Q. Reference: Dr. Cleary's Evidence, Page 29, Table 11

Please provide Dr. Cleary's understanding of whether DBRS' credit ratings are based entirely on the credit metrics shown in Table 11, or whether DBRS also takes other factors into consideration. If other factors are considered, please identify those factors.

A. Dr. Cleary is well aware that credit metrics are only a part of what debt rating agencies consider in determining their ratings.

For example, "Attachment A – CA-NP-082 – DBRS Methodology Sept 18.pdf" includes a copy of the September 2018 DBRS methodology publication entitled "Rating Companies in the Regulated Electric, Natural Gas and Water Utilities Industry." From this document, Dr. Cleary notes the following:

- Page 4 of this document provides the overall framework, which involves making a business risk assessment (BRA) and a financial risk assessment (FRA).
- Page 5 discusses the utilities industry in general.
- Pages 6-7 provides an outline of the primary BRA factors that include assessing regulation, business mix, and franchise and customer mix respectively.
- Pages 7-8 of this document discusses additional BRA factors that may be considered.
- Page 9 of this document discusses primary FRA metrics, plus some additional metrics.
- Page 10 discusses blending the BRA and FRA into a final issuer rating, as well as rating the specific instrument and other criteria.
- Notably, DBRS states the following on page 10 of this document:
-

"The final issuer rating is a blend of the BRA and FRA. In most cases, the BRA will have greater weight than the FRA in determining the issuer rating."

Q. Please provide any recent Moody's analyses of its rating methodology used for evaluating regulated utilities, similar to those filed in both the 2009 and 2012 hearings. If no new ones have been issued please provide the latest documents.

A. Moody's latest rating methodology report for Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities dated December 2013 is provided as Attachment A.

Moody's Methodology Report
December 2013

MOODY'S
INVESTORS SERVICE

Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities

Summary

This rating methodology explains Moody's approach to assessing credit risk for regulated electric and gas utilities globally and is intended to provide general guidance that helps companies, investors, and other interested market participants understand how qualitative and quantitative risk characteristics are likely to affect rating outcomes for companies in the regulated electric and gas utility industry. This document does not include an exhaustive treatment of all factors that are reflected in Moody's ratings but should enable the reader to understand the qualitative considerations and financial information and ratios that are usually most important for ratings in this sector.

This rating methodology replaces[1] the Rating Methodology for Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities published in August 2009. While reflecting many of the same core principles as the 2009 methodology, this updated document provides a more transparent presentation of the rating considerations that are usually most important for companies in this sector and incorporates refinements in our analysis that better reflect credit fundamentals of the industry. No rating changes will result from publication of this rating methodology.

This report includes a detailed rating grid and illustrative examples that compare the mapping of rated public companies against the factors in the grid. The grid is a reference tool that can be used to approximate credit profiles within the regulated electric and gas utility sector in most cases. The grid provides summarized guidance for the factors that are generally most important in assigning ratings to companies in the regulated electric and gas utility industry. However, the grid is a summary that does not include every rating consideration. The weights shown for each factor in the grid represent an approximation of their importance for rating decisions but actual importance may vary substantially. In addition, the illustrative mapping examples in this document use historical results while ratings are based on our forward-looking expectations. As a result, the grid-indicated rating is not expected to match the actual rating of each company.

[1] This update may not be effective in some jurisdictions until certain requirements are met.

The grid contains four key factors that are important in our assessment for ratings in the regulated electric and gas utility sector, and a notching factor for structural subordination at holding companies:

1. Regulatory Framework
2. Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns
3. Diversification
4. Financial Strength

Some of these factors also encompass a number of sub-factors. Since an issuer's scoring on a particular grid factor or sub-factor often will not match its overall rating, in Appendix C we include a discussion of some of the grid "outliers" – companies whose grid-indicated rating for a specific sub-factor differs significantly from the actual rating – in order to provide additional insights.

This rating methodology is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of all factors that our analysts consider in assigning ratings in this sector. We note that our analysis for ratings in this sector covers factors that are common across all industries such as ownership, management, liquidity, corporate legal structure, governance and country related risks which are not explained in detail in this document, as well as factors that can be meaningful on a company-specific basis. Our ratings consider these and other qualitative considerations that do not lend themselves to a transparent presentation in a grid format. The grid used for this methodology reflects a decision to favor a relatively simple and transparent presentation rather than a more complex grid that would map grid-indicated ratings more closely to actual ratings.

Highlights of this report include:

» An overview of the rated universe

» A summary of the rating methodology

» A discussion of the key rating factors that drive ratings

» Comments on the rating methodology assumptions and limitations, including a discussion of rating considerations that are not included in the grid

The Appendices show the full grid (Appendix A), a list of the companies included in our illustrative sample universe of issuers with their ratings, grid-indicated ratings and country of domicile (Appendix B), tables that illustrate the application of the grid to the sample universe of issuers, with explanatory comments on some of the more significant differences between the grid-implied rating for each sub-factor and our actual rating (Appendix C)[2], our approach to ratings within a utility family (Appendix D), a description of the various types of companies rated under this methodology (Appendix E), key industry issues over the intermediate term (Appendix F), regional and other considerations (Appendix G), and treatment of power purchase agreements (Appendix H).

[2] In general, the rating (or other indicator of credit strength) utilized for comparison to the grid-implied rating is the senior unsecured rating for investment-grade issuers, the Corporate Family Rating (CFR) for speculative-grade issuers and the Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) for Government Related Issuers (GRIs). Individual debt instrument ratings also factor in decisions on notching for seniority level and collateral. Related documents that provide additional insight in this area are the rating methodologies "Loss Given Default for Speculative Grade Non-Financial Companies in the US, Canada and EMEA", published June 2009, and "Updated Summary Guidance for Notching Bonds, Preferred Stocks and Hybrid Securities of Corporate Issuers", published February 2007.

What's Changed

While incorporating many of the core principles of the 2009 version, this methodology updates how the four key rating factors are defined, and how certain sub-factors are weighted in the grid.

More specifically, this methodology introduces four equally weighted sub-factors into the two rating factors that are related to regulation –the Regulatory Framework and the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns – in order to provide more granularity and transparency on the overall regulatory environment, which is the most important consideration for this sector.

The weighting of the grid indicators for diversification are unchanged, but the proposed descriptive criteria have been refined to place greater emphasis on the economic and regulatory diversity of each utility's service area rather than the diversity of operations, because we think this emphasis better distinguishes credit risk. We have refined the definitions of the Generation and Fuel Diversity sub-factor to better incorporate the full range of challenges that can affect a particular fuel type.

While the overall weighting of the Financial Strength factor is unchanged, the weighting for two sub-factors that seek to measure debt in relation to cash flow has increased. The 15% weight for CFO Pre-WC/Debt reflects our view that this is the single most predictive financial measure, followed in importance by CFO Pre-WC - Dividends/Debt with a 10% grid weighting. The additional weighting of these ratios is balanced by the elimination of a separate liquidity sub-factor that had a 10% weighting in the prior grid.

Liquidity assessment remains a key focus of our analysis. However, we consider it as a qualitative assessment outside the grid because its credit importance varies greatly over time and by issuer and accordingly is not well represented by a fixed grid weight. See "Other Rating Considerations" for insights on liquidity analysis in this sector.

Lower financial metric thresholds have been introduced for certain utilities viewed as having lower business risk, for instance many US natural gas local distribution companies (LDCs) and certain US electric transmission and distribution companies (T&Ds, which lack generation but generally retain some procurement responsibilities for customers). The low end of the scale in the methodology grid has been extended from B to Caa to better capture our views of more challenging regulatory environments and weaker performance.

We have introduced minor changes to financial metric thresholds at the lower end of the scale, primarily to incorporate this extension of the grid.

We have incorporated scorecard notching for structural subordination at holding companies. Ratings already incorporated structural subordination, but including an adjustment in the scorecard will result in a closer alignment of grid-indicated outcomes and ratings for holding companies.

Treatment of first mortgage bonds (primarily in the US), which was the subject of a Request for Comment in 2009 and adopted subsequent to the 2009 methodology, is summarized in Appendix G.

This methodology describes the analytical framework used in determining credit ratings. In some instances our analysis is also guided by additional publications which describe our approach for analytical considerations that are not specific to any single sector. Examples of such considerations include but are not limited to: the assignment of short-term ratings, the relative ranking of different classes of debt and hybrid securities, how sovereign credit quality affects non-sovereign issuers, and the assessment of credit support from other entities. Documents that describe our approach to such cross-sector methodological considerations can be found here.

About the Rated Universe

The Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities rating methodology applies to rate-regulated[3] electric and gas utilities that are not Networks[4]. Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities are companies whose predominant[5] business is the sale of electricity and/or gas or related services under a rate-regulated framework, in most cases to retail customers. Also included under this methodology are rate-regulated utilities that own generating assets as any material part of their business, utilities whose charges or bills to customers include a meaningful component related to the electric or gas commodity, utilities whose rates are regulated at a sub-sovereign level (e.g. by provinces, states or municipalities), and companies providing an independent system operator function to an electric grid. Companies rated under this methodology are primarily rate-regulated monopolies or, in certain circumstances, companies that may not be outright monopolies but where government regulation effectively sets prices and limits competition.

This rating methodology covers regulated electric and gas utilities worldwide. These companies are engaged in the production, transmission, coordination, distribution and/or sale of electricity and/or natural gas, and they are either investor owned companies, commercially oriented government owned companies or, in the case of independent system operators, not-for-profit or similar entities. As detailed in Appendix E, this methodology covers a wide variety of companies active in the sector, including vertically integrated utilities, transmission and distribution utilities with retail customers and/or sub-sovereign regulation, local gas distribution utility companies (LDCs), independent system operators, and regulated generation companies. These companies may be operating companies or holding companies.

An over-arching consideration for regulated utilities is the regulatory environment in which they operate. While regulation is also a key consideration for networks, a utility's regulatory environment is in comparison often more dynamic and more subject to political intervention. The direct relationship that a regulated utility has with the retail customer, including billing for electric or gas supply that has substantial price volatility, can lead to a more politically charged rate-setting environment. Similarly, regulation at the sub-sovereign level is often more accessible for participation by interveners, including disaffected customers and the politicians who want their votes. Our views of regulatory environments evolve over time in accordance with our observations of regulatory, political, and judicial events that affect issuers in the sector.

This methodology pertains to regulated electric and gas utilities and excludes the following types of issuers, which are covered by separate rating methodologies: Regulated Networks, Unregulated Utilities and Power Companies, Public Power Utilities, Municipal Joint Action Agencies, Electric Cooperatives, Regulated Water Companies and Natural Gas Pipelines.

[3] Companies in many industries are regulated. We use the term rate-regulated to distinguish companies whose rates (by which we also mean tariffs or revenues in general) are set by regulators.

[4] Regulated Electric and Gas Networks are companies whose predominant business is purely the transmission and/or distribution of electricity and/or natural gas without involvement in the procurement or sale of electricity and/or gas; whose charges to customers thus do not include a meaningful commodity cost component; which sell mainly (or in many cases exclusively) to non-retail customers; and which are rate-regulated under a national framework.

[5] We generally consider a company to be predominantly a regulated electric and gas utility when a majority of its cash flows, prospectively and on a sustained basis, are derived from regulated electric and gas utility businesses. Since cash flows can be volatile (such that a company might have a majority of utility cash flows simply due to a cyclical downturn in its non-utility businesses), we may also consider the breakdown of assets and/or debt of a company to determine which business is predominant.

Other Related Methodologies

» Regulated Electric and Gas Networks

» Unregulated Utilities and Power Companies

» Natural Gas Pipelines

» US Public Power Electric Utilities with Generation Ownership Exposure

» US Electric Generation & Transmission Cooperatives

» US Municipal Joint Action Agencies

» Government Related Issuers: Methodology Update

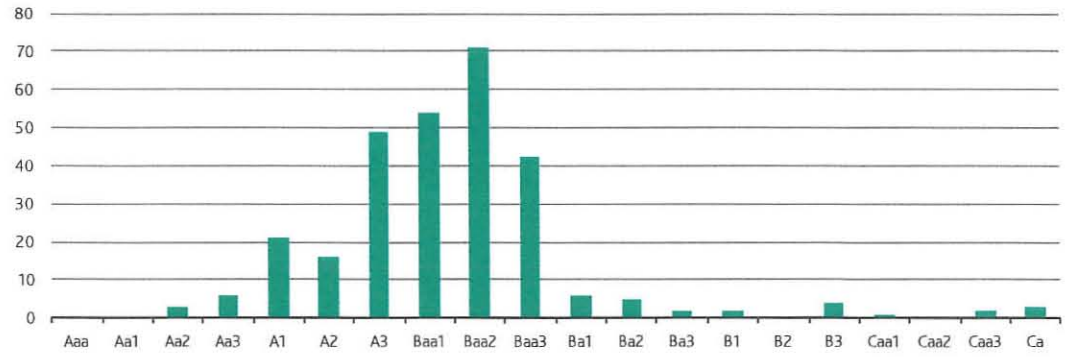
» Global Regulated Water Utilities

The rated universe includes approximately 315 entities that are either utility operating companies or a parent holding company with one or more utility company subsidiaries that operate predominantly in the electric and gas utility business. These companies account for about US$730 billion of total outstanding long-term debt instruments.

The Regulated Electric and Gas Utility sector is predominantly investment grade, reflecting the stability generally conferred by regulation that typically sets prices and also limits competition, such that defaults have been lower than in many other non-financial corporate sectors. However, the nature of regulation can vary significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Most issuers at the lower end of the ratings spectrum operate in challenging regulatory environments. Additional information about the ratings and default performance of the sector can be found in our publication "Infrastructure Default and Recovery Rates, 1983-2012H1". As shown on the following table, the ratings spectrum for issuers in the sector (both holding companies and operating companies) ranges from Aaa to Ca:

EXHIBIT 1

Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities' Senior Unsecured Ratings Distribution



Source: Moody's Investors Service, ratings as of December 2013

About this Rating Methodology

This report explains the rating methodology for regulated electric and gas utilities in seven sections, which are summarized as follows:

1. Identification and Discussion of the Rating Factors in the Grid

The grid in this rating methodology focuses on four rating factors. The four factors are comprised of sub-factors that provide further detail:

Factor / Sub-Factor Weighting - Regulated Utilities

Broad Rating Factors	Broad Rating Factor Weighting	Rating Sub-Factor	Sub-Factor Weighting
Regulatory Framework	25%	Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework	12.5%
		Consistency and Predictability of Regulation	12.5%
Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns	25%	Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs	12.5%
		Sufficiency of Rates and Returns	12.5%
Diversification	10%	Market Position	5%*
		Generation and Fuel Diversity	5%**
Financial Strength, Key Financial Metrics	40%		
		CFO pre-WC + Interest/ Interest	7.5%
		CFO pre-WC / Debt	15.0%
		CFO pre-WC – Dividends / Debt	10.0%
		Debt/Capitalization	7.5%
Total	**100%**		**100%**
Notching Adjustment			
		Holding Company Structural Subordination	0 to -3

*10% weight for issuers that lack generation; **0% weight for issuers that lack generation

2. Measurement or Estimation of Factors in the Grid

We explain our general approach for scoring each grid factor and show the weights used in the grid. We also provide a rationale for why each of these grid components is meaningful as a credit indicator. The information used in assessing the sub-factors is generally found in or calculated from information in company financial statements, derived from other observations or estimated by Moody's analysts.

Our ratings are forward-looking and reflect our expectations for future financial and operating performance. However, historical results are helpful in understanding patterns and trends of a company's performance as well as for peer comparisons. We utilize historical data (in most cases, an average of the last three years of reported results) in this document to illustrate the application of the rating grid. All of the quantitative credit metrics incorporate Moody's standard adjustments to income statement, cash flow statement and balance sheet amounts for restructuring, impairment, off-balance sheet accounts, receivable securitization programs, under-funded pension obligations, and recurring operating leases.

For definitions of Moody's most common ratio terms please see Moody's Basic Definitions for Credit Statistics, User's Guide (June 2011, document #78480). For a description of Moody's standard adjustments, please see Moody's Approach to Global Standard Adjustments in the Analysis of Financial Statements for Non-Financial Corporations December 2010 (128137). These documents can be found at www.moodys.com under the Research and Ratings directory.

In most cases, the illustrative examples in this document use historic financial data from a recent three year period. However, the factors in the grid can be assessed using various time periods. For example, rating committees may find it analytically useful to examine both historic and expected future performance for periods of several years or more, or for individual twelve month periods.

3. Mapping Factors to the Rating Categories

After estimating or calculating each sub-factor, the outcomes for each of the sub-factors are mapped to a broad Moody's rating category (Aaa, Aa, A, Baa, Ba, B, or Caa).

4. Mapping Issuers to the Grid and Discussion of Grid Outliers

In Appendix C, we provide a table showing how each company in the sample set of issuers maps to grid-indicated ratings for each rating sub-factor and factor. We highlight companies whose grid-indicated performance on a specific sub-factor is two or more broad rating categories higher or lower than its actual rating and discuss the general reasons for such positive and negative outliers for a particular sub-factor.

5. Assumptions, Limitations and Rating Considerations Not Included in the Grid

This section discusses limitations in the use of the grid to map against actual ratings, some of the additional factors that are not included in the grid but can be important in determining ratings, and limitations and assumptions that pertain to the overall rating methodology.

6. Determining the Overall Grid-Indicated Rating

To determine the overall grid-indicated rating, we convert each of the sub-factor ratings into a numeric value based upon the scale below.

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa	Ba	B	Caa	Ca
1	3	6	9	12	15	18	20

The numerical score for each sub-factor is multiplied by the weight for that sub-factor with the results then summed to produce a composite weighted-factor score. The composite weighted factor score is then mapped back to an alphanumeric rating based on the ranges in the table below.

Grid-Indicated Rating

Grid-Indicated Rating	Aggregate Weighted Total Factor Score
Aaa	x < 1.5
Aa1	1.5 ≤ x < 2.5
Aa2	2.5 ≤ x < 3.5
Aa3	3.5 ≤ x < 4.5
A1	4.5 ≤ x < 5.5
A2	5.5 ≤ x < 6.5
A3	6.5 ≤ x < 7.5
Baa1	7.5 ≤ x < 8.5
Baa2	8.5 ≤ x < 9.5
Baa3	9.5 ≤ x < 10.5
Ba1	10.5 ≤ x < 11.5
Ba2	11.5 ≤ x < 12.5
Ba3	12.5 ≤ x < 13.5
B1	13.5 ≤ x < 14.5
B2	14.5 ≤ x < 15.5
B3	15.5 ≤ x < 16.5
Caa1	16.5 ≤ x < 17.5
Caa2	17.5 ≤ x < 18.5
Caa3	18.5 ≤ x < 19.5
Ca	x ≥ 19.5

For example, an issuer with a composite weighted factor score of 11.7 would have a Ba2 grid-indicated rating. We used a similar procedure to derive the grid indicated ratings shown in the illustrative examples.

