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UTILITY EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION



2026 REPORT

Utility CEO pay surges amid higher profits, customer struggles

April 2026

Authored by

Jonathan Kim



Findings

Investor-owned electric and gas utilities paid their CEOs \$626 million in 2025, an Energy and Policy Institute analysis of annual corporate filings found. From 2017 to 2025, utilities paid their CEOs more than \$5.2 billion.

Ohio-based American Electric Power (AEP) compensated CEO Bill Fehrman [\\$36.6 million in 2025](#), making him the highest paid utility CEO of the year by a wide margin. It would take the average worker in AEP's home state of Ohio 550 years to earn what Fehrman made last year, according to [data](#) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Fehrman's 2025 pay was a \$23.3 million increase over the previous year, driven by stock awards [intended to motivate Fehrman](#) to "create sustainable shareholder value," incentivize focus on "longer-term results," and reduce risk of CEO turnover.

Fehrman's leap in pay comes as AEP customers struggled to keep up with their bills. The utility [disconnected](#) Ohio customers more than 173,000 times from June 2024 to May 2025, and during that same period issued nearly 2 million final notices for disconnection to customers who carried a combined past-due balance of \$722 million.

Ranking second was Chris Womack, CEO of Georgia-based Southern Company and the top-paid utility executive in 2024. Womack raked in \$28.2 million in 2025, the same year that subsidiary Georgia Power [disconnected](#) customers 311,513 times. Overall, Georgia Power customers ended the year [behind on their bills by](#) \$111.5 million. The average Georgia worker would have to work for 402 years to match Womack's earnings.

Florida-based NextEra Energy CEO John Ketchum came in third with \$24.2 million in compensation for 2025, the same year that state utility regulators granted its subsidiary Florida Power & Light's request to saddle its customers with a [record-breaking \\$6.9 billion rate hike](#). It would take an average Florida worker 347 years to match Ketchum's 2025 earnings.

A compensation package worth \$22.2 million landed San Diego-based Sempra Energy CEO Jeffrey Martin in fourth place as Sempra subsidiary San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) combats a campaign for public power that one study estimated [could save customers between \\$6 billion and \\$15 billion](#) over 30 years. An average California worker would have to work for 236 years to earn what Martin made in 2025.

Gregory Abel of Nebraska-based Berkshire Hathaway received the fifth-largest pay package in 2025, at \$22 million. The average Nebraska worker would have to work 356 years to earn Abel's 2025 compensation. Meanwhile, Berkshire Hathaway



subsidiary MidAmerican Energy [issued](#) 430,055 disconnection notices to Iowa customers in 2025. Another subsidiary, NV Energy, [was forced to send refunds](#) to over 100,000 Nevada customers after overcharging them more than \$65 million between 2002 and 2025.

The following CEOs rounded out the top ten:

- Consolidated Edison (ConEd) CEO Timothy Cawley with \$19.9 million in compensation for 2025. It would take an average New York worker 218 years to match Cawley's earnings. In 2025, ConEd [disconnected](#) New York customers more than 190,000 times and ended 2025 with 414,210 customers behind on their bills, [owing](#) a combined \$871 million.
- Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) CEO Patricia Poppe with \$19.8 million. An average California worker would have to work for 210 years to make as much as Poppe did in 2025. PG&E [disconnected](#) customers 196,501 times in 2025 and had more than 1 million customers behind on their bills with a total balance of \$697.5 million at the end of the year.
- Entergy CEO Andrew Marsh with \$16.8 million. The average Louisiana worker would have to work 271 years to match Marsh's earnings. Entergy Arkansas [disconnected](#) customers 94,893 times for non-payment in 2025 and had 123,904 customers in arrears at the end of the year.
- Edison International CEO Pedro Pizarro with \$16.5 million. An average California worker would need to work 175 years to meet Pizarro's earnings. Edison International subsidiary Southern California Edison's (SCE) customers [ended the year with more than](#) \$1.1 billion in arrearages, and the company [disconnected](#) customers 186,508 times for non-payment in 2025. The U.S. Department of Justice [found](#) that SCE equipment was responsible for the deadly Eaton fire in January 2025 that claimed 19 lives and destroyed more than 9,000 buildings in Los Angeles County. Pizarro's compensation was a \$2.7 million jump from 2024.
- Dominion Energy CEO Robert Blue with \$16 million. In Virginia, an average worker would have to work for 205 years to meet Blue's earnings. Dominion South Carolina [disconnected](#) customers 118,292 times in 2025.

