

Council Memo

Department Source: City Utilities - Water and Light

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: July 20, 2026

Re: Public Hearing for the 2026 Renewable Energy Plan

Impacted Ward: Citywide

Executive Summary

This is a Public Hearing for the 2026 Renewable Energy Plan. The Renewable Energy Standard passed by voters in 2004 and modified by council in 2014 requires that each year prior to February 1, City of Columbia Water & Light publicly release a Renewable Energy Plan outlining compliance with the ordinance. The Renewable Energy Plan provides details on the amount of renewable energy provided, descriptions of current and future projects, and the forecast for current and future renewable energy portfolios. Staff reports that 22.57% of all energy sources for 2025 electric retail usage was provided by the 2025 renewable portfolio.

The 2026 Renewable Energy Plan was publicly released January 30, 2026. It has been reviewed by the Water & Light Advisory Board and the Climate & Environment Commission. Ordinance requires a public hearing and a vote to approve the plan.

Discussion

Columbia Water & Light has been pursuing renewable energy sources since the mandate was passed by voter approval in 2004. The following is a list of the renewable energy sources as a percentage of load for 2025:

- Bluegrass Ridge Wind: 1.64%
- Crystal Lake Wind: 15.99%
- Columbia Landfill Gas: 1.41%
- Distributed Photovoltaics: 0.64%
- Jefferson City Landfill Gas: 1.27%
- Truman Solar: 1.58%
- Columbia Solar: .03%

Renewable Energy Total: 284,780 megawatt hours (MWH) or 22.57%. If the contracted IronStar Wind project was not delayed, the current 25% renewable energy goal would have been exceeded.

As outlined in Section 27-106(b) of the Renewable Energy Standard Ordinance, renewable energy cannot cause electric rates to increase more than 3% above what rates would be with non-renewable energy. Based on the methodology detailed in the Renewable Energy

Plan, the total expense of renewable energy resources was 72.4% of the allowed cost limit of \$4,787,669. While the additional cost will not result in a recommended rate increase, consideration for the increasing cost of renewables should be made when evaluating future rate increases.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: N/A
Long-Term Impact: N/A

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
6/15/2026	R115-26 Setting a public hearing: consider the Water & Light 2026 Renewable Energy Plan.
08/04/2025	PH23-25 Consider the Water and Light 2025 Renewable Energy Plan.
07/21/2025	R98-25 Setting a public hearing: consider the Water and Light 2025 Renewable Energy Plan.
8/5/2024	PH27-24 Consider the Water and Light 2024 Renewable Energy Plan
7/1/2024	R120-24 Setting a public hearing: consider the Water & Light 2024 Renewable Energy Plan.
07/17/2023	PH27-23 Consider the Water and Light 2023 Renewable Energy Plan
06/20/2023	R95-23 Setting a public hearing: consider the Water & Light 2023 Renewable Energy Plan.
7/18/2022	PH25-22 Consider the Water and Light 2022 Renewable Energy Plan
7/05/2022	R95-22 Setting a public hearing: consider the Water & Light 2022 Renewable Energy Plan.
7/06/2021	PH26-21 Consider the Water and Light 2021 Renewable Energy Plan
06/21/2021	R94-21 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light

Date	Action
11/16/2020	2021 Renewable Energy Plan PH44-20 Consider the Water and Light 2020 Renewable Energy Report
11/02/2020	R141-20 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light 2020 Renewable Energy Report
06/03/2019	PH25-19 Consider the Water and Light 2019 Renewable Energy Report
05/20/2019	R73-19 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light 2019 Renewable Energy Report
05/21/2018	PH15-18 Consider the Water and Light 2018 Renewable Energy Report
05/07/2018	R65-18 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light 2018 Renewable Energy Report
04/17/2017	PH10-17 Consider the Water and Light 2017 Renewable Energy Report
04/03/2017	R41-17 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light 2017 Renewable Energy Report
05/02/2016	PH15-16 Consider the Water and Light 2016 Renewable Energy Report
04/18/2016	R41-16 Setting a public hearing; consider the Water and Light 2016 Renewable Energy Report

Suggested Council Action

Accept the 2026 Renewable Energy Plan