms for managing the account protect customer deposits.
- (C) In lieu of the requirements of subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, a REP certified pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection that is providing electric service under the provisions of §25.498 of this title (relating to Retail Electric Service Using a Customer Prepayment Device or System) shall be required to keep all deposits and an amount sufficient to cover the credit balance that exceeds \$50 for all customer accounts that have a credit balance exceeding \$50 at the close of each month in an escrow account, or to provide an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit payable to the commission in an amount equal to or greater than the amount required to be deposited in the escrow account.
- (D) Each escrow account and segregated cash account shall be reconciled no less frequently than at the close of each month to ensure that it equals or exceeds deposits and residential advance payments held as of the end of the month, and shall maintain at least that amount in the account until the next monthly reconciliation.
- (E) Any irrevocable stand-by letter of credit provided pursuant to this paragraph shall be in addition to the irrevocable stand-by letter of credit required by paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection, if applicable.

(3) **Protection of TDU financial integrity.**

- (A) A TDU shall not require a deposit from a REP except to secure the payment of transition charges as provided in §25.108 of this title (relating to Financial Standards for Retail Electric Providers Regarding Billing and Collection of Transition Charges), or if the REP has defaulted on one or more payments to the TDU. A TDU may impose credit conditions on a REP that has defaulted to the extent specified in its statewide standardized tariff for retail delivery service and as allowed by commission rules.

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- (B) A TDU shall create a regulatory asset for bad debt expenses, net of collateral posted pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and bad debt already included in its rates, resulting from a REP's default on its obligation to pay delivery charges to the TDU. Upon a review of reasonableness and necessity, a reasonable level of amortization of such regulatory asset shall be included as a recoverable cost in the TDU's rates in its next rate case or such other rate recovery proceeding as deemed necessary.
- (4) **Financial documentation required to obtain a REP certificate.** The following shall be required to demonstrate compliance with the financial requirements to obtain a REP certificate.
  - (A) Investment-grade credit ratings shall be documented by reports of a credit reporting agency.
  - (B) Tangible net worth shall be documented by the audited financial statements of the REP or its guarantor for the most recently completed calendar or fiscal year, and unaudited financial statements for the most recently completed quarter. Audited financial statements shall include the accompanying notes and the independent auditor's report. Unaudited financial statements shall include a sworn statement from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy, in all material respects, of the information provided in the unaudited financial statements. Three consecutive months of monthly statements may be submitted in lieu of quarterly statements if quarterly statements are not available. The requirement for financial statements may be satisfied by filing a copy of or by providing an electronic link to its most recent statement that contains unaudited financials filed with any agency of the federal government, including without limitation, the Securities and Exchange Commission.
  - (C) Shareholders' equity shall be documented by the audited and unaudited financial statements of the REP for the most recent quarter. Audited financial statements shall include the accompanying notes and the independent auditor's report. Unaudited financial statements shall include a sworn statement from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy, in all material respects, of the information provided in the unaudited financial statements. Three consecutive months of monthly statements may be submitted in lieu of quarterly statements if quarterly statements are not available. The requirement for financial statements may be satisfied by filing a copy of or by providing an electronic link to its most recent statement that contains unaudited financials filed with any agency of the federal government, including without limitation, the Securities and Exchange Commission.
  - (D) Segregated cash accounts shall be documented by an account statement that clearly identifies the financial institution where the account holder maintains the account, and that clearly identifies the account as an account that is designated as containing only customer deposits and residential advanced payments. Segregated cash accounts shall be maintained at a financial institution that is supervised or examined by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Office of the Controller of the Currency, or a state banking department, and where accounts are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.
  - (E) Escrow accounts shall be documented by the current account statement and the escrow account agreement. The escrow account agreement shall provide that the account holds customer deposits and residential advance payments only, and that the deposits are held in trust by the escrow agent and are not the property of the REP or in the REP's control unless the customer deposits are applied to a final bill or applied to satisfy unpaid amounts if allowed by the REP's terms of service. The escrow agent shall deposit the customer deposits and residential advance payments in an account at a financial institution that is supervised or examined by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Office of the Controller of the Currency, or a state