Of the 10 highest-paid CEOs in 2025, seven also appeared on the [2024 list of top earners](#). Each of them received a pay hike compared to the previous year.

Also ranking high on the 2025 list were North Carolina-based Duke Energy and Michigan-based DTE Energy. Each saw a changeover in CEO leadership during 2025. While the total compensation paid to multiple CEOs was high enough to land



both Duke and DTE in the top 10, none of the payees received enough compensation to make the list individually. Duke [paid](#) retiring CEO Lynn Good \$8.3 million and current CEO Harry Sideris \$13.7 million, for a total of \$21.9 million. DTE [paid](#) outgoing CEO Jerry Norcia \$14.2 million and current CEO Joi Harris \$6.7 million for a total of \$20.9 million. Both Sideris and Harris served in different executive roles before their promotions, and their pay totals also include compensation earned in their prior roles.

Duke is currently [seeking](#) multi-year rate hikes for its North Carolina utilities of up to 18% for residential customers over the next two years. It [disconnected](#) customers 187,333 times in 2025 across its North Carolina subsidiaries and more than 300,000 customers were more than 60 days overdue on their bills, owing more than \$83 million at the end of last year.

Frustrations with DTE have also boiled over in Michigan, where state officials and consumer advocates fed up with a steady churn of rate hikes have [called to rein in utility profits](#) to alleviate the growing affordability crisis confronting utility customers.

Amid booming CEO pay, [some policymakers](#) are contemplating ways to limit how much customers pay for utility executive compensation. In April 2026, Maryland [enacted legislation](#) limiting cost recovery of executive and supervisor pay to 110% of the salary for the chair of the Maryland Public Service Commission (which is currently around \$230,000). Similarly, Minnesota lawmakers [introduced legislation](#) in 2026 that would protect ratepayers from paying utility executives more than salary for the governor of Minnesota (currently \$200,000). Neither bill limits what utilities can pay their executives overall; they simply shift a greater portion of those costs to shareholders rather than customers.

Of the 51 utilities reviewed, CEOs received an average of \$12.3 million, an increase of nearly 16 percent from 2024. 27 utility CEOs received an increase in compensation of more than \$1 million. The highest year-over-year pay increases were:

- Bill Fehrman, AEP, \$23.3 million or a 176.1 percent increase
- Timothy Cawley, ConEd, \$4.9 million or a 32.8 percent increase
- Chris Womack, Southern Company, \$4.3 million or a 18.2 percent increase
- Marty Lyons, Ameren, \$4.3 million or a 44.5 percent increase
- Patricia Poppe, PG&E, \$4.0 million or a 25.2 percent increase
- Andrew Marsh, Entergy, \$3.9 million or a 30.4 percent increase



- Robert Blue, Dominion, \$3.1 million or a 24.3 percent increase
- Bob Frenzel, Xcel Energy, \$3.1 million or a 23.7 percent increase
- Christopher Franklin, Essential Utilities, \$3.0 million or a 48 percent increase

Since 2017, average utility CEO compensation has risen 47 percent. This outpaces [inflation](#), which rose 31 percent from 2017 to 2025, and [average wage growth](#) for American workers, which has risen 38 percent in the same span.

Utility executives are rewarded with incentive pay based on company performance as defined by their corporate boards, and from shareholders' perspectives, the companies have performed quite well. An [EPI analysis](#) showed that from 2021 to 2024, U.S. electric utilities collected more than \$200 billion in net income, or profit, with an average of 12.8 cents of every dollar collected from customers' bills going to profit. Preliminary data for 2025 suggests that number has increased to 14.6 cents of every dollar. A [calculator](#) tool based on EPI's analysis allows customers to see what portion of their electric bill goes to their utility's profits.

