In the Matter of:

GREG STIENS

THE EMPIRE DISTRICT GAS COMPANY d/b/a LIBERTY

GC-2021-0395, VOL. III

December 16, 2021

1 BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION 2 STATE OF MISSOURI 3 4 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, VIA WEBEX 5 Evidentiary Hearing December 16, 2021 6 7 Volume 3 8 9 GREG STIENS,) 10 Complainant,) File No. GC-2021-0395 11 12) v. 13) 14 THE EMPIRE DISTRICT GAS) COMPANY d/b/a LIBERTY, 15) 16 Respondent.) 17 JOHN T. CLARK, Presiding 18 SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE RYAN A. SILVEY, Chairman, 19 MAIDA J. COLEMAN, JASON R. HOLSMAN, 20 GLEN KOLKMEYER, COMMISSIONERS 21 22 REPORTED BY: Tracy Taylor, CCR No. 939 23 TIGER COURT REPORTING, LLC 24 25

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11	FOR: Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission
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1	JUDGE CLARK: Good afternoon. Today is
2	December 16th, 2021 and the current time is 1:52 p.m.
3	The Commission has set aside this time for an
4	evidentiary hearing in Greg Stine Stiens,
5	Complainant, versus the Empire District Gas Company,
6	doing business as Liberty, Respondent. And this is
7	File Number GC-2021-0395.
8	My name's John Clark. I'm the Regulatory
9	Law Judge presiding over this hearing today. With me
10	attending remotely are Commissioners Maida Coleman and
11	Glen Kolkmeyer. At this time I'm going to ask counsel
12	for the parties to enter their appearance for the
13	record. And Mr. Stiens, you are appearing on your own
14	behalf. Correct?
15	MR. STIENS: Yes.
16	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And for Liberty?
17	MS. CARTER: Diana Carter for the Empire
18	District Gas Company, doing business as Liberty.
19	JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Carter. And
20	for the Commission Staff.
21	MS. PAYNE: Whitney Payne for the Staff
22	of the Missouri Public Service Commission.
23	JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Payne.
24	OPC I believe filed a motion in this, but
25	they did not appear.

1	Now, this is the this is the second
2	go-around of this hearing. We had previously started
3	this hearing remote from our Jefferson City office.
4	At that time, Mr. Stiens, you expressed that you would
5	like to be able to present your case in person. And
6	so that was granted and so we are here today in
7	Maryville, Missouri so that you can do that.
8	Now, we had some discussion last time in
9	regard to the fact that the nature of this case
10	involves you talking about what would normally be
11	confidential information with the Commission, and
12	that's customer-specific information. So you
13	understand that it is virtually impossible to hold a
14	hearing today without talking about your bills since
15	your bills and the cut-off notice are at issue.
16	Correct?
17	MR. STIENS: Correct.
18	JUDGE CLARK: And you're agreeing to
19	waive and talk about those things today, understanding
20	that it's open for the hearing?
21	MR. STIENS: Yes.
22	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Now, are there any
23	preliminary matters before we start?
24	THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, but I
25	can't hear anyone. I can hear the Judge, but I can't

1 hear when anyone else is speaking. 2 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I guess we're going to have to try and speak up as much as possible. 3 MR. STIENS: I'm wondering are we -- the 4 5 issue today, are we going over what's going to be --6 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry? What's 7 going to be what? 8 JUDGE CLARK: Yeah, she's having a hard 9 time. This is not the best microphone. MS. PAYNE: I was going to say what if he 10 stood closer? 11 12 JUDGE CLARK: If you would like to, I think that would be fine. Do you want to come up here 13 14 and --15 Judge, I was wondering, MR. STIENS: we're just -- today the issue is should Liberty 16 17 generate a shut-off notice to me if the bill's overdue and are Liberty's rates just and reasonable? 18 JUDGE CLARK: We're not addressing 19 20 whether Liberty's rates are just and reasonable. This is -- you don't have standing for that kind of 21 complaint before the Commission. The parties 22 23 submitted an issue and the issue that was submitted by all the parties -- Staff submitted it on behalf of the 24 25 parties -- was did Liberty violate any applicable

statutes, Commission rules, or Commission 1 2 approved-tariffs related to the complaint. And the complaint I believe has to do with a shut-off notice 3 4 you received. 5 MR. STIENS: Correct. 6 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. 7 MR. STIENS: I just wanted to clarify 8 that. 9 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. That's fine. 10 MR. STIENS: And the other one, before we get started, the court -- or hearing here, the def--11 12 definition of arrears, can we all agree that it's money that was owed and should have been paid earlier? 13 JUDGE CLARK: I think that that is a 14 15 question that you will need to ask the witnesses when they're on the stand. I don't make stipulations of 16 17 fact. And what you're indicating was not included in the stipulations of fact that were supplied by the 18 19 parties. 20 But when Liberty puts their witnesses on or when Staff puts their witnesses on, you're 21 22 certainly welcome to ask you -- ask them what they 23 believe the definition of arrears is or whether they agree with your definition. 24 25 MR. STIENS: Right. Because there could

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be several different ways it's worded or people assume 1 2 it means. 3 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. MR. STIENS: So I just maybe we would get 4 5 a -- just a ruling on okay, this is where we're at, 6 but --7 JUDGE CLARK: No. I'm not going to make 8 a ruling in regards to that. That's something that I 9 can't -- I can't -- I can't make a ruling on whether or not the parties agree with a definition you have. 10 MR. STIENS: Right. And that's what I 11 12 was wanting. Okay. I think when we get started, I'll just give an overview of what went on, my thoughts and 13 opinions and actually what -- and we'll just go from 14 15 that. Okay. I'm going to go over 16 JUDGE CLARK: 17 the procedure here in just a second in terms of how people are going to testify and opening statements. 18 And if you have any questions about the procedures at 19 20 any time, let me know and I'll be more than happy to stop and clarify. 21 MR. STIENS: All right. Thank you, 22 23 Judge. 24 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Hey, Judge. 25 Commissioner Holsman has joined.

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1	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. We've also been
2	joined by Commissioner Holsman. Thank you,
3	Commissioner Holsman.
4	Any preliminary matters from Liberty?
5	MS. CARTER: No, thank you.
6	JUDGE CLARK: Any preliminary matters
7	from Staff?
8	MS. PAYNE: No, thank you.
9	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. To briefly explain
10	the procedure for this, I'm going to allow each party
11	to make a brief opening statement. An opening
12	statement is kind of like a preview. You kind of just
13	give me an overview of what this case is about from
14	your perspective and what you believe your evidence is
15	going to show.
16	Mr. Stine Stiens, since you're not an
17	attorney, I'm going to place you under oath before you
18	give yours and you get to lead off since you have the
19	burden of proof in this case. So would you raise your
20	right hand in order to be sworn?
21	(Greg Stiens sworn in by Judge Clark.)
22	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Would you give me a
23	brief opening statement, saying how you see this case
24	and why you believe that you should prevail? And you
25	can come up here and give it closer so that everybody

1	can hear you.
2	MR. STIENS: I was home one day, I got
3	the mail and in the mail was a shut-off notice from
4	Liberty. And so I knew that I'D just paid it so I
5	went back and checked my records and it had been paid.
6	So I went to call the Liberty and tried to call
7	customer service and they gave me no satisfaction.
8	And I guess my issue is here, if a bill's
9	been paid, can you and you still get a shut-off
10	notice, do the rules and procedures cover that? And I
11	believe that this was I thought a case of first
12	impression. The rules and regulations to me, unless
13	I'm wrong, pertain to if you didn't pay your bill and
14	you're behind and you got a shut-off notice, that's
15	fine.
16	But what happens if the bill's been paid
17	and you get a shut-off notice? And that if you get
18	a shut-off notice, that stays with you the rest of
19	your life. You got a shut-off notice. And I take
20	these things very serious. So I guess I'll that's
21	all I have for right now.
22	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you. That was
23	a good opening statement. That gives me an overview
24	of the case. In a in just a few minutes, you'll
25	get an opportunity to testify and at that time you can

