

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of the Establishment of a	)	
Working Case for the Development of Best	)	File No. OW-2025-0314
Practices for Wildfire Mitigation in Missouri	)	

**NEXTERA ENERGY TRANSMISSION SOUTHWEST, LLC'S**  
**RESPONSE TO WILDFIRE PLAN DETAILS**

Pursuant to the October 31, 2025 *Order Setting Time for Responses* (“Order”), NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC (“NEET Southwest”) hereby submits its Response to the plan information included in Attachment A to the Order.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

NEET Southwest appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Missouri Public Service Commission Staff’s (“Staff”) draft framework for Electric Utility Wildfire Emergency Response and Recovery Plans issued October 31, 2025 (“Proposed Framework,” Attachment A to the Order). NEET Southwest supports the Commission’s proactive effort to strengthen wildfire preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery in Missouri. Overall, NEET Southwest finds the proposed framework to be practical, balanced, and consistent with industry emergency-management practices. NEET Southwest is providing points of comment for further elaboration and revision based on its review of the Proposed Framework and its general experience as a utility company.

As background, NEET Southwest currently operates transmission infrastructure in Barton and Jasper Counties in Missouri, which is part of the Wolf Creek-Blackberry 345 kV Transmission Project (“WCB Project”). While the WCB Project is approximately 92 miles total, only nine miles are in Missouri with the other 83 miles traversing five counties in Kansas. The WCB Project is

NEET Southwest's only asset in Missouri at this time.

NEET Southwest is a direct, wholly-owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Transmission, LLC ("NEET"), which, in turn is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy, Inc. ("NextEra Energy"). NEET serves as the holding company for NextEra Energy's regulated transmission utilities across North America outside the State of Florida. The NEET portfolio includes regulated transmission subsidiaries with operating assets in Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Texas, Indiana, New Hampshire, New York, Nevada, California, and Ontario, Canada. NextEra Energy is a proven, experienced owner of electric transmission and generation facilities across North America.

As a NextEra Energy subsidiary, NEET Southwest possesses significant operational, and technical expertise regarding the safe operation of electric infrastructure and industry best practices, including as they relate to wildfire mitigation, response and recovery.

## **II. COMMENTS REGARDING PROPOSED FRAMEWORK**

### **A. General Support for Proposed Factors**

NEET Southwest agrees that a coordinated holistic approach to wildfire risk is critical to ensuring public safety and system reliability. The Proposed Framework appropriately allows utilities to tailor their wildfire-mitigation efforts to their respective service territories, system designs, and available resources.

NEET Southwest appreciates that the Commission intends these plans to establish a base-level preparedness standard without requiring unnecessary or duplicative costs. NEET Southwest supports that goal and looks forward to participating in this Working Case as well as future rulemaking cases as necessary to adopt regulations consistent with findings of this Working Case.

## **B. Clarification on Procedural Elements of Complying with Proposed Framework**

The Proposed Framework identifies the “essential elements” of wildfire preparedness but does not specify the process for submitting, reviewing, or updating the plans.<sup>1</sup> NEET Southwest notes the following areas that require additional detail and suggests potential methods to resolve the lack of detail. NEET Southwest notes that to the extent the Commission considers adopting specific requirements, it must be done in accordance with rulemaking procedures (*see e.g.*, 20 CSR 4240-2.180).

The Proposed Framework requires utilities to assess numerous factors relating to wildfire preparedness including risk assessments, area resources, action and training plans, and to coordinate with third parties, including local emergency responders, customers, and service providers to enhance community preparedness.

For each potential obligation, however, further clarification would be helpful regarding: 1) the type of informational filing that must be shared with the Commission, and if so, in what format and at what interval; 2) if the filing is informational only or subject to review, comment, and/or approval; 3) if there are imposed frequencies with which the obligation should be revisited; and 4) what level of discretion a utility may use to customize obligations in light of their specific operations.

### *1. Format and Frequency*

NEET Southwest suggests that the Commission adopt procedures that maintain flexibility for utilities to integrate wildfire planning within existing emergency-preparedness and reliability programs. Rather than create a single one-size-fits-all program, NEET Southwest recommends

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<sup>1</sup> In Section C below, NEET Southwest provides comments on customization within the “essential elements” included in the Proposed Framework.

that each utility deliver to Staff a plan that includes risk assessment, area resources, action and training plans, and third-party coordination, to the extent applicable to each utility (collectively, “Wildfire Plan”). After submittal, Staff can submit comments and questions for the utility’s review. Then, at annual intervals, the utility can assess its plan and submit revisions or communicate to Staff that the Wildfire Plan does not need additional updates. More immediate updates may be appropriate to update emergency contact information or critical changes in the status of plans.

## *2. Informational Submittal Versus Review and Approval*

NEET Southwest suggests that the submittal be a confidential submittal to Staff for comment and review by Staff and the Commission, as opposed to submission in a public case with Commission approval for several reasons. First, Wildfire Reports are operational, dynamic planning tools rather than policy documents. Requiring formal Commission approval would create delay and rigidity inconsistent with emergency-readiness needs. An informational filing allows utilities to adapt plans in real time while keeping Staff fully informed.