UTILITIES FALL SHORT IN CUSTOMER OUTCOMES, CEOS GET RAISES ANYWAY

Several utility CEOs saw a pay raise in 2025 even though they fell short of customer satisfaction goals baked into their compensation plans. These include top leaders at Texas-based [CenterPoint Energy](#), Michigan-based [CMS Energy \(Consumers\)](#), Illinois-based [Exelon](#), [NextEra](#), and Indiana-based [NiSource](#).

CenterPoint Energy, whose CEO Jason Wells [received](#) a \$2.6 million pay bump in 2025, also failed to meet the threshold for a service reliability incentive that measures the number of customers experiencing four or more electricity outages that are five minutes or longer.

In other cases, utilities that doled out customer satisfaction bonuses appeared to have relaxed their standards for executives to achieve those goals and the associated bonuses.

Minnesota-based Xcel awarded CEO Bob Frenzel a maximum bonus for customer satisfaction after [apparently changing the threshold](#), replacing a metric based on J.D. Power survey results with a different index it did not thoroughly detail in its annual proxy filing. After falling short of the target under the previous metric last year, Frenzel's customer satisfaction payout in 2025 came even as an influx of customer complaints in recent years [prompted regulatory inquiries](#) in both Minnesota and Colorado. His overall pay climbed to nearly \$16 million last year.



Similarly, Oregon's Portland General Electric Company (PGE) [lowered](#) both the threshold and the target for its "customer delight" metric from 2024 to 2025, such that 2025's actual results would have failed to meet the 2024 threshold. PGE CEO Maria Pope saw her compensation increase to \$7.6 million in 2025, including a partial bonus under the revised metric.

EXECUTIVES WORK FOR SHAREHOLDERS, NOT CUSTOMERS

For most utilities, if customer satisfaction is incentivized at all, it comprises only a small portion of the executives' potential bonus pay. Generally speaking, executive compensation packages are specifically designed to align with shareholders' interests, including increased earnings and profits – objectives that can, and often do, conflict with customers' interests. In one illustrative example that mirrors many, Southern Company's [executive compensation program](#) "ties pay to overall Company performance [and] aligns with stockholder interests."

In some cases, utilities pay bonuses tied to regulatory outcomes that drive profits, often at the direct expense of customers. Most notably, this includes incentives tied to return on equity (ROE), or the profit utilities can collect from customers on qualifying capital expenses. Where financial metrics like utility share price can rise independently of customers' rates, higher ROEs directly correspond to higher costs for customers. Set by state regulators as part of rate case proceedings, ROEs are [increasingly the focus](#) of [public pushback](#) amid broader affordability concerns.

Wisconsin-based WEC Energy Group [offered CEO Scott Lauber and other executives](#) bonus compensation if the company earns higher ROE, based on the weighted average ROE for WEC's subsidiaries over a three-year period. [Rate hikes for multiple WEC utilities](#) took effect in 2025, continuing a series of increases that [sparked protests by customers](#) who say they can't keep up.

For AEP executives, a ["regulatory and legislative integrity" incentive](#) was measured as whether executives "Achieve Plan ROE," though it missed its set target in 2025.

Both WEC and AEP tied their bonuses to specific ROE levels approved by regulators. Several other utilities linked executive compensation to ROE in 2025, but did not list criteria that directly corresponded to regulatory outcomes. These included Southern Company, Exelon, MGE Energy, Otter Tail Corporation, and Southwest Gas. In every case, though, the ROEs authorized by regulators are a key driver of utility profits and overall shareholder returns.

[Mounting evidence shows](#) that regulators are authorizing ROEs that are systematically higher than necessary to attract capital, burdening customers with



excessive rates. U.S. residential electric customers saw their [rates increase](#) an average of 9.5 percent from January 2025 to January 2026.