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- banking department, and where accounts are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.
- (F) Irrevocable stand-by letters of credit provided pursuant to paragraphs (1) or (2) of this subsection must be issued by a financial institution that is supervised or examined by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Office of the Controller of the Currency, or a state banking department, and where accounts are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The REP must use the standard form irrevocable stand-by letter of credit approved by the commission. The irrevocable stand-by letter of credit must be irrevocable for a period not less than twelve months, payable to the commission, and permit a draw to be made in part or in full. The irrevocable stand-by letter of credit must permit the commission's executive director or the designee to draw on the irrevocable stand-by letter of credit if:
- (i) ERCOT performs a mass transition of the REP's customers; or
  - (ii) the commission issues an order revoking the REP's certificate.
- (G) A REP may satisfy the requirements of paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection by relying upon a guarantor that meets one of the capital requirements of paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, provided that:
- (i) The guarantor is an affiliate of the REP and has executed and maintains the standard form guaranty agreement approved by the commission, or
  - (ii) The guarantor is one or more persons that are affiliates of the REP and such affiliates have executed and maintain guaranty agreements, business financial commitments, or credit support agreements that demonstrate financial support for credit or collateral requirements associated with power purchase agreements and for security associated with participation at ERCOT, or
  - (iii) The guarantor is a financial institution that maintains an investment-grade credit rating and has executed and maintains guaranty agreements, business financial commitments, or credit support agreements that demonstrate financial support for credit or collateral requirements associated with power purchase agreements and for security associated with participation at ERCOT, or
  - (iv) The guarantor is a provider of wholesale power supply to the REP, or one of such power provider's affiliates, and such person has executed and maintains guaranty agreements, business financial commitments, or credit support agreements that demonstrate financial support for credit or collateral requirements associated with a power purchase agreement and for security associated with participation at ERCOT.
- (5) **Billing and collection of transition charges.** If a REP serves customers in the service area of a TDU that is subject to a financing order pursuant to PURA §39.310, the REP shall comply with §25.108 of this title.
- (6) **Proceeds from an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit.**
- (A) Proceeds from an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit provided under this subsection may be used to satisfy the following obligations of the REP, in the following order of priority:
- (i) first, if available, to assist in the payment of the deposits to retail electric providers that volunteer to provide service in a mass transition event under §25.43 of this title (relating to Provider of Last Resort (POLR)) of low-income customers as identified by the Low-Income List Administrator pursuant to §25.45 of this title;
  - (ii) second, if available, to assist in the payment of deposits to retail electric providers that are designated to provide service in a mass transition event

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- under §25.43 of this title of low-income customers as identified by the Low-Income List Administrator pursuant to §25.45 of this title;
- (iii) third, for customer deposits and residential advance payments of customers;
  - (iv) fourth, for services provided by the independent organization related to serving customer load;
  - (v) fifth, for services provided by a TDU; and
  - (vi) sixth, for administrative penalties assessed under Chapter 15 of PURA.
- (B) Proceeds from an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit provided under this subsection shall, to the extent that the proceeds are not needed to satisfy an obligation set out in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, be paid to the REP.
- (g) **Technical and managerial requirements.** A REP must have the technical and managerial resources and ability to provide continuous and reliable retail electric service to customers, in accordance with its customer contracts, PURA, commission rules, ERCOT protocols, and other applicable laws.
- (1) Technical and managerial resource requirements include:
    - (A) Capability to comply with all applicable scheduling, operating, planning, reliability, customer registration, and settlement policies, protocols, guidelines, procedures, and other rules established by ERCOT or other applicable independent organization including any independent organization requirements for 24-hour coordination with control centers for scheduling changes, reserve implementation, curtailment orders, interruption plan implementation, and telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, and postal address where the REP's staff can be directly reached at all times.
    - (B) Capability to comply with the registration and certification requirements of ERCOT or other applicable independent organization and its system rules, or contracts for services with entities registered with or certified by ERCOT or other applicable independent organization.
    - (C) Compliance with all renewable energy portfolio standards in accordance with §25.173 of this title (relating to Goal for Renewable Energy).
    - (D) Principals or permanent employees in managerial positions whose combined experience in the competitive electric industry or competitive gas industry equals or exceeds 15 years. An individual that was a principal of a REP that experienced a mass transition of the REP's customers to POLR shall not be considered for purposes of satisfying this requirement, and shall not own more than 10% of a REP or directly or indirectly control a REP.
    - (E) At least one principal or permanent employee who has five years of experience in energy commodity risk management of a substantial energy portfolio. Alternatively, the REP may provide documentation demonstrating that the REP has entered into a contract for a term not less than two years with a provider of commodity risk management services that has been providing such services for a substantial energy portfolio for at least five years. A substantial energy portfolio means managing electricity or gas market risks with a minimum value of at least \$10,000,000.
    - (F) Adequate staffing and employee training to meet all service level commitments.
    - (G) The capability and effective procedures to be the primary point of contact for retail electric customers for distribution system service in accordance with applicable commission rules, including procedures for relaying outage reports to the TDU on a 24-hour basis.
    - (H) A customer service plan that describes how the REP complies with the commission's customer protection and anti-discrimination rules.
  - (2) An applicant shall include the following in its initial application for REP certification:
    - (A) Prior experience of one or more of the applicant's principals or permanent employees in the competitive retail electric industry or competitive gas industry;