7. Appendices

The Appendices provide illustrative examples of grid-indicated ratings based on historical financial information and also provide additional commentary and insights on our view of credit risks in this industry.

Discussion of the Grid Factors

Moody's analysis of electric and gas utilities focuses on four broad factors:

» Regulatory Framework

» Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns

» Diversification

» Financial Strength

There is also a notching factor for holding company structural subordination.

Factor 1: Regulatory Framework (25%)

Why It Matters

For rate-regulated utilities, which typically operate as a monopoly, the regulatory environment and how the utility adapts to that environment are the most important credit considerations. The regulatory environment is comprised of two rating factors - the Regulatory Framework and its corollary factor, the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns. Broadly speaking, the Regulatory Framework is the foundation for how all the decisions that affect utilities are made (including the setting of rates), as well as the predictability and consistency of decision-making provided by that foundation. The Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns relates more directly to the actual decisions, including their timeliness and the rate-setting outcomes.

Utility rates[6] are set in a political/regulatory process rather than a competitive or free-market process; thus, the Regulatory Framework is a key determinant of the success of utility. The Regulatory Framework has many components: the governing body and the utility legislation or decrees it enacts, the manner in which regulators are appointed or elected, the rules and procedures promulgated by those regulators, the judiciary that interprets the laws and rules and that arbitrates disagreements, and the manner in which the utility manages the political and regulatory process. In many cases, utilities have experienced credit stress or default primarily or at least secondarily because of a break-down or obstacle in the Regulatory Framework – for instance, laws that prohibited regulators from including investments in uncompleted power plants or plants not deemed "used and useful" in rates, or a disagreement about rate-making that could not be resolved until after the utility had defaulted on its debts.

How We Assess Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework for the Grid

For this sub-factor, we consider the scope, clarity, transparency, supportiveness and granularity of utility legislation, decrees, and rules as they apply to the issuer. We also consider the strength of the regulator's authority over rate-making and other regulatory issues affecting the utility, the effectiveness of the judiciary or other independent body in arbitrating disputes in a disinterested manner, and whether the utility's monopoly has meaningful or growing carve-outs. In addition, we look at how well developed the framework is – both how fully fleshed out the rules and regulations are and how well tested it is – the extent to which regulatory or judicial decisions have created a body of precedent that will help determine future rate-making. Since the focus of our scoring is on each issuer, we consider

[6] In jurisdictions where utility revenues include material government subsidy payments, we consider utility rates to be inclusive of these payments, and we thus evaluate sub-factors 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b in light of both rates and material subsidy payments. For example, we would consider the legal and judicial underpinnings and consistency and predictability of subsidies as well as rates.

how effective the utility is in navigating the regulatory framework – both the utility's ability to shape the framework and adapt to it.

A utility operating in a regulatory framework that is characterized by legislation that is credit supportive of utilities and eliminates doubt by prescribing many of the procedures that the regulators will use in determining fair rates (which legislation may show evidence of being responsive to the needs of the utility in general or specific ways), a long history of transparent rate-setting, and a judiciary that has provided ample precedent by impartially adjudicating disagreements in a manner that addresses ambiguities in the laws and rules will receive higher scores in the Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings sub-factor. A utility operating in a regulatory framework that, by statute or practice, allows the regulator to arbitrarily prevent the utility from recovering its costs or earning a reasonable return on prudently incurred investments, or where regulatory decisions may be reversed by politicians seeking to enhance their populist appeal will receive a much lower score.

In general, we view national utility regulation as being less liable to political intervention than regulation by state, provincial or municipal entities, so the very highest scoring in this sub-factor is reserved for this category. However, we acknowledge that states and provinces in some countries may be larger than small nations, such that their regulators may be equally "above-the-fray" in terms of impartial and technically-oriented rate setting, and very high scoring may be appropriate.

The relevant judicial system can be a major factor in the regulatory framework. This is particularly true in litigious societies like the United States, where disagreements between the utility and its state or municipal regulator may eventually be adjudicated in federal district courts or even by the US Supreme Court. In addition, bankruptcy proceedings in the US take place in federal courts, which have at times been able to impose rate settlement agreements on state or municipal regulators. As a result, the range of decisions available to state regulators may be effectively circumscribed by court precedent at the state or federal level, which we generally view as favorable for the credit-supportiveness of the regulatory framework.

Electric and gas utilities are generally presumed to have a strong monopoly that will continue into the foreseeable future, and this expectation has allowed these companies to have greater leverage than companies in other sectors with similar ratings. Thus, the existence of a monopoly in itself is unlikely to be a driver of strong scoring in this sub-factor. On the other hand, a strong challenge to the monopoly could cause lower scoring, because the utility can only recover its costs and investments and service its debt if customers purchase its services. There have some instances of incursions into utilities' monopoly, including municipalization, self-generation, distributed generation with net metering, or unauthorized use (beyond the level for which the utility receives compensation in rates). Incursions that are growing significantly or having a meaningful impact on rates for customers that remain with the utility could have a negative impact on scoring of this sub-factor and on factor 2 - Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns.

The scoring of this sub-factor may not be the same for every utility in a particular jurisdiction. We have observed that some utilities appear to have greater sway over the relevant utility legislation and promulgation of rules than other utilities – even those in the same jurisdiction. The content and tone of publicly filed documents and regulatory decisions sometimes indicates that the management team at one utility has better responsiveness to and credibility with its regulators or legislators than the management at another utility.

While the underpinnings to the regulatory framework tend to change relatively slowly, they do evolve, and our factor scoring will seek to reflect that evolution. For instance, a new framework will typically become tested over time as regulatory decisions are issued, or perhaps litigated, thereby setting a body of precedent. Utilities may seek changes to laws in order to permit them to securitize certain costs or collect interim rates, or a jurisdiction in which rates were previously recovered primarily in base rate proceedings may institute riders and trackers. These changes would likely impact scoring of sub-factor 2b - Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs, but they may also be sufficiently significant to indicate a change in the regulatory underpinnings. On the negative side, a judiciary that had formerly been independent may start to issue decisions that indicate it is conforming its decisions to the expectations of an executive branch that wants to mandate lower rates.

Factor 1a: Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Utility regulation occurs under a fully developed framework that is national in scope based on legislation that provides the utility a nearly absolute monopoly (see note 1) within its service territory, an unquestioned assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, an extremely high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and prescriptive methods and procedures for setting rates. Existing utility law is comprehensive and supportive such that changes in legislation are not expected to be necessary; or any changes that have occurred have been strongly supportive of utilities credit quality in general and sufficiently forward-looking so as to address problems before they occurred. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility should they occur, including access to national courts, very strong judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs under a fully developed national, state or provincial framework based on legislation that provides the utility an extremely strong monopoly (see note 1) within its service territory, a strong assurance, subject to limited review, that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, a very high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and reasonably prescriptive methods and procedures for setting rates. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been timely and clearly credit supportive of the issuer in a manner that shows the utility has had a strong voice in the process. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, should they occur including access to national courts, strong judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs under a well developed national, state or provincial framework based on legislation that provides the utility a very strong monopoly (see note 1) within its service territory, an assurance, subject to reasonable prudency requirements, that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, a high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated, and overall guidance for methods and procedures for setting rates. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been mostly timely and on the whole credit supportive for the issuer, and the utility has had a clear voice in the legislative process. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, should they occur, including access to national courts, clear judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility law, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation that provides the utility a strong monopoly within its service territory that may have some exceptions such as greater self-generation (see note 1), a general assurance that, subject to prudency requirements that are mostly reasonable, rates will be set will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, reasonable clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and overall guidance for methods and procedures for setting rates; or (ii) under a new framework where independent and transparent regulation exists in other sectors. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been credit supportive or at least balanced for the issuer but potentially less timely, and the utility had a voice in the legislative process. There is either (i) an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, including access to courts at least at the state or provincial level, reasonably clear judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a generally strong rule of law; or (ii) regulation has been applied (under a well developed framework) in a manner such that redress to an independent arbiter has not been required. We expect these conditions to continue.

Ba	B	Caa
Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility a monopoly within its service territory that is generally strong but may have a greater level of exceptions (see note 1), and that, subject to prudency requirements which may be stringent, provides a general assurance (with somewhat less certainty) that rates will be set will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where the jurisdiction has a history of less independent and transparent regulation in other sectors. Either: (i) the judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or may not be fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure, but there is a reasonably strong rule of law; or (ii) where there is no independent arbiter, the regulation has mostly been applied in a manner such redress has not been required. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility monopoly within its service territory that is reasonably strong but may have important exceptions, and that, subject to prudency requirements which may be stringent or at times arbitrary, provides more limited or less certain assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where we would expect less independent and transparent regulation, based either on the regulator's history in other sectors or other factors. The judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or may not be fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure, but there is a reasonably strong rule of law. Alternately, where there is no independent arbiter, the regulation has been applied in a manner that often requires some redress adding more uncertainty to the regulatory framework. There may be a periodic risk of creditor-unfriendly government intervention in utility markets or rate-setting.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility a monopoly within its service territory, but with little assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where we would expect unpredictable or adverse regulation, based either on the jurisdiction's history of in other sectors or other factors. The judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or is viewed as not being fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure. Alternately, there may be no redress to an effective independent arbiter. The ability of the utility to enforce its monopoly or prevent uncompensated usage of its system may be limited. There may be a risk of creditor-unfriendly nationalization or other significant intervention in utility markets or rate-setting.

Note 1: The strength of the monopoly refers to the legal, regulatory and practical obstacles for customers in the utility's territory to obtain service from another provider. Examples of a weakening of the monopoly would include the ability of a city or large user to leave the utility system to set up their own system, the extent to which self-generation is permitted (e.g. cogeneration) and/or encouraged (e.g., net metering, DSM generation). At the lower end of the ratings spectrum, the utility's monopoly may be challenged by pervasive theft and unauthorized use. Since utilities are generally presumed to be monopolies, a strong monopoly position in itself is not sufficient for a strong score in this sub-factor, but a weakening of the monopoly can lower the score.

How We Assess Consistency and Predictability of Regulation for the Grid

For the Consistency and Predictability sub-factor, we consider the track record of regulatory decisions in terms of consistency, predictability and supportiveness. We evaluate the utility's interactions in the regulatory process as well as the overall stance of the regulator toward the utility.

In most jurisdictions, the laws and rules seek to make rate-setting a primarily technical process that examines costs the utility incurs and the returns on investments the utility needs to earn so it can make investments that are required to build and maintain the utility infrastructure - power plants, electric transmission and distribution systems, and/or natural gas distribution systems. When the process remains technical and transparent such that regulators can support the financial health of the utility while balancing their public duty to assure that reliable service is provided at a reasonable cost, and when the utility is able to align itself with the policy initiatives of the governing jurisdiction, the utility will receive higher scores in this sub-factor. When the process includes substantial political intervention, which could take the form of legislators or other government officials publically second-guessing regulators, dismissing regulators who have approved unpopular rate increases, or preventing the implementation of rate increases, or when regulators ignore the laws/rules to deliver an outcome that appears more politically motivated, the utility will receive lower scores in this sub-factor.

As with the prior sub-factor, we may score different utilities in the same jurisdiction differently, based on outcomes that are more or less supportive of credit quality over a period of time. We have observed that some utilities are better able to meet the expectations of their customers and regulators, whether through better service, greater reliability, more stable rates or simply more effective regulatory outreach and communication. These utilities typically receive more consistent and credit supportive outcomes, so they will score higher in this sub-factor. Conversely, if a utility has multiple rapid rate increases, chooses to submit major rate increase requests during a sensitive election cycle or a severe economic downturn, has chronic customer service issues, is viewed as frequently providing incomplete information to regulators, or is tone deaf to the priorities of regulators and politicians, it may receive less consistent and supportive outcomes and thus score lower in this sub-factor.

In scoring this sub-factor, we will primarily evaluate the actions of regulators, politicians and jurists rather than their words. Nonetheless, words matter when they are an indication of future action. We seek to differentiate between political rhetoric that is perhaps oriented toward gaining attention for the viewpoint of the speaker and rhetoric that is indicative of future actions and trends in decision-making.

Factor 1b: Consistency and Predictability of Regulation (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to a strong, lengthy track record of predictable, consistent and favorable decisions. The regulator is highly credit supportive of the issuer and utilities in general. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has a led to a considerable track record of predominantly predictable and consistent decisions. The regulator is mostly credit supportive of utilities in general and in almost all instances has been highly credit supportive of the issuer. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to a track record of largely predictable and consistent decisions. The regulator may be somewhat less credit supportive of utilities in general, but has been quite credit supportive of the issuer in most circumstances. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to an adequate track record. The regulator is generally consistent and predictable, but there may some evidence of inconsistency or unpredictability from time to time, or decisions may at times be politically charged. However, instances of less credit supportive decisions are based on reasonable application of existing rules and statutes and are not overly punitive. We expect these conditions to continue.

Ba	B	Caa
We expect that regulatory decisions will demonstrate considerable inconsistency or unpredictability or that decisions will be politically charged, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. The regulator may have a history of less credit supportive regulatory decisions with respect to the issuer, but we expect that the issuer will be able to obtain support when it encounters financial stress, with some potentially material delays. The regulator's authority may be eroded at times by legislative or political action. The regulator may not follow the framework for some material decisions.	We expect that regulatory decisions will be largely unpredictable or even somewhat arbitrary, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. However, we expect that the issuer will ultimately be able to obtain support when it encounters financial stress, albeit with material or more extended delays. Alternately, the regulator is untested, lacks a consistent track record, or is undergoing substantial change. The regulator's authority may be eroded on frequent occasions by legislative or political action. The regulator may more frequently ignore the framework in a manner detrimental to the issuer.	We expect that regulatory decisions will be highly unpredictable and frequently adverse, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. Alternately, decisions may have credit supportive aspects, but may often be unenforceable. The regulator's authority may have been seriously eroded by legislative or political action. The regulator may consistently ignore the framework to the detriment of the issuer.

Factor 2: Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns (25%)

Why It Matters

This rating factor examines the ability of a utility to recover its costs and earn a return over a period of time, including during differing market and economic conditions. While the Regulatory Framework looks at the transparency and predictability of the rules that govern the decision-making process with respect to utilities, the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns evaluates the regulatory elements that directly impact the ability of the utility to generate cash flow and service its debt over time. The ability to recover prudently incurred costs on a timely basis and to attract debt and equity capital are crucial credit considerations. The inability to recover costs, for instance if fuel or purchased power costs ballooned during a rate freeze period, has been one of the greatest drivers of financial stress in this sector, as well as the cause of some utility defaults. In a sector that is typically free cash flow negative (due to large capital expenditures and dividends) and that routinely needs to refinance very large maturities of long-term debt, investor concerns about a lack of timely cost recovery or the sufficiency of rates can, in an extreme scenario, strain access to capital markets and potentially lead to insolvency of the utility (as was the case when "used and useful" requirements threatened some utilities that experienced years of delay in completing nuclear power plants in the 1980s). While our scoring for the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns may primarily be influenced by our assessment of the regulatory relationship, it can also be highly impacted by the management and business decisions of the utility.

How We Assess Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns

The timeliness and sufficiency of rates are scored as separate sub-factors; however, they are interrelated. Timeliness can have an impact on our view of what constitutes sufficient returns, because a strong assurance of timely cost recovery reduces risk. Conversely, utilities may have a strong assurance that they will earn a full return on certain deferred costs until they are able to collect them, or their generally strong returns may allow them to weather some rate lag on recovery of construction-related capital expenditures. The timeliness of cost recovery is particularly important in a period of rapidly rising costs. During the past five years, utilities have benefitted from low interest rates and generally decreasing fuel costs and purchased power costs, but these market conditions could easily reverse. For example, fuel is a large component of total costs for vertically integrated utilities and for natural gas utilities, and fuel prices are highly volatile, so the timeliness of fuel and purchased power cost recovery is especially important.

While Factors 1 and 2 are closely inter-related, scoring of these factors will not necessarily be the same. We have observed jurisdictions where the Regulatory Framework caused considerable credit concerns – perhaps it was untested or going through a transition to de-regulation, but where the track record of rate case outcomes was quite positive, leading to a higher score in the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns. Conversely, there have been instances of strong Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework where the commission has ignored the framework (which would affect Consistency and Predictability of Regulation as well as Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns) or has used extraordinary measures to prevent or defer an increase that might have been justifiable from a cost perspective but would have caused rate shock.

One might surmise that Factors 2 and 4 should be strongly correlated, since a good Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns would normally lead to good financial metrics. However, the scoring for the Ability to Recover Costs and Earn Returns sub-factor places more emphasis on our expectation of timeliness and sufficiency of rates over time; whereas financial metrics may be impacted by one-time

events, market conditions or construction cycles - trends that we believe could normalize or even reverse.

How We Assess Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs for the Grid

The criteria we consider include provisions and cost recovery mechanisms for operating costs, mechanisms that allow actual operating and/or capital expenditures to be trued-up periodically into rates without having to file a rate case (this may include formula rates, rider and trackers, or the ability to periodically adjust rates for construction work in progress) as well as the process and timeframe of general tariff/base rate cases – those that are fully reviewed by the regulator, generally in a public format that includes testimony of the utility and other stakeholders and interest groups. We also look at the track record of the utility and regulator for timeliness. For instance, having a formula rate plan is positive, but if the actual process has included reviews that are delayed for long periods, it may dampen the benefit to the utility. In addition, we seek to estimate the lag between the time that a utility incurs a major construction expenditures and the time that the utility will start to recover and/or earn a return on that expenditure.

How We Assess Sufficiency of Rates and Returns for the Grid

The criteria we consider include statutory protections that assure full cost recovery and a reasonable return for the utility on its investments, the regulatory mechanisms used to determine what a reasonable return should be, and the track record of the utility in actually recovering costs and earning returns. We examine outcomes of rate cases/tariff reviews and compare them to the request submitted by the utility, to prior rate cases/tariff reviews for the same utility and to recent rate/tariff decisions for a peer group of comparable utilities. In this context, comparable utilities are typically utilities in the same or similar jurisdiction. In cases where the utility is unique or nearly unique in its jurisdiction, comparison will be made to other peers with an adjustment for local differences, including prevailing rates of interest and returns on capital, as well as the timeliness of rate-setting. We look at regulatory disallowances of costs or investments, with a focus on their financial severity and also on the reasons given by the regulator, in order to assess the likelihood that such disallowances will be repeated in the future.

