

JOCELYN BENSON

for GOVERNOR

Affordability Agenda | Energy

I grew up in a middle-class family and know how hard so many families are working just to get by and pay the bills. And as those bills continue to go up instead of down, we need urgent solutions to turn this around. Because Michiganders pay some of the highest heat and electricity bills in the nation while enduring an antiquated, unreliable grid rife with failures and power outages – all while monopoly utility companies make record profits. It's unfair, corrupt, and it has to end.

As governor, I will not allow publicly-owned and regulated utilities to increase your bills while neglecting improvements to our power grid. Because when we, as Michiganders, guarantee a profit for these companies, there must be accountability. When storms knock out power for days, people deserve fair compensation. As governor, I will stand with Michiganders who are fed up with the choice of paying their electric bill or their groceries.

We need to work together to modernize our power grid and drive down energy costs. As Governor I will use every tool in my toolbox to get this done, and hold utility companies accountable for the service we all need.

As Governor I will:

✓ **End unfair profit-driven rate hikes** and implement a transparent, accountable rate-setting process that puts people – and grid reliability – before profits. We can't allow endless increases to our energy bills while public utilities deliver unreliable, unaffordable service. I will ban rate increases that are only being used to pad profits, I will increase outage credits for residents, and institute performance-based profit standards so utilities only earn maximum returns when they are delivering reliable, affordable service to Michiganders.

✓ **Launch a statewide Home Energy Bills Relief Program** to weatherize homes, upgrade insulation, and replace outdated heating and cooling systems – cutting monthly bills for Michigan families while expanding well-paying union jobs.



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Reform the rate setting process



Protect from unfair electricity shutoffs

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- ✓ **Modernize Michigan's power grid.** Work with our public utilities to conduct a comprehensive audit of our power grid and address the vulnerabilities and outdated infrastructure of our aging energy infrastructure. This will help strengthen our defenses against cyber attacks and climate disasters — with public reporting and clear timelines for improvements and progress.
- ✓ **Restrict political contributions from public utilities.** Too often elected officials remain silent while Michiganders experience more power outages than any other state in the Midwest. I will ban regulated utilities from spending money to influence or elect politicians, ending the conflict of interest so that companies seeking to raise rates cannot influence those making the rules meant to regulate them.
- ✓ **Protect residents from unfair electricity shutoffs.** No one should live in fear of losing a basic, life-saving service like electricity. I will expand flexible payment plans so residents can pay back overdue bills without the constant threat of disconnection, while strengthening enforcement of existing protections against winter shutoffs for vulnerable households.
- ✓ **Expand prevailing wage and create more well-paying union jobs in Michigan's clean energy sector,** ensuring union workers benefit from the jobs and opportunities created by building a modern and clean energy system.
- ✓ **Reform the rate setting process** to prohibit conflicts of interest and ensure an open, transparent, and accountable appointment process to the Michigan Public Service Commission.
- ✓ **Ensure corporations — not ratepayers — pay the cost of increased energy demands.** No customer should subsidize a data center. I will require that data centers — and any other corporations found to be driving up energy costs — cover the costs they impose on our energy system. Michigan ratepayers will not foot the bill for corporate energy demands on my watch.