

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Norman Harrold,)	
)	
Complainant,)	
)	
v.)	<u>Case No. GC-2007-0311</u>
)	
Laclede Gas Company,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

ORDER GRANTING STAFF'S THIRD REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF
TIME TO FILE RECOMMENDATION

Issue Date: May 22, 2007

Effective Date: May 22, 2007

Norman Harrold filed a formal complaint against Laclede Gas Company ("Laclede") on February 22, 2007.¹ On February 23, the Commission notified Laclede of the complaint and allowed it thirty days in which to answer as provided by 4 CSR 240-2.070(7). The same day, pursuant to 4 CSR 240-2.070(10), the Commission ordered its Staff to commence an investigation of Mr. Harrold's formal complaint and to file a report concerning the results of its investigation no later than three weeks after Laclede filed its answer to the complaint.

Although its answer to Mr. Harrold's complaint was due on March 26, Laclede did not file it until March 28.² Thus, Staff's report and recommendation were due three weeks

¹ All dates specified in this order refer to the calendar year 2007.

² Filed along with Laclede's answer was a motion requesting that the Commission grant Laclede leave to file its answer out-of-time. The Commission granted that motion on March 29.

later, on April 18. On April 20, Staff filed its first Request for Additional Time to File. In this pleading, Staff averred that it had learned, after discussions with both Laclede and Mr. Harrold, that settlement negotiations were ongoing and a settlement was possible. For that reason, Staff asked that it be given until May 9 to file its report and recommendation. The Commission granted Staff's request by order dated April 24.

On May 9, Staff filed its second Request for Additional Time to File, in which Staff advised that it had contacted Mrs. Harrold earlier that day. Despite having received a disconnect notice from Laclede, she indicated that a settlement with Laclede was still possible.³ Therefore, Staff proposed to file its report and recommendation by May 18 if no settlement had been reached by May 16. The Commission granted this request by order dated May 10.

On May 17, Staff filed its third Request for Additional Time to File, advising that according to Mrs. Harrold, the "exchange of additional information may result in resolution with Laclede." Staff now proposes to file its report and recommendation by June 6 if settlement discussions have not been successful before then.

As noted in the Commission's order of May 10, Staff's request is authorized by Commission Rule 4 CSR 240-2.050(3)(A) and the law favors settlements and compromises based upon valid considerations. Therefore, the Commission finds the request to be reasonable under the circumstances and will grant it. However, the Commission advises its Staff that absent extraordinary circumstances, this is the last extension that will be granted.

³ Staff also stated that because the amount of the bill is still the subject of this case, it had contacted Laclede to ensure that the company would not disconnect Mr. and Mrs. Harrold.

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. Staff's third Request for Additional Time to File is granted. Assuming the case does not settle before then, Staff shall file a report concerning the results of its investigation of Norman Harrold's formal complaint against Laclede Gas Company by no later than June 6, 2007.
2. This order shall become effective on May 22, 2007.

BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen M. Dale', written over a horizontal line.

Colleen M. Dale
Secretary

(S E A L)

Benjamin H. Lane, Regulatory Law
Judge, by delegation of authority
under Section 386.240, RSMo 2000.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 22nd day of May, 2007.