Factor 2a: Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Tariff formulas and automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and highly timely recovery of all operating costs and essentially contemporaneous return on all incremental capital investments, with statutory provisions in place to preclude the possibility of challenges to rate increases or cost recovery mechanisms. By statute and by practice, general rate cases are efficient, focused on an impartial review, quick, and permit inclusion of fully forward-looking costs.	Tariff formulas and automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and highly timely recovery of all operating costs and essentially contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous return on most incremental capital investments, with minimal challenges by regulators to companies' cost assumptions. By statute and by practice, general rate cases are efficient, focused on an impartial review, of a very reasonable duration before non-appealable interim rates can be collected, and primarily permit inclusion of forward-looking costs.	Automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and reasonably timely recovery of fuel, purchased power and all other highly variable operating expenses. Material capital investments may be made under tariff formulas or other rate-making permitting reasonably contemporaneous returns, or may be submitted under other types of filings that provide recovery of cost of capital with minimal delays. Instances of regulatory challenges that delay rate increases or cost recovery are generally related to large, unexpected increases in sizeable construction projects. By statute or by practice, general rate cases are reasonably efficient, primarily focused on an impartial review, of a reasonable duration before rates (either permanent or non-refundable interim rates) can be collected, and permit inclusion of important forward-looking costs.	Fuel, purchased power and all other highly variable expenses are generally recovered through mechanisms incorporating delays of less than one year, although some rapid increases in costs may be delayed longer where such deferrals do not place financial stress on the utility. Incremental capital investments may be recovered primarily through general rate cases with moderate lag, with some through tariff formulas. Alternately, there may be formula rates that are untested or unclear. Potentially greater tendency for delays due to regulatory intervention, although this will generally be limited to rates related to large capital projects or rapid increases in operating costs.

Ba	B	Caa
There is an expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will eventually be recovered with delays that will not place material financial stress on the utility, but there may be some evidence of an unwillingness by regulators to make timely rate changes to address volatility in fuel, or purchased power, or other market-sensitive expenses. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be subject to delays that are somewhat lengthy, but not so pervasive as to be expected to discourage important investments.	The expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will be recovered may be subject to material delays due to second-guessing of spending decisions by regulators or due to political intervention. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be subject to delays that are material to the issuer, or may be likely to discourage some important investment.	The expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will be recovered may be subject to extensive delays due to second-guessing of spending decisions by regulators or due to political intervention. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be uncertain, subject to delays that are extensive, or that may be likely to discourage even necessary investment.

Note: Tariff formulas include formula rate plans as well as trackers and riders related to capital investment.

Factor 2b: Sufficiency of Rates and Returns (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Sufficiency of rates to cover costs and attract capital is (and will continue to be) unquestioned.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that permits full cost recovery and a fair return on all investments, with minimal challenges by regulators to companies' cost assumptions. This will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are strong relative to global peers.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides full cost recovery and a fair return on investments, with limited instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are generally above average relative to global peers, but may at times be average.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides full operating cost recovery and a mostly fair return on investments, but there may be somewhat more instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances, although ultimate rate outcomes are sufficient to attract capital without difficulty. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are average relative to global peers, but may at times be somewhat below average.

Ba	B	Caa
Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides recovery of most operating costs but return on investments may be less predictable, and there may be decidedly more instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances, but ultimate rate outcomes are generally sufficient to attract capital. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are generally below average relative to global peers, or where allowed returns are average but difficult to earn. Alternately, the tariff formula may not take into account all cost components and/or remuneration of investments may be unclear or at times unfavorable.	We expect rates will be set at a level that at times fails to provide recovery of costs other than cash costs, and regulators may engage in somewhat arbitrary second-guessing of spending decisions or deny rate increases related to funding ongoing operations based much more on politics than on prudency reviews. Return on investments may be set at levels that discourage investment. We expect that rate outcomes may be difficult or uncertain, negatively affecting continued access to capital. Alternately, the tariff formula may fail to take into account significant cost components other than cash costs, and/or remuneration of investments may be generally unfavorable.	We expect rates will be set at a level that often fails to provide recovery of material costs, and recovery of cash costs may also be at risk. Regulators may engage in more arbitrary second-guessing of spending decisions or deny rate increases related to funding ongoing operations based primarily on politics. Return on investments may be set at levels that discourage necessary maintenance investment. We expect that rate outcomes may often be punitive or highly uncertain, with a markedly negative impact on access to capital. Alternately, the tariff formula may fail to take into account significant cash cost components, and/or remuneration of investments may be primarily unfavorable.

Factor 3: Diversification (10%)

Why It Matters

Diversification of overall business operations helps to mitigate the risk that economic cycles, material changes in a single regulatory regime or commodity price movements will have a severe impact on cash flow and credit quality of a utility. While utilities' sales volumes have lower exposure to economic recessions than many non-financial corporate issuers, some sales components, including industrial sales, are directly affected by economic trends that cause lower production and/or plant closures. In addition, economic activity plays a role in the rate of customer growth in the service territory and (absent energy efficiency and conservation) can often impact usage per customer. The economic strength or weakness of the service territory can affect the political and regulatory environment for rate increase requests by the utility. For utilities in areas prone to severe storms and other natural disasters, the utility's geographic diversity or concentration can be a key determinant for creditworthiness. Diversity among regulatory regimes can mitigate the impact of a single unfavorable decision affecting one part of the utility's footprint.

For utilities with electric generation, fuel source diversity can mitigate the impact (to the utility and to its rate-payers) of changes in commodity prices, hydrology and water flow, and environmental or other regulations affecting plant operations and economics. We have observed that utilities' regulatory environments are most likely to become unfavorable during periods of rapid rate increases (which are more important than absolute rate levels) and that fuel diversity leads to more stable rates over time. For that reason, fuel diversity can be important even if fuel and purchased power expenses are an automatic pass-through to the utility's ratepayers. Changes in environmental, safety and other regulations have caused vulnerabilities for certain technologies and fuel sources during the past five years. These vulnerabilities have varied widely in different countries and have changed over time.

How We Assess Market Position for the Grid

Market position is comprised primarily of the economic diversity of the utility's service territory and the diversity of its regulatory regimes. We also consider the diversity of utility operations (e.g., regulated electric, gas, water, steam) when there are material operations in more than one area. Economic diversity is a typically a function of the population, size and breadth of the territory and the businesses that drive its GDP and employment. For the size of the territory, we typically consider the number of customers and the volumes of generation and/or throughput. For breadth, we consider the number of sizeable metropolitan areas served, the economic diversity and vitality in those metropolitan areas, and any concentration in a particular area or industry. In our assessment, we may consider various information sources. For example, in the US, information sources on the diversity and vitality of economies of individual states and metropolitan areas may include Moody's Economy.com. We also look at the mix of the utility's sales volumes among customer types, as well as the track record of volume sales and any notable payment patterns during economic cycles. For diversity of regulatory regimes, we typically look at the number of regulators and the percentages of revenues and utility assets that are under the purview of each. While the highest scores in the Market Position sub-factor are reserved for issuers regulated in multiple jurisdictions, when there is only one regulator, we make a differentiation of regimes perceived as having lower or higher volatility.

Issuers with multiple supportive regulatory jurisdictions, a balanced sales mix among residential, commercial, industrial and governmental customers in a large service territory with a robust and diverse economy will generally score higher in this sub-factor. An issuer with a small service territory economy that has a high dependence on one or two sectors, especially highly cyclical industries, will

generally score lower in this sub-factor, as will issuers with meaningful exposure to economic dislocations caused by natural disasters.

For issuers that are vertically integrated utilities having a meaningful amount of generation, this sub-factor has a weighting of 5%. For electric transmission and distribution utilities without meaningful generation and for natural gas local distribution companies, this sub-factor has a weighting of 10%.

How We Assess Generation and Fuel Diversity for the Grid

Criteria include the fuel type of the issuer's generation and important power purchase agreements, the ability of the issuer to economically shift its generation and power purchases when there are changes in fuel prices, the degree to which the utility and its rate-payers are exposed to or insulated from changes in commodity prices, and exposure to Challenged Source and Threatened Sources (see the explanations for how we generally characterize these generation sources in the table below). A regulated utility's capacity mix may not in itself be an indication of fuel diversity or the ability to shift fuels, since utilities may keep old and inefficient plants (e.g., natural gas boilers) to serve peak load. For this reason, we do not incorporate set percentages reflecting an "ideal" or "sub-par" mix for capacity or even generation. In addition to looking at a utility's generation mix to evaluate fuel diversity, we consider the efficiency of the utility's plants, their placement on the regional dispatch curve, and the demonstrated ability/inability of the utility to shift its generation mix in accordance with changing commodity prices.

Issuers having a balanced mix of hydro, coal, natural gas, nuclear and renewable energy as well as low exposure to challenged and threatened sources of generation will score higher in this sub-factor. Issuers that have concentration in one or two sources of generation, especially if they are threatened or challenged sources, will score lower.

In evaluating an issuer's degree of exposure to challenged and threatened sources, we will consider not only the existence of those plants in the utility's portfolio, but also the relevant factors that will determine the impact on the utility and on its rate-payers. For instance, an issuer that has a fairly high percentage of its generation from challenged sources could be evaluated very differently if its peer utilities face the same magnitude of those issues than if its peers have no exposure to challenged or threatened sources. In evaluating threatened sources, we consider the utility's progress in its plan to replace those sources, its reserve margin, the availability of purchased power capacity in the region, and the overall impact of the replacement plan on the issuer's rates relative to its peer group. Especially if there are no peers in the same jurisdiction, we also examine the extent to which the utility's generation resources plan is aligned with the relevant government's fuel/energy policy.

Factor 3: Diversification (10%)

Weighting 10%	Sub-Factor Weighting	Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Market Position	5% *	A very high degree of multinational and regional diversity in terms of regulatory regimes and/or service territory economies.	Material operations in three or more nations or substantial geographic regions providing very good diversity of regulatory regimes and/or service territory economies.	Material operations in two to three nations, states, provinces or regions that provide good diversity of regulatory regimes and service territory economies. Alternately, operates within a single regulatory regime with low volatility, and the service territory economy is robust, has a very high degree of diversity and has demonstrated resilience in economic cycles.	May operate under a single regulatory regime viewed as having low volatility, or where multiple regulatory regimes are not viewed as providing much diversity. The service territory economy may have some concentration and cyclicality, but is sufficiently resilient that it can absorb reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates.
Generation and Fuel Diversity	5% **	A high degree of diversity in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers are well insulated from commodity price changes, no generation concentration, and very low exposures to Challenged or Threatened Sources (see definitions below).	Very good diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers are affected only minimally by commodity price changes, little generation concentration, and low exposures to Challenged or Threatened Sources.	Good diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers have only modest exposure to commodity price changes; however, may have some concentration in a source that is neither Challenged nor Threatened. Exposure to Threatened Sources is low. While there may be some exposure to Challenged Sources, it is not a cause for concern.	Adequate diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers have moderate exposure to commodity price changes; however, may have some concentration in a source that is Challenged. Exposure to Threatened Sources is moderate, while exposure to Challenged Sources is manageable.

	Sub-Factor Weighting	Ba	B	Caa	Definitions
Market Position	5% *	Operates in a market area with somewhat greater concentration and cyclicality in the service territory economy and/or exposure to storms and other natural disasters, and thus less resilience to absorbing reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates. May show somewhat greater volatility in the regulatory regime(s).	Operates in a limited market area with material concentration and more severe cyclicality in service territory economy such that cycles are of materially longer duration or reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates could present a material challenge to the economy. Service territory may have geographic concentration that limits its resilience to storms and other natural disasters, or may be an emerging market. May show decided volatility in the regulatory regime(s).	Operates in a concentrated economic service territory with pronounced concentration, macroeconomic risk factors, and/or exposure to natural disasters.	"Challenged Sources" are generation plants that face higher but not insurmountable economic hurdles resulting from penalties or taxes on their operation, or from environmental upgrades that are required or likely to be required. Some examples are carbon-emitting plants that incur carbon taxes, plants that must buy emissions credits to operate, and plants that must install environmental equipment to continue to operate, in each where the taxes/credits/upgrades are sufficient to have a material impact on those plants' competitiveness relative to other generation types or on the utility's rates, but where the impact is not so severe as to be likely require plant closure.
Generation and Fuel Diversity	5% **	Modest diversification in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have greater exposure to commodity price changes. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be more pronounced, but the utility will be able to access alternative sources without undue financial stress.	Operates with little diversification in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have high exposure to commodity price changes. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be high, and accessing alternate sources may be challenging and cause more financial stress, but ultimately feasible.	Operates with high concentration in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have exposure to commodity price shocks. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be very high, and accessing alternate sources may be highly uncertain.	"Threatened Sources" are generation plants that are not currently able to operate due to major unplanned outages or issues with licensing or other regulatory compliance, and plants that are highly likely to be required to de-activate, whether due to the effectiveness of currently existing or expected rules and regulations or due to economic challenges. Some recent examples would include coal fired plants in the US that are not economic to retro-fit to meet mercury and air toxics standards, plants that cannot meet the effective date of those standards, nuclear plants in Japan that have not been licensed to re-start after the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident, and nuclear plants that are required to be phased out within 10 years (as is the case in some European countries).

*10% weight for issuers that lack generation **0% weight for issuers that lack generation

Factor 4: Financial Strength (40%)

Why It Matters

Electric and gas utilities are regulated, asset-based businesses characterized by large investments in long-lived property, plant and equipment. Financial strength, including the ability to service debt and provide a return to shareholders, is necessary for a utility to attract capital at a reasonable cost in order to invest in its generation, transmission and distribution assets, so that the utility can fulfill its service obligations at a reasonable cost to rate-payers.

How We Assess It for the Grid

In comparison to companies in other non-financial corporate sectors, the financial statements of regulated electric and gas utilities have certain unique aspects that impact financial analysis, which is further complicated by disparate treatment of certain elements under US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) versus International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Regulatory accounting may permit utilities to defer certain costs (thereby creating regulatory assets) that a non-utility corporate entity would have to expense. For instance, a regulated utility may be able to defer a substantial portion of costs related to recovery from a storm based on the general regulatory framework for those expenses, even if the utility does not have a specific order to collect the expenses from ratepayers over a set period of time. A regulated utility may be able to accrue and defer a return on equity (in addition to capitalizing interest) for construction-work-in-progress for an approved project based on the assumption that it will be able to collect that deferred equity return once the asset comes into service. For this reason, we focus more on a utility's cash flow than on its reported net income. Conversely, utilities may collect certain costs in rates well ahead of the time they must be paid (for instance, pension costs), thereby creating regulatory liabilities. Many of our metrics focus on Cash Flow from Operations Before Changes in Working Capital (CFO Pre-WC) because, unlike Funds from Operations (FFO), it captures the changes in long-term regulatory assets and liabilities. However, under IFRS the two measures are essentially the same. In general, we view changes in working capital as less important in utility financial analysis because they are often either seasonal (for example, power demand is generally greatest in the summer) or caused by changes in fuel prices that are typically a relatively automatic pass-through to the customer. We will nonetheless examine the impact of working capital changes in analyzing a utility's liquidity (see Other Rating Considerations – Liquidity).

Given the long-term nature of utility assets and the often lumpy nature of their capital expenditures, it is important to analyze both a utility's historical financial performance as well as its prospective future performance, which may be different from backward-looking measures. Scores under this factor may be higher or lower than what might be expected from historical results, depending on our view of expected future performance. In the illustrative mapping examples in this document, the scoring grid uses three year averages for the financial strength sub-factors. Multi-year periods are usually more representative of credit quality because utilities can experience swings in cash flows from one-time events, including such items as rate refunds, storm cost deferrals that create a regulatory asset, or securitization proceeds that reduce a regulatory asset. Nonetheless, we also look at trends in metrics for individual periods, which may influence our view of future performance and ratings.

For this scoring grid, we have identified four key ratios that we consider the most consistently useful in the analysis of regulated electric and gas utilities. However, no single financial ratio can adequately convey the relative credit strength of these highly diverse companies. Our ratings consider the overall financial strength of a company, and in individual cases other financial indicators may also play an important role.

CFO Pre-Working Capital Plus Interest/Interest or Cash Flow Interest Coverage

The cash flow interest coverage ratio is an indicator for a utility's ability to cover the cost of its borrowed capital. The numerator in the ratio calculation is the sum of CFO Pre-WC and interest expense, and the denominator is interest expense.

CFO Pre-Working Capital / Debt

This important metric is an indicator for the cash generating ability of a utility compared to its total debt. The numerator in the ratio calculation is CFO Pre-WC, and the denominator is total debt.

CFO Pre-Working Capital Minus Dividends / Debt

This ratio is an indicator for financial leverage as well as an indicator of the strength of a utility's cash flow after dividend payments are made. Dividend obligations of utilities are often substantial, quasi-permanent outflows that can affect the ability of a utility to cover its debt obligations, and this ratio can also provide insight into the financial policies of a utility or utility holding company. The higher the level of retained cash flow relative to a utility's debt, the more cash the utility has to support its capital expenditure program. The numerator of this ratio is CFO Pre-WC minus dividends, and the denominator is total debt.

Debt/Capitalization

This ratio is a traditional measure of balance sheet leverage. The numerator is total debt and the denominator is total capitalization. All of our ratios are calculated in accordance with Moody's standard adjustments[7], but we note that our definition of total capitalization includes deferred taxes in addition to total debt, preferred stock, other hybrid securities, and common equity. Since the presence or absence of deferred taxes is a function of national tax policy, comparing utilities using this ratio may be more meaningful among utilities in the same country or in countries with similar tax policies. High debt levels in comparison to capitalization can indicate higher interest obligations, can limit the ability of a utility to raise additional financing if needed, and can lead to leverage covenant violations in bank credit facilities or other financing agreements[8]. A high ratio may result from a regulatory framework that does not permit a robust cushion of equity in the capital structure, or from a material write-off of an asset, which may not have impacted current period cash flows but could affect future period cash flows relative to debt.

There are two sets of thresholds for three of these ratios based on the level of the issuer's business risk – the Standard Grid and the Lower Business Risk (LBR) Grid. In our view, the different types of utility entities covered under this methodology (as described in Appendix E) have different levels of business risk.

Generation utilities and vertically integrated utilities generally have a higher level of business risk because they are engaged in power generation, so we apply the Standard Grid. We view power generation as the highest-risk component of the electric utility business, as generation plants are typically the most expensive part of a utility's infrastructure (representing asset concentration risk) and are subject to the greatest risks in both construction and operation, including the risk that incurred costs will either not be recovered in rates or recovered with material delays.

[7] In certain circumstances, analysts may also apply specific adjustments.

[8] We also examine debt/capitalization ratios as defined in applicable covenants (which typically exclude deferred taxes from capitalization) relative to the covenant threshold level.

