

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office in
Jefferson City on the 19th day of
October, 2006.

Regarding an Investigation into the Service and)	
Billing Practices for Residential Customers of)	<u>Case No. GW-2007-0099</u>
Electric, Gas, and Water Utilities)	

ORDER DIRECTING STAFF TO PROCEED WITH INVESTIGATION

Issue Date: October 19, 2006

Effective Date: October 19, 2006

The Commission established this case on September 14, 2006, for the purpose of examining the estimated billing practices of Missouri's Electric, Gas, and Water utilities. At the direction of the Commission, the Commission's Staff filed an initial report on September 26. After reviewing Staff's report, the Commission finds that as a first step, Staff should survey the various utilities to attempt to discern the extent of the problem. In particular the Commission would like to know the answers to the following questions:

1. How many estimated monthly bills did each utility issue in the past year?
2. How often did each utility obtain actual meter readings for accounts for which it issued an estimated bill in the last year?
3. How often did each utility true-up estimated bills with actual meter readings in the last year?

In addition, Staff should consult with the Office of the Public Counsel, consumer groups, and the utilities to determine whether other questions should be asked.

After Staff obtains the requested information from the utilities, it shall conduct spot audits to read customer meters to determine the extent to which estimated bills reflect actual meter readings for the various utilities.

So that Staff's inquiry can be kept at a manageable level, Staff shall limit its inquiries to Missouri's investor-owned electric and gas utilities, as well as the six largest investor-owned water utilities, Missouri-American Water Company, Raytown Water Company, The Empire District Electric Company, Tri-States Utility, U.S. Water Company, and Aqua-Missouri. Staff shall request any additional resources it needs to carry out this investigation.

IT IS ORDERED THAT:

1. The Commission's Staff shall send its survey questions to the electric, gas, and water utilities by December 1, 2006.
2. The Commission's Staff shall begin conducting spot-audits of the electric, gas, and water utilities by February 1, 2007.
3. The Commission's Staff shall file a report of its findings by May 1, 2007.
4. This order shall become effective on October 19, 2006.

BY THE COMMISSION



Colleen M. Dale
Secretary

(S E A L)

Davis, Chm., Gaw, Clayton and Appling, CC., concur
Murray, C., dissents

Woodruff, Deputy Chief Regulatory Law Judge