



**Washington  
Electric  
CO-OP**

# Introduction to Washington Electric Cooperative

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Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
East Montpelier, VT

Friday, Jan. 24, 2025

# WEC

- ❖ 11,600 members
- ❖ Fewer than 40 employees:
  - Run and maintain generation, transmission, distribution infrastructure
  - Growing regulatory mandates⇒ Higher cost of electricity
- ❖ Most rural utility territory
  - About 1,300 miles of distribution line to be maintained
  - More storm damage
  - Greatest share of miles off road
  - Fewer than 9 members per mile⇒ Higher cost of electricity
- ❖ Few sizeable commercial/industrial customers
  - Membership 95 percent residential
  - Cost of running system and state programs borne mainly by residential ratepayer⇒ Higher cost of electricity
- ❖ Lots of net metering (10% roughly)
  - Shifts costs onto other, lower income, members
  - Discourages beneficial electrification⇒ Higher cost of electricity



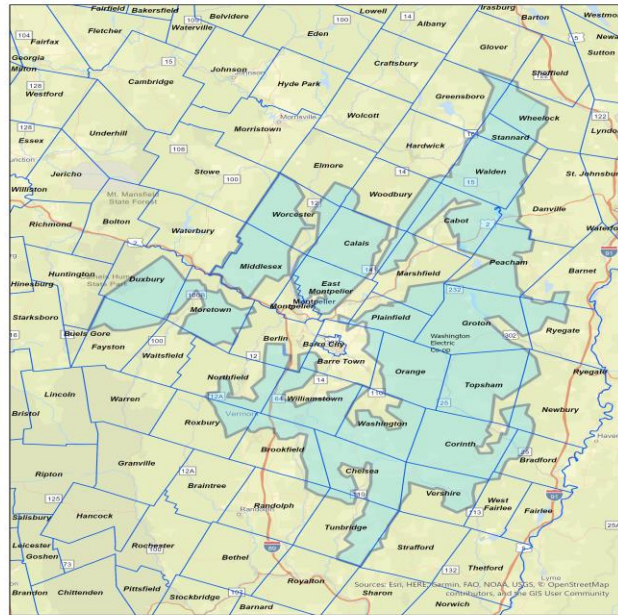
# WEC Began Operating in 1939

Many Rural Electrical Cooperatives began in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- ❖ WEC created by residents in rural areas un-served by commercial utilities of that day – with few town centers.
- ❖ WEC's situation today reflects its history as rural provider.
- ❖ Cooperatives return excess revenue, closing in on \$10 million for WEC members since '98.



*Running lines in WEC territory - cross country.*

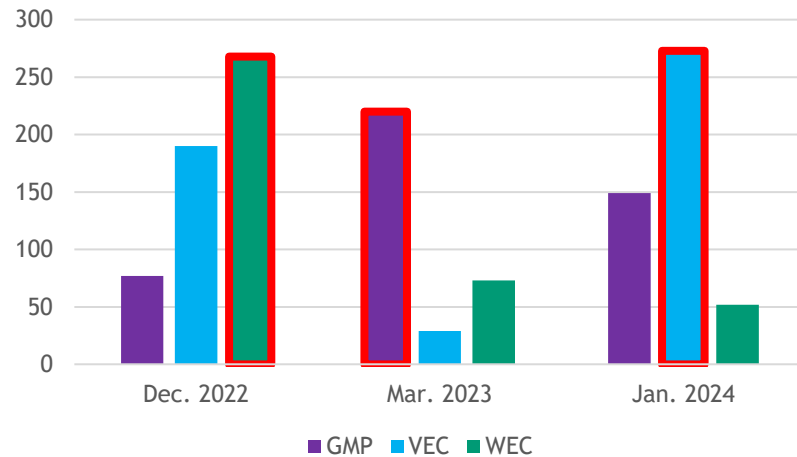


WEC service territory



# Storm Response

- ❖ Utilities rely on each other to a large extent.
- ❖ Cooperation among utilities, state and local emergency and public works orgs.
- ❖ Growing storm damage, growing member expectations.
- ❖ For rural service providers, a lot depends on where, when and how the weather hits.