Other types of utilities may have lower business risk, such that we believe that they are most appropriately assessed using the LBR Grid, due to factors that could include a generally greater transfer of risk to customers, very strong insulation from exposure to commodity price movements, good protection from volumetric risks, fairly limited capex needs and low exposure to storms, major accidents and natural disasters. For instance, we tend to view many US natural gas local distribution companies (LDCs) and certain US electric transmission and distribution companies (T&Ds, which lack generation but generally retain some procurement responsibilities for customers), as typically having a lower business risk profile than their vertically integrated peers. In cases of T&Ds that we do not view as having materially lower risk than their vertically integrated peers, we will apply the Standard grid. This could result from a regulatory framework that exposes them to energy supply risk, large capital expenditures for required maintenance or upgrades, a heightened degree of exposure to catastrophic storm damage, or increased regulatory scrutiny due to poor reliability, or other considerations. The Standard Grid will also apply to LDCs that in our view do not have materially lower risk; for instance, due to their ownership of high pressure pipes or older systems requiring extensive gas main replacements, where gas commodity costs are not fully recovered in a reasonably contemporaneous manner, or where the LDC is not well insulated from declining volumes.

The four key ratios, their weighting in the grid, and the Standard and LBR scoring thresholds are detailed in the following table.

Factor 4: Financial Strength

Weighting 40%	Sub-Factor Weighting		Aaa	Aa	A	Baa	Ba	B	Caa
CFO pre-WC + Interest / Interest	7.5%		≥ 8x	6x - 8x	4.5x - 6x	3x - 4.5x	2x - 3x	1x - 2x	< 1x
CFO pre-WC / Debt	15%	Standard Grid	≥ 40%	30% - 40%	22% - 30%	13% - 22%	5% - 13%	1% - 5%	< 1%
		Low Business Risk Grid	≥ 38%	27% - 38%	19% - 27%	11% - 19%	5% - 11%	1% - 5%	< 1%
CFO pre-WC - Dividends / Debt	10%	Standard Grid	≥ 35%	25% - 35%	17% - 25%	9% - 17%	0% - 9%	(5%) - 0%	< (5%)
		Low Business Risk Grid	≥ 34%	23% - 34%	15% - 23%	7% - 15%	0% - 7%	(5%) - 0%	< (5%)
Debt / Capitalization	7.5%	Standard Grid	< 25%	25% - 35%	35% - 45%	45% - 55%	55% - 65%	65% - 75%	≥ 75%
		Low Business Risk Grid	< 29%	29% - 40%	40% - 50%	50% - 59%	59% - 67%	67% - 75%	≥ 75%

Notching for Structural Subordination of Holding Companies

Why It Matters

A typical utility company structure consists of a holding company ("HoldCo") that owns one or more operating subsidiaries (each an "OpCo"). OpCos may be regulated utilities or non-utility companies. A HoldCo typically has no operations – its assets are mostly limited to its equity interests in subsidiaries, and potentially other investments in subsidiaries that are structured as advances, debt, or even hybrid securities.

Most HoldCos present their financial statements on a consolidated basis that blurs legal considerations about priority of creditors based on the legal structure of the family, and grid scoring is thus based on

consolidated ratios. However, HoldCo creditors typically have a secondary claim on the group's cash flows and assets after OpCo creditors. We refer to this as structural subordination, because it is the corporate legal structure, rather than specific subordination provisions, that causes creditors at each of the utility and non-utility subsidiaries to have a more direct claim on the cash flows and assets of their respective OpCo obligors. By contrast, the debt of the HoldCo is typically serviced primarily by dividends that are up-streamed by the OpCos[9]. Under normal circumstances, these dividends are made from net income, after payment of the OpCo's interest and preferred dividends. In most non-financial corporate sectors where cash often moves freely between the entities in a single issuer family, this distinction may have less of an impact. However, in the regulated utility sector, barriers to movement of cash among companies in the corporate family can be much more restrictive, depending on the regulatory framework. These barriers can lead to significantly different probabilities of default for HoldCos and OpCos. Structural subordination also affects loss given default. Under most default[10] scenarios, an OpCo's creditors will be satisfied from the value residing at that OpCo before any of the OpCo's assets can be used to satisfy claims of the HoldCo's creditors. The prevalence of debt issuance at the OpCo level is another reason that structural subordination is usually a more serious concern in the utility sector than for investment grade issuers in other non-financial corporate sectors.

The grids for factors 1-4 are primarily oriented to OpCos (and to some degree for HoldCos with minimal current structural subordination; for example, there is no current structural subordination to debt at the operating company if all of the utility family's debt and preferred stock is issued at the HoldCo level, although there is structural subordination to other liabilities at the OpCo level). The additional risk from structural subordination is addressed via a notching adjustment to bring grid outcomes (on average) closer to the actual ratings of HoldCos.

How We Assess It

Grid-indicated ratings of holding companies may be notched down based on structural subordination. The risk factors and mitigants that impact structural subordination are varied and can be present in different combinations, such that a formulaic approach is not practical and case-by-case analyst judgment of the interaction of all pertinent factors that may increase or decrease its importance to the credit risk of an issuer are essential.

Some of the potentially pertinent factors that could increase the degree and/or impact of structural subordination include the following:

- Regulatory or other barriers to cash movement from OpCos to HoldCo
- Specific ring-fencing provisions
- Strict financial covenants at the OpCo level
- Higher leverage at the OpCo level
- Higher leverage at the HoldCo level[11]
- Significant dividend limitations or potential limitations at an important OpCo
- HoldCo exposure to subsidiaries with high business risk or volatile cash flows

[9] The HoldCo and OpCo may also have intercompany agreements, including tax sharing agreements, that can be another source of cash to the HoldCo.

[10] Actual priority in a default scenario will be determined by many factors, including the corporate and bankruptcy laws of the jurisdiction, the asset value of each OpCo, specific financing terms, inter-relationships among members of the family, etc.

[11] While higher leverage at the HoldCo does not increase structural subordination per se, it exacerbates the impact of any structural subordination that exists

» Strained liquidity at the HoldCo level

» The group's investment program is primarily in businesses that are higher risk or new to the group

Some of the potentially mitigating factors that could decrease the degree and/or impact of structural subordination include the following:

» Substantial diversity in cash flows from a variety of utility OpCos

» Meaningful dividends to HoldCo from unlevered utility OpCos

» Dependable, meaningful dividends to HoldCo from non-utility OpCos

» The group's investment program is primarily in strong utility businesses

» Inter-company guarantees - however, in many jurisdictions the value of an upstream guarantee may be limited by certain factors, including by the value that the OpCo received in exchange for granting the guarantee

Notching for structural subordination within the grid may range from 0 to negative 3 notches. Instances of extreme structural subordination are relatively rare, so the grid convention does not accommodate wider differences, although in the instances where we believe it is present, actual ratings do reflect the full impact of structural subordination.

A related issue is the relationship of ratings within a utility family with multiple operating companies, and sometimes intermediate holding companies. Some of the key issues are the same, such as the relative amounts of debt at the holding company level compared to the operating company level (or at one OpCo relative to another), and the degree to which operating companies have credit insulation due to regulation or other protective factors. Appendix D has additional insights on ratings within a utility family.

Rating Methodology Assumptions and Limitations, and Other Rating Considerations

The grid in this rating methodology represents a decision to favor simplicity that enhances transparency and to avoid greater complexity that would enable the grid to map more closely to actual ratings. Accordingly, the four rating factors and the notching factor in the grid do not constitute an exhaustive treatment of all of the considerations that are important for ratings of companies in the regulated electric and gas utility sector. In addition, our ratings incorporate expectations for future performance, while the financial information that is used to illustrate the mapping in the grid in this document is mainly historical. In some cases, our expectations for future performance may be informed by confidential information that we can't disclose. In other cases, we estimate future results based upon past performance, industry trends, competitor actions or other factors. In either case, predicting the future is subject to the risk of substantial inaccuracy.

Assumptions that may cause our forward-looking expectations to be incorrect include unanticipated changes in any of the following factors: the macroeconomic environment and general financial market conditions, industry competition, disruptive technology, regulatory and legal actions.

Key rating assumptions that apply in this sector include our view that sovereign credit risk is strongly correlated with that of other domestic issuers, that legal priority of claim affects average recovery on different classes of debt, sufficiently to generally warrant differences in ratings for different debt classes of the same issuer, and the assumption that access to liquidity is a strong driver of credit risk.

In choosing metrics for this rating methodology grid, we did not explicitly include certain important factors that are common to all companies in any industry such as the quality and experience of management, assessments of corporate governance and the quality of financial reporting and information disclosure. Therefore ranking these factors by rating category in a grid would in some cases suggest too much precision in the relative ranking of particular issuers against all other issuers that are rated in various industry sectors.

Ratings may include additional factors that are difficult to quantify or that have a meaningful effect in differentiating credit quality only in some cases, but not all. Such factors include financial controls, exposure to uncertain licensing regimes and possible government interference in some countries. Regulatory, litigation, liquidity, technology and reputational risk as well as changes to consumer and business spending patterns, competitor strategies and macroeconomic trends also affect ratings. While these are important considerations, it is not possible to precisely express these in the rating methodology grid without making the grid excessively complex and significantly less transparent. Ratings may also reflect circumstances in which the weighting of a particular factor will be substantially different from the weighting suggested by the grid.

This variation in weighting rating considerations can also apply to factors that we choose not to represent in the grid. For example, liquidity is a consideration frequently critical to ratings and which may not, in other circumstances, have a substantial impact in discriminating between two issuers with a similar credit profile. As an example of the limitations, ratings can be heavily affected by extremely weak liquidity that magnifies default risk. However, two identical companies might be rated the same if their only differentiating feature is that one has a good liquidity position while the other has an extremely good liquidity position.

Other Rating Considerations

Moody's considers other factors in addition to those discussed in this report, but in most cases understanding the considerations discussed herein should enable a good approximation of our view on the credit quality of companies in the regulated electric and gas utilities sector. Ratings consider our assessment of the quality of management, corporate governance, financial controls, liquidity management, event risk and seasonality. The analysis of these factors remains an integral part of our rating process.

Liquidity and Access to Capital Markets

Liquidity analysis is a key element in the financial analysis of electric and gas utilities, and it encompasses a company's ability to generate cash from internal sources as well as the availability of external sources of financing to supplement these internal sources. Liquidity and access to financing are of particular importance in this sector. Utility assets can often have a very long useful life- 30, 40 or even 60 years is not uncommon, as well as high price tags. Partly as a result of construction cycles, the utility sector has experienced prolonged periods of negative free cash flow – essentially, the sum of its dividends and its capital expenditures for maintenance and growth of its infrastructure frequently exceeds cash from operations, such that a portion of capital expenditures must routinely be debt financed. Utilities are among the largest debt issuers in the corporate universe and typically require consistent access to the capital markets to assure adequate sources of funding and to maintain financial flexibility. Substantial portions of capex are non-discretionary (for example, maintenance, adding customers to the network, or meeting environmental mandates); however, utilities were swift to cut or defer discretionary spending during the 2007-2009 recession. Dividends represent a quasi-permanent outlay, since utilities will typically only rarely cut their dividend. Liquidity is also important to meet

maturing obligations, which often occur in large chunks, and to meet collateral calls under any hedging agreements.

Due to the importance of liquidity, incorporating it as a factor with a fixed weighting in the grid would suggest an importance level that is often far different from the actual weight in the rating. In normal circumstances most companies in the sector have good access to liquidity. The industry generally requires, and for the most part has, large, syndicated, multi-year committed credit facilities. In addition, utilities have demonstrated strong access to capital markets, even under difficult conditions. As a result, liquidity has generally not been an issue for most utilities and a utility with very strong liquidity may not warrant a rating distinction compared to a utility with strong liquidity. However, when there is weakness in liquidity or liquidity management, it can be the dominant consideration for ratings.

Our assessment of liquidity for regulated utilities involves an analysis of total sources and uses of cash over the next 12 months or more, as is done for all corporates. Using our financial projections of the utility and our analysis of its available sources of liquidity (including an assessment of the quality and reliability of alternate liquidity such as committed credit facilities), we evaluate how its projected sources of cash (cash from operations, cash on hand and existing committed multi-year credit facilities) compare to its projected uses (including all or most capital expenditures, dividends, maturities of short and long-term debt, our projection of potential liquidity calls on financial hedges, and important issuer-specific items such as special tax payments). We assume no access to capital markets or additional liquidity sources, no renewal of existing credit facilities, and no cut to dividends. We examine a company's liquidity profile under this scenario, its ability to make adjustments to improve its liquidity position, and any dependence on liquidity sources with lower quality and reliability.

Management Quality and Financial Policy

The quality of management is an important factor supporting the credit strength of a regulated utility or utility holding company. Assessing the execution of business plans over time can be helpful in assessing management's business strategies, policies, and philosophies and in evaluating management performance relative to performance of competitors and our projections. A record of consistency provides Moody's with insight into management's likely future performance in stressed situations and can be an indicator of management's tendency to depart significantly from its stated plans and guidelines.

We also assess financial policy (including dividend policy and planned capital expenditures) and how management balances the potentially competing interests of shareholders, fixed income investors and other stakeholders. Dividends and discretionary capital expenditures are the two primary components over which management has the greatest control in the short term. For holding companies, we consider the extent to which management is willing stretch its payout ratio (through aggressive increases or delays in needed decreases) in order to satisfy common shareholders. For a utility that is a subsidiary of a parent company with several utility subsidiaries, dividends to the parent may be more volatile depending on the cash generation and cash needs of that utility, because parents typically want to assure that each utility maintains the regulatory debt/equity ratio on which its rates have been set. The effect we have observed is that utility subsidiaries often pay higher dividends when they have lower capital needs and lower dividends when they have higher capital expenditures or other cash needs. Any dividend policy that cuts into the regulatory debt/equity ratio is a material credit negative.

Size – Natural Disasters, Customer Concentration and Construction Risks

The size and scale of a regulated utility has generally not been a major determinant of its credit strength in the same way that it has been for most other industrial sectors. While size brings certain economies of scale that can somewhat affect the utility's cost structure and competitiveness, rates are more heavily impacted by costs related to fuel and fixed assets. Particularly in the US, we have not observed material differences in the success of utilities' regulatory outreach based on their size. Smaller utilities have sometimes been better able to focus their attention on meeting the expectations of a single regulator than their multi-state peers.

However, size can be a very important factor in our assessment of certain risks that impact ratings, including exposure to natural disasters, customer concentration (primarily to industrial customers in a single sector) and construction risks associated with large projects. While the grid attempts to incorporate the first two of these into Factor 3, for some issuers these considerations may be sufficiently important that the rating reflects a greater weight for these risks. While construction projects always carry the risk of cost over-runs and delays, these risks are materially heightened for projects that are very large relative to the size of the utility.

Interaction of Utility Ratings with Government Policies and Sovereign Ratings

Compared to most industrial sectors, regulated utilities are more likely to be impacted by government actions. Credit impacts can occur directly through rate regulation, and indirectly through energy, environmental and tax policies. Government actions affect fuel prices, the mix of generating plants, the certainty and timing of revenues and costs, and the likelihood that regulated utilities will experience financial stress. While our evolving view of the impact of such policies and the general economic and financial climate is reflected in ratings for each utility, some considerations do not lend themselves to incorporation in a simple ratings grid.[12]

Diversified Operations at the Utility

A small number of regulated utilities have diversified operations that are segments within the utility company, as opposed to the more common practice of housing such operations in one or more separate affiliates. In general, we will seek to evaluate the other businesses that are material in accordance with the appropriate methodology and the rating will reflect considerations from such methodologies. There may be analytical limitations in evaluating the utility and non-utility businesses when segment financial results are not fully broken out and these may be addressed through estimation based on available information. Since regulated utilities are a relatively low risk business compared to other corporate sectors, in most cases diversified non-utility operations increase the business risk profile of a utility. Reflecting this tendency, we note that assigned ratings are typically lower than grid-indicated ratings for such companies.

Event Risk

We also recognize the possibility that an unexpected event could cause a sudden and sharp decline in an issuer's fundamental creditworthiness. Typical special events include mergers and acquisitions, asset sales, spin-offs, capital restructuring programs, litigation and shareholder distributions.

[12] See also the cross-sector methodology How Sovereign Credit Quality May Affect Other Ratings, February 2012.

Corporate Governance

Among the areas of focus in corporate governance are audit committee financial expertise, the incentives created by executive compensation packages, related party transactions, interactions with outside auditors, and ownership structure.

Investment and Acquisition Strategy

In our credit assessment we take into consideration management's investment strategy. Investment strategy is benchmarked with that of the other companies in the rated universe to further verify its consistency. Acquisitions can strengthen a company's business. Our assessment of a company's tolerance for acquisitions at a given rating level takes into consideration (1) management's risk appetite, including the likelihood of further acquisitions over the medium term; (2) share buy-back activity; (3) the company's commitment to specific leverage targets; and (4) the volatility of the underlying businesses, as well as that of the business acquired. Ratings can often hold after acquisitions even if leverage temporarily climbs above normally acceptable ranges. However, this depends on (1) the strategic fit; (2) pro-forma capitalization/leverage following an acquisition; and (3) our confidence that credit metrics will be restored in a relatively short timeframe.

Financial Controls

We rely on the accuracy of audited financial statements to assign and monitor ratings in this sector. Such accuracy is only possible when companies have sufficient internal controls, including centralized operations, the proper tone at the top and consistency in accounting policies and procedures.

Weaknesses in the overall financial reporting processes, financial statement restatements or delays in regulatory filings can be indications of a potential breakdown in internal controls.