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- (B) Any complaint history, disciplinary record and compliance record during the ten years immediately preceding the filing of the application regarding: the applicant; the applicant's affiliates that provide utility-like services such as telecommunications, electric, gas, water, or cable service; the applicant's principals; and any person that merged with any of the preceding persons;
  - (i) The complaint history, disciplinary record, and compliance record shall include information from any federal agency including the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission; any self-regulatory organization relating to the sales of securities, financial instruments, physical or financial transactions in commodities, or other financial transactions; state public utility commissions, state attorney general offices, or other regulatory agencies in states where the applicant is doing business or has conducted business in the past including state securities boards or commissions, the Texas Secretary of State, Texas Comptroller's Office, and Office of the Texas Attorney General. Relevant information shall include the type of complaint, status of complaint, resolution of complaint, and the number of customers in each state where complaints occurred.
  - (ii) The applicant may request to limit the inclusion of this information if it would be unduly burdensome to provide, so long as the information provided is adequate for the commission to assess the applicant's and the applicant's principals' and affiliates' complaint history, disciplinary record, and compliance record.
  - (iii) The commission may also consider any complaint information on file at the commission.
- (C) A summary of any history of insolvency, bankruptcy, dissolution, merger, or acquisition of the applicant or any predecessors in interest during the 60 months immediately preceding the application;
- (D) A statement indicating whether the applicant or the applicant's principals are currently under investigation or have been penalized by an attorney general or any state or federal regulatory agency for violation of any deceptive trade or consumer protection laws or regulations;
- (E) Disclosure of whether the applicant or applicant's principals have been convicted or found liable for fraud, theft, larceny, deceit, or violations of any securities laws, customer protection laws, or deceptive trade laws in any state;
- (F) An affidavit stating that the applicant will register with or be certified by ERCOT or other applicable independent organization and will comply with the technical and managerial requirements of this subsection; or that entities with whom the applicant has a contractual relationship are registered with or certified by the independent organization and will comply with all system rules established by the independent organization;
- (G) An affidavit identifying all principals, executive management, and employees, or contract employees of the applicant that exercised influence or control over a REP that experienced a mass transition of the REP's customers to POLR. If such a relationship existed, the applicant shall include in the affidavit the name of the REP that experienced a mass transition of the REP's customers to POLR and provide factual statements as to whether and, if so, how the REP that experienced a mass transition of the REP's customers to POLR settled all outstanding obligations including the return of any owed customer deposits; and
- (H) Other evidence, at the discretion of the applicant, supporting the applicant's plans for meeting requirements of this subsection.