Data centers and load growth are leading to increased capital spending, a potential boon to shareholders that will make the profits utilities earn on that spending all the more impactful to ratepayers. Duke Energy, for example, notes that as “load growth materializes across our territories, we’re executing on our more than \$103 billion, five-year capital plan – the largest regulated capital plan in the industry.”

Researchers have [demonstrated](#) that incumbent ratepayers can be on the hook for such capital investments, if costs are not allocated appropriately.

Some utilities are explicit in the threat this spending poses to ratepayers. In listing risks and uncertainties the company faces, Kansas City-based Evergy included “uncertainties related to projected rapid growth in electricity demand driven primarily by data centers and other large load customers and the related requirement for new generation and transmission investments, creating capital access, revenue recovery and customer affordability risks [emphasis added].”

LAVISH CEO PERKS INCLUDE PRIVATE JETS, CLUB MEMBERSHIPS

As part of their compensation, utility CEOs frequently receive a variety of perks provided by their employers.

Utility executives commonly have access to private air travel, either using third-party charter planes or company jets. In some instances, utility CEOs are allowed to fly private with their families or guests, for personal matters, or both. Those that provide CEOs personal use of private aircraft include FirstEnergy, AEP, Southern Company, Alliant Energy, NiSource, NextEra, PG&E, and Sempra. All of these companies explicitly allow family or other guests to travel with the executive.

Some utilities impose limits on how much CEOs can use private aircraft for personal reasons. Exelon, for example, [provided](#) “limited personal use of corporate aircraft for certain executives, including spouse, domestic partner, other family members, or guests” in 2025. But that “limited use” was generous: Butler, the CEO, was entitled to “the lesser of 100 hours or \$300,000 of aggregate incremental cost of personal private plane use.”

Similarly, Dominion CEO Blue was [allowed](#) up to \$150,000 in personal private plane use in 2025. Xcel’s CEO [can access](#) the company jet for personal use up to 100 hours annually, despite the company stating that it does not “provide unusual or excessive perquisites.”



In 2025, more utilities used security concerns as justification for their executives flying private. But in some cases – [as with](#) New Jersey-based Public Service Energy Group (PSEG) – they had [already provided access](#) to private aircraft in the previous year, without citing security issues.

Southern Company, Alliant Energy, NextEra, Sempra, and PG&E also used security or safety as a justification for private plane travel.

PG&E [requires](#) CEO Poppe to use private planes for business and personal travel after a “third-party security risk assessment” that also led the utility to spend \$3.5 million on “protective services and one-time property security enhancements” for Poppe, including a security detail for events and “perimeter and physical security enhancements as well as network and security monitoring.”

Some utilities also provide executives with club memberships, as is the case for Southwest Gas, OGE Energy, and Spire.

Several more – Exelon, UGI, Ameren, PPL, Eversource, Southern Company, and DTE – all note that they provide executives with tickets to sports games and other entertainment events. DTE’s CEO also has access to a corporate condo. Additionally, DTE, Exelon, Southern Company, Chesapeake Utilities, Eversource, Pinnacle West, New Jersey Resources, and PPL all provide company cars or vehicle leasing benefits.

EPI has found that utilities [routinely seek to charge customers](#) for these perks. In one such case, Duke successfully [charged Indiana customers more than \\$5 million](#) for private jet use from 2021 to 2023. Michigan’s Attorney General has in recent years successfully prevented [such costs](#) from falling to DTE customers, calling them “[downright insulting](#).”

UTILITIES LOWER ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS, SHIFT INCENTIVES TO SHAREHOLDER SUCCESS

As executive pay grows alongside customer rates and dissatisfaction, utilities are lowering environmental standards, including those necessary to achieve bonuses, that they once celebrated. In 2025, many utilities continued an [ongoing retreat](#) from commitments and incentives related to clean energy and decarbonization. In some cases, they disappeared altogether – even as executive pay ticked up.