Conclusion: Summary of the Grid-Indicated Rating Outcomes

For the 45 representative utilities shown in the illustrative mapping examples, the grid-indicated ratings map to current assigned ratings as follows (see Appendix B for the details):

- 33% or 15 companies map to their assigned rating
- 49% or 22 companies have grid-indicated ratings that are within one alpha-numeric notch of their assigned rating
- 16% or 7 companies have grid-indicated ratings that are within two alpha-numeric notches of their assigned rating
- 2% or 1 company has a grid-indicated rating that is within three alpha-numeric notches of its assigned rating

Grid Indicated Rating Outcomes

Map to Assigned Rating	Map to Within One Notch
American Electric Power Company, Inc.	Appalachian Power Company
China Longyuan Power Group Corporation Ltd.	Arizona Public Service Company
Chubu Electric Power Company, Incorporated	China Resources Gas Group Limited
Entergy Corporation	Duke Energy Corporation
FortisBC Holdings Inc.	Florida Power & Light Company
Great Plains Energy Incorporated	Georgia Power Company
Hokuriku Electric Power Company	Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc.
Madison Gas & Electric	Idaho Power Company
MidAmerican Energy Company	Kansai Electric Power Company, Incorporated
Mississippi Power Company	Korea Electric Power Corporation
Newfoundland Power Inc.	MidAmerican Energy Holdings Co.
Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company	Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
Osaka Gas Co., Ltd.	Northern States Power Minnesota
Saudi Electricity	Okinawa Electric Power Company, Incorporated
Wisconsin Public Service Corporation	PacifiCorp
	Pennsylvania Electric Company
	PNG Companies
	Public Service Company of New Mexico
	SCANA
	Southwestern Public Service Company
	UGI Utilities, Inc.
	Virginia Electric Power Company

Map to Within Two Notches	Map to Within Three or More Notches
Ameren Illinois Company	Western Mass Electric Co.
Consumers Energy Company	
Distribuidora de Electricidad La Paz S.A.	
Empresa Electrica de Guatemala, S.A. (EEGSA)	
Gail (India) Ltd	
Gas Natural Ban, S.A.	
Ohio Power Company	

Appendix A: Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities Methodology Factor Grid

Factor 1a: Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Utility regulation occurs under a fully developed framework that is national in scope based on legislation that provides the utility a nearly absolute monopoly (see note 1_ within its service territory, an unquestioned assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, an extremely high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and prescriptive methods and procedures for setting rates. Existing utility law is comprehensive and supportive such that changes in legislation are not expected to be necessary; or any changes that have occurred have been strongly supportive of utilities credit quality in general and sufficiently forward-looking so as to address problems before they occurred. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility should they occur, including access to national courts, very strong judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs under a fully developed national, state or provincial framework based on legislation that provides the utility an extremely strong monopoly (see note 1) within its service territory, a strong assurance, subject to limited review, that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, a very high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and reasonably prescriptive methods and procedures for setting rates. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been timely and clearly credit supportive of the issuer in a manner that shows the utility has had a strong voice in the process. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, should they occur including access to national courts, strong judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs under a well developed national, state or provincial framework based on legislation that provides the utility a very strong monopoly (see note 1) within its service territory, an assurance, subject to reasonable prudency requirements, that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, a high degree of clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated, and overall guidance for methods and procedures for setting rates. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been mostly timely and on the whole credit supportive for the issuer, and the utility has had a clear voice in the legislative process. There is an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, should they occur, including access to national courts, clear judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility law, and a strong rule of law. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation that provides the utility a strong monopoly within its service territory that may have some exceptions such as greater self-generation (see note 1), a general assurance that, subject to prudency requirements that are mostly reasonable, rates will be set will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover all necessary investments, reasonable clarity as to the manner in which utilities will be regulated and overall guidance for methods and procedures for setting rates; or (ii) under a new framework where independent and transparent regulation exists in other sectors. If there have been changes in utility legislation, they have been credit supportive or at least balanced for the issuer but potentially less timely, and the utility had a voice in the legislative process. There is either (i) an independent judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility, including access to courts at least at the state or provincial level, reasonably clear judicial precedent in the interpretation of utility laws, and a generally strong rule of law; or (ii) regulation has been applied (under a well developed framework) in a manner such that redress to an independent arbiter has not been required. We expect these conditions to continue.
Ba	**B**	**Caa**	
Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility a monopoly within its service territory that is generally strong but may have a greater level of exceptions (see note 1), and that, subject to prudency requirements which may be stringent, provides a general assurance (with somewhat less certainty) that rates will be set will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where the jurisdiction has a history of less independent and transparent regulation in other sectors. Either: (i) the judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or may not be fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure, but there is a reasonably strong rule of law; or (ii) where there is no independent arbiter, the regulation has mostly been applied in a manner such redress has not been required. We expect these conditions to continue.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility monopoly within its service territory that is reasonably strong but may have important exceptions, and that, subject to prudency requirements which may be stringent or at times arbitrary, provides more limited or less certain assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where we would expect less independent and transparent regulation, based either on the regulator's history in other sectors or other factors. The judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or may not be fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure, but there is a reasonably strong rule of law. Alternately, where there is no independent arbiter, the regulation has been applied in a manner that often requires some redress adding more uncertainty to the regulatory framework. There may be a periodic risk of creditor-unfriendly government intervention in utility markets or rate-setting.	Utility regulation occurs (i) under a national, state, provincial or municipal framework based on legislation or government decree that provides the utility a monopoly within its service territory, but with little assurance that rates will be set in a manner that will permit the utility to make and recover necessary investments; or (ii) under a new framework where we would expect unpredictable or adverse regulation, based either on the jurisdiction's history of in other sectors or other factors. The judiciary that can arbitrate disagreements between the regulator and the utility may not have clear authority or is viewed as not being fully independent of the regulator or other political pressure. Alternately, there may be no redress to an effective independent arbiter. The ability of the utility to enforce its monopoly or prevent uncompensated usage of its system may be limited. There may be a risk of creditor-unfriendly nationalization or other significant intervention in utility markets or rate-setting.	

Note 1: The strength of the monopoly refers to the legal, regulatory and practical obstacles for customers in the utility's territory to obtain service from another provider. Examples of a weakening of the monopoly would include the ability of a city or large user to leave the utility system to set up their own system, the extent to which self-generation is permitted (e.g. cogeneration) and/or encouraged (e.g., net metering, DSM generation). At the lower end of the ratings spectrum, the utility's monopoly may be challenged by pervasive theft and unauthorized use. Since utilities are generally presumed to be monopolies, a strong monopoly position in itself is not sufficient for a strong score in this sub-factor, but a weakening of the monopoly can lower the score.

Factor 1b: Consistency and Predictability of Regulation (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to a strong, lengthy track record of predictable, consistent and favorable decisions. The regulator is highly credit supportive of the issuer and utilities in general. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has a led to a considerable track record of predominantly predictable and consistent decisions. The regulator is mostly credit supportive of utilities in general and in almost all instances has been highly credit supportive of the issuer. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to a track record of largely predictable and consistent decisions. The regulator may be somewhat less credit supportive of utilities in general, but has been quite credit supportive of the issuer in most circumstances. We expect these conditions to continue.	The issuer's interaction with the regulator has led to an adequate track record. The regulator is generally consistent and predictable, but there may some evidence of inconsistency or unpredictability from time to time, or decisions may at times be politically charged. However, instances of less credit supportive decisions are based on reasonable application of existing rules and statutes and are not overly punitive. We expect these conditions to continue.

Ba	B	Caa
We expect that regulatory decisions will demonstrate considerable inconsistency or unpredictability or that decisions will be politically charged, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. The regulator may have a history of less credit supportive regulatory decisions with respect to the issuer, but we expect that the issuer will be able to obtain support when it encounters financial stress, with some potentially material delays. The regulator's authority may be eroded at times by legislative or political action. The regulator may not follow the framework for some material decisions.	We expect that regulatory decisions will be largely unpredictable or even somewhat arbitrary, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. However, we expect that the issuer will ultimately be able to obtain support when it encounters financial stress, albeit with material or more extended delays. Alternately, the regulator is untested, lacks a consistent track record, or is undergoing substantial change. The regulator's authority may be eroded on frequent occasions by legislative or political action. The regulator may more frequently ignore the framework in a manner detrimental to the issuer.	We expect that regulatory decisions will be highly unpredictable and frequently adverse, based either on the issuer's track record of interaction with regulators or other governing bodies, or our view that decisions will move in this direction. Alternately, decisions may have credit supportive aspects, but may often be unenforceable. The regulator's authority may have been seriously eroded by legislative or political action. The regulator may consistently ignore the framework to the detriment of the issuer.

Factor 2a: Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Tariff formulas and automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and highly timely recovery of all operating costs and essentially contemporaneous return on all incremental capital investments, with statutory provisions in place to preclude the possibility of challenges to rate increases or cost recovery mechanisms. By statute and by practice, general rate cases are efficient, focused on an impartial review, quick, and permit inclusion of fully forward -looking costs.	Tariff formulas and automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and highly timely recovery of all operating costs and essentially contemporaneous or near-contemporaneous return on most incremental capital investments, with minimal challenges by regulators to companies' cost assumptions. By statute and by practice, general rate cases are efficient, focused on an impartial review, of a very reasonable duration before non-appealable interim rates can be collected, and primarily permit inclusion of forward-looking costs.	Automatic cost recovery mechanisms provide full and reasonably timely recovery of fuel, purchased power and all other highly variable operating expenses. Material capital investments may be made under tariff formulas or other rate-making permitting reasonably contemporaneous returns, or may be submitted under other types of filings that provide recovery of cost of capital with minimal delays. Instances of regulatory challenges that delay rate increases or cost recovery are generally related to large, unexpected increases in sizeable construction projects. By statute or by practice, general rate cases are reasonably efficient, primarily focused on an impartial review, of a reasonable duration before rates (either permanent or non-refundable interim rates) can be collected, and permit inclusion of important forward -looking costs.	Fuel, purchased power and all other highly variable expenses are generally recovered through mechanisms incorporating delays of less than one year, although some rapid increases in costs may be delayed longer where such deferrals do not place financial stress on the utility. Incremental capital investments may be recovered primarily through general rate cases with moderate lag, with some through tariff formulas. Alternately, there may be formula rates that are untested or unclear. Potentially greater tendency for delays due to regulatory intervention, although this will generally be limited to rates related to large capital projects or rapid increases in operating costs.

Ba	B	Caa
There is an expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will eventually be recovered with delays that will not place material financial stress on the utility, but there may be some evidence of an unwillingness by regulators to make timely rate changes to address volatility in fuel, or purchased power, or other market-sensitive expenses. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be subject to delays that are somewhat lengthy, but not so pervasive as to be expected to discourage important investments.	The expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will be recovered may be subject to material delays due to second-guessing of spending decisions by regulators or due to political intervention. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be subject to delays that are material to the issuer, or may be likely to discourage some important investment.	The expectation that fuel, purchased power or other highly variable expenses will be recovered may be subject to extensive delays due to second-guessing of spending decisions by regulators or due to political intervention. Recovery of costs related to capital investments may be uncertain, subject to delays that are extensive, or that may be likely to discourage even necessary investment.

Note: Tariff formulas include formula rate plans as well as trackers and riders related to capital investment.

Factor 2b: Sufficiency of Rates and Returns (12.5%)

Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Sufficiency of rates to cover costs and attract capital is (and will continue to be) unquestioned.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that permits full cost recovery and a fair return on all investments, with minimal challenges by regulators to companies' cost assumptions. This will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are strong relative to global peers.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides full cost recovery and a fair return on investments, with limited instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are generally above average relative to global peers, but may at times be average.	Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides full operating cost recovery and a mostly fair return on investments, but there may be somewhat more instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances, although ultimate rate outcomes are sufficient to attract capital without difficulty. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are average relative to global peers, but may at times be somewhat below average.

Ba	B	Caa
Rates are (and we expect will continue to be) set at a level that generally provides recovery of most operating costs but return on investments may be less predictable, and there may be decidedly more instances of regulatory challenges and disallowances, but ultimate rate outcomes are generally sufficient to attract capital. In general, this will translate to returns (measured in relation to equity, total assets, rate base or regulatory asset value, as applicable) that are generally below average relative to global peers, or where allowed returns are average but difficult to earn. Alternately, the tariff formula may not take into account all cost components and/or remuneration of investments may be unclear or at times unfavorable.	We expect rates will be set at a level that at times fails to provide recovery of costs other than cash costs, and regulators may engage in somewhat arbitrary second-guessing of spending decisions or deny rate increases related to funding ongoing operations based much more on politics than on prudency reviews. Return on investments may be set at levels that discourage investment. We expect that rate outcomes may be difficult or uncertain, negatively affecting continued access to capital. Alternately, the tariff formula may fail to take into account significant cost components other than cash costs, and/or remuneration of investments may be generally unfavorable.	We expect rates will be set at a level that often fails to provide recovery of material costs, and recovery of cash costs may also be at risk. Regulators may engage in more arbitrary second-guessing of spending decisions or deny rate increases related to funding ongoing operations based primarily on politics. Return on investments may be set at levels that discourage necessary maintenance investment. We expect that rate outcomes may often be punitive or highly uncertain, with a markedly negative impact on access to capital. Alternately, the tariff formula may fail to take into account significant cash cost components, and/or remuneration of investments may be primarily unfavorable.

Factor 3: Diversification (10%)

Weighting 10%	Sub-Factor Weighting	Aaa	Aa	A	Baa
Market Position	5% *	A very high degree of multinational and regional diversity in terms of regulatory regimes and/or service territory economies.	Material operations in three or more nations or substantial geographic regions providing very good diversity of regulatory regimes and/or service territory economies.	Material operations in two to three nations, states, provinces or regions that provide good diversity of regulatory regimes and service territory economies. Alternately, operates within a single regulatory regime with low volatility, and the service territory economy is robust, has a very high degree of diversity and has demonstrated resilience in economic cycles.	May operate under a single regulatory regime viewed as having low volatility, or where multiple regulatory regimes are not viewed as providing much diversity. The service territory economy may have some concentration and cyclicality, but is sufficiently resilient that it can absorb reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates.
Generation and Fuel Diversity	5% **	A high degree of diversity in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers are well insulated from commodity price changes, no generation concentration, and very low exposures to Challenged or Threatened Sources (see definitions below).	Very good diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers are affected only minimally by commodity price changes, little generation concentration, and low exposures to Challenged or Threatened Sources.	Good diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers have only modest exposure to commodity price changes; however, may have some concentration in a source that is neither Challenged nor Threatened. Exposure to Threatened Sources is low. While there may be some exposure to Challenged Sources, it is not a cause for concern.	Adequate diversification in terms of generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility and rate-payers have moderate exposure to commodity price changes; however, may have some concentration in a source that is Challenged. Exposure to Threatened Sources is moderate, while exposure to Challenged Sources is manageable.

	Sub-Factor Weighting	Ba	B	Caa	Definitions
Market Position	5% *	Operates in a market area with somewhat greater concentration and cyclicality in the service territory economy and/or exposure to storms and other natural disasters, and thus less resilience to absorbing reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates. May show somewhat greater volatility in the regulatory regime(s).	Operates in a limited market area with material concentration and more severe cyclicality in service territory economy such that cycles are of materially longer duration or reasonably foreseeable increases in utility rates could present a material challenge to the economy. Service territory may have geographic concentration that limits its resilience to storms and other natural disasters, or may be an emerging market. May show decided volatility in the regulatory regime(s).	Operates in a concentrated economic service territory with pronounced concentration, macroeconomic risk factors, and/or exposure to natural disasters.	Challenged Sources are generation plants that face higher but not insurmountable economic hurdles resulting from penalties or taxes on their operation, or from environmental upgrades that are required or likely to be required. Some examples are carbon-emitting plants that incur carbon taxes, plants that must buy emissions credits to operate, and plants that must install environmental equipment to continue to operate, in each where the taxes/credits/upgrades are sufficient to have a material impact on those plants' competitiveness relative to other generation types or on the utility's rates, but where the impact is not so severe as to be likely require plant closure.
Generation and Fuel Diversity	5% **	Modest diversification in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have greater exposure to commodity price changes. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be more pronounced, but the utility will be able to access alternative sources without undue financial stress.	Operates with little diversification in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have high exposure to commodity price changes. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be high, and accessing alternate sources may be challenging and cause more financial stress, but ultimately feasible.	Operates with high concentration in generation and/or fuel sources such that the utility or rate-payers have exposure to commodity price shocks. Exposure to Challenged and Threatened Sources may be very high, and accessing alternate sources may be highly uncertain.	Threatened Sources are generation plants that are not currently able to operate due to major unplanned outages or issues with licensing or other regulatory compliance, and plants that are highly likely to be required to de-activate, whether due to the effectiveness of currently existing or expected rules and regulations or due to economic challenges. Some recent examples would include coal fired plants in the US that are not economic to retro-fit to meet mercury and air toxics standards, plants that cannot meet the effective date of those standards, nuclear plants in Japan that have not been licensed to re-start after the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident, and nuclear plants that are required to be phased out within 10 years (as is the case in some European countries).

* 10% weight for issuers that lack generation **0% weight for issuers that lack generation

Factor 4: Financial Strength

Weighting 40%	Sub-Factor Weighting		Aaa	Aa	A	Baa	Ba	B	Caa
CFO pre-WC + Interest / Interest	7.5%		≥ 8x	6x - 8x	4.5x - 6x	3x - 4.5x	2x - 3x	1x - 2x	< 1x
CFO pre-WC / Debt	15%	Standard Grid	≥ 40%	30% - 40%	22% - 30%	13% - 22%	5% - 13%	1% - 5%	< 1%
		Low Business Risk Grid	≥ 38%	27% - 38%	19% - 27%	11% - 19%	5% - 11%	1% - 5%	< 1%
CFO pre-WC - Dividends / Debt	10%	Standard Grid	≥ 35%	25% - 35%	17% - 25%	9% - 17%	0% - 9%	(5%) - 0%	< (5%)
		Low Business Risk Grid	≥ 34%	23% - 34%	15% - 23%	7% - 15%	0% - 7%	(5%) - 0%	< (5%)
Debt / Capitalization	7.5%	Standard Grid	< 25%	25% - 35%	35% - 45%	45% - 55%	55% - 65%	65% - 75%	≥ 75%
		Low Business Risk Grid	< 29%	29% - 40%	40% - 50%	50% - 59%	59% - 67%	67% - 75%	≥ 75%

Appendix B: Regulated Electric and Gas Utilities – Assigned Ratings and Grid-Indicated Ratings for a Selected Cross-Section of Issuers

	Issuer	Outlook	Actual Rating	*BCA / Rating Before Uplift*[13]	Grid Indicated Rating	Country
1	Ameren Illinois Company	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	A3	USA
2	American Electric Power Company, Inc.	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	Baa2	USA
3	Appalachian Power Company	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	Baa1	USA
4	Arizona Public Service Company	RUR-Up	Baa1	-	A3	USA
5	China Longyuan Power Group Corporation	Stable	Baa3	*Ba1*	Ba1	China
6	China Resources Gas Group Ltd.	Stable	Baa1	*Baa2*	Baa1	China
7	Chubu Electric Power Company, Inc.	Negative	A3	*Baa2*	Baa2	Japan
8	Consumers Energy Company	RUR-Up	(P)Baa1	-	A2	USA
9	Distribuidora de Electricidad La Paz S.A.	Stable	Ba3	-	Ba1	Bolivia
10	Duke Energy Corporation	RUR-Up	Baa1	-	Baa2	USA
11	Empresa Electrica de Guatemala, S.A.	Positive	Ba2	-	Baa3	Guatemala
12	Entergy Corporation	Stable	Baa3	-	Baa3	USA
13	Florida Power & Light Company	RUR-Up	A2	-	A1	USA
14	FortisBC Holdings Inc.	Negative	Baa2	-	Baa2	Canada
15	Gail (India) Ltd	Stable	Baa2	*Baa2*	A3	India
16	Gas Natural BAN, S.A.	Negative	B3	-	B1	Argentina
17	Georgia Power Company	Stable	A3	-	A2	USA
18	Great Plains Energy Incorporated	RUR-Up	Baa3	-	Baa3	USA
19	Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc.	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	Baa1	USA
20	Hokuriku Electric Power Company	Negative	A3	*Baa2*	Baa2	Japan
21	Idaho Power Company	RUR-Up	Baa1	-	A3	USA
22	Kansai Electric Power Company, Inc.	Negative	A3	*Baa2*	Baa3	Japan
23	Korea Electric Power Corporation	Stable	A1	*Baa2*	Baa3	Korea
24	Madison Gas & Electric	RUR-Up	A1	-	A1	USA
25	MidAmerican Energy Company	RUR-Up	A2	-	A2	USA
26	MidAmerican Energy Holdings Co.	RUR-Up	Baa1	-	A3	USA
27	Mississippi Power Company	Stable	Baa1	-	Baa1	USA
28	Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation	RUR-Up	A3	-	A2	USA
29	Newfoundland Power Inc.	Stable	Baa1	-	Baa1	Canada
30	Northern States Power Minnesota	RUR-Up	A3	-	A2	USA
31	Ohio Power Company	Stable	Baa1	-	A2	USA
32	Okinawa Electric Power Company, Inc.	Stable	Aa3	*A2*	A3	Japan
33	Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company	RUR-Up	A2	-	A2	USA
34	Osaka Gas Co., Ltd.	Stable	Aa3	*A1*	A1	Japan

[13] BCA means a Baseline Credit Assessment for a government related issuer. Please see Government Related Issuers: Methodology Update, July 2010. In addition, certain companies in Japan receive a ratings uplift due to country-specific considerations. Please see "Support system for large corporate entities in Japan can provide ratings uplift, with limits" in Appendix G.

