

2023 Grid Resilience Committee Report

The Grid Resilience Committee was created in May of 2022 as a result of the passage of H.B. 418 during the 2022 legislative session.

The Grid Resilience Committee shall (53-2a-1503):

- Develop knowledge about grid resilience and critical infrastructure protection
- Invite as necessary, presenters with expertise in grid resilience or critical infrastructure protection
- Discuss recommendations for state action related to increasing grid resilience and enhancing critical infrastructure protection
- Committee shall meet no fewer than four times each year
- Annually, on or before November 30, the committee shall report recommendations to increase grid resilience and enhance critical infrastructure protection, to the Public Utilities Energy, and Technology Interim Committee
- Any recommendations the committee makes in accordance with Subsection (2) shall comply with national standards that are:
 - Developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
 - Developed by a federal regulatory agency or
 - Commonly accepted by the public utilities as best practices
 - The division shall provide staff and support to the committee

Grid Resilience Committee Members

Name	Agency	Organization Represented
Angela Lang	Division of Emergency Management	Division of Emergency Management
Braden Norris	Division of Emergency Management	Division of Emergency Management
Tad Greener	Office of Energy Development	Office of Energy Development
Chris Parker	Division of Public Utilities	Division of Public Utilities
Erick Wiedmeier	Utah National Guard	Utah National Guard
Michael Squires	Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems	Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems
Kevin Garlick	Utah Municipal Power Agency	Utah Municipal Power Agency
Christopher Spencer	Pacificorp/Rocky Mountain Power	Large-Scale Electric Utility
Nathan Powell	Deseret Power	Wholesale Electric Cooperative
Colin Jack	Dixie Power	Rural Electric Cooperative
Carson Pollastro	Wolverine Fuels	Power Plant Fuels Sector

Matt Beaudry	CISA	Member with Expertise in Critical Infrastructure Protection
Hanna Bennett	SIAC	Member with Expertise in Critical Infrastructure Protection
Ad-Hoc Members		
Tyson Jarrett	Utah Department of Public Safety	State Government
Kris Hamlet	Division of Emergency Management	State Government
Judy Watanabe	Division of Emergency Management	State Government

2023 Grid Resilience Committee Meeting Schedule:

The committee met five (5) times during 2023. The following meeting topics were discussed in open public meetings on the dates identified:

January 9th

- Possible funding under IIJA
- North Carolina Substation Attacks (closed portion)
- Roundtable

March 20th

- Update on Cost March Funding Under IIJA
- Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Presentation
- Roundtable

May 31st

- Cyber Threat Briefing- Energy Sector (closed portion)
- Wildland Fire Planning
- Lesson Learned from 2023 Flooding
- Ideas for Legislative Action
- Roundtable

September 12th

- Discuss Legislative Recommendations
- Roundtable

November 7th

- Review of Report to be Presented to Legislative Committee

Grid Resilience Committee Recommendations

The committee voted to make the following recommendations to the Utah Legislature, in accordance with its statutory mandate. Prior to the Legislature's 2023 General Session, the committee also voted to send a letter of support for the Office of Energy Development's request for appropriation of matching funds enabling the state to receive federal grant funding for resilience projects. Below are the recommendations for the 2024 General Session.

1. The Legislature should consider creating incentives for Utah manufacturers of critical electrical system infrastructure, including distribution and power transformers.

2. Legislative leadership and executive entities should advocate against federal Department of Energy regulation mandating amorphous core steel transformers, which provide minimal efficiency gains but are significantly more difficult to produce and source.
3. Amend Section 54-24-201 of Utah's Wildland Fire Protection Plan statute as follows:
54-24-201. Wildland fire protection plan for a qualified utility.
 - (1) A qualified utility shall prepare a wildland fire protection plan in accordance with the requirements of this chapter.
 - (2) A wildland fire protection plan under Subsection (1) shall include:
 - (a) a description of areas within the service territory of the qualified utility that may be subject to a heightened risk of wildland fire;
 - (b) a description of the procedures, standards, and time frames that the qualified utility will use to inspect and operate its infrastructure;
 - (c) a description of the procedures and standards that the qualified utility will use to perform vegetation management;
 - (d) a description of proposed modifications or upgrades to facilities and preventative programs, including a description of the utility's controls and responsiveness to emergencies, that the qualified utility will implement to reduce the risk of its electric facilities initiating a wildland fire;
 - (e) a description of procedures for de-energizing power lines and disabling reclosers to mitigate potential wildland fires taking into consideration:
 - (i) the ability of the qualified utility to reasonably access the proposed power line to be de-energized;
 - (ii) the balance of the risk of wildland fire with the need for continued supply of electricity to a community; and
 - (iii) any potential impact to public safety, first responders, and health and communication infrastructure;
 - (f) a description of the procedures the qualified utility intends to use to restore its electrical system in the event of a wildland fire;
 - (g) a description of the costs for the implementation of the plan, including system improvements and upgrades;
 - (h) a description of community outreach and public awareness efforts before and during a wildland fire season; and
 - (i) a description of potential participation, if applicable, with state or local wildland fire protection plans.
 - (3)
 - (a) A qualified utility shall submit the wildland fire protection plan described in this section to the commission:
 - (i) on or before June 1, 2020; and
 - (ii) on or before October 1 of every third year after calendar year 2020.
 - (b) The commission shall:
 - (i) review the plan submitted under Subsection (3)(a); and
 - (ii) consider input from:
 - (A) the State Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands created in Section 65A-1-4;

(B) any other appropriate federal, state, or local entity that chooses to provide input;
and

(C) other interested persons who choose to provide input.

(c) The commission shall approve a wildland fire protection plan submitted under Subsection (3)(a) if the plan:

(i) is reasonable and in the public interest; and

(ii) appropriately balances the costs of implementing the plan with the risk of a potential wildland fire.

(4) No later than June 1, 2021, and each year after 2021, a qualified utility shall submit to the commission a report detailing the qualified utility's compliance with the qualified utility's wildland fire protection plan.

4. Consider legislative changes allowing Utah National Guard cyber operations activation for state disasters, including the required budget
5. Consider allowing the Utah Cyber Center to support municipal, cooperative utility, and other political subdivision cybersecurity efforts
6. Consider making certain state infrastructure grant funding available and other grants contingent on completion of cybersecurity assessments, such as those offered by the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)