In 2025, Southern Company removed a greenhouse-gas reduction metric for executive performance after both lowering and failing to hit its target in 2024, replacing it with a metric focused on earnings. CenterPoint’s three-year carbon reduction goals that guided CEO bonus pay expired, and the company noted it will shift its focus more fully to shareholder-related performance metrics going



forward. AES maintained an incentive tied to renewables development, but weakened the target and reduced its weight in executives' annual bonus calculations while shifting the emphasis to earnings-related goals. PSEG completely removed sustainability from its executive's long-term incentive plan, consolidating sustainability among many metrics on a "scorecard" that informs annual bonuses, without detailing the role or impact of sustainability on the bonus calculations.

Utilities also weakened or eliminated clean energy goals, including the following:

- Idaho's IDACORP deleted their goal to provide "100-percent clean energy by 2045" from its proxy.
- Wisconsin-based WEC Energy Group removed its net-zero methane by 2030 commitment and carbon-neutrality by 2050 goals.
- NextEra fully erased its vision of achieving net-zero emissions by 2045, a provision that the utility once categorized as a goal before recasting it as an "aspiration" in 2024.
- Evergy kept a net-zero commitment, but delayed its timeline from 2045 to 2050 and eliminated interim goals.
- NiSource kept a greenhouse-gas reduction goal, but suggested it "may evolve."

UTILITIES CONTINUE TO RETREAT FROM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

An [EPI analysis examining 2024 data](#) found an industry-wide retreat by utilities from prior policies that sought to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion among their boards, employees, and suppliers, and that tied some portions of executives' compensation to company progress toward those goals. Utilities continued this retreat in 2025.

Washington-based Avista [removed an incentive](#) that tied 5% of executives' annual bonuses to "achievement of four out of five goals related to our equity, inclusion, and diversity strategy." Ameren, CenterPoint, Entergy, Evergy, Otter Tail, Spire, ConEd, and Xcel all also eliminated or weakened diversity, equity, and inclusion incentives for executives.

Other utilities removed commitments to or policies that encourage racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of their boards, including NextEra, DTE, New Jersey Resources, Spire, UGI, and Unitil. Diversity remains a challenge at the highest levels



of utilities: of the 25 highest-paid utility CEOs in 2025, only one – Patricia Poppe of PG&E – is a woman.



2025 UTILITY CEO COMPENSATION

UTILITY	CEO	COMPENSATION
American Electric Power	Bill Fehrman	\$36,601,524
Southern Company	Christopher Womack	\$28,223,562
NextEra Energy	John Ketchum	\$24,192,607
Sempra Energy	Jeffrey Martin	\$22,274,952
Berkshire Hathaway Energy	Gregory Abel	\$22,017,500
Consolidated Edison	Timothy Cawley	\$19,899,971
PG&E Corporation	Patricia Poppe	\$19,812,481
Entergy Corporation	Andrew Marsh	\$16,752,589
Edison International	Pedro Pizarro	\$16,544,559
Dominion Energy	Robert Blue	\$16,037,850
Xcel Energy	Bob Frenzel	\$15,998,859
Exelon	Calvin Butler	\$15,601,905
Eversource	Joseph Nolan	\$14,987,168
DTE Energy	Gerardo Norcia	\$14,156,937
Ameren	Martin Lyons	\$14,056,510
Public Service Enterprise Group	Ralph LaRossa	\$13,866,735
Duke Energy	Harry Sideris	\$13,652,630
FirstEnergy	Brian Tierney	\$13,337,245
PPL Corporation	Vincent Sorgi	\$13,221,331
Nisource	Lloyd Yates	\$13,197,800
WEC Energy	Scott Lauber	\$12,188,492
CenterPoint Energy	Jason Wells	\$12,092,341
OGE Energy	Sean Trauschke	\$12,032,007
CMS Energy	Garrick Rochow	\$10,534,039
Southwest Gas	Karen Haller	\$10,029,409