	Issuer	Outlook	Actual Rating	*BCA / Rating Before Uplift*[13]	Grid Indicated Rating	Country
35	PacifiCorp	RUR-Up	Baa1	-	A3	USA
36	Pennsylvania Electric Company	Stable	Baa2	-	Baa1	USA
37	PNG Companies LLC	RUR-Up	Baa3	-	Baa2	USA
38	Public Service Company of New Mexico	RUR-Up	Baa3	-	Baa2	USA
39	Saudi Electricity Company	Stable	A1	*Baa1*	Baa1	Saudi Arabia
40	SCANA Corporation	Stable	Baa3	-	Baa2	USA
41	Southwestern Public Service Company	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	Baa1	USA
42	UGI Utilities, Inc.	RUR-Up	A3	-	A2	USA
43	Virginia Electric and Power Company	RUR-Up	A3	-	A2	USA
44	Western Massachusetts Electric Company	RUR-Up	Baa2	-	A2	USA
45	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation	RUR-Up	A2	-	A2	USA

Appendix C: Regulated Electric and Gas Utility Grid Outcomes and Outlier Discussion

In the table below positive or negative "outliers" for a given sub-factor are defined as issuers whose grid sub-factor score is at least two broad rating categories higher or lower than a company's rating (e.g. a B-rated company whose rating on a specific sub-factor is in the Baa-rating category is flagged as a positive outlier for that sub-factor). Green is used to denote a positive outlier, whose grid-indicated performance for a sub-factor is two or more broad rating categories higher than Moody's rating. Red is used to denote a negative outlier, whose grid-indicated performance for a sub-factor is two or more broad rating categories lower than Moody's rating.

Grid-Indicated Ratings

					Factor 1a	Factor 1b		Factor 2a	Factor 2b		Factor 3a	Factor 3b		Factor 4a	Factor 4b	Factor 4c	Factor 4d	Hold-Co Notching for Structural Subor-dination
		Actual Rating / *BCA or Rating Before Uplift*	Indicated Rating	Indicated Factor 1 Rating	12.50 %	12.50 %	Indicated Factor 2 Rating	12.50 %	12.50 %	Indicated Factor 3 Rating	5.00 %	5.00 %	Indicated Factor 4 Rating	7.50 %	15.00 %	10.00 %	7.50 %	
1	Ameren Illinois Company	Baa2	A3	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Aa	Ba	Baa	Baa	-	A	Baa	A	Baa	Aa	n/a
2	American Electric Power Company, Inc.	Baa2	Baa2	A	A	A	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	-1
3	Appalachian Power Company	Baa2	Baa1	A	A	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	n/a
4	Arizona Public Service Company	Baa1	A3	A	A	A	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	A	A	A	n/a
5	China Longyuan Power Group Corporation Ltd.	Baa3 / *Ba1*	Ba1	Ba	Ba	Baa	A	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	A	Ba	Ba	Ba	Baa	B	-1
6	China Resources Gas Group Limited	Baa1 / *Baa2*	Baa1	Ba	Ba	Baa	Ba	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	-	A	Aaa	A	A	A	n/a
7	Chubu Electric Power Company, Incorporated	A3 / *Baa2*	Baa2	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Ba	A	Baa	A	Ba	Ba	Aa	Ba	Ba	B	n/a
8	Consumers Energy Company	Baa1	A2	A	A	Aa	A	Aa	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	A	A	A	A	Baa	n/a
9	Distribuidora de Electricidad La Paz S.A.	Ba3	Ba1	B	B	Ba	B	B	Ba	B	B	-	A	Baa	A	A	A	n/a
10	Duke Energy Corp.	Baa1	Baa2	A	A	Aa	Baa	A	Baa	A	A	A	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	A	-2
11	Empresa Electrica de Guatemala, S.A. (EEGSA)	Ba2	Baa3	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	-	Baa	A	Aa	B	A	n/a
12	Entergy Corp	Baa3	Baa3	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	Baa	A	A	A	A	Baa	-2
13	Florida Power & Light Company	A2	A1	A	A	Aa	A	Aa	Baa	A	A	A	Aa	Aaa	Aa	Aa	Aa	n/a
14	FortisBC Holdings Inc.	Baa2	Baa2	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	0
15	Gail (India) Ltd	Baa2 / *Baa2*	A3	Ba	Ba	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	Ba	Ba	-	Aa	Aaa	Aaa	Aaa	Aa	n/a
16	Gas Natural Ban, S.A.	B3	B1	Caa	Caa	Caa	Caa	Caa	Caa	B	B	-	A	Ba	A	Baa	Aaa	n/a

Grid-Indicated Ratings

		Actual Rating / *BCA or Rating Before Uplift*	Indicated Rating	Indicated Factor 1 Rating	Factor 1a 12.50 %	Factor 1b 12.50 %	Indicated Factor 2 Rating	Factor 2a 12.50 %	Factor 2b 12.50 %	Indicated Factor 3 Rating	Factor 3a 5.00 %	Factor 3b 5.00 %	Indicated Factor 4 Rating	Factor 4a 7.50 %	Factor 4b 15.00 %	Factor 4c 10.00 %	Factor 4d 7.50 %	Hold-Co Notching for Structural Subor-dination
17	Georgia Power Company	A3	A2	Aa	Aa	Aa	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	Aa	A	Baa	A	n/a
18	Great Plains Energy Incorporated	Baa3	Baa3	A	A	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	-1
19	Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc.	Baa2	Baa1	A	A	A	A	Aa	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	-1
20	Hokuriku Electric Power Company	A3 / *Baa2*	Baa2	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Ba	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	Ba	Aa	Ba	Ba	B	n/a
21	Idaho Power Company	Baa1	A3	A	A	A	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	n/a
22	Kansai Electric Power Company, Incorporated	A3 / *Baa2*	Baa3	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Ba	A	Baa	A	Ba	B	Ba	B	Ba	Caa	n/a
23	Korea Electric Power Corporation	A1 / *Baa2*	Baa3	Baa	Baa	Baa	Ba	Ba	Ba	A	A	A	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Baa	n/a
24	Madison Gas & Electric	A1	A1	A	A	Aa	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Aa	Aa	Aa	Aa	A	n/a
25	MidAmerican Energy Company	A2	A2	A	A	Aa	Ba	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	Aa	A	Aa	A	n/a
26	MidAmerican Energy Holdings Co.	Baa1	A3	A	A	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	Baa	0
27	Mississippi Power Company	Baa1	Baa1	A	A	A	A	Aa	Baa	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	n/a
28	Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation	A3	A2	A	A	A	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	-	A	Aa	A	A	Aa	n/a
29	Newfoundland Power Inc.	Baa1	Baa1	A	A	A	A	A	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	n/a
30	Northern States Power Minnesota	A3	A2	A	A	A	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	A	A	A	n/a
31	Ohio Power Company	Baa1	A2	A	A	A	Baa	Baa	A	Ba	Baa	B	A	A	Aa	A	A	n/a
32	Okinawa Electric Power Company, Incorporated	Aa3 / *A2*	A3	Aa	Aa	Aa	A	A	A	Ba	Ba	Ba	Baa	Aaa	Ba	Baa	B	n/a
33	Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company	A2	A2	A	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	A	A	A	n/a
34	Osaka Gas Co., Ltd.	Aa3 / *A1*	A1	Aa	Aa	Aa	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	Aaa	A	A	A	n/a
35	PacifiCorp	Baa1	A3	A	A	A	Baa	Aa	Ba	Baa	A	Baa	A	A	A	Baa	A	n/a
36	Pennsylvania Electric Company	Baa2	Baa1	A	A	A	Baa	A	Baa	Baa	Baa	-	Baa	Baa	Baa	Ba	A	n/a

Grid-Indicated Ratings

		Actual Rating / *BCA or Rating Before Uplift*	Indicated Rating	Indicated Factor 1 Rating	Factor 1a 12.50 %	Factor 1b 12.50 %	Indicated Factor 2 Rating	Factor 2a 12.50 %	Factor 2b 12.50 %	Indicated Factor 3 Rating	Factor 3a 5.00 %	Factor 3b 5.00 %	Indicated Factor 4 Rating	Factor 4a 7.50 %	Factor 4b 15.00 %	Factor 4c 10.00 %	Factor 4d 7.50 %	Hold-Co Notching for Structural Subor-dination
37	PNG Companies	Baa3	Baa2	A	A	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	Baa	-	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Baa	n/a
38	Public Service Company of New Mexico	Baa3	Baa2	Baa	A	Baa	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	Baa	A	Baa	n/a
39	Saudi Electricity	A1 / *Baa1*	Baa1	Baa	Baa	A	Ba	Baa	Ba	A	Baa	Aaa	A	Aaa	A	A	Baa	n/a
40	SCANA	Baa3	Baa2	Aa	Aa	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Ba	Baa	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	-1
41	Southwestern Public Service Company	Baa2	Baa1	A	A	A	Baa	A	Baa	Ba	Ba	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	n/a
42	UGI Utilities, Inc.	A3	A2	A	A	A	A	A	A	Baa	Baa	-	A	A	A	A	A	n/a
43	Virginia Electric Power Company	A3	A2	Aa	Aa	Aa	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	A	A	A	A	n/a
44	Western Mass Electric Co.	Baa2	A2	A	A	Aa	A	A	A	Ba	Ba	-	A	Aa	A	A	A	n/a
45	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation	A2	A2	A	A	Aa	A	Aa	Baa	Baa	Baa	Baa	A	Aa	A	A	A	n/a

Outliers in Legislative and Judicial Underpinnings of the Regulatory Framework

For Chubu Electric Power Company, Hokuriku Electric Power Company, Kansai Electric Power Company, and Okinawa Electric Power Company, our ratings consider the credit-supportive underpinnings in the Electric Utility Industries Law that have been balanced against higher leverage and lower returns than global peers.

For SCANA Corporation, the South Carolina Base Load Review Act provides strong credit support for companies engaging in nuclear new-build, which also affects the scoring for consistency and predictability of regulation. However, SCANA's rating also considers the size and complexity of the nuclear construction project, which is out of scale to the size of the company, as well as structural subordination.

Outliers in Consistency and Predictability of Regulation

Consumers Energy Company has benefitted from increasingly predictable regulatory decisions in Michigan, as well as improved timeliness due to forward test years and the ability to implement interim rates. However, the substantial debt at its parent, CMS Energy Corporation (Baa3, RUR-up), has weighed on the ratings.

Duke Energy Corporation has received generally consistent and predictable rate treatment at it subsidiary operating companies, but parent debt has impacted financial metrics

The shift in business mix at Western Massachusetts Electric Company will place a greater percentage of its rate base under the jurisdiction of the FERC, generally viewed as having greater consistency and predictability, which is somewhat tempered by its financial metrics.

Outliers in Timeliness of Recovery of Operating and Capital Costs

Ameren Illinois Company has a formula rate plan that has a positive impact on timeliness, balanced against rate decisions that have been somewhat below average.

Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc.'s timeliness has improved considerably due to the introduction in rate-making of a de-coupling mechanism, forward test year and an investment tracker at its utility subsidiary.

For Mississippi Power Company, a fully forward test year and the ability to recover some construction-work-in-progress in rates lead to strong scoring for timeliness. Ratings also consider risks associated with construction of a power plant that will utilize lignite and integrated gasification combined cycle technology, that has experienced material costs overruns and that represents a high degree of asset concentration for the utility.

For MidAmerican Energy Company, the absence of a fuel cost pass-through mechanism at the time of this writing results in its relatively low scoring on timeliness. However, the company has proposed a fuel clause in its current rate case, and the regulatory framework has generally been quite credit supportive, which has helped the utility generate good financial metrics.

The primary utility divisions of PacifiCorp have forward test years that have a positive impact on timeliness, balanced against rate decisions that have been somewhat below average.

Outliers in Sufficiency of Rates and Returns

China Longyuan Power Group Corporation Ltd. has benefitted from a higher benchmark tariff for its wind power generation, balanced against a less well developed regulatory framework.

Outliers in Market Position

Okinawa Electric Power Company, Incorporated's service territory is a group of small islands with limited economic diversity, which negatively impacts its market position. Generation is highly dependent on coal and oil. These factors are balanced against a strong regulatory framework.

Outliers in Generation and Fuel Diversity

Ohio Power Company has been highly dependent on coal-fired generation but will be divesting generation assets in accordance with regulatory initiatives.

Outliers in Financial Strength

Distribuidora de Electricidad La Paz S.A. has strong historical financial metrics that are balanced against the somewhat unpredictable regulatory framework and the risk of government intervention in its business.

Gail (India) Limited has strong historical financial metrics that are balanced against higher business risk in its diversified, non-rate-regulated operations, including in oil and gas exploration and production. Financial metrics are expected to weaken somewhat relative to historical levels due to debt funded capex and are thus expected to be more in line with its rating going forward.

Gas Natural BAN S.A. has strong historical financial metrics that are expected to deteriorate due to frozen tariff positions, reflected in weak scores for the regulatory environment. Its ratings are also impacted by debt maturities that are concentrated in the short term and the Government of Argentina's B3 negative rating.

Appendix D: Approach to Ratings within a Utility Family

Typical Composition of a Utility Family

A typical utility company structure consists of a holding company ("HoldCo") that owns one or more operating subsidiaries (each an "OpCo"). OpCos may be regulated utilities or non-utility companies. Financing of these entities varies by region, in part due to the regulatory framework. A HoldCo typically has no operations – its assets are mostly limited to its equity interests in subsidiaries, and potentially other investments in subsidiaries or minority interests in other companies. However, in certain cases there may be material operations at the HoldCo level. Financing can occur primarily at the OpCo level, primarily at the HoldCo level, or at both HoldCo and OpCos in varying proportions. When a HoldCo has multiple utility OpCos, they will often be located in different regulatory jurisdictions. A HoldCo may have both levered and unlevered OpCos.

General Approach to a Utility Family

In our analysis, we generally consider the stand-alone credit profile of an OpCo and the credit profile of its ultimate parent HoldCo (and any intermediate HoldCos), as well as the profile of the family as a whole, while acknowledging that these elements can have cross-family credit implications in varying degrees, principally based on the regulatory framework of the OpCos and the financing model (which has often developed in response to the regulatory framework).

In addition to considering individual OpCos under this (or another applicable) methodology, we typically[14] approach a HoldCo rating by assessing the qualitative and quantitative factors in this methodology for the consolidated entity and each of its utility subsidiaries. Ratings of individual entities in the issuer family may be pulled up or down based on the interrelationships among the companies in the family and their relative credit strength.

In considering how closely aligned or how differentiated ratings should be among members of a utility family, we assess a variety of factors, including:

- Regulatory or other barriers to cash movement among OpCos and from OpCos to HoldCo
- Differentiation of the regulatory frameworks of the various OpCos
- Specific ring-fencing provisions at particular OpCos
- Financing arrangements – for instance, each OpCo may have its own financing arrangements, or the sole liquidity facility may be at the parent; there may be a liquidity pool among certain but not all members of the family; certain members of the family may better be able to withstand a temporary hiatus of external liquidity or access to capital markets
- Financial covenants and the extent to which an Event of Default by one OpCo limits availability of liquidity to another member of the family
- The extent to which higher leverage at one entity increases default risk for other members of the family
- An entity's exposure to or insulation from an affiliate with high business risk

[14] See paragraph at the end of this section for approaches to Hybrid HoldCos.

» Structural features or other limitations in financing agreements that restrict movements of funds, investments, provision of guarantees or collateral, etc.

» The relative size and financial significance of any particular OpCo to the HoldCo and the family

See also those factors noted in Notching for Structural Subordination of Holding Companies.

Our approach to a Hybrid HoldCo (see definition in Appendix E) depends in part on the importance of its non-utility operations and the availability of information on individual businesses. If the businesses are material and their individual results are fully broken out in financial disclosures, we may be able to assess each material business individually by reference to the relevant Moody's methodologies to arrive at a composite assessment for the combined businesses. If non-utility operations are material but are not broken out in financial disclosures, we may look at the consolidated entity under more than one methodology. When non-utility operations are less material but could still impact the overall credit profile, the difference in business risks and our estimation of their impact on financial performance will be qualitatively incorporated in the rating.

Higher Barriers to Cash Movement with Financing Predominantly at the OpCos

Where higher barriers to cash movement exist on an OpCo or OpCos due the regulatory framework or debt structural features, ratings among family members are likely to be more differentiated. For instance, for utility families with OpCos in the US, where regulatory barriers to free cash movement are relatively high, greater importance is generally placed on the stand-alone credit profile of the OpCo.

Our observation of major defaults and bankruptcies in the US sector generally corroborates a view that regulation creates a degree of separateness of default probability. For instance, Portland General Electric (Baa1 RUR-up) did not default on its securities, even though its then-parent Enron Corp. entered bankruptcy proceedings. When Entergy New Orleans (Ba2 stable) entered into bankruptcy, the ratings of its affiliates and parent Entergy Corporation (Baa3 stable) were unaffected. PG&E Corporation (Baa1 stable) did not enter bankruptcy proceedings despite bankruptcies of two major subsidiaries - Pacific Gas & Electric Company (A3 stable) in 2001 and National Energy Group in 2003.

The degree of separateness may be greater or smaller and is assessed on a case by case basis, because situational considerations are important. One area we consider is financing arrangements. For instance, there will tend to be greater differentiation if each member of a family has its own bank credit facilities and difficulties experienced by one entity would not trigger events of default for other entities. While the existence of a money pool might appear to reduce separateness between the participants, there may be regulatory barriers within money pools that preserve separateness. For instance, non-utility entities may have access to the pool only as a borrower, only as a lender, and even the utility entities may have regulatory limits on their borrowings from the pool or their credit exposures to other pool members. If the only source of external liquidity for a money pool is borrowings by the HoldCo under its bank credit facilities, there would be less separateness, especially if the utilities were expected to depend on that liquidity source. However, the ability of an OpCo to finance itself by accessing capital markets must also be considered. Inter-company tax agreements can also have an impact on our view of how separate the risks of default are.

For a HoldCo, the greater the regulatory, economic, and geographic diversity of its OpCos, the greater its potential separation from the default probability of any individual subsidiary. Conversely, if a HoldCo's actions have made it clear that the HoldCo will provide support for an OpCo encountering

some financial stress (for instance, due to delays and/or cost over-runs on a major construction project), we would be likely to perceive less separateness.

Even where high barriers to cash movement exist, onerous leverage at a parent company may not only give rise to greater notching for structural subordination at the parent, it may also pressure an OpCo's rating, especially when there is a clear dependence on an OpCo's cash flow to service parent debt. While most of the regulatory barriers to cash movement are very real, they are not absolute. Furthermore, while it is not usually in the interest of an insolvent parent or its creditors to bring an operating utility into a bankruptcy proceeding, such an occurrence is not impossible.

The greatest separateness occurs where strong regulatory insulation is supplemented by effective ring-fencing provisions that fully separate the management and operations of the OpCo from the rest of the family and limit the parent's ability to cause the OpCo to commence bankruptcy proceedings as well as limiting dividends and cash transfers. Currently, most entities in US utility families (including HoldCos and OpCos) are rated within 3 notches of each other. However, Energy Future Holdings Corp. (Caa3 senior unsecured) and its T&D subsidiary Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC (Baa3 senior secured) have much wider notching due to the combination of regulatory imperatives and strong ring-fencing that includes a significant minority shareholder who must agree to important corporate decisions, including a voluntary bankruptcy filing.

Lower Barriers to Cash Movement with Financing Predominantly at the OpCos

Our approach to rating issuers within a family where there are lower regulatory barriers to movement of cash from OpCos to HoldCos (e.g., many parts of Asia and Europe) places greater emphasis on the credit profile of the consolidated group. Individual OpCos are considered based on their individual characteristics and their importance to the family, and their assigned ratings are typically banded closely around the consolidated credit profile of the group due to the expectation that cash will transit relatively freely among family entities.

Some utilities may have OpCos in jurisdictions where cash movement among certain family members is more restricted by the regulatory framework, while cash movement from and/or among OpCos in other jurisdictions is less restricted. In these situations, OpCos with more restrictions may vary more widely from the consolidated credit profile while those with fewer restrictions may be more tightly banded around the other entities in the corporate family group.

Appendix E: Brief Descriptions of the Types of Companies Rated Under This Methodology

The following describes the principal categories of companies rated under this methodology:

Vertically Integrated Utility: Vertically integrated utilities are regulated electric or combination utilities (see below) that own generation, distribution and (in most cases) electric transmission assets. Vertically integrated utilities are generally engaged in all aspects of the electricity business. They build power plants, procure fuel, generate power, build and maintain the electric grid that delivers power from a group of power plants to end-users (including high and low voltage lines, transformers and substations), and generally meet all of the electric needs of the customers in a specific geographic area (also called a service territory). The rates or tariffs for all of these monopolistic activities are set by the relevant regulatory authority.

Transmission & Distribution Utility: Transmission & Distribution utilities (T&Ds) typically operate in deregulated markets where generation is provided under a competitive framework. T&Ds own and operate the electric grid that transmits and/or distributes electricity within a specific state or region. T&Ds provide electrical transportation and distribution services to carry electricity from power plants and transmission lines to retail, commercial, and industrial customers. T&Ds are typically responsible for billing customers for electric delivery and/or supply, and most have an obligation to provide a standard supply or provider-of-last-resort (POLR) service to customers that have not switched to a competitive supplier. These factors distinguish T&Ds from Networks, whose customers are retail electric suppliers and/or other electricity companies. In a smaller number of cases, T&Ds rated under this methodology may not have an obligation to provide POLR services, but are regulated in sub-sovereign jurisdictions. The rates or tariffs for these monopolistic T&D activities are set by the relevant regulatory authority.

Local Gas Distribution Company: Distribution is the final step in delivering natural gas to customers. While some large industrial, commercial, and electric generation customers receive natural gas directly from high capacity pipelines that carry gas from gas producing basins to areas where gas is consumed, most other users receive natural gas from their local gas utility, also called a local distribution company (LDC). LDCs are regulated utilities involved in the delivery of natural gas to consumers within a specific geographic area. Specifically, LDCs typically transport natural gas from delivery points located on large-diameter pipelines (that usually operate at fairly high pressure) to households and businesses through thousands of miles of small-diameter distribution pipe (that usually operate at fairly low pressure). LDCs are typically responsible for billing customers for gas delivery and/or supply, and most also have the responsibility to procure gas for at least some of their customers, although in some markets gas supply to all customers is on a competitive basis. These factors distinguish LDCs from gas networks, whose customers are retail gas suppliers and/or other natural gas companies. The rates or tariffs for these monopolistic activities are set by the relevant regulatory authority.

Integrated Gas Utility: Integrated gas regulated utilities are regulated utilities that deliver gas to all end users in a particular service territory by sourcing the commodity; operating transport infrastructure that often combines high pressure pipelines with low pressure distribution systems and, in some cases, gas storage, re-gasification or other related facilities; and performing other supply-related activities, such as customer billing and metering. The rates or tariffs for the totality of these activities are set by the relevant regulatory authority. Many integrated gas utilities are national in scope.

Combination Utility: Combination utilities are those that combine an LDC or Integrated Gas Utility with either a vertically integrated utility or a T&D utility. The rates or tariffs for these monopolistic activities are set by the relevant regulatory authority.

Regulated Generation Utility: Regulated generation utilities (Regulated Gencos) are utilities that almost exclusively have generation assets, but their activities are generally regulated like those of vertically integrated utilities. In the US, this means that the purchasers of their output (typically other investor-owned, municipal or cooperative utilities) pay a regulated rate based on the total allowed costs of the Regulated Genco, including a return on equity based on a capital structure designated by the regulator (primarily FERC). Companies that have been included in this group include certain generation companies (including in Korea and China) that are not rate regulated in the usual sense of recovering costs plus a regulated rate of return on either equity or asset value. Instead, we have looked at a combination of governmental action with respect to setting feed-in tariffs and directives on how much generation will be built (or not built) in combination with a generally high degree of government ownership, and we have concluded that these companies are currently best rated under this methodology. Future evolution in our view of the operating and/or regulatory environment of these companies could lead us to conclude that they may be more appropriately rated under a related methodology (for example, Unregulated Utilities and Power Companies).

Independent System Operator: An Independent System Operator (ISO) is an organization formed in certain regional electricity markets to act as the sole chief coordinator of an electric grid. In the areas where an ISO is established, it coordinates, controls and monitors the operation of the electrical power system to assure that electric supply and demand are balanced at all times, and, to the extent possible, that electric demand is met with the lowest-cost sources. ISOs seek to assure adequate transmission and generation resources, usually by identifying new transmission needs and planning for a generation reserve margin above expected peak demand. In regions where generation is competitive, they also seek to establish rules that foster a fair and open marketplace, and they may conduct price-setting auctions for energy and/or capacity. The generation resources that an ISO coordinates may belong to vertically integrated utilities or to independent power producers. ISOs may not be rate-regulated in the traditional sense, but fall under governmental oversight. All participants in the regional grid are required to pay a fee or tariff (often volumetric) to the ISO that is designed to recover its costs, including costs of investment in systems and equipment needed to fulfill their function. ISOs may be for profit or not-for-profit entities.

In the US, most ISOs were formed at the direction or recommendation of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), but the ISO that operates solely in Texas falls under state jurisdiction. Some US ISOs also perform certain additional functions such that they are designated as Regional Transmission Organizations (or RTOs).

Transmission-Only Utility: Transmission-only utilities are solely focused on owning and operating transmission assets. The transmission lines these utilities own are typically high-voltage and allow energy producers to transport electric power over long distances from where it is generated (or received) to the transmission or distribution system of a T&D or vertically integrated utility. Unlike most of the other utilities rated under this methodology, transmission-only utilities primarily provide services to other utilities and ISOs. Transmission-only utilities in most parts of the world other than the US have been rated under the Regulated Networks methodology, and we expect that FERC-regulated transmission-only utilities in the US will also transition to the Regulated Networks when that methodology is updated (expected in 2014).

Utility Holding Company (Utility HoldCo): As detailed in Appendix D, regulated electric and gas utilities are often part of corporate families under a parent holding company. The operating subsidiaries of Utility Holdcos are overwhelmingly regulated electric and gas utilities.

Hybrid Holding Company (Hybrid HoldCo): Some utility families contain a mix of regulated electric and gas utilities and other types of companies, but the regulated electric and gas utilities represent the majority of the consolidated cash flows, assets and debt. The parent company is thus a Hybrid HoldCo.

Appendix F: Key Industry Issues Over the Intermediate Term

Political and Regulatory Issues

As highly regulated monopolistic entities, regulated utilities continually face political and regulatory risk, and managing these risks through effective outreach to key customers as well as key political and regulatory decision-makers is, or at least should be, a core competency of companies in this sector. However, larger waves of change in the political, regulatory or economic environment have the potential to cause substantial changes in the level of risk experienced by utilities and their investors in somewhat unpredictable ways.

One of the more universal risks faced by utilities currently is the compression of allowed returns. A long period of globally low interest rates, held down by monetary stimulus policies, has generally benefitted utilities, since reductions in allowed returns have been slower than reductions in incurred capital costs. Essentially all regulated utilities face a ratcheting down of allowed and/or earned returns. More difficult to predict is how regulators will respond when monetary stimulus reverses, and how well utilities will fare when fixed income investors require higher interest rates and equity investors require higher total returns and growth prospects.

The following global snapshot highlights that regulatory frameworks evolve over time. On an overall basis in the US over the past several years, we have noted some incremental positive regulatory trends, including greater use of formula rates, trackers and riders, and (primarily for natural gas utilities) de-coupling of returns from volumetric sales. In Canada, the framework has historically been viewed as predictable and stable, which has helped offset somewhat lower levels of equity in the capital structure, but the compression of returns has been relatively steep in recent years. In Japan, the regulatory authorities are working through the challenges presented by the decision to shut down virtually all of the country's nuclear generation capacity, leading to uncertainty regarding the extent to which increased costs will be reflected in rate increases sufficient to permit returns on capital to return to prior levels. China's regulatory framework has continued to evolve, with fairly low transparency and some time-to-time shifts in favored versus less-favored generation sources balanced by an overall state policy of assuring sustainability of the sector, adequate supply of electricity and affordability to the general public. Singapore and Hong Kong have fairly well developed and supportive regulatory frameworks despite a trend towards lower returns, whereas Malaysia, Korea and Thailand have been moving towards a more transparent regulatory framework. The Philippines is in the process of deregulating its power market, while Indian power utilities continue to grapple with structural challenges. In Latin America, there is a wide dispersion among frameworks, ranging from the more stable, long established and predictable framework in Chile to the decidedly unpredictable framework in Argentina. Generally, as Latin American economies have evolved to more stable economic policies, regulatory frameworks for utilities have also shown greater stability and predictability.

All of the other issues discussed in this section have a regulatory/political component, either as the driver of change or in reaction to changes in economic environments and market factors.

Economic and Financial Market Conditions

As regulated monopolies, electric and gas utilities have generally been quite resistant to unsettled economic and financial market conditions for several reasons. Unlike many companies that face direct market-based competition, their rates do not decrease when demand decreases. The elasticity of demand for electricity and gas is much lower than for most products in the consumer economy. When financial markets are volatile, utilities often have greater capital market access than industrial companies in competitive sectors, as was the case in the 2007-2009 recession. However, regulated electric and gas utilities are by no means immune to a protracted or severe recession.

Severe economic malaise can negatively affect utility credit profiles in several ways. Falling demand for electricity or natural gas may negatively impact margins and debt service protection measures, especially when rates are designed such that a substantial portion of fixed costs is in theory recovered through volumetric charges. The decrease in demand in the 2007-2009 recession was notable in comparison to prior recessions, especially in the residential sector. Poor economic conditions can make it more difficult for regulators to approve needed rate increases or provide timely cost recovery for utilities, resulting in higher cost deferrals and longer regulatory lag. Finally, recessions can coincide with a lack of confidence in the utility sector that impacts access to capital markets for a period of time. For instance, in the Great Depression and (to a lesser extent) in the 2001 recession, access for some issuers was curtailed due to the sector's generally higher leverage than other corporate sectors, combined with a concerns over a lack of transparency in financial reporting.

Fuel Price Volatility and the Global Impact of Shale Gas

The ability of most utilities to pass through their fuel costs to end users may insulate a utility from exposure to price volatility of these fuels, but it does not insulate consumers. Consumers and regulators complained vociferously about utility rates during the run-up in hydro-carbon prices in 2005-2008 (oil, natural gas and, to a lesser extent, coal). The steep decline in US natural gas prices since 2009, caused in large part by the development of shale gas and shale oil resources, has been a material benefit to US utilities, because many have been able to pass through substantial base rate increases during a period when all-in rates were declining. Shale hydro-carbons have also had a positive impact, albeit one that is less immediate and direct, on non-US utilities. In much of the eastern hemisphere, natural gas prices under long-term contracts have generally been tied to oil prices, but utilities and other industrial users have started to have some success in negotiating to de-link natural gas from oil. In addition, increasing US production of oil has had a noticeable impact on world oil prices, generally benefitting oil and gas users.

Not all utilities will benefit equally. Utilities that have locked in natural gas under high-priced long-term contracts that they cannot re-negotiate are negatively impacted if they cannot pass through their full contracted cost of gas, or if the high costs cause customer dissatisfaction and regulatory backlash. Utilities with large coal fleets or utilities constructing nuclear power plants may also face negative impacts on their regulatory environment, since their customers will benefit less from lower natural gas prices.

Distributed Generation Versus the Central Station Paradigm

The regulation and the financing of electric utilities are based on the premise that the current model under which electricity is generated and distributed to customers will continue essentially unchanged for many decades to come. This model, called the central station paradigm (because electricity is generated in large, centrally located plants and distributed to a large number of customers, who may in fact be hundreds of miles away), has been in place since the early part of the 20th century. The model has worked because the economies of scale inherent to very large power plants has more than offset the cost and inefficiency (through power losses) inherent to maintaining a grid for transmitting and distributing electricity to end users.

Despite rate structures that only allow recovery of invested capital over many decades (up to 60 years), utilities can attract capital because investors assume that rates will continue to be collected for at least that long a period. Regulators and politicians assume that taxes and regulatory charges levied on electricity usage will be paid by a broad swath of residences and businesses and will not materially discourage usage of electricity in a way that would decrease the amount of taxes collected. A corollary

assumption is that the number of customers taking electricity from the system during that period will continue to be high enough such that rates will be reasonable and generally more attractive than other alternatives. In the event that consumers were to switch en masse to alternate sources of generating or receiving power (for instance distributed generation), rates for remaining customers would either not cover the utility's costs, or rates would need to be increased so much that more customers may be incentivized to leave the system. This scenario has been experienced in the regulated US copper wire telephone business, where rates have increased quite dramatically for users who have not switched to digital or wireless telephone service. While this scenario continues to be unlikely for the electricity sector, distributed generation, especially from solar panels, has made inroads in certain regions.

Distributed generation is any retail-scale generation, differentiated from self-generation, which generally describes a large industrial plant that builds its own reasonably large conventional power plant to meet its own needs. While some residential property owners that install distributed generation may choose to sever their connection to the local utility, most choose to remain connected, generating power into the grid when it is both feasible and economic to do so, and taking power from the grid at other times. Distributed generation is currently concentrated in roof-top photovoltaic solar panels, which have benefitted from varying levels of tax incentives in different jurisdictions. Regulatory treatment has also varied, but some rate structures that seek to incentivize distributed renewable energy are decidedly credit negative for utilities, in particular net metering.

Under net metering, a customer receives a credit from the utility for all of its generation at the full (or nearly full) retail rate and pays only for power taken, also at the retail rate, resulting in a materially reduced monthly bill relative to a customer with no distributed generation. The distributed generation customer has no obligation to generate any particular amount of power, so the utility must stand ready to generate and deliver that customer's full power needs at all times. Since most utility costs, including the fixed costs of financing and maintaining generation and delivery systems, are currently collected through volumetric rates, a customer owning distributed generation effectively transfers a portion of the utility's costs of serving that customer to other customers with higher net usage, notably to customers that do not own distributed generation. The higher costs may incentivize more customers to install solar panels, thereby shifting the utility's fixed costs to an even smaller group of rate-payers. California is an example of a state employing net solar metering in its rate structure, whereas in New Jersey, which has the second largest residential solar program in the US, utilities buy power at a price closer to their blended cost of generation, which is much lower than the retail rate.

To date, solar generation and net metering have not had a material credit impact on any utilities, but ratings could be negatively impacted if the programs were to grow and if rate structures were not amended so that each customer's monthly bill more closely approximated the cost of serving that customer.

In our current view, the possibility that there will be a widespread movement of electric utility customers to sever themselves from the grid is remote. However, we acknowledge that new technologies, such as the development of commercially viable fuel cells and/or distributed electric storage, could materially disrupt the central station paradigm and the credit quality of the utility sector.

Nuclear Issues

Utilities with nuclear generation face unique safety, regulatory, and operational issues. The nuclear disaster at Fukushima Daiichi had a severely negative credit impact on its owner, Tokyo Electric Power Company, Incorporated (Ba3, negative), as well as all the nuclear utilities in the country. Japan previously generated about 30% of its power from 50 reactors, but all are currently either idled or shut down, and utilities in the country face materially higher costs of replacement power, a credit negative. Japan also created a new Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA), under the Ministry of the Environment to replace the Nuclear Safety Commission, which had been under the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. The NRA has not yet set any schedule for completing safety checks at idled plants.

Fukushima Daiichi also had global consequences. Germany's response was to require that all nuclear power plants in the country be shut by 2022. Switzerland opted for a phase-out by 2031. (Most European nuclear plants are owned by companies rated under other the Unregulated Utilities and Power Companies methodology.) Even in countries where the regulatory response was more moderate, increased regulatory scrutiny has raised operating costs, a credit negative, especially in the US, where low natural gas prices have rendered certain primarily smaller nuclear plants uneconomic. Nuclear license renewal decisions in the US are currently on hold until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission comes to a determination on the safety of spent fuel storage in the absence of a permanent repository. Nonetheless, we view robust and independent nuclear safety regulation as a credit-positive for the industry.

Other general issues for nuclear operators include higher costs and lower reliability related to the increasing age of the fleet. In 2013, Duke Energy Florida, Inc. (Baa1, RUR-up) decided to permanently shut Crystal River Unit 3 after it determined that a de-lamination (or separation) in the concrete of the outer wall of the containment building was uneconomic to repair. San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station was permanently closed in 2013 after its owners, including Southern California Edison Company (A3, RUR-up) and San Diego Gas & Electric Company (A2, RUR-up), decided not to pursue a re-start in light of operating defects in two steam generators that had been replaced in 2010 and 2011.

Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power Company Limited (KHNP, A1 stable) and its parent Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO, A1 stable), face a scandal related to alleged corruption and acceptance of falsified safety documents provided by its parts suppliers for nuclear plants. Korean prosecutors' widening probe into KHNP's use of substandard parts at many of its 23 nuclear power plants caused three plants to be temporarily shut down starting in May 2013 and raises the risk the Korean public will lose confidence in nuclear power. However, more than 80% of substandard parts in the idled plants have been replaced, and a restart is expected in late 2013 or early 2014.

Appendix G: Regional and Other Considerations

Notching Considerations for US First Mortgage Bonds

In most regions, our approach to notching between different debt classes of the same regulated utility issuer follows the guidance in the publication Updated Summary Guidance for Notching Bonds, Preferred Stocks and Hybrid Securities of Corporate Issuers, February 2007), including a one notch differential between senior secured and senior unsecured debt. However, in most cases we have two notches between the first mortgage bonds and senior unsecured debt of regulated electric and gas utilities in the US.

Wider notching differentials between debt classes may also be appropriate in speculative grade. Additional insights for speculative grade issuers are provided in the publication Loss Given Default for Speculative-Grade Non-Financial Companies in the US, Canada and EMEA, June 2009).

First mortgage bond holders in the US generally benefit from a first lien on most of the fixed assets used to provide utility service, including such assets as generating stations, transmission lines, distribution lines, switching stations and substations, and gas distribution facilities, as well as a lien on franchise agreements. In our view, the critical nature of these assets to the issuers and to the communities they serve has been a major factor that has led to very high recovery rates for this class of debt in situations of default, thereby justifying a two notch uplift. The combination of the breadth of assets pledged and the bankruptcy-tested recovery experience has been unique to the US.

In some cases, there is only a one notch differential between US first mortgage bonds and the senior unsecured rating. For instance, this is likely when the pledged property is not considered critical infrastructure for the region, or if the mortgage is materially weakened by carve-outs, lien releases or similar creditor-unfriendly terms.

Securitization

The use of securitization, a financing technique utilizing a discrete revenue stream (typically related to recovery of specifically defined expenses) that is dedicated to servicing specific securitization debt, has primarily been used in the US, where it has been quite pervasive in the past two decades. The first generation of securitization bonds were primarily related to recovery of the negative difference between the market value of utilities' generation assets and their book value when certain states switched to competitive electric supply markets and utilities sold their generation (so-called stranded costs). This technique was then used for significant storm costs (especially hurricanes) and was eventually broadened to include environmental related expenditures, deferred fuel costs, or even deferred miscellaneous expenses. States that have implemented securitization frameworks include Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and West Virginia. In its simplest form, a securitization isolates and dedicates a stream of cash flow into a separate special purpose entity (SPE). The SPE uses that stream of revenue and cash flow to provide annual debt service for the securitized debt instrument. Securitization is typically underpinned by specific legislation to segregate the securitization revenues from the utility's revenues to assure their continued collection, and the details of the enabling legislation may vary from state to state. The utility benefits from the securitization because it receives an immediate source of cash (although it gives up the opportunity to earn a return on the corresponding asset), and ratepayers benefit because the cost of the securitized debt is lower than the utility's cost of debt and much lower than its all-in cost of capital, which reduces the revenue requirement associated with the cost recovery.

In the presentation of US securitization debt in published financial ratios, Moody's makes its own assessment of the appropriate credit representation but in most cases follows the accounting in audited statements under US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), which is in turn considers the terms of enabling legislation. As a result, accounting treatment may vary. In most states utilities have been required to consolidate securitization debt under GAAP, even though it is technically non-recourse.

In general, we view securitization debt of utilities as being on-credit debt, in part because the rates associated with it reduce the utility's headroom to increase rates for other purposes while keeping all-in rates affordable to customers. Thus, where accounting treatment is off balance sheet, we seek to adjust the company's ratios by including the securitization debt and related revenues for our analysis. Where the securitized debt is on balance sheet, our credit analysis also considers the significance of ratios that exclude securitization debt and related revenues. Since securitization debt amortizes mortgage-style, including it makes ratios look worse in early years (when most of the revenue collected goes to pay interest) and better in later years (when most of the revenue collected goes to pay principal).

Strong levels of government ownership in Asia Pacific (ex-Japan) provide rating uplift

Strong levels of government ownership have dominated the credit profiles of utilities in Asia Pacific (excluding Japan), generally leading to ratings that are a number of notches above the Baseline Credit Assessment. Regulated electric and gas utilities with significant government ownership are rated using this methodology in conjunction with the Joint Default Analysis approach in our methodology for Government-Related Issuers.

Support system for large corporate entities in Japan can provide ratings uplift, with limits

Moody's ratings for large corporate entities in Japan reflect the unique nature of the country's support system, and they are higher than they would otherwise be if such support were disregarded. This is reflected in the tendency for ratings of Japanese utilities to be higher than their grid implied ratings (currently higher on average by about 2 notches), while utilities globally tend to be more evenly distributed above and below their actual ratings. However, even for large prominent companies, our ratings consider that support will not be endless and is less likely to be provided when a company has questionable viability rather than being in need of temporary liquidity assistance.

Appendix H: Treatment of Power Purchase Agreements ("PPAs")

Although many utilities own and operate power stations, some have entered into PPAs to source electricity from third parties to satisfy retail demand. The motivation for these PPAs may be one or more of the following: to outsource operating risks to parties more skilled in power station operation, to provide certainty of supply, to reduce balance sheet debt, to fix the cost of power, or to comply with regulatory mandates regarding power sourcing, including renewable portfolio standards. While Moody's regards PPAs that reduce operating or financial risk as a credit positive, some aspects of PPAs may negatively affect the credit of utilities. The most conservative treatment would be to treat a PPA as a debt obligation of the utility as, by paying the capacity charge, the utility is effectively providing the funds to service the debt associated with the power station. At the other end of the continuum, the financial obligations of the utility could also be regarded as an ongoing operating cost, with no long-term capital component recognized.

Under most PPAs, a utility is obliged to pay a capacity charge to the power station owner (which may be another utility or an Independent Power Producer – IPP); this charge typically covers a portion of the IPP's fixed costs in relation to the power available to the utility. These fixed payments usually help to cover the IPP's debt service and are made irrespective of whether the utility calls on the IPP to generate and deliver power. When the utility requires generation, a further energy charge, to cover the variable costs of the IPP, will also typically be paid by the utility. Some other similar arrangements are characterized as tolling agreements, or long-term supply contracts, but most have similar features to PPAs and are thus analyzed by Moody's as PPAs.

PPAs are recognized qualitatively to be a future use of cash whether or not they are treated as debt-like obligations in financial ratios

The starting point of our analysis is the issuer's audited financial statements – we consider whether the utility's accountants determine that the PPA should be treated as a debt equivalent, a capitalized lease, an operating lease, or in some other manner. PPAs have a wide variety of operational and financial terms, and it is our understanding that accountants are required to have a very granular view into the particular contractual arrangements in order to account for these PPAs in compliance with applicable accounting rules and standards. However, accounting treatment for PPAs may not be entirely consistent across US GAAP, IFRS or other accounting frameworks. In addition, we may consider that factors not incorporated into the accounting treatment may be relevant (which may include the scale of PPA payments, their regulatory treatment including cost recovery mechanisms, or other factors that create financial or operational risk for the utility that is greater, in our estimation, than the benefits received). When the accounting treatment of a PPA is a debt or lease equivalent (such that it is reported on the balance sheet, or disclosed as an operating lease and thus included in our adjusted debt calculation), we generally do not make adjustments to remove the PPA from the balance sheet. However, in relevant circumstances we consider making adjustments that impute a debt equivalent to PPAs that are off-balance sheet for accounting purposes.

Regardless of whether we consider that a PPA warrants or does not warrant treatment as a debt obligation, we assess the totality of the impact of the PPA on the issuer's probability of default. Costs of a PPA that cannot be recovered in retail rates creates material risk, especially if they also cannot be recovered through market sales of power.

Additional considerations for PPAs

PPAs have a wide variety of financial and regulatory characteristics, and each particular circumstance may be treated differently by Moody's. Factors which determine where on the continuum Moody's treats a particular PPA include the following:

» Risk management: An overarching principle is that PPAs have normally been used by utilities as a risk management tool and Moody's recognizes that this is the fundamental reason for their existence. Thus, Moody's will not automatically penalize utilities for entering into contracts for the purpose of reducing risk associated with power price and availability. Rather, we will look at the aggregate commercial position, evaluating the risk to a utility's purchase and supply obligations. In addition, PPAs are similar to other long-term supply contracts used by other industries and their treatment should not therefore be fundamentally different from that of other contracts of a similar nature.

» Pass-through capability: Some utilities have the ability to pass through the cost of purchasing power under PPAs to their customers. As a result, the utility takes no risk that the cost of power is greater than the retail price it will receive. Accordingly Moody's regards these PPA obligations as operating costs with no long-term debt-like attributes. PPAs with no pass-through ability have a greater risk profile for utilities. In some markets, the ability to pass through costs of a PPA is enshrined in the regulatory framework, and in others can be dictated by market dynamics. As a market becomes more competitive or if regulatory support for cost recovery deteriorates, the ability to pass through costs may decrease and, as circumstances change, Moody's treatment of PPA obligations will alter accordingly.

» Price considerations: The price of power paid by a utility under a PPA can be substantially above or below the market price of electricity. A below-market price will motivate the utility to purchase power from the IPP in excess of its retail requirements, and to sell excess electricity in the spot market. This can be a significant source of cash flow for some utilities. On the other hand, utilities that are compelled to pay capacity payments to IPPs when they have no demand for the power or at an above-market price may suffer a financial burden if they do not get full recovery in retail rates. Moody's will particularly focus on PPAs that have mark-to-market losses, which typically indicates that they have a material impact on the utility's cash flow.

» Excess Reserve Capacity: In some jurisdictions there is substantial reserve capacity and thus a significant probability that the electricity available to a utility under PPAs will not be required by the market. This increases the risk to the utility that capacity payments will need to be made when there is no demand for the power. We may determine that all of a utility's PPAs represent excess capacity, or that a portion of PPAs are needed for the utility's supply obligations plus a normal reserve margin, while the remaining portion represents excess capacity. In the latter case, we may impute debt to specific PPAs that are excess or we take a proportional approach to all of the utility's PPAs.

» Risk-sharing: Utilities that own power plants bear the associated operational, fuel procurement and other risks. These must be balanced against the financial and liquidity risk of contracting for the purchase of power under a PPA. Moody's will examine on a case-by case basis the relative credit risk associated with PPAs in comparison to plant ownership.

» Purchase requirements: Some PPAs are structured with either options or requirements to purchase the asset at the end of the PPA term. If the utility has an economically meaningful requirement to purchase, we would most likely consider it to be a debt obligation. In most such cases, the obligation would already receive on-balance sheet treatment under relevant accounting standards.

» Default provisions: In most cases, the remedies for default under a PPA do not include acceleration of amounts due, and in many cases PPAs would not be considered as debt in a bankruptcy scenario and could potentially be cancelled. Thus, PPAs may not materially increase Loss Given Default for the utility. In addition, PPAs are not typically considered debt for cross-default provisions under a utility's debt and liquidity arrangements. However, the existence of non-standard default provisions that are debt-like would have a large impact on our treatment of a PPA. In addition, payments due under PPAs are senior unsecured obligations, and any inability of the utility to make them materially increases default risk.

Each of these factors will be considered by Moody's analysts and a decision will be made as to the importance of the PPA to the risk analysis of the utility.

Methods for estimating a liability amount for PPAs

According to the weighting and importance of the PPA to each utility and the level of disclosure, Moody's may approximate a debt obligation equivalent for PPAs using one or more of the methods discussed below. In each case we look holistically at the PPA's credit impact on the utility, including the ability to pass through costs and curtail payments, the materiality of the PPA obligation to the overall business risk and cash flows of the utility, operational constraints that the PPA imposes, the maturity of the PPA obligation, the impact of purchased power on market-based power sales (if any) that the utility will engage in, and our view of future market conditions and volatility.

» Operating Cost: If a utility enters into a PPA for the purpose of providing an assured supply and there is reasonable assurance that regulators will allow the costs to be recovered in regulated rates, Moody's may view the PPA as being most akin to an operating cost. Provided that the accounting treatment for the PPA is, in this circumstance, off-balance sheet, we will most likely make no adjustment to bring the obligation onto the utility's balance sheet.

» Annual Obligation x 6: In some situations, the PPA obligation may be estimated by multiplying the annual payments by a factor of six (in most cases). This method is sometimes used in the capitalization of operating leases. This method may be used as an approximation where the analyst determines that the obligation is significant but cannot otherwise be quantified otherwise due to limited information.

» Net Present Value: Where the analyst has sufficient information, Moody's may add the NPV of the stream of PPA payments to the debt obligations of the utility. The discount rate used will be our estimate of the cost of capital of the utility.

» Debt Look-Through: In some circumstances, where the debt incurred by the IPP is directly related to the off-taking utility, there may be reason to allocate the entire debt (or a proportional part related to share of power dedicated to the utility) of the IPP to that of the utility.

» Mark-to-Market: In situations in which Moody's believes that the PPA prices exceed the market price and thus will create an ongoing liability for the utility, we may use a net mark-to-market method, in which the NPV of the utility's future out-of-the-money net payments will be added to its total debt obligations.

» Consolidation: In some instances where the IPP is wholly dedicated to the utility, it may be appropriate to consolidate the debt and cash flows of the IPP with that of the utility. If the utility purchases only a portion of the power from the IPP, then that proportion of debt might be consolidated with the utility.

If we have determined to impute debt to a PPA for which the accounting treatment is not on-balance sheet, we will in some circumstances use more than one method to estimate the debt equivalent obligations imposed by the PPA, and compare results. If circumstances (including regulatory treatment or market conditions) change over time, the approach that is used may also vary.

Moody's Related Research

Industry Outlooks:

» US Regulated Utilities: Regulation Provides Stability as Business Model Faces Challenges, July 2013 (156754)

» Asian Power Utilities (ex-Japan): Broad Stable Outlook; India an Outlier, March 2013 (149101)

Rating Methodologies:

» US Electric Generation & Transmission Cooperatives, April 2013, (151814)

» How Sovereign Credit Quality May Affect Other Ratings, February 2012 (139495)

» Unregulated Utilities and Power Companies, August 2009 (118508)

» Regulated Electric and Gas Networks, August 2009 (118786)

» Natural Gas Pipelines, November 2012 (146415)

» US Public Power Electric Utilities with Generation Ownership Exposure, November 2011 (135299)

» US Electric Generation & Transmission Cooperatives, April 2013 (151814)

» US Municipal Joint Action Agencies, October 2012 (145899)

» Government Related Issuers: Methodology Update, July 2010 (126031)

» Global Regulated Water Utilities, December 2009 (121311)

To access any of these reports, click on the entry above. Note that these references are current as of the date of publication of this report and that more recent reports may be available. All research may not be available to all clients.

The credit ratings assigned in this sector are primarily determined by this credit rating methodology. Certain broad methodological considerations (described in one or more secondary or cross-sector credit rating methodologies) may also be relevant to the determination of credit ratings of issuers and instruments in this sector. Potentially related secondary and cross-sector credit rating methodologies can be found here.

For data summarizing the historical robustness and predictive power of credit ratings assigned using this credit rating methodology, see link.

» contacts continued from page 1

Analyst Contacts:

NEW YORK +1.212.553.1653

Sid Menon +1.212.553.0165
Associate Analyst
siddharth.menon@moodys.com

Lesley Ritter +1.212.553.1607
Analyst
lesley.ritter@moodys.com

Walter Winrow +1.212.553.7943
Managing Director - Global Project and Infrastructure Finance
walter.winrow@moodys.com

BUENOS AIRES +54.11.3752.2000

Daniela Cuan +54.11.5129.2617
Vice President - Senior Analyst
daniela.cuan@moodys.com

HONG KONG +852.3551.3077

Patrick Mispagel +852.3758.1538
Associate Managing Director
patrick.mispagel@moodys.com

LONDON +44.20.7772.5454

Helen Francis +44.20.7772.5422
Vice President - Senior Credit Officer
helen.francis@moodys.com

Monica Merli +44.20.7772.5433
Managing Director - Infrastructure Finance
monica.merli@moodys.com

SAO PAULO +55.11.3043.7300

Jose Soares +55.11.3043.7339
Vice President - Senior Credit Officer
jose.soares@moodys.com

SINGAPORE +65.6398.8308

Ray Tay +65.6398.8306
Assistant Vice President - Analyst
ray.tay@moodys.com

TOKYO +81.3.5408.4100

Kazusada Hirose +81.3.5408.4175
Vice President - Senior Credit Officer
kazusada.hirose@moodys.com

Richard Bittenbender +81.3.5408.4025
Associate Managing Director
richard.bittenbender@moodys.com

TORONTO +1.416.214.1635

Gavin Macfarlane +1.416.214.3864
Vice President - Senior Credit Officer
gavin.macfarlane@moodys.com

Report Number: 157160

Authors
Bill Hunter
Michael G. Haggarty

Associate Analyst
Sid Menon

Production Associates
Ginger Kipps
Masaki Shiomi
Judy Torre