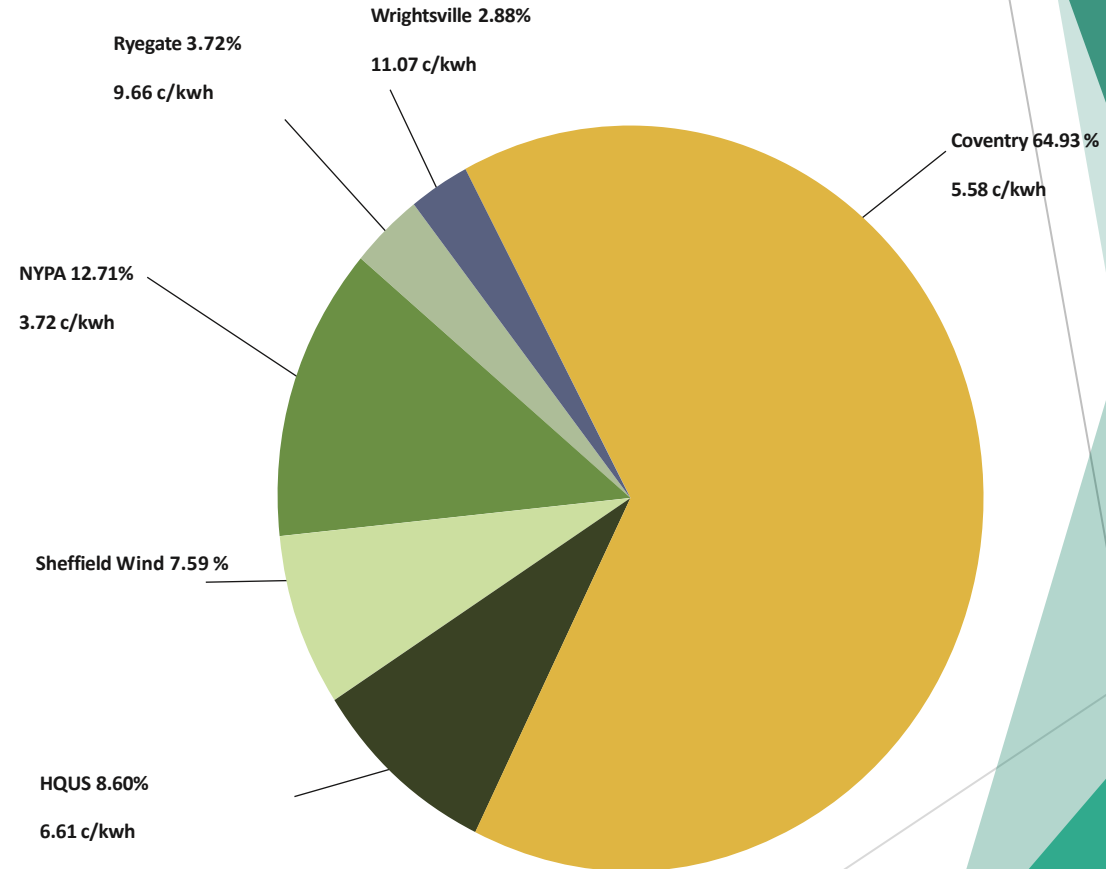
Number of Hours When Outages Were >0.5% of Total Utility Customers



*Washington Electric Co-op lineman Donnie Singleton carries part of a downed and de-energized power line, getting ready to splice it.  
– John Lazenby, The Bridge*

# WEC Power Portfolio: Low-Carbon and Fully Renewable

- ❖ WEC and two other Vermont utilities already 100% renewable
- ❖ Already meets goal of VT Renewable Energy Standard
- ❖ Almost 70 percent of power self-generated.
- ❖ New RES bill places additional requirements on WEC to meet some or all of load growth with “new” renewables.

