Re: Docket No. UD-24-02 July 21, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

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

FINAL COMMENTS OF TOGETHER NEW ORLEANS REGARDING ENTERGY NEW ORLEANS' SUPPLEMENTAL FILINGS

Together New Orleans respectfully submits the attached Final Comments in Docket No. UD-24-02 regarding the City of New Orleans' Distributed Energy Resource Program.

These comments are being submitted on the morning of July 21st, shortly after the July 20 filing deadline because TNO staff were engaged in tropical-storm preparations through the Community Lighthouse network. TNO respectfully requests that the filing be accepted into the record. The brief delay will not prejudice any party or disrupt the Council's consideration of this matter.

Please contact me with any questions regarding this filing.

Respectfully submitted,

Broderick Bagert
Together New Orleans

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

FINAL COMMENTS OF TOGETHER NEW ORLEANS REGARDING ENTERGY NEW ORLEANS' SUPPLEMENTAL FILINGS

I. INTRODUCTION

Together New Orleans ("TNO") submits these comments in response to Entergy New Orleans, LLC's ("ENO") supplemental filings and in support of successful implementation of the Distributed Energy Resource ("DER") Program.

TNO's comments seek to address two significant defects in ENO's filings: its proposed reduction of the Council-directed funding for upfront incentives and its incomplete and misleading benefit-cost analysis.

Notwithstanding these critiques, TNO recognizes a legitimate concern raised by ENO: assuring ongoing battery energy storage system ("BESS") performance payments do not become an open-ended obligation for ENO customers.

TNO disagrees with ENO's proposed solution of reducing the upfront incentives directed by the Council. That approach is neither authorized by the Council's Resolutions nor sound as a matter of program design.

TNO proposes that the concern can be addressed more directly, by establishing a programwide, not-to-exceed annual budget for ongoing performance payments, beginning at $5 million per year and reviewed annually.

II. RESPONSE TO ENO'S COMMENTS

Two elements of ENO's comments require particular attention: its proposed reduction of the Council-approved upfront incentive budget and its incomplete benefit-cost analysis.

A. ENO's Proposed Reduction of Upfront Incentives Conflicts with the Council's Directive

ENO's comments attempt to rewrite the Council's directive in Resolution R-25-669 regarding funding for upfront customer incentives. ENO proposes both to reduce that funding substantially and to redirect a significant portion of it to ongoing demand-response payments.

The Council made an affirmative determination regarding the appropriate level and purpose of the upfront incentive budget. Resolution R-25-669 finds that "customer upfront incentives are necessary to achieve the Council's goal of increasing the availability of DERs" and that "a customer upfront incentive budget of $28 million over a period of three years is appropriate." Emphasis added.

Ordering Paragraph 3 then directs:

"Upfront incentive funding. The DER Program shall include a not-to-exceed budget of $28 million for customer upfront incentives over the initial three-year Program term."

Resolution R-26-150 subsequently adjusted that amount to $27.2 million as a technical correction. The Council's intent remains clear: the DER Program is to include a not-to-exceed budget of $27.2 million specifically for upfront customer incentives during the initial three-year term.

ENO's implementation plan departs substantially from that directive. Rather than preserving the $27.2 million upfront incentive budget, ENO proposes approximately $15.2 million—a reduction of roughly 45 percent.

ENO also proposes to redirect $10 million that the Council allocated for upfront incentives over three years to ongoing demand-response participation payments spread over ten years. ENO identifies no Council authorization for that reallocation.

The phrase "not-to-exceed" does not require ENO to spend every dollar regardless of participation, eligibility, or program performance. It does, however, establish the amount that must remain available for the purpose identified by the Council. It does not authorize ENO to make nearly half of the approved upfront incentive budget unavailable at the outset.

The Council should direct ENO to restore the full $27.2 million upfront incentive budget.

B. ENO's Benefit-Cost Analysis Omits Most of the Program's Quantified Benefits

ENO claims that TNO's proposed incentive levels would produce benefit-cost ratios of 0.15 under the Ratepayer Impact Measure and 0.16 under the Utility Cost Test. Those ratios imply that the program would produce only approximately 15 or 16 cents in benefits for each dollar of cost.

That result is implausibly low when compared with the benefits quantified in TNO's analysis. The federal investment tax credit alone is projected to attract approximately $31 million in additional investment in grid-connected battery assets—more than two and a half times the total benefits reflected in ENO's stated ratios.