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- (h) **Customer protection requirements.** A REP shall comply with all applicable customer protection requirements, including disclosure requirements, marketing guidelines and anti-discrimination requirements, and the requirements of this section.
- (i) **Requirements for reporting and changing certification.** To maintain a REP certificate, a REP must keep its certification information up to date, pursuant to the following requirements:
  - (1) A REP shall notify the commission within five working days of any change in its business address, telephone numbers, authorized contacts, or other contact information.
  - (2) A REP that demonstrates compliance with certification requirements of this section by submitting an affidavit shall supply information to the commission to show actual compliance with this section.
  - (3) A REP shall apply to amend its certification within ten working days of a material change to the information provided as the basis for the commission's approval of the certification application. A REP may seek prior approval of a material change, including a change in control, by filing the amendment application before the occurrence of the material change. The transfer of a REP certificate is a material change.
  - (4) For an Option 1 REP, the REP shall notify the commission within three working days of its non-compliance with subsection (f)(1)(A) or (B) of this section. The notification shall set out a plan of recourse to correct the non-compliance with subsection (f)(1)(A) or (B) of this section within 10 working days after the non-compliance has been brought to the attention of the commission. The commission staff may initiate a proceeding to address the non-compliance.
  - (5) For an Option 1 REP, the REP shall file a report due on March 5, or 65 days after the end of the REP or guarantor's fiscal year (annual report), and August 15, or 225 days after the end of the REP or guarantor's fiscal year (semi-annual report), of each year.
    - (A) The annual report shall include:
      - (i) Any changes in addresses, telephone numbers, authorized contacts, and other information necessary for contacting the certificate holder.
      - (ii) Identification of areas where the REP is providing retail electric service to customers in Texas compiled by zip code.
      - (iii) A list of aggregators with whom the REP has conducted business in the reporting period, and the commission registration number for each aggregator.
      - (iv) A sworn affidavit that the certificate holder is not in material violation of any of the requirements of its certificate.
      - (v) Any changes in ownership.
      - (vi) Any changes in management, experience, and personnel relied on for certification in each semi-annual report before the REP begins serving customers and in the first semi-annual report after the REP serves customers.
      - (vii) Documentation to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the financial requirements of subsection (f) of this section, including, but not limited to, calculations showing tangible net worth, financial ratios or shareholders' equity, as applicable, and the amount of customer deposits and the balance of an account in which customer deposits are held, supported by a sworn statement from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy, in all material respects, of the information provided. Any certified calculations provided as part of the annual report to demonstrate such compliance shall be as of the end of the most recent fiscal quarter. A REP may submit any relevant documentation of the type required by subsection (f)(4) of this section to demonstrate its ongoing compliance with the financial requirements of subsection (f) of this section.

## **CHAPTER 25. SUBSTANTIVE RULES APPLICABLE TO ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDERS.**

### **Subchapter E. CERTIFICATION, LICENSING AND REGISTRATION.**

- (B) The semi-annual report shall include:
  - (i) Documentation to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the financial requirements of subsection (f) of this section, including, but not limited to, calculations showing tangible net worth, financial ratios or shareholders' equity, as applicable, and the amount of customer deposits and the balance of an account in which customer deposits are held, and shall be supported by a sworn statement from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy of the information provided. Any certified calculations provided as part of the semi-annual report to demonstrate such compliance shall be as of the end of the most recent fiscal year and most recent fiscal quarter. A REP may submit any relevant documentation of the type required by subsection (f)(4) of this section to demonstrate its ongoing compliance with the financial requirements of subsection (f) of this section.
  - (ii) The audited financial statements of the REP or its guarantor for the most recent completed calendar or fiscal year with accompanying footnotes and the independent auditor's report, if not previously filed.
  - (iii) The unaudited financial statements for the most recent six-month financial period that immediately follows the end of its most recent fiscal year. Unaudited financial statements shall include a sworn statement from an executive officer of the REP attesting to the accuracy, in all material respects, of the information provided in the unaudited financial statements. In lieu of six-month unaudited financial statements, six consecutive months of monthly financial statements may be submitted.
- (C) The requirement for financial statements may be satisfied by filing a copy of or by providing an electronic link to its most recent statement that contains unaudited financials filed with any agency of the federal government, including without limitation, the Securities and Exchange Commission. A REP that is part of a structure that is consolidated for financial reporting purposes and files financial reports with a federal agency on a consolidated company basis may provide financial statements for the consolidated company to meet this requirement.
- (D) REPs or guarantors with an investment-grade credit rating are not required to provide financial statements pursuant to this section.
- (6) A REP shall not cease operations as a REP without prior notice of at least 45 days to the commission, to each of the REP's customers to whom the REP is providing service on the planned date of cessation of operations, and to other affected persons, including the applicable independent organization, TDUs, electric cooperatives, municipally owned utilities, generation suppliers, and providers of last resort. The REP shall file with the commission proof of refund of any monies owed to customers. Upon the effective cessation date, a REP's certificate will be suspended. A REP must demonstrate full compliance with the requirements of this section, including but not limited to, the requirement to demonstrate shareholders' equity of not less than one million dollars and its associated restrictions pursuant to subsection (f)(1)(B) of this section, in order for the commission to reinstate the certificate. The commission may revoke a suspended certificate if it determines that the REP does not meet certification requirements.
- (7) If a REP files a petition in bankruptcy, is the subject of an involuntary bankruptcy proceeding, or in any other manner becomes insolvent, it shall notify the commission within three working days of this event and shall provide the commission a summary of the nature of the matter. The commission shall have the right to proceed against any financial resources that the REP relied on in obtaining its certificate, to satisfy unpaid obligations to customers or administrative penalties.