1 clarify things a little bit more and I may have some 2 questions for you. 3 MR. STIENS: Okay. Thank you. 4 JUDGE CLARK: Opening statement from 5 Liberty? 6 MS. CARTER: Thanks, Judge. With me 7 today to provide testimony for the company are Jon 8 Harrison, the director of customer experience for 9 Liberty Central Region; and also Angie Simkin, a Liberty Central Region customer service manager. 10 Ms. Simkin will address the details of 11 12 Mr. Stiens' complaint and the company's compliance with all applicable statutes, rules, tariffs and 13 Commission orders. And Mr. Harrison will address 14 related policy issues for the company. 15 16 As we were just discussing, the issue 17 before the Commission is whether the Empire District Gas Company violated any statutes, rules, orders or 18 tariffs. Based upon the agreed-upon facts that were 19 filed with the Commission, there were no violations of 20 any statutes, rules, orders or tariffs. 21 Mr. Stiens is asking the Commission to 22 order the company to provide him with financial 23 compensation, something the Commission cannot do, and 24 also possibly to enact a new rule or a new regulation 25

and this would not be the proper place for that. 1 2 The basis for Mr. Stiens' complaint is that he did receive in the mail, as he was saying, a 3 past due notice, a shut-off notice. Mr. Stiens 4 5 received the notice and immediately called the Customer Service Center. That was on April 19th of 6 7 2021. 8 The day the shut-off notice was received 9 by Mr. Stiens and he called in, payment had already been received by the company at that time and had been 10 credited to his account. Mr. Stiens was on the phone 11 12 for a little over half an hour with three different customer service representatives who talked with him 13 14 about the timing of when his payment was received in relation to when the disconnect notice had been sent. 15 It was explained to Mr. Stiens that his 16 17 account now at that point was showing as paid in full, he was never disconnected, there was no late fee, no 18 other penalty, nothing was reported to a credit 19 20 agency. During that 30-minute call, Mr. Stiens 21 was also given an apology, information on the 22 23 company's billing practices and, again, confirmation that nothing was reflected on his account. 24 That it 25 was just about crossing in the mail.

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1	I certainly understand Mr. Stiens'
2	frustration regarding the mail delay and I commiserate
3	with him on how he felt receiving that that notice.
4	But his gas service was never shut off, not charged a
5	late fee, not charged any sort of penalty, not
6	reported to a credit agency.
7	And the facts as will be presented today,
8	as well as the stipulated facts that were filed with
9	the Commission, demonstrate that the company acted in
10	complete compliance with all applicable statutes,
11	rules, orders and tariffs, as well as the company's
12	reasonable policy about when they shut send a
13	shut-off notice. Thank you.
14	JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Liberty. Any
15	opening statement from Commission Staff? You can
16	either get up from where you are or you can come up
17	and get up here.
18	MS. PAYNE: Thank you. If the court
19	reporter can hear me from here, I'm generally loud
20	mouth.
21	I would just say that Staff was charged
22	with conducting an investigation in relation to
23	Mr. Stiens' complaint. Sco Mr. Scott Glasgow will
24	take the stand later. He conducted the investigation
25	for Staff. And as is contained in Staff's report that

1	was filed in this case, we did not find any violations
2	of any statutes, rules, orders or tariffs in relation
3	to the facts of the complaint. But certainly
4	Mr. Glasgow can clarify, you know, any answers to any
5	questions or that and discuss any of the matters
6	contained in Staff's report when he takes the stand.
7	JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Staff. Okay.
8	At this time, Mr. Stiens, we're back to you. If you
9	would like to come up here and take the witness stand,
10	I think it would be easier to hear you. If you want
11	to bring up any exhibits that you are planning on
12	offering or documents that you're planning on
13	discussing, I think that might be a good idea.
14	And since we did not go over order of
15	witnesses, I'm going to go over that order of
16	cross-examination, I'll go over that now. Mr. Stiens,
17	I'm going to let Liberty cross first, followed by
18	Staff. Liberty's witnesses will be crossed by you
19	first, Mr. Stiens, and then by Staff. And then
20	Staff's witnesses will be crossed by Liberty first and
21	then Mr. Stiens.
22	And we did this was brought up I'm
23	going to mention this because it was brought up during
24	one of the openings and it was discussed last time
25	when we started the remote hearing. You do

understand, Mr. Stiens, that the Commission does not 1 2 have the power to order you -- order monetary compensation? 3 4 MR. STIENS: Yes. You said that last 5 time. 6 JUDGE CLARK: And you also understand 7 that one of the things you suggested involved a -- if 8 you're asking the Commission to change a rule, which 9 is not a determination that this complaint procedure will make, that a rulemaking is a much longer 10 procedure? 11 12 MR. STIENS: So it doesn't -- it doesn't fall in -- under your jurisdiction, state or --13 JUDGE CLARK: It's not a matter of 14 15 jurisdiction. It's just a matter of what complaints are about versus rulemakings. There's one question 16 17 before the Commission in a complaint hearing, and that is whether the -- whether the company has violated any 18 law that would be subject to the Commission, any 19 20 tariff under which the utility operates, or any Commission rule or any Commission order. 21 22 Now, if they did do that, what to be done 23 about it is a separate issue and that could lead to the Commission initiating a rulemaking, but this is 24 not a rulemaking hearing. 25

1	MR. STIENS: Okay. I will just go over
2	what happened. You can take in facts or of what
3	to what I say and then there may be somewhere down the
4	rule road you there needs to be some changes
5	possibly.
6	JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Stiens, you've
7	been sworn in already. I'll remind you you're under
8	oath. And go ahead and tell the Commission what you
9	would like the Commission to know about your
10	complaint.
11	GREG STIENS, having been sworn, testified as follows:
12	DIRECT TESTIMONY BY MR. STIENS:
13	All right. Well, it started, like I said
14	earlier, one day I opened the mail and I got this
15	shut-off notice from Liberty. So you immediately just
16	get you know, your blood pressure goes whoa.
17	Because, you know, I take these things very seriously.
18	So I had to scramble. I go, I know I paid that.
19	So I went back and looked and it was
20	for the March bill I believe it was it was due on
21	April 9th of 2021 for 97.36. On the fourth day of
22	April of '21, I sent them a check, Number 716, and
23	paid that, put it in the mail. I believe I I
24	mailed it on a Sunday night.
25	And according to the Post Office, and

1	I've talked to them again about this, what can we
2	expect a reasonable time limit they will get that?
3	They told me over and over three days, five days at
4	the very latest. So that would leave Monday, Tuesday,
5	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Five days they should
6	have gotten it on Friday. Now, I know the Post Office
7	has had their problems. So Liberty claims they didn't
8	get it. I have no idea if they did or didn't.
9	I do know that the same situation came
10	up, same time frame, in November. It was on the week
11	of Veterans Day. I mailed it on a Monday, plus there
12	was Veterans Day, Thursday, the Post Office was off.
13	I called and Liberty had received my payment.
14	So if you look back at my record, I've
15	always paid it. And if you look back at this one
16	that's in an issue well, I got the shut-off
17	notice, I made a good faith effort to send this in.
18	And it should have been sent there they should have
19	gotten it on time.
20	Now, I've called Liberty and no one can
21	give me an answer. Evidently they their payment
22	center is in Dallas, Texas and they're in Joplin or
23	wherever southern Missouri. So the left hand doesn't
24	know what the right hand's doing all the time.
25	So I'd called especially in the week

1	of the Veterans Day Well, have you got my payment
2	yet? Well, they didn't know. I called Joplin or in
3	Missouri. Well, that was in Dallas. I said, Well,
4	can you call there? No, they can't can't call.
5	They have no idea.
6	So you have to wait until it gets posted
7	or they hit the button to show it's been paid. That's
8	in Dallas. Now, if that's the way they want to do
9	their business, it seems kind of I don't why.
10	They've got enough employees, why they don't take care
11	of it here in Missouri.
12	So I don't know what happened. It
13	appears to me did they get this are they open on
14	Saturday? Sunday? Did they get it Friday and did
15	somebody just not want to post it that date and wait
16	till Monday? Or was there some type of thing that
17	well, we got let's just wait and then we can charge
18	him a little more. Because if you see on their bill,
19	if don't pay it by a certain date, then you owe them
20	like two or three dollars more after that.
21	Now, I don't know. I've tried to find
22	out. Nobody can give me an answer. So did they get
23	it on time? I assume they did. They said they
24	didn't. But I would like to offer I don't know.
25	Do you have a copy of the shut-off notice?

JUDGE CLARK: I do. You included these 1 2 as exhibits attached to your complaint, I believe. You called one Exhibit A. 3 4 MR. STIENS: Α. 5 JUDGE CLARK: And one Exhibit B? 6 MR. STIENS: B. So you have it? 7 JUDGE CLARK: Yes. Are you offering 8 those? MR. STIENS: Well, if you've got it, can 9 I offer those or do you want this? It's the same 10 11 thing. 12 JUDGE CLARK: You can keep your originals. If you want to offer these for the 13 14 Commission's consideration --15 MR. STIENS: I would like to offer that, which is the shut-off notice I got, and the check that 16 17 shows the date and the amount and then when they cashed it, I quess, on the 13th. Well, you've got --18 19 got a little -- I quess maybe a little issue here that 20 I, in good faith, sent this off. If the Post Office, if there was a 21 problem there, okay. If there's a problem on their 22 23 end not posting it in time or -- I don't know what 24 their procedure is, or they didn't take it to the bank in time, I don't know. But that makes -- there's too 25

many variables there and that shouldn't make me the 1 bad guy. I did this in good faith. 2 And then another thing, when you see this 3 4 Shut-off Notice in big letters, to me, that's a little 5 insulting. Especially since I've always paid my bill 6 and I paid my bill. 7 So I called Liberty that day. I talked 8 for 35 minutes and I talked to two reps and to a 9 supervisor and I got no satisfaction. I mean I was insulted when I got this. And their only response was 10 "sorry." 11 12 Well, you know, that's not good enough. Now this thing stays with me all -- and I don't know 13 14 for sure what the damage could be. If I move somewhere else and I have to fill out for gas service, 15 are they going to put on there, Have you ever received 16 a shut-off notice? Well, I can't lie about that. 17 Ι have. I'm tainted now. I've received a shut-off 18 notice. 19 20 And if you do stuff online or even on a paper application, there -- and I've seen this before 21 because -- when I was living around Kansas City --22 there's no room for an explanation. It's just, Have 23 you received a shut-off notice? So is that going to 24 25 throw me -- they're going to require a deposit, a

1	bigger deposit? They're going to I don't know.
2	There's some unknowns here. This is damaging. And
3	plus, I'm insulted because I had a pride it's like
4	I've never received a shut-off notice and then I
5	received this?
6	So so if they were on their end,
7	they didn't cash it in time, I got I'm not the bad
8	one here. That's on them. So anyway, I paid it and
9	the record clearly shows I've always paid it, paid it
10	on time. And there's this happens to be a maybe
11	a time where I don't know what the problem was
12	because they didn't get it on time.
13	But that's a person shouldn't get a
14	shut-off notice for being an hour late. That's
15	ridiculous. I know that the company's got to have,
16	you know, their money to operate, but you're a day or
17	two late, according to them and you get a shut-off
18	notice? There needs to be at least, I don't know, 15,
19	30 days.
20	Or they should make sure that double
21	check because they've got enough employees. Well,
22	wait a minute, this guy did we get his we better
23	wait and see if it comes in. There should be a
24	variance there. There should be some days to wait
25	before you get a shut-off notice, not just generate

one if you're an hour late. So -- so basically that's 1 kind of what happened. 2 But now as far as the Staff report, they 3 4 found no violations? Well, of course they wouldn't 5 have. Because -- and I -- correct me if I'm wrong, but this is the tariffs and the regulations and the 6 7 procedures are set up if a person didn't pay their 8 bill or they were behind and they're owed the money. 9 Now, I can see that. That's what they were looking at. 10 But this -- I thought this, unless I'm 11 12 wrong, is a case of first impression. What happens if your bill's paid and you still get a shut-off notice? 13 Are there any rules and procedures that are pertaining 14 to this? They didn't really have anything -- they 15 16 weren't looking at the right rules and procedures. 17 There's probably none in place for this. And there need to be. 18 They -- not only Liberty, but any utility 19 20 company needs to -- lost my train of thought -- needs to wait and see if -- make sure they're -- there 21 should be at least a 30-day if you're late. I know 22 23 they've got -- they've got their money. 24 Oh, but getting back to that, so, of 25 course they're not going to find anything because

1 they're looking at just, well, the bill wasn't paid.
2 And certainly a company has a right if your bill
3 wasn't paid, like if it's a month or two behind and
4 it's like well, yeah, if they did everything right.
5 But what happens again if it was paid and they made a
6 mistake?

7 And of course, they didn't charge me 8 anything, and they shouldn't have, but -- and then the 9 other thing is I know in the weights and measures law, the state's not allowed to check meters of any 10 utility. I guess they're policing themselves. 11 And 12 being a -- an ex-federal inspector and state, when they start policing themselves, that's when you get 13 into trouble. 14

15 They need to have somebody kind of watching out on -- I don't know if their meters are 16 17 correct or not. And I don't know who checks them. 18 But that's why they put like the state or someone federal in charge of checking these things from time 19 20 to time. Now, I don't know what's in place, but there needs to be something in place if there is a problem 21 with the bill. 22

23 So I think -- I think that's all I've got 24 for right now. I think that's basically it in a 25 nutshell.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you, 2 Mr. Stiens. I'm going to back up a second. You had two exhibits that you had discussed and you indicated 3 you wanted to offer them. 4 5 MR. STIENS: Yes. 6 JUDGE CLARK: One was the shut-off 7 notice, the other was the Check Number 716 that you 8 used to pay your utility bill. 9 MR. STIENS: Yes. JUDGE CLARK: I have relabeled those 10 Complainant's Exhibit 1 for the shut-off notice and 11 12 Complainant's Exhibit 2 for the check. 13 MR. STIENS: Okay. 14 JUDGE CLARK: Are there any objections to 15 the Court admitting those onto the record? 16 MS. CARTER: No objection from Liberty. 17 MS. PAYNE: No objection from Staff. 18 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Complainant's Exhibit 1 and 2 are admitted onto the hearing record. 19 20 (Exhibits 1 and 2 were received into 21 evidence.) 22 JUDGE CLARK: At this time it is 23 Liberty's opportunity to ask you questions, so Liberty if you'll proceed. 24 25 MS. CARTER: Thanks, Judge.

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CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: 1 2 0. Thank you, Mr. Stiens. I'm going to be talking fairly loudly because of the court reporter so 3 4 sorry if it seems like I'm shouting at you. 5 Α. Okay. 6 Ο. Just wanted to confirm before your March 7 2001 [sic] statement, you received a bill for that and 8 it gave you a certain number of days to pay; is that 9 correct? Yes. 10 Α. And you put your payments in the mail on 11 Ο. 12 a Sunday? 13 I believe that's what it was, yes. Α. 14 0. And I believe that's what you had told us earlier, that you had put it in the mail on a Sunday. 15 And that was by regular mail, just using like a blue 16 17 box? 18 Α. Yes. And then as soon as you received the 19 0. 20 disconnect notice, the past due notice, that's when you called the company. Correct? 21 22 Α. Yes. 23 And you were on the phone with them for Q. 30, 35 minutes? 24 25 Α. Thirty-five minutes.

1	Q. And you spoke with three different
2	individuals with the company during those 35 minutes.
3	Correct?
4	A. Yes. That's what I've got written down.
5	Q. You said you didn't receive any
б	satisfaction. What were you asking them to do on that
7	call?
8	A. I was wanting some type of compensation
9	or see what they had for sending out a shut-off notice
10	that when a bill had been paid. I didn't think
11	that was right to get one. I mean, you know, people
12	get all hyper and all kind of upset. It's like
13	when you get something like that.
14	Q. During that call, the customer service
15	representatives and managers you spoke with, they were
16	polite with you the entire time. Correct?
17	A. I wouldn't say they were, no.
18	Q. You don't think they were polite to you?
19	A. No, I don't.
20	Q. What did they say that you thought wasn't
21	polite?
22	A. I don't remember what they said, but
23	their demeanor was not it was kind of like their
24	it was kind of like well, too bad.
25	Q. That's how they treated you, you think?

1	A. That's how I felt they did, yes.
2	MS. CARTER: Judge, we submitted it's
3	EFIS Item Number 24. We submitted the recorded call
4	as an exhibit. Is that something we could play today?
5	Or when Ms. Simkin is on the stand, I would ask to
б	have it admitted when she can verify exactly what it
7	is.
8	MR. STIENS: Could I object to that?
9	JUDGE CLARK: You can object to it when
10	they offer it. I believe the appropriate time to
11	offer it would be when the witness is on the stand.
12	MR. STIENS: Okay.
13	BY MS. CARTER:
14	Q. But your memory is they weren't polite to
15	you?
16	A. Not to me, no.
17	MS. CARTER: So Judge, I would like to
18	refresh his recollection by listening to the call then
19	or to have it admitted so that could be listened to by
20	Commissioners.
21	MR. STIENS: So
22	JUDGE CLARK: Hold on just a second,
23	Mr. Stiens. I'm thinking about this because we have
24	some foundational issues as well. I think rather than
25	just juggling witnesses back and forth, that what I'd

rather do is wait until your witness gets on the 1 2 stand, then you can lay your foundation and offer the 3 recording appropriately. And I will allow you at that time to be recall Mr. Stiens if you would like to 4 5 question him about that issue. 6 MS. CARTER: Thanks, Judge. 7 JUDGE CLARK: And that will give 8 Mr. Stiens an opportunity to object to either the 9 foundation or the recording itself. MS. CARTER: Thank you. 10 BY MS. CARTER: 11 12 So during that call, the customer service Ο. representatives explained to you the policy about when 13 14 a disconnect notice is sent. Correct? 15 They were talking about something. I Α. 16 don't know if they were correct or not. 17 0. Did they tell you when a disconnect notice is sent? 18 I don't remember. 19 Α. 20 0. At that time you had already paid the bill and they told you your account showed a zero 21 balance. Correct? 22 23 I don't -- can't recall much from it, but Α. I -- I don't know. 24 They explained to you that you weren't 25 0.

charged a late fee. Correct? 1 2 Α. I believe I remember that part. And they explained to you that you 3 0. weren't reported to a credit agency? 4 That's what they claim, but I had no 5 Α. proof of that. 6 7 And at that point you had not been 0. 8 disconnected. Correct? There had been no 9 interruption in your service? Well, no. I just got it that day, but 10 Α. they were threatening to do it on the 23rd. 11 12 So ten -- more than ten days later? Ο. Four days, isn't it? 13 Α. What's the date of the notice? 14 Q. 15 I called on 4/19. Α. What was the date of the notice that was 16 Ο. 17 mailed to you? It was mailed on the 13th. 18 Α. And when did it say you could be 19 Ο. 20 disconnected after? The 23rd of April. 21 Α. 22 And that would be if you still hadn't Q. 23 paid by the 23rd, they were saying you could be disconnected. Correct? 24 25 Α. I believe so, yes.

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1	Q. But at that time, on April 19th, you knew
2	you had paid and the company told you that that
3	payment had been reflected and that you would not be
4	disconnected. Correct?
5	A. They told me I I remember that that
б	they received the payment, but I can't recall what
7	they said about the shut off.
8	Q. You don't recall during that conversation
9	that they said you could disregard that notice since
10	you had already paid?
11	A. No. I didn't take down a whole lot of
12	notes. I just did the what time and how many minutes
13	and the date. I mean that call was so upsetting, I
14	I don't even like to talk about it.
15	MS. CARTER: And Judge, again, I would
16	like to refresh the witness's recollection with the
17	recording, but I understand that we'll wait and do
18	that during Ms. Simkin's testimony.
19	BY MS. CARTER:
20	Q. You also mentioned a situation around
21	Veterans Day.
22	A. Yes.
23	Q. Did you receive a disconnect notice
24	during that time period?
25	A. No. This is the only one I've ever

1	no.
2	Q. So around Veterans Day were you just
3	calling to check on your bill?
4	A. It was before Veterans Day. And after
5	Veterans Day, I was calling to see if they received my
6	payment. It was the same time frame that I was sent
7	this shut-off notice on.
8	Q. And I'm sorry. I'm maybe not following.
9	I'm thinking Veterans Day in November? November 11th?
10	A. I believe it was November 11th, yes.
11	Q. But this happened in March and April.
12	A. Right. But I was just checking to see if
13	maybe there was a problem with the Post Office, there
14	was a problem on Liberty's end. And the Post Office
15	got it there in one last day because of Veterans Day.
16	And they received payment on on that Friday and it
17	was the same time frame that as this shut-off
18	notice was, so.
19	Q. Okay. But you didn't receive a shut-off
20	notice then in November and, again, your service has
21	never been disconnected for nonpayment. Correct?
22	A. Correct.
23	Q. That's all the questions I had.
24	MS. CARTER: Thank you, Judge.
25	JUDGE CLARK: Cross-examination from

1 Staff? 2 MS. PAYNE: Just one, your Honor. CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PAYNE: 3 Mr. Stiens, have you checked your credit 4 0. 5 report since the occurrence of the filing of the 6 complaint? 7 No, I haven't. Α. 8 Q. Okay. That's all I had. Thank you. 9 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Staff. QUESTIONS BY JUDGE CLARK: 10 11 I have a few questions for you, Ο. 12 Mr. Stiens. 13 Α. Okay. 14 0. And then if any of the Commissioners have 15 any questions, I'm not going to stop and ask them if 16 they do, but if they want to unmute at any time and ask a question after I've asked mine, they're welcome 17 to do so and I'll leave a brief pause for that. 18 My first question is, you said that you 19 20 thought this was an issue of first impression. 21 Α. Yes. 22 What do you mean by that? Q. 23 Α. Well, you have your rules and regulations, tariffs concerning the shut-off notice, 24 when people are behind on their bills. But first 25

1	impression is do you have rules, regulations and
2	tariffs, procedures that if a person had paid their
3	bill and they got a shut-off notice? Are they the
4	same thing or are they two different issues?
5	They should be two separate ones. You
6	have one where they didn't pay their bill and they've
7	got to go through the correct procedure to let them
8	know they're going to shut it off. Or you've got
9	where you paid your bill, then what? They're going to
10	go through the same procedures?
11	Q. Okay. So what you're saying is there's
12	no statute, law, Commission rule, or tariff provision
13	that addresses what happens if you pay your bill but
14	receive a shut-off notice?
15	A. Correct.
16	Q. And that's what you're calling an issue
17	of first impression?
18	A. Right.
19	Q. Okay. My next question is, you indicated
20	that you were a federal inspector?
21	A. I was at one time.
22	Q. Okay. What kind inspector were you?
23	A. I was a commodity inspector.
24	Q. Not a utility inspector?
25	A. No. I did like pasta and flour, things

like that for the school programs. 1 2 Ο. Okay. You had -- you had indicated that there was no way of knowing if your meter was 3 affected; is that correct? 4 That's correct. 5 Α. 6 0. But you didn't allege in this complaint 7 that your meter was affected. 8 Α. I did not. I just wanted to make note 9 that I was a weights and measures inspector and in the weights and measures law, we couldn't check utility 10 meters; water, electric, gas. And I just wanted to 11 12 make that point. I don't know who does or if they police 13 14 themselves or what, but I know when I was a federal inspector, they had us in there checking because I 15 16 quess they'd had a problem at one time people being 17 short or cheating. And so that's why they had the inspectors in there to make sure everybody -- it was 18 kind of consumer protection I guess. 19 20 And same way with weights and measures, consumer protection is to make sure you're getting 21 what you pay for. And I have no way of -- you just 22 23 get a bill. You don't know if it's right or wrong, if it's reasonable. You pay it. But if you get a bill, 24 25 it doesn't matter. You can't argue with them and say,

1	well, you know, that's you don't know if you got
2	got what you're paying for or not.
3	And when you try and talk to them and
4	say, well, I think it's a little high, you know, I
5	don't have that much money this month, they won't
6	knock anything off. It's not only Liberty. It's
7	Evergy or KC Power and Light's the same way. All
8	of them. No, that's just the way it is. There's the
9	bill, you got to pay it.
10	Q. Did you express to Liberty at any time
11	that you thought your meter was incorrect?
12	A. I'm not I'm not sure on that. That
13	was in that call that I don't like to think about. I
14	knew that the 97.36 seemed about 30 dollars too high
15	because my other bill's around 20 to 40. And then I
16	get this. Of course, in all fairness, there was a
17	little cooler weather, but I have of knowing how much
18	gas is being used.
19	And I don't even know if the quality of
20	gas it's kind of like the difference in a lot of
21	fuels. Sometimes it will burn quicker and you won't
22	get as much heat or sometimes it will burn hotter and
23	you'll get more for your money. I don't know what
24	kind of gas I'm buying.
25	So I mean if you think about that

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1	difference in fuel like unleaded or premium. Same way
2	on diesel. I've had some diesel you put it in there
3	and it burns hotter than others, but you're paying the
4	same price. So I don't know there's a lot of
5	unknowns there.
6	Q. Now, you indicated that you had called
7	over after Veterans Day to see if they had received
8	your payment.
9	A. Right.
10	Q. Is that is that something you usually
11	do when you make a utility payment, that you call to
12	follow up?
13	A. No. I called to follow up on this
14	because it's it was the same time frame as when I
15	got this shut-off notice. It was the same five days
16	as I mailed it on a Monday. See, I mailed the
17	other one on Sunday night, but it really didn't go out
18	till Monday.
19	So Monday so I wanted to call and see
20	if there was a problem with the Post Office, if they
21	got it the next week. But then there was Veterans Day
22	there that the Post Office was off so that was an
23	extra day, so it was only four days to be delivered.
24	And they I called before to see if they got it in
25	the three days, they didn't. Then you had Veterans

Day, that was the fourth day, they were off. And then 1 2 Friday was the fifth day. I called and they'd gotten 3 it. So you'd received the shut-off notice 4 Q. 5 first and this was the Veterans Day after that? 6 Α. Yeah. It was just to kind see what was 7 going on, where their payment was going, who was doing 8 what. So it was going to Dallas and they don't have 9 any idea down in Joplin or wherever they're at when they receive it. And I couldn't get any information. 10 They claim it was in their box at a certain time, but 11 12 how do we know that? I don't know. Now, you had indicated that -- or it 13 0. 14 had -- it came up, your gas was never shut off. 15 Correct? 16 No. It was never shut off. Α. 17 Ο. And you weren't charged anything additional for this? 18 19 Α. No, I wasn't. 20 0. You indicated that you think that if you had -- were on an application for another utility 21 company, if you were asked if you had a shut-off 22 23 notice, that you would have to indicate that you had, in fact, received one. 24 25 Α. Yeah, I'd have to. I'm not going to lie

1 about it.

2 Q.

A. I -- I actually came across something
4 like that when I lived in Kansas City when you're
5 filling out for utilities.

Okay.

Q. Now, if you were asked if your utility
had actually been shut off, then you could answer in
8 the negative. Correct?

9 A. Well, right. If there was a place to 10 comment. But a lot of times I've noticed on --11 online, you just have to check a box. They won't let 12 you put a comment in. Or sometimes on the -- on the 13 paper they'll just have, Have you ever received a 14 shut-off notice and either yes or no. There's no 15 explanation.

You'd like to say well, I did, but it was a mistake and blah, blah, blah, but a lot of times you don't have that. And they take that and they look at it and say well, this guy has got a shut-off notice. We better require a deposit or a bigger deposit. I don't know. It's -- it's an unknown. I don't know what the damage could be.

Q. Okay. So you don't know if they wouldactually charge you a bigger deposit?

A. No. But they could is my understanding

from what I have read about utility companies. I 1 2 think some could require deposits, some may not. Some might require a bigger deposit than normal. 3 And you read this about shut-off notices? 4 Q. 5 Α. I did. 6 0. And where did you read it? 7 It was on the internet. Α. 8 Q. All right. Those are all the questions I 9 have. Thank you, Mister -- well, 10 JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry. Liberty, do you have any questions based 11 12 upon questions from the Bench? MS. CARTER: Yes, thank you. Just one. 13 RECROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: 14 15 Mr. Stiens, do you remember being asked 0. 16 some discovery requests from the company? 17 Α. Yes. 18 Ο. And the company asked for you to produce any documentation showing that you had been asked at 19 20 any time whether you had received a shut-off notice. Do you remember being asked that? 21 22 Not exactly no, but. Α. 23 Q. Do you remember seeing -- receiving the discovery requests? 24 25 Α. I do.

1 And being asked to produce documentation 0. 2 showing that there had been an issue for you having to answer a question about having received a disconnect 3 notice? 4 5 Α. I'm not recalling that. 6 0. Mr. Stiens, do you have any 7 documentation, anything you can point to that would 8 indicate you've ever been asked that question by 9 someone, if you've received a shut-off notice? That's interesting. No. That's been Α. 10 years ago. And I wouldn't have kept anything like 11 12 that. 13 When did you last apply for utility Ο. service? 14 15 Probably with you guys. I don't know. Α. Maybe 2008. Just -- I'm just guessing. 16 17 Ο. Thank you. 18 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from Staff based upon questions from the Bench? 19 20 MS. PAYNE: No questions. Thank you. JUDGE CLARK: Okay, Mr. Stiens. You can 21 step down. 22 23 Okay. Liberty, you want to call your first witness? 24 25 MS. CARTER: Angie Simkin.

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1 (Angie Simkin sworn in by Judge Clark.) 2 MS. CARTER: Thank you. ANGIE SIMKIN, having been sworn, testified as follows: 3 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: 4 5 Ο. If you will please state and spell your 6 full name for the court reporter. 7 Angie Simkin. A-n-g-i-e, Simkin is S, as Α. 8 in Sam, i-m, as in Mary, k-i-n, as in Nancy. 9 0. Thank you. How are you employed? I'm the manager of customer service. 10 Α. I've been with Liberty or Empire District for 11 12 23 years. Have you been in that same area with the 13 0. 14 company for all 23 of those years? 15 I started in the Contact Center for many, Α. many years and then I went to Credit and Collections 16 17 for several years and then Billing Operations for several years there and then I took this position as 18 the manager. And I've been in this position for 19 20 around seven or eight years. Can you summarize for us what your job 21 Ο. duties are as a customer service manager? 22 23 Α. Yes. I handle pretty much all of the complaints, as far as Commission complaints for -- we 24 serve four states so I handle Kansas, Oklahoma, 25

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1	Arkansas, and then we rotate in Missouri every third
2	one in Missouri normally; the Attorney General
3	complaints; Better Business Bureau complaints; along
4	with my every day duties. I have 24 individuals under
5	me, union and nonunion. I have the offices that are
6	in the Legacy Empire area and then I have Credit and
7	Collections and then I also have two field personnel.
8	Q. Where is your office located?
9	A. In Joplin, Missouri.
10	Q. And those are the company headquarters
11	for the Springfield region?
12	A. Yes.
13	Q. And just for clarification, Liberty's
14	Central Region includes the Empire District Gas
14 15	Central Region includes the Empire District Gas Company. Correct?
15	Company. Correct?
15 16	Company. Correct? A. Yes.
15 16 17	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long
15 16 17 18	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer?
15 16 17 18 19	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer? A. Since 2018.
15 16 17 18 19 20	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer? A. Since 2018. Q. Can you provide the timeline of events
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer? A. Since 2018. Q. Can you provide the timeline of events regarding Mr. Stiens' March 19th billing statement and
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer? A. Since 2018. Q. Can you provide the timeline of events regarding Mr. Stiens' March 19th billing statement and when he received the disconnect notice?
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	Company. Correct? A. Yes. Q. Do you know approximately how long Mr. Stiens has been an Empire customer? A. Since 2018. Q. Can you provide the timeline of events regarding Mr. Stiens' March 19th billing statement and when he received the disconnect notice? A. So March 19th was his billing date. The

1 payment posted in our -- Customer Watch is our 2 operating system -- on April the 13th. And that is through the third-party processor, our Lockbox. We do 3 backdate it to the day that they received the payment. 4 5 0. And Mr. Stiens called the company when he received the disconnect notice; is that right? 6 7 Correct. Α. 8 Q. Was that April 19th of 2021? 9 Α. Yes. Was that call recorded? 10 0. 11 Yes. All calls are recorded. Α. 12 So that's a normal practice when a 0. customer calls the company, for the call to be 13 recorded? 14 15 Α. Yes. And are you familiar with the recording 16 0. 17 of Mr. Stiens' call on April 19th, 2021? 18 Α. Yes. 19 Did you listen to that call? Q. 20 Α. Yes. 21 The voices heard on that call, are those Ο. 22 employees within your office? 23 Α. Yes. The Contact Center, yes. 24 And has that call now been logged in the 0. Commission's electronic filing system? 25

1 Α. Yes. 2 Ο. Was that also produced during discovery in this case? 3 4 Α. Yes. 5 Q. Approximately how long was Mr. Stiens on 6 the phone with the customer service representatives? 7 It was over 30 -- it was between 30 and Α. 8 35 minutes. 9 0. Do you believe the customer service representatives treated Mr. Stiens well and were 10 polite with him? 11 12 Absolutely. All three individuals were Α. very, very polite. 13 MS. CARTER: I would ask for the recorded 14 15 call to be admitted into evidence in this matter. Ιt was submitted in EFIS. It's Document Number 24. 16 17 MR. STIENS: I'd object. JUDGE CLARK: I'll get to that in just a 18 I'm going to call that Respondent's Exhibit 19 second. 20 100. Any objection to Respondent's Exhibit 100, the recorded call? 21 22 MR. STIENS: Yes. 23 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. What's your objection, Mr. Stiens? 24 25 MR. STIENS: I was not notified that it

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was being recorded and I didn't agree to it. 1 2 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. You were asked questions about the recording, is that correct, by 3 4 Liberty? 5 MR. STIENS: Yes. 6 JUDGE CLARK: And you indicated to 7 several of those questions that you did not remember 8 the content of that phone call. 9 MR. STIENS: Yes, sir. JUDGE CLARK: I understand that this was 10 an upsetting phone call to you and I'm not trying to 11 12 be insensitive, but I do believe it's important for the Commission to hear that call. And so I'm going to 13 14 overrule that objection. 15 MR. STIENS: Well, I have to object. It's very, very upsetting to me to recall all this. 16 17 JUDGE CLARK: I understand that. I'm still going to overrule your objection. Any other 18 objections? 19 20 MS. PAYNE: None from Staff. Okay. Go ahead. 21 JUDGE CLARK: 22 MS. CARTER: 23 Q. Thank you. And Ms. Simkin, are customers notified that the call will be recorded? 24 25 Α. Yes. When they first call in, it states

1 that the call may be recorded for monitoring and 2 quality assurance purposes. And could a customer then hang up if they 3 0. do not consent to the call being recorded? 4 5 Α. Correct. Was Mr. Stiens' service ever disconnected 6 0. 7 by Empire? 8 Α. No. 9 Was he charged a late fee or a penalty of Ο. any kind? 10 11 Α. No. 12 When the company sends a bill for 0. service, how quickly is it due after that bill is 13 14 sent? 15 Twenty-one days. Α. And Mr. Stiens' bill for March 19th, 16 Ο. 2021, did that have the 21 days? 17 Α. 18 Yes. And is that in compliance with the 19 0. 20 company's tariff and the Commission's rules? 21 Α. Yes. 22 What is the company's policy regarding Q. 23 sending disconnect notices? 24 The company gives a two-day grace period Α. before a disconnect issue is noticed. It's an 25

automatic process through the -- the computer, the 1 2 information system. It automatically creates that if 3 the payment is not posted to the account. And when you say two days, that's two 4 Ο. days after the 21 days. Correct? 5 6 Α. Correct, yes. 7 Is this a new policy that the company 0. 8 has? 9 Α. I've been here for 23 years and it's been that way the whole time, so no. 10 How quickly after a disconnect notice is 11 0. 12 sent to a customer may the service actually be disconnected? 13 14 Α. They'll have ten days after your shut-off notice. Then that night, in our computer information 15 16 system, it will generate a phone call to be produced 17 the next day through our dialer. So they would receive a phone call the next day and then it could be 18 disconnected after that point. 19 20 0. And is there a second phone call as well? Yes, it will produce -- it will do two 21 Α. phone calls. And actually it will produce more than 22 23 that. It depends on the numbers associated with the 24 account, but very well could get quite a few. 25 0. And that's all -- again, you have the

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21 days and the 10 days and then also the phone calls 1 2 before a disconnect would actually take place? Yes. And the two days before the 3 Α. 4 shut-off notice is created, yes. 5 0. To your knowledge, is the company's 6 policy on sending disconnect notices and when they could actually disconnect, to your knowledge, is that 7 8 in compliance with the company's tariff and the Commission's rules? 9 10 Α. Yes. There was mention of a Lockbox. Can you 11 Ο. 12 tell us what that is? So a Lockbox is a third-party provider. 13 Α. Normally they're banking institutions, which is what 14 15 ours is. It's J.P. Morgan. They make multiple trips daily, Monday through Friday, up to our PO Box in 16 17 Dallas, retrieving payments. They take them back to 18 their location and it's -- they have spent a lot of money to get all of their systems automated the best 19 that they can. It's very accurate. They're very 20 They would be way more fast and accurate versus 21 fast. us doing them in the office. 22 23 It's all -- a lot by -- through machines and they scan the MICR line, they scan the check or 24 25 money order, whatever is sent, and then it gets sent

to us the next day or that night in a file. And then 1 2 it automatically posts into our computer information system. 3 And is that why Empire uses a Lockbox 4 Q. 5 instead of processing payments --6 Α. Absolutely. 7 -- in the Joplin office? 0. Absolutely, yes. Yes. And we do process 8 Α. 9 payments at the Joplin office that come in over the counter, but the mail payments all go to Dallas 10 because it's a lot faster and more accurate. 11 12 And you said the banking institution is Ο. 13 J.P. Morgan? 14 Α. Yes. 15 And that's a large banking institution. Ο. 16 Correct? 17 Α. Very large, yes. 18 And that those payments are processed in Ο. Texas? 19 20 Α. Yes. In Dallas. And why does the company use a Lockbox in 21 Ο. Dallas, Texas? 22 In 2018, when we switched banking to 23 Α. J.P. Morgan, we were given the option of either Dallas 24 25 or Denver. We figured due to the snow in Denver,

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1	there would be a time delay so we thought Dallas was
2	our best option.
3	Q. So J.P. Morgan just gave those two
4	choices for where the PO box would be located?
5	A. Yes.
6	Q. And when Empire Gas customers receive
7	their bill, they are shown the payment address, that
8	PO Box in Texas. Correct?
9	A. Correct.
10	Q. When someone is applying for service with
11	Liberty, does the company ask if they have ever
12	received a shut-off notice?
13	A. No. In order to waive a deposit, we may
14	ask for a letter of credit from another utility. And
15	that would have different information depending upon
16	that utility what they send over as far as shut-offs,
17	if they've been disconnected. But no, we do not
18	specifically ask if you've ever received a shut-off
19	notice.
20	Q. Has anything anything been reported
21	negatively on a credit report for Mr. Stiens?
22	A. No.
23	Q. When does the company make reports to the
24	credit agency?
25	A. So an account actually has to go into a

1	final bill status and then go into write off. At that
2	point it will get turned over to a collection agency.
3	They will exhaust their efforts trying to collect
4	that. And then after 90 days of trying to do the
5	collections, if they're unable to collect, that
6	following month, the beginning of the next month, it
7	would go be reported on their credit.
8	Q. And again, this would all happen long
9	after what happened here with Mr. Stiens?
10	A. Absolutely, yeah. We don't do anything
11	like that on active accounts.
12	Q. What are the different ways a customer
13	can make a payment for gas service other than mailing
14	it in?
15	A. Online or via the web I'm sorry, the
16	web or IVR are options. There are fees. It's an
17	outside third-party vendor. Or there are locations
18	that you can walk into and use a kiosk.
19	Unfortunately, there aren't very many around
20	Maryville. They're further away.
21	Q. Can you pay electronically, I'm assuming,
22	through your own checking account. Correct?
23	A. Yes. You can also, yeah, initiate a
24	payment from your personal checking account to us, and
25	most banks don't charge fees for that. Or you can go

on auto pay where you've got that set up with us and 1 2 there is no fee for that. Is anything negatively reflected on 3 0. Mr. Stiens' account right now with Empire Gas? 4 5 Α. No. 6 Ο. Thank you. That's all the questions I 7 have. 8 JUDGE CLARK: Do you want to play your 9 recording? 10 MS. CARTER: It's all right with me, Judge, that we don't play it here, that it is admitted 11 12 in evidence and perhaps the Commissioners or you could listen to that separately. If you'd like to play 13 it -- I just know Mr. Stiens wasn't wanting to hear it 14 15 right now. JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Then I will show 16 Respondent's Exhibit 100 as admitted on to the record. 17 (Exhibit 100 was received into evidence.) 18 19 MS. CARTER: Thank you. 20 JUDGE CLARK: I will also note that also present today remotely is the Chairman of Commission, 21 Ryan Silvey. 22 23 At this time Mr. Stiens, do you have any questions for this witness? 24 25 MR. STIENS: Yes.

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1	JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead. And please feel
2	free to come up closer to the microphone.
3	CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. STIENS:
4	Q. What was your name again?
5	A. Angie Simkin.
6	Q. Angie?
7	A. Uh-huh.
8	Q. Wow. You sounded really good there. It
9	sounded like Liberty is really efficient.
10	A. Thank you.
11	Q. I'm just wondering with all that that you
12	said, why I received a shut-off notice in error?
13	A. Well, sir, it came in the same day the
14	shut-off notice was created. So the shut-off notice
15	was already in the process of being mailed out when
16	your payment
17	Q. Now, what was
18	A came in.
19	Q that same day?
20	JUDGE CLARK: Don't interrupt the
21	witness, please. Let her finish answering before you
22	ask your next question.
23	THE WITNESS: So we received the payment
24	the day later. So it was already in the process. And
25	we backdate it to the day we receive the payment of

the 12th. We received it -- we technically received 1 it on the 13th. The Lockbox received it on the 12th. 2 They send us a file and we get that overnight. 3 So the shut-off notice had actually been produced. 4 BY MR. STIENS: 5 6 Ο. So what date was the 12th? 7 April the 12th was a Monday. Is that Α. what you're asking, if it's a Monday? 8 9 0. Yes. 10 Α. Yes, it's a Monday. 11 Ο. So is the payment center open on 12 Saturdays? 13 No. Monday through Friday. Α. It's not open on Sunday either? 14 Q. 15 No, sir. Α. 16 So do they receive mail on Saturday? 0. 17 Α. I would assume that it would just be like any other Lockbox, any other PO Box; they would 18 receive mail and they would just have a really big --19 20 you know, Monday would be a really big day for them. So payment could have been in there 21 0. Friday or Saturday; is that correct? 22 23 Α. If it was there Friday, we would have had it processed. If it came in Saturday, that's not a 24 25 normal business day that we processed on Monday. Just

the same as if you would go to an office and put it in 1 2 the night box, that would get processed the following Monday. 3 But you don't really know that 4 0. specifically, do you? 5 6 Α. No, sir. I do not know when it came in. 7 I mean Monday was the first notification. And they 8 make multiple trips every day up to the Post Office to 9 get -- the mail that comes in, you know, keeps coming 10 in. So basically the customer is at their 11 0. 12 mercy when they want to get it and post it? I'm sorry. The Lockbox or --13 Α. 14 0. A Liberty customer is at your collection 15 center's mercy when they want to pick it up and post 16 it? 17 Α. Well, they make multiple trips a day. Ι mean our file that comes in is very, very large every 18 I mean it's not like -- there's nothing on one 19 day. 20 day. I mean it's a large file every day. So they're processing multiple, multiple payments every day. 21 22 So you said you were in Credit and Q. 23 Collections? 24 Uh-huh. Α. 25 Q. Does Liberty send out a lot of shut-off

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notices? 1 2 Α. Yes. If a customer is behind, a shut-off notice does go out after -- if they haven't paid it 3 two days afterwards -- after the due date. 4 5 Ο. What would be a common number per month 6 do you think you might send out, just a ball park? 7 With all of our commodities in all of our Α. 8 states? 9 Just gas. 0. I wouldn't have that -- I wouldn't even 10 Α. begin to know, honestly, how many that would be. 11 I'm 12 sorry, sir. Have they ever sent a shut-out --13 0. 14 shut-off notice out to customers like me that had paid 15 their bill? I mean am I the only one? 16 Α. Well, if your payment was in the mail and 17 it crisscrossed -- I mean like -- like that's what 18 happened with yours. It was in the mail, the shut-off notice was created and produced and on its way and 19 20 then your payment posted. That -- I mean that could have happened. I'm not going to say that no, that 21 it's never happened. It is a possibility. 22 23 Q. So getting back to this call and the day I got the shut-off notice, did you talk to me that 24 25 day?

1 No, sir. It was not me. Α. 2 Ο. So I talked to three different people; is that correct? 3 4 Α. Yes. 5 Q. So why is it I had to talk to three 6 different people? 7 You were asking for somebody higher each Α. 8 time. So you were given the representative and then a 9 senior representative, which is how our process works. And then a supervisor. And you know, they all were 10 apologizing to you, telling you please disregard the 11 12 shut-off notice, the payment has posted, you're good, you don't need to worry about it. 13 But couldn't just one person -- if they 14 0. 15 were a good customer service person, I would just have to talk to one, not three? 16 17 Α. Sometimes customers are not happy with that answer, even though it's a correct answer and 18 they just keep wanting somebody higher and higher 19 20 until they get at what they're hoping is a different 21 answer. 22 So to be clear, you talk about as being Q. 23 recorded for quality purposes? Uh-huh. 24 Α. 25 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead, Mr. Stiens.

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BY MR. STIENS: 1 2 So what exactly is quality purposes? 0. 3 Α. So we have Quality Assurance as a department. And they will pull calls and monitor 4 5 them and critique the reps to make sure that, number 6 one, they're telling the correct information. Is 7 there any improvement? We use it for training 8 persons. How could we have had this call go better? 9 What could we have changed? Maybe if you suggested this, the call would have been a little bit better. 10 So that's the type of quality assurance purposes we 11 12 have. 13 So then the calls aren't actually for 0. evidentiary -- evidentiary hearings or any other court 14 15 matters; is that right? It's -- it can be -- it's recorded for 16 Α. 17 quality and monitoring purposes, but --18 But --0. -- you're saying this is a quality issue 19 Α. 20 so it would be considered for this, yes. But not for court? 21 0. 22 MS. CARTER: Object to the question 23 that -- the witness would not be the one determining whether a recorded call could be used in a proceeding. 24 That will be sustained. 25 JUDGE CLARK:

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1	Mr. Stiens, if you could move on to another line of
2	questioning.
3	BY MR. STIENS:
4	Q. Did you get my permission that day to
5	record?
6	A. By say it states that up front. And so
7	if you would prefer not to have it recorded, then you
8	would, you know you could either hang up on the
9	call, you could get contact us in writing or via
10	e-mail. That would be another way if you did not want
11	the call recorded. But if you're going on through
12	there, it lets you know that your call has been or
13	will be recorded.
14	Q. How many times does it state that?
15	A. At least once. I don't know that that
16	plays over, but I know it says it at least once.
17	Q. Did any of your customer reps ask me?
18	A. For your permission?
19	Q. For my permission.
20	A. No, sir, because it says that up front.
21	When you call in to pretty much any place, even if
22	it's a credit card place asking a question on your
23	account, they pretty much every place does that.
24	It's a standard procedure.
25	Q. Wouldn't you agree that that is not an

agreement of me consenting to that? 1 2 Α. If you did not agree to that, then you would have to tell them that up front. 3 4 Q. But --5 Α. Or you could --6 Ο. -- you didn't state that though. 7 Yes, it was stated in the recording up Α. 8 front when you call in. 9 0. That -- it stated that if you don't agree with this, then you need to let us know and we'll shut 10 it off or we'll hang up? 11 12 No, it does not say that. Α. Okay. As far as your policy and 13 0. procedures, it re-- you follow when a person hasn't 14 15 paid their bill and you get a shut-off notice, does 16 your policy and procedures cover what happened if you 17 sent a bill that's been paid and they still get a shut-off notice? 18 Like yours that crisscrossed in the mail? 19 Α. 20 0. Yes. I mean that may happen from time to time. 21 Α. And if somebody calls in, we just ask you to disregard 22 23 it. We have no intent of going through. And how our procedure works is you would also get the phone 24 25 attempts. And you did not receive any phone attempts

1 after your ten days. So we would not be able to 2 disconnect you without attempting to contact you by 3 phone. 4 Well, I understand all that, but I asked Q. 5 you because your policy and procedures cover when you 6 send a shut-off notice, but the bills already been 7 paid. 8 Α. Well, if somebody has a payment in --9 logged into our customer information system, then a shut-off notice is not produced. So in this case, 10 they crisscrossed in the mail. And that -- it may 11 12 happen occasionally. And so if a customer calls in, we confirm the payment is posted and our policy is to 13 tell them please disregard the shut-off notice. 14 15 0. Okay. So actually you don't have any policy or procedures in your company that cover when a 16 17 bill has been paid and you still send them a shut-off notice? 18 MS. CARTER: I'm going to object. 19 20 Ms. Simkin just answered that, that they do and the policy is to tell the customer to disregard the 21 22 notice. 23 THE WITNESS: Yes. 24 JUDGE CLARK: Is that -- allow me to 25 clarify. Is that -- I think what Mister -- and

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correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Stiens. I think what 1 2 he's getting to, is that something that you're trained to do? 3 4 THE WITNESS: Yes. If -- so if, by 5 chance, they crisscross in the mail, we confirm that 6 the payment has posted. We confirm you're not in 7 jeopardy of disconnect, please disregard the shut-off 8 notice. 9 That is what we tell our representatives. It's trained if that does happen. And it happens 10 occasionally. I mean it's -- I mean, but it's all in 11 12 the timing of the mail. We cannot control the mail and how long it takes to get there. 13 BY MR. STIENS: 14 15 Nor can I. 0. 16 Α. Correct. 17 0. But -- so what you're saying is basically your procedures cover both -- cover shut-off notice, 18 whether your bill has been paid or not been paid? 19 20 Α. Yes. Okay. Just a few more questions. 21 Ο. Did you bring a copy of an application for service today? 22 23 Α. No, sir, I did not. You can find one 24 online. LibertyUtilities.com. We have our 25 application online.

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here today to present it to you. You didn't bring one? A. No, sir. Q. So are you specifically online or can you fill out one in paper? A. We don't have paper applications. For residential, it's either online or over the phone. And most typically, it is over the phone. Q. Okay. So you don't know if there's a question or you do know there's a question on there about have you ever received a shut-off notice? A. That is not a question we ask, sir, either online or over the phone or in person. We have offices in different locations and we don't ask that there either. Q. So it's up to any utility company to ask that? So one company may and another company may not? A. If you're referring to a letter of credit like if you're moving from one utility company to another, we ma we would ask for a letter of credit as a way to waive your deposit. And each company has pretty much the same thing on there. Mainly we're looking for the number of times you've been disconnected or number of late fees. But we do	1	Q. Okay. The problem is I don't have it
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24 Mainly we're looking for the number of times you've	22	of credit as a way to waive your deposit. And each
	23	company has pretty much the same thing on there.
25 been disconnected or number of late fees. But we do	24	Mainly we're looking for the number of times you've
	25	been disconnected or number of late fees. But we do

not say did they receive a shut-off notice. 1 2 Well, you just said something about we 0. look for the number of times you've been disconnected. 3 4 Α. Uh-huh. 5 Q. As in got a shut-off notice? 6 Α. No. Disconnected is completely 7 different. It's when your power or your gas has been 8 completely disconnected. Like if we actually have to 9 send somebody out there to try to collect payment and you're not able to fulfill your payment obligation, 10 then your services would be disconnected at that time. 11 12 So we look at that. So they don't get a shut-off notice 13 0. before that? 14 15 Α. Well, yes, sir. That's the whole 16 process. 17 Ο. So it is a shut-off notice? No. A shut-off notice is different. 18 Α. You get the shut-off notice before. Then you would 19 20 have -- how our process works, then you'd have your ten days to make your payment. And then the next day, 21 we would make our phone attempt. 22 23 And if we're not able to either make an arrangement with you or, you know, have -- come to 24 25 some kind of payment terms, then it could be that a

1	truck is	s disp	oatched to go to your address, knock on
2	the door	r, try	to collect the payment. And if you're
3	not able	e to m	nake the payment at that time, services
4	would be	e disc	connected.
5	Ç	Q.	Right. I got that part, but
6	I	A.	But a shut-off notice is different than a
7	disconne	ection	1.
8	