ENO reaches its result by excluding most of the benefits quantified by TNO, including the benefits from the investment tax credit ($31 million), avoided Regional Network Service charges

($4.96 million), avoided demand-response costs ($16.72 million), deferred transmission and distribution investments ($7.74 million) and resilience benefits during outages ($57.48 million).

In total, ENO's analysis excludes approximately $118 million in quantified benefits.

Those exclusions have a predictable effect. ENO's ratios count the program's incentive costs while omitting most of the economic, system, and resilience benefits the program is intended to produce.

The Council should not rely on benefit-cost ratios that exclude the majority of the program's quantified benefits.

III. SUBJECTING ONGOING INCENTIVES TO AN ANNUAL LIMIT

ENO's filings therefore leave one legitimate issue for the Council to resolve: how to provide compensation sufficient to support participation while limiting the total cost borne by non-participating customers.

TNO supports addressing that concern through a programwide annual cap on ongoing performance payments.

The DER Program's other major cost categories already operate within not-to-exceed budgets. Upfront customer incentives are capped at $27.2 million over three years. Administrative costs are capped at $2 million. Ongoing performance payments can and should be governed by the same principle.

TNO recommends an initial not-to-exceed budget of $5 million per year for ongoing performance payments. The Council should review the cap annually, based on a filing by ENO and recommendations from the Council's Advisors, and may increase, reduce, or maintain it based on customer participation and battery deployment; verified battery performance; realized grid and capacity benefits; and the level of compensation needed to sustain participation.

This approach directly addresses ENO's concern, by preventing ongoing payments from becoming an unlimited obligation while preserving the upfront incentives needed to deploy the batteries that will provide grid services.

IV. SUMMARY OF TNO RECOMMENDATIONS

TNO identifies five policy choices as central to the success of the Neighborhood Power Plan.

1. Scale

The Council should restore the full $27.2 million allocated for upfront customer incentives over the initial three-year term, consistent with Ordering Paragraph 3 of Resolution R-25-669, as adjusted by Resolution R-26-150.

The approved funding should remain available for eligible upfront incentives, subject to actual participation, program rules, and Council oversight.

2. Affordability

Program incentives should close the battery affordability gap sufficiently to support actual customer adoption.

TNO's modeling supports the following upfront incentive levels:

- $527 per kWh for non-LMI residential customers;
- $822 per kWh for LMI residential customers;
- $527 per kWh for non-resilience commercial customers; and
- $822 per kWh for commercial resilience facilities.

A program is not successful merely because customers are technically eligible to participate. Incentive levels must make participation financially feasible.

3. Fairness

The disparity between residential and commercial incentive levels should be removed unless supported by a record-based justification. No such justification has been presented.

Compensation for identical dispatched battery services should not vary by customer class unless the record establishes a corresponding difference in the service provided or the value delivered.

TNO recommends that the Council:

- establish a uniform ongoing payment of $250 per average kW-year across customer classes;
- set the residential annual payment cap at $1,200;
- remove the commercial annual payment cap; and
- set the residential upfront incentive cap at $20,000.

4. Protection of Non-Participating Customers

The Council should protect non-participating customers through measures that preserve program effectiveness rather than reduce deployment.

Those measures should include:

- using available settlement funds to reduce or avoid increases in the program rider;
- recognizing the grid, capacity, and resilience benefits received by all customers;
- establishing an initial $5 million annual not-to-exceed budget for ongoing performance payments; and
- reviewing and adjusting that cap annually based on verified program results and bill impacts.

5. Urgency and Accountability

The Council should establish clear participation benchmarks and deployment targets, with review at least twice each year.

The implementation plan should also specify corrective measures if ENO fails to meet those benchmarks. Program success should be measured by results, including:

- battery systems installed;
- dispatchable capacity enrolled;
- LMI customers served;
- commercial and community resilience facilities participating; and
- verified grid benefits delivered.

V. CONCLUSION

The DER Program represents an important opportunity for New Orleans to expand access to battery storage, strengthen community resilience, reduce peak demand, and create a more flexible and reliable electric system.

The Council has already completed much of the difficult policy work required to establish the program's direction. The task now is to translate that direction into a program that customers can use, market participants can support, and the Council can evaluate through measurable results.

TNO looks forward to working with the Council, its Advisors, ENO, and other stakeholders to move from policy design to implementation and to ensure that the program delivers meaningful benefits for participating customers, non-participating customers, and the electric system as a whole.

BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

DOCKET NO. UD-24-02

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on July 20, 2026, I served the foregoing Comments of Together New Orleans Regarding upon all persons listed on the Official Service List for Docket No. UD-24-02 dated by electronic mail.

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