## CHAPTER 25. SUBSTANTIVE RULES APPLICABLE TO ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDERS.

### Subchapter E. CERTIFICATION, LICENSING AND REGISTRATION.

- (8) A REP shall respond within three working days to any commission staff request for additional information to confirm continued compliance with this section.
- (j) **Suspension and revocation.** A certificate granted pursuant to this section is subject to amendment, suspension, or revocation by the commission for a significant violation of PURA, commission rules, or rules adopted by an independent organization. A suspension of a REP certificate requires the cessation of all REP activities associated with obtaining new customers in the state of Texas. A revocation of a REP certificate requires the cessation of all REP activities in the state of Texas, pursuant to commission order. The commission may also impose an administrative penalty on a person for a significant violation of PURA, commission rules, or rules adopted by an independent organization. The commission staff or any affected person may bring a complaint seeking to amend, suspend, or revoke a REP's certificate. Significant violations include the following:
- (1) Providing false or misleading information to the commission, including a failure to disclose any information required by this section;
  - (2) Engaging in fraudulent, unfair, misleading, deceptive, or anticompetitive practices, or unlawful discrimination;
  - (3) Switching, or causing to be switched, the retail electric provider for a customer without first obtaining the customer's permission;
  - (4) Billing an unauthorized charge, or causing an unauthorized charge to be billed, to a customer's retail electric service bill;
  - (5) Failure to maintain continuous and reliable electric service to customers pursuant to this section;
  - (6) Failure to maintain financial resources in accordance with subsection (f) of this section;
  - (7) Bankruptcy, insolvency, or the inability to meet financial obligations on a reasonable and timely basis;
  - (8) Failure to timely remit payment for invoiced charges to an independent organization;
  - (9) Failure to observe any applicable scheduling, operating, planning, reliability, and settlement policies, protocols, guidelines, procedures, and other rules established by the independent organization;
  - (10) A pattern of not responding to commission inquiries or customer complaints in a timely fashion;
  - (11) Suspension or revocation of a registration, certification, or license by any state or federal authority;
  - (12) Conviction of a felony by the certificate holder, a person controlling the certificate holder, or principal employed by the certificate holder, or any crime involving fraud, theft, or deceit related to the certificate holder's service;
  - (13) Not providing retail electric service to customers within 24 months of the certificate being granted by the commission;
  - (14) Failure to serve as a POLR if required to do so by the commission;
  - (15) Providing retail electric service in an area in which customer choice is in effect without obtaining a certificate under this section;
  - (16) Failure to timely remit payment for invoiced charges to a transmission and distribution utility pursuant to the terms of the statewide standardized tariff adopted by the commission;
  - (17) Erroneously imposing switch-holds or failing to remove switch-holds within the timeline described in §25.480 of this title (relating to Bill Payment and Adjustments);
  - (18) Failure to comply with §25.272 of this title; and
  - (19) Other significant violations, including the failure or a pattern of failures to meet the requirements of this section or other commission rules or orders.