Atmos Energy	Kevin Akers	\$9,953,274
Evergy	David Campbell	\$9,537,018
Essential Utilities	Christopher Franklin	\$9,212,815
Puget Energy	Mary Kipp	\$9,204,291
AES	Andrés Gluski	\$9,153,896
Alliant Energy	Lisa Barton	\$8,999,073
UGI Corporation	Bob Flexon	\$8,991,090
Pinnacle West	Theodore N. Geisler	\$8,414,652
Duke Energy	Lynn Good	\$8,269,436
Portland General Electric Company	Maria Pope	\$7,583,877
IDACORP	Lisa Grow	\$7,529,892
AltaGas	Vern Yu	\$7,083,219
Tennessee Valley Authority	Jeffrey J. Lyash	\$6,819,261
Otter Tail Corporation	Charles MacFarlane	\$6,792,688
DTE Energy	Joi Harris	\$6,732,386
New Jersey Resources	Stephen Westhoven	\$6,433,253
Black Hills Corporation	Linden Evans	\$5,991,759
Cleco Corporation	William Fontenot	\$5,744,057
Tennessee Valley Authority	Donald A. Moul	\$5,710,167
Avangrid	Armando Martínez Martínez	\$5,590,321
ONE Gas	Robert McAnnally	\$5,575,027
Spire	Steven Lindsey	\$5,066,799
Northwestern Energy	Brian Bird	\$5,016,745
MDU Resources	Nicole A. Kivisto	\$4,812,252
Avista Corporation	Heather Rosentrater	\$4,773,308
Chesapeake Utilities	Jeffry Householder	\$4,531,322
NW Natural	Justin B. Palfreyman	\$3,695,467
MGE Energy	Jeffrey Keebler	\$3,613,508



Spire	Scott E. Doyle	\$3,328,340
Unitil Corporation	Thomas Meissner Jr.	\$3,189,116
Pinnacle West	Jeffrey Guldner	\$2,828,115
UGI Corporation	Mario Longhi	\$2,827,989
Avangrid	Pedro Azagra Blázquez	\$1,570,048
NW Natural	David Anderson	\$575,775



NOTES ON THE DATA

This analysis is focused on the compensation paid to the CEOs of 50 investor-owned electric and gas utility companies, plus the Tennessee Valley Authority, during the nine-year period between 2017 and 2025. Two American and four internationally-owned utilities included in previous EPI's analyses are excluded here because they have not yet filed reports; they are Albuquerque-based TXNM Energy; Hawaiian Electric Industries; Avangrid of Connecticut, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Spanish company Iberdrola; Emera and Algonquin Power, both headquartered in Canada; and London-based National Grid. This analysis also excludes Allete, which has been taken private and is no longer required to make public securities filings that detail executive compensation.

The analysis includes the compensation paid only to the CEOs of the parent companies of the investor-owned utilities and TVA; it does not include compensation paid to the CEOs of those companies' subsidiaries, nor does it include compensation paid to the companies' other top executives. Aside from TVA, it also does not include compensation paid to the CEOs of nonprofit utilities, such as electric cooperatives and municipal utilities.

When utilities had more than one CEO during the period, we showed compensation for each CEO, which sometimes includes payments to two people in the same year. For incoming CEOs that were promoted from within the company, data for their compensation for their first year as CEO may include compensation they received that year in their earlier position, because corporate filings typically do not distinguish between the compensation they received for each position.

Data are from summary compensation tables published in companies' 14A proxy statement or 10-K forms, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, or those forms' equivalents for companies headquartered in countries other than the U.S. Additionally, this analysis incorporates average weekly wage data compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, organized by state. To draw comparisons between the compensation of an average worker and that of a utility CEO, the average weekly wage figure was multiplied by 52. The most recent average wage data available reflects the third quarter of 2025.

Figures for CEOs paid in foreign currency were converted into and recorded in the tables in U.S. dollars using the average official rate of exchange between the two currencies for 2025.

EPI included in our analysis nearly all of the investor-owned electric utilities that are members of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), and investor-owned gas utilities that are represented on the American Gas Association (AGA) board of directors. EEI is the trade association for investor-owned electric utilities in the U.S., and AGA is the trade association for investor-owned gas utilities in the U.S.; several utility



companies (or their subsidiaries) are members of both trade associations. A few EEI and AGA member companies are not included in this analysis, because their ownership structures do not require them to report this data to the SEC.