



Empowering Public Participation in Utility Decisions

The electric grid is undergoing a critical transformation, but the communities hosting its infrastructure and the customers who fund it are often excluded from vital decision-making processes. Intervenor compensation programs provide crucial financial support, allowing consumer advocates, community members and other stakeholders to actively participate in complex public utility decisions. Without this support, only those with deep pockets get a seat at the table — creating a disadvantage for consumers.

The need for genuine community engagement

Energy decisions profoundly impact communities, yet the process is often **opaque and inaccessible**. Vital concerns—like who benefits, who pays and how bills are affected by new energy infrastructure—are frequently resolved in **complex, closed-door regulatory proceedings**. This leaves many feeling voiceless in choices that directly shape their lives.

To build a **more equitable and affordable energy future**, customers need three things:

- **Transparent information** on their monthly bills.
- **Tools to manage** usage and costs.
- **Meaningful opportunities** to communicate directly with utilities and decision-makers.

“An equitable energy future demands that communities have clear information, practical tools, and a meaningful voice in the decisions that shape their power and their lives.” – Jolette Westbrook, Director & Senior Attorney, Regulatory Solutions, Environmental Defense Fund

Ensuring every voice shapes our energy future

Intervenor compensation programs are crucial because they **democratize energy decisions**, helping ensure all voices, not just those with substantial financial resources, can shape our energy future. These efforts foster **transparency and fairness**, holding powerful utilities accountable and driving outcomes that truly benefit communities and the environment.

Effective intervenor compensation programs:

- **Facilitate the inclusion** of community members, environmental advocates and consumer groups in critical energy discussions.
- **Encourage external scrutiny** of proposals and plans in energy proceedings.
- Help shape energy decisions that are **fair, just, and beneficial for all consumers**, especially vulnerable community members.

The 2023 report [Overly Impacted and Rarely Heard](#) discusses how and why community voices are important for energy regulatory processes.