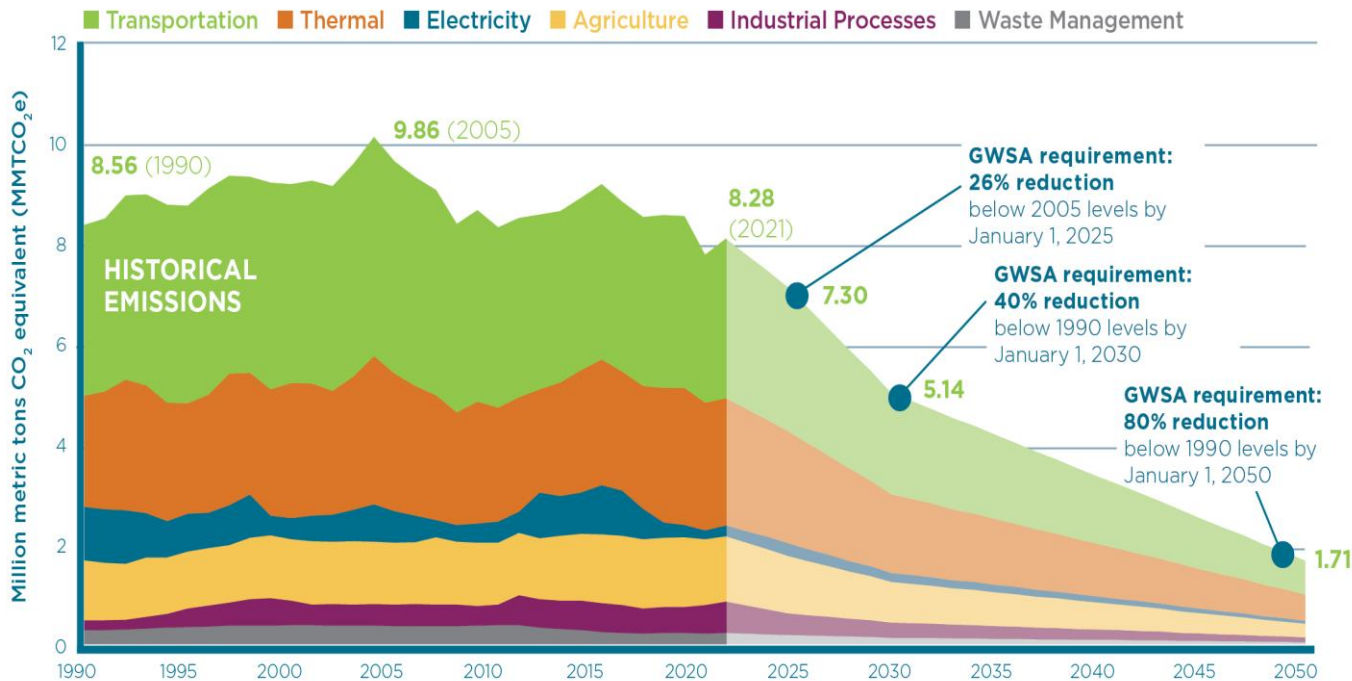


# Vermont Electric Utilities' Success Story

Roughly 3% of state's GHG emission came from the electric sector in 2024.

Vermont has the least carbon-intensive electricity portfolio in the U.S., making electrification especially beneficial. - *EAN 2024 Progress Report*

## Vermont's historical GHG emissions and future requirements



Source: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, "Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Forecast: 1990-2021," 2024. Note: A small amount of emissions from the "fossil fuel industry" category (i.e., fugitive emissions from fossil gas pipelines in VT), accounting for 0.4% of Vermont's overall emissions in 2021, does not show up on this graph.



- ❖ Need of expanding low-cost, reliable renewables as electric load grows.
- ❖ Keeping rates as low as possible to encourage electrical heating and transportation.
- ❖ Investing in grid resiliency and reliability.
- ❖ Increasing expectations from members and regulators require investment in new systems and approaches.

# The Challenge of Net Metering Pricing

Summary of the PUC's biennial update of net metering:

- ❖ Not the least cost way to meet Vermont's renewable energy and climate requirements.
- ❖ Could be diminishing investment in more cost-effective means of reducing GHG emissions.
- ❖ Cost shift to other ratepayers, particularly those who are highly energy burdened.

