Communication from Minnesota Department of Commerce regarding ECO Online Reporting Platform

July 30, 2024

Greetings ECO Utility Representatives,

Thank you for your continued hard work reporting data into the new ECO Online Reporting Platform.

Based on the utilities' overall progress reporting their data to date, we are extending the reporting deadline for municipal and cooperative utilities to August 31. As you move forward with the reporting, below are some reminders along with answers to frequently asked questions about the platform.

Utility Data Reporting Deadlines

- Municipal and cooperative utility reporting deadline: August 31, 2024.

- Later this summer, Commerce will contact investor-owned utility representatives to begin entering investor-owned utility data.

Points of Contact

- Adam Zoet (adam.zoet@state.mn.us) and Shan Ramalingam (shan@techzavi.com): Contacts for the new ECO online reporting platform (i.e. for any questions regarding how to use the platform and issues/bugs encountered.)

- Laura Silver (laura.silver@state.mn.us): Contact for muni/coop reporting and regulatory review (i.e. for any questions regarding the ECO data reporting.)

Reporting Guidance: Consumer-Owned Utilities (i.e. munis, coops, and aggregators)

- ECO Reporting Platform - Program Admin Module's Electric/Gas Main Data Entry Pages:

  - ECO requirements apply to program years 2023 – Onward (i.e. for both Plan and Actual data reporting).

  - All of the historical data up to (and including) program year 2022 are Pre-ECO requirements.

  - Current program years that will be open for data entry include: 2023 Actuals and 2025, 2026, 2027 Plans (i.e. if utilities select to report a 3-year plan).

  - Historical data years that will be open for data entry include: 2021 Actuals, 2022 Actuals, 2023 Plan, and 2024 Plan.

  - *Please prioritize current program year Actual/Plan data reporting and historical Actual/Plan data years after that.*

- ECO Reporting Platform - Organization Admin Module's Electric/Gas Sales Data Entry Pages:

  o Utilities will need to enter data for years 2021, 2022, and 2023 in the electric/gas sales data entry pages.

- Additional Instructions

  o Aggregator Utilities: Please update your member utilities' contact information when you access the platform for data entry. Also, please update your member utilities' Exempt/Voluntarily reporting status where needed.

  o Independent Munis/Coops: Please update your contact information when you access the platform. Also, please update your utility's Exempt/Voluntarily reporting status where needed.

  o If your utility has a carry forward balance and you would like to use it for 2023 performance, do not enter it anywhere in the platform. Complete the reporting for your actual 2023 performance. Contact Laura Silver (laura.silver@state.mn.us) and let her know that you plan to use carry forward and we will proceed from there. The values shown in the reporting platform will reflect the actual amounts achieved in 2023. Additional language will be added to the regulatory review letter that will serves as a confirmation that your utility is in compliance with meeting the energy savings goal for 2023 once the carry forward balance was applied. Additional language in the letter will also discuss how much carry forward balance is remaining.

Frequently Asked Questions and Other Key Information About the New Platform
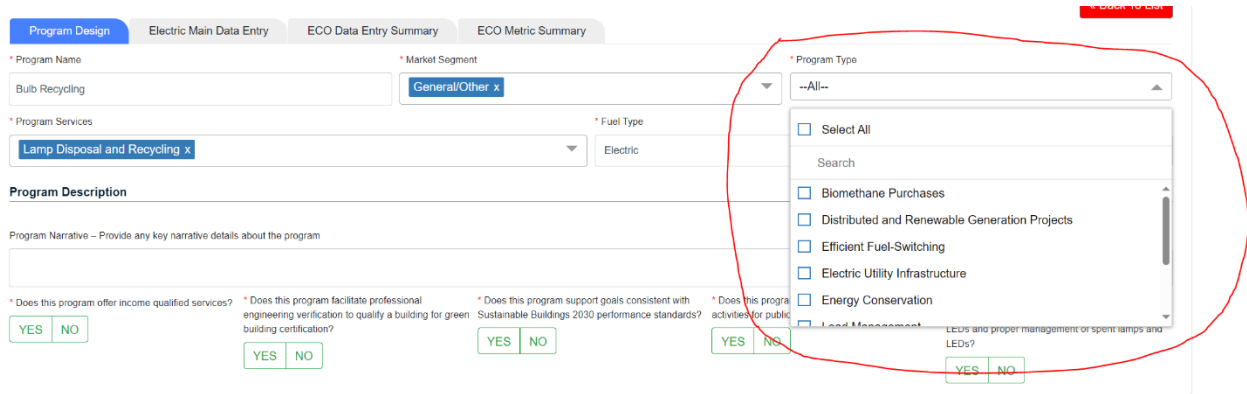
- Default Electric Muni/Coop Line Loss Factors:

  o For electric munis/coops, the platform has applied default kW and kWh line loss factors to current Actual and Plan reporting years. The default values should not have overwritten any line loss factor data you may have already entered. Utilities may overwrite these default line loss factors if they prefer to use their own utility-specific line loss data. The following table below includes the default kW and kWh line loss factor values:

Electric Utility Type	Default Line Loss Factors - kWh and kW
Cooperative Utilities	4.09%
Municipal Utilities	2.81%

- Which program years should I prioritize entering data for?

  o Munis/Coops should prioritize reporting the current program year data first (i.e. 2023 Actuals and 2025, 2026, 2027 Plans).

- o   Then, when finished reporting the current program year data, munis/coops should shift to entering the historical data (i.e. 2021 Actuals, 2022 Actuals, 2023 Plan, and 2024 Plan).

- Why aren't my data entries saving in the platform?

  - o   After clicking the "Save Details" button, if the system prompts you with validations to complete pending fields, those pending ones need to be completed before clicking the "Save Details" button again.

  - o   You should see a green "successfully saved" prompt in the right corner of your window. If not, the data will not be not saved.

- If I delete a program by accident, does it go to a trash bin from which it can be retrieved?

  - o   No. Deleting a program will remove it from the platform and users will have to recreate it.

  - o   If the same program is active in some other org, then the platform allows you to add that back via the org admin -> add program feature.

  - o   As a last resort, please contact us if you accidently deleted a program and we can try to retrieve it from the backend database tables.

- For electric coop data entry, there is a column for # of Customers and another for # of Members. Are these reporting the same numbers?

  - o   The critical data is number of members. This is what determines whether ECO reporting is required for the coop utilities. The total # of members values should match what is reported on the "Financial and Operating Report Electric Distribution" federal form.

  - o   If you are able to also enter number of customers, that will help the Department better understand the magnitude of differences between members and customers and allow us to compare utility size (based on customers) to municipal utilities.

- Total Energy Savings Data Logic:

  - o   In case it's helpful to understand how the platform is tallying up the total energy savings that can be claimed, the attached "FAQ - Thresholds for Energy Savings Types" Word document attempts to summarize the platform's logic/thresholds for when the various energy savings types can be claimed toward a utility's total energy savings.

  - o   The data mapping outlined in this document applies to NEW Actual and Plan data entries. The data mapping applies to each utility's aggregate reported results. I.e. the mapping applies to utility Actual and Plan data that is summed across all of a utility's programs for a particular reporting year (e.g. 2023 Actuals summed across all a utility's programs). For munis/coops, the ECO requirements apply to program years 2023 – Onward (i.e. for both Plan and Actual data reporting).
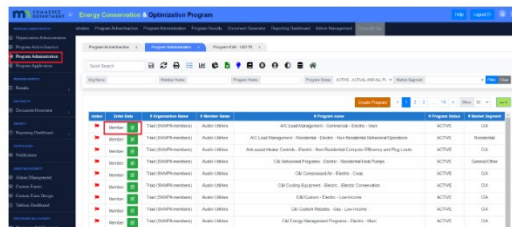
- You will see in the Word document that a lot of the platform's data logic is tied to the "Program Type" that users assign to each individual program that you select from the platform's dropdown list (see screenshot below):

- How can I view ECO Plan and Actual data compared to minimum goals?

  - We haven't built the new muni/coop regulatory letter templates into the new platform quite yet, so utilities will not yet be able to generate draft letters using the platform's the Document Generator.

  - However, utilities should still be able to get general sense of how their Actual and Plan reported data compares to the minimum ECO goals, using the graphs in the "ECO Data Entry Summary" tab. Below are instructions for how to view those graphs in the platform: