



To: Interested parties

From: Fight Corporate Monopolies

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Subject: Michigan's next representatives must act to curb DTE's greed

Taking on DTE Energy's outrageous profiteering is a winning position in Michigan's upcoming election. As Michiganders are squeezed by relentless rate hikes and widespread outages, public consensus is mounting around holding DTE and Michigan's other investor-owned utilities accountable. [72 percent](#) of Michiganders support a ballot initiative that would curb DTE's political power by banning utilities' political spending. Michigan's legislature is also currently considering legislation that would [cap utilities' authorized profits](#) and impose [other accountability measures](#).

However, the election also creates an inflection point for these efforts to curb DTE's greed: Michigan's incoming Governor will have the opportunity to appoint an attorney general and Public Service Commissioners who will decide the fate of DTE's pending and future rate applications.

Michigan's next Senator and Congressional representatives can provide critical leadership – even before taking office – to curb DTE's greed and bring real and lasting rate relief to Michiganders. This memo summarizes DTE's track record of unreasonable rate increases and unreliable service, and lays out opportunities for Michigan's next representatives to intervene at both the state and federal levels.

Michiganders are being squeezed by DTE's relentless rate hikes

- DTE has raised its rates 5 times in the last 7 years; it filed its pending rate hike request [just weeks](#) after receiving a \$242 million increase. This frequency of rate increase requests means that regulators and stakeholders are having to begin reviewing a new application from the utility before its last rate hike even goes into effect, masking the cumulative impacts on consumers.
- DTE's [latest request to raise rates](#) – by a staggering \$474 million – would increase rates by nearly 10 percent and force its customers to pay an extra \$150 to \$180 per year.
- For many Michiganders, particularly low-income households and seniors on fixed incomes, these increases are unsustainable: Michigan families and businesses already pay the [highest energy bills in the Midwest](#).

- Nearly 1 in 4 DTE customers are behind on their electric bills; since 2025, nearly [365,000 DTE customers](#) (16 percent of its [customer base](#)) have been disconnected because they have fallen deeply into debt.
- DTE is also weaponizing its frequent rate hikes to pressure regulators to approve a controversial deal the utility has struck with an Oracle subsidiary to supply power to a new AI data center in Saline Township. DTE has promised that it will “[pause](#)” any future rate hike requests until 2028 — but only if the currently under-construction data center comes online with no delay.

DTE’s greed is to blame for unaffordable and unreliable service

- In the summer of 2026, widespread outages left [nearly half a million Michiganders without power](#) for as long as 5 days and led to the [deaths of 6 people](#), including [3 children](#).
- But this outage is part of a larger trend: a [2025 report](#) from Citizens Utility Board found that Michigan’s utilities take longer to restore power after an outage than any other state.
- DTE’s rate increases have not translated into sustained improvements to service quality and reliability – instead, the same report found that over the in recent years, the length of outages has increased.
- DTE’s unreliable service and repeated rate hikes are compounded by an outdated regulatory model that incentivizes DTE and Michigan’s other regulated investor-owned utilities to spend excessively on infrastructure and underspend on grid maintenance.
- As a result, approximately [17 cents of every dollar of DTE customers' bills](#) goes directly to shareholders, a profit margin that is well above the national average.
- These earnings are bolstered by a generous return on equity (ROE); yet in its pending rate hike request, DTE is seeking to increase its ROE even further (from [9.9 to 10.25](#)). While shareholders might enjoy higher earnings from this increase, DTE customers are likely to be left in the dark.

Michiganders deserve elected representatives who will end DTE’s profiteering

Michigan’s incoming Congressional delegation can curb DTE’s greed and deliver lasting relief by intervening at both the state and federal levels.

At the state level, federal candidates can use the bully pulpit to:

- Bring DTE’s pending rate increase into the political spotlight, from the campaign trail and beyond. Michigan’s utility regulators are scheduled to complete their review of this rate hike by February 2027.
- Intervene in future rate hike requests to build political pressure for rate reductions. For more information on how to do this, see Economic Liberties’ December 2025 policy brief, “[Elected Officials Can Lower Costs by Getting Involved in Utility Rate Cases](#).”
- Endorse future state legislation that can address the acute and structural drivers of increasing electricity rates.

At the federal level, Michigan's Senators and Congressional representatives can champion reforms at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), including:

- Pass legislation to right-size [return on equity authorized for FERC-jurisdictional rates](#).
- Revoke unnecessary incentives that reward shareholders for behavior that DTE would have done anyway, such as participating in the wholesale electricity market administered by the Midwest Independent System Operator.
- Ban utilities from charging ratepayers for the costs of their political influence activities.
- Reform the FERC ratemaking process so that utilities are required to more fully justify their requests.
- Establish rules to enhance FERC's data collection practices to better equip state regulators to curb rate increases.