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Members of the Kentucky Public Service Commission listen to residents in Ashland on Jan. 8, 2026. Seen from left, Andrew Wood, Chair Angie Hatton and Mary Pat Regan. (Photo by Curtis Tate, WEKU)

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State commission limits outside groups from weighing in on Kentucky Power audit

BY CURTIS TATE
KENTUCKY LANTERN

This story first appeared on WEKU. It's republished here as part of the Appalachian News Exchange reporting partnership to strengthen Kentucky journalism.

The state Public Service Commission said Tuesday it will not allow a group of stakeholders to intervene in an audit of Kentucky Power's operations and management.

The PSC launched the investigation earlier this year, though the audit has not begun.

A group of stakeholders, including the Appalachian Citizens Law Center, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and the Mountain Association, had filed a motion to intervene, a request the PSC denied.

Byron Gary, an attorney representing the groups, says it's unusual for the PSC to exclude them from filing testimony and offering evidence. However, he said the commission allowed them a more limited form of participation as part of its request for proposals.

"It puts us sort of on the outside rather than being an active participant," he said. "But we do appreciate that the commission at least put that in the RFP."

The PSC's request says the investigator that's chosen will interview the groups to determine the scope of the audit.

Gary said those stakeholder groups advocate for low-income and energy-burdened residents, a high concentration of whom live in Kentucky Power's territory.

"In the case of KFTC, they have many members who are struggling rate-payers of Kentucky Power Company themselves, or Mountain Association that works with volunteer fire departments and churches and small groceries in Kentucky Power Company's territory," he said.

Residents in utility's 20-county service territory pay some of the highest bills in the state. According to Heatmap, the average Kentucky Power August residential bill was \$238.42. Only Kenergy in Western Kentucky was higher.

Customers who pay 6% or more of their income for heating and cooling are considered energy burdened, Gary said.

The groups he represents participated jointly in Kentucky Power's most recent rate case before the commission.

During three public comment hearings in Eastern Kentucky, residents and local officials pleaded with the PSC to deny the company's request.

The commission ultimately approved an increase, but less than the utility asked to be granted.

The Kentucky attorney general's office functions as an advocate for electricity customers. Gary said, though, the attorney general does not advocate for specific classes of customers, such as residents with low or fixed incomes.

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