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STATE OF MISSOURI  
JEFFERSON CITY  
65101

MATT BLUNT  
GOVERNOR

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*Records*  
*Public Service Commission*

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December 7, 2005

Chairman Jeff Davis  
Missouri Public Service Commission  
Governor Office Building  
200 Madison Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

RE: Proposed Emergency Amendment to Commission Rule 4 CSR240-13.055  
Cold Weather Rule

Dear Chairman Davis:

In September, the U.S. Department of Energy's Information Administration (EIA) announced home heating costs in the Midwest may rise by as much as 71 percent this winter for customers who use natural gas. As of November 15<sup>th</sup> of this year more than 37,000 Missourians have applied for energy assistance programs, more than double the number of applicants from one year ago.

We are at the very beginning of the three coldest months of the year. Very soon families all across Missouri will begin to feel the effects of the high cost of natural gas. Low income families and Missouri seniors on fixed incomes will be the hardest hit by higher home heating bills. No Missouri family should have to choose between heating their homes and eating a meal.

In order to ensure every Missourian is able to heat their home this winter, my administration has taken significant action. Earlier this year, I obtained an agreement from Missouri's investor-owned natural gas and electrical companies to temporarily waive *reconnection fees and security deposits for low-income individuals during the winter months*. With assistance funds covering actual usage charges only, and not administrative reconnection fees and security deposits, the state of Missouri will be able to assist many more low-income households with their heating costs this winter. In addition, I have sought funding from large oil companies whose profits have increased more than 75 percent from the previous year, for Utilicare, a state program that helps low-income Missourians with home-heating costs.

Despite these efforts, high natural gas prices may soon cause Missouri families to be faced with possible disconnection and while there is still a large number of Missourians who remain disconnected due to the high cost of natural gas last winter. As such, I join with and

support the Missouri Public Counsel's request to adopt emergency changes to the Cold Weather Rule. I urge you and the other Missouri Public Service Commission members to make changes to the Rule that would provide residential customers with more lenient reconnection terms, prohibit the assessment of late charges on deferred balances, provide access to budget billing programs despite carrying a balance in arrears and require existing deposits to be applied to account balances in arrears to avoid disconnection. In return, natural gas companies should be provided with some mechanism with which to collect reasonable expenses incurred by the emergency amendment.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts with you. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that low-income Missourians are protected this winter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Blunt". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped "M" and a cursive "Blunt".

Matt Blunt

Cc: Commissioner Connie Murray  
Commissioner Steve Gaw  
Commissioner Robert M. Clayton III  
Commissioner Lin Appling