Second, many planning steps relating to wildfire preparedness reveal sensitive critical infrastructure information. For example, assessments may identify locations of weaknesses or high-risk assets and describe emergency plans that would be applicable in both accidental fires and intentional acts to destabilize the power grid. This information and process would not meaningfully benefit from public review. Additionally, if the Wildfire Plans were published, even with confidentiality protections, utilities may be less forthcoming in order to protect sensitive information.

Third, utilities may already be required by other governmental agencies, NERC guidance, and/or industry best practices to maintain emergency plans. If the Commission began a process

of approving or disapproving operational protocols for emergency response, it could lead to circumstances where utilities are obligated to follow a Commission order that is contrary to or inconsistent with requirements issued by governmental agencies, NERC guidance, or industry best practices. This is not the purpose of this planning exercise and should be avoided.

Staff and Commission review and informal feedback is sufficient to meet the Commission's goal, which is to ensure that utilities have base-level plans and not to impose new regulatory burdens or costly compliance programs.

### **C. Areas of Potential Refinement**

#### *1. The "Essential Elements" Should Be Customizable*

Staff's Proposed Plan refers to an outline of issues as "Essential Elements." That terminology could be interpreted to mean that every Wildfire Plan needs to formally address each of the listed elements and have positive responses to each. NEET Southwest contends that utilities be afforded latitude to customize the Essential Elements to suit the unique needs of each utility. This should include the ability to expand, refine, or treat as inapplicable certain Essential Elements.

Electric utilities in Missouri vary greatly and include large, vertically integrated companies serving hundreds of thousands of customers across the state; small municipal utilities serving a single community; rural electric cooperatives operating low-density networks over thousands of miles of distribution lines; and transmission-only utilities with no retail customers. Each utility will differ in how wildfire response should be managed, and each should be allowed to customize the response tools it includes in its response strategies.

NEET Southwest operates a single transmission line, only nine miles of which is in Missouri. Because the line is newly constructed and has been in operation for less than a year, the transmission infrastructure meets modern safety standards. Per its Certificate of Convenience and

Necessity, NEET Southwest is already required to prepare and furnish numerous plans relating to wildfire responsiveness to the Commission, including an Emergency Management Plan, Severe Weather Activities Procedures, Regulatory Communications Plans, Line Restoration Plans, and Vendor Contracts.<sup>2</sup> Last, as a transmission-only operator, NEET Southwest has no retail customers and only serves to connect to substations.

Given NEET Southwest's unique circumstances, its Wildfire Plan may have a very perfunctory section on customer outreach (Essential Element 10) (because it has no retail customers) and it likely does not need to include a prioritization matrix for restoration (Essential Element 11) because it only operates a single line between two substations. Its sections on emergency management strategies might also lean heavily on its recently filed emergency and restoration plans. Conversely, a utility with complex retail customer services, large service territories, and no filed plans may need to craft a much different Wildfire Plan to address its unique weaknesses.

The rigidity of providing a Wildfire Plan that formulaically addresses each Essential Element defeats the point of conducting an assessment addressing the unique risks for a utility and then creating a bespoke action plans to address those risks. Instead, the Commission should adopt a requirement that each utility identify its risks, and then based on those risks, choose between the suite of response options that are listed in the Proposed Framework.

## *2. Wildfire Report Elements that Require Third Party Cooperation Should Be Treated With Some Additional Leeway*

Several of Staff's Essential Elements require interaction with third parties, including

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<sup>2</sup> See "Post-Construction Compliance Filing," EA-2022-0234 (Sept. 18, 2025).

emergency responders, customer outreach, entering into mutual assistance agreements, and communications with local officials. Per the preceding Section C.1 of this Response, NEET Southwest’s position is that these should be customizable or subject to omission depending on the circumstances of the individual utility.

To the extent these are required, the Commission should clarify that utilities are not subject to penalties if third parties refuse to engage in reasonable requests to participate in coordinated planning (or are unreasonable when engaged). NEET Southwest recognizes the importance of working with local stakeholders but recognizes that some may not have the bandwidth or desire to engage with tabletop training exercises or other advance planning. For these types of Essential Elements, if made to be formal requirements, the Commission should add language to any final rule stating that the “utility should make reasonable efforts to” complete the given action.

### **III. IV. IMPLEMENTATION, WORKING GROUP PROCESS, AND POTENTIAL RULEMAKING**

NEET Southwest strongly supports the Commission’s collaborative “working case” approach to develop best practices. However, to the extent the working group process identifies a need for new or mandatory standards, the Company respectfully requests that the Commission open a separate rulemaking docket to consider and adopt any such requirements through formal notice-and-comment procedures.

This would preserve transparency, allow full stakeholder participation, and provide the procedural safeguards necessary before imposing any binding obligations on utilities.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

NEET Southwest thanks the Commission and Staff for initiating this important effort to enhance utility wildfire preparedness. We support adoption of the proposed plan elements with the

clarifications and refinements noted above. NEET Southwest remains committed to providing reasonable responses, participating in the working group process, and sharing practical experience to ensure that Missouri's electric utilities can prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events effectively and efficiently.

Dated: December 12, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

POLSINELLI PC

By: /s/ Andrew O. Schulte

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ATTORNEYS FOR NEXTERA ENERGY  
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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I do hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing document has been emailed to all parties of record this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2025.

/s/ Andrew O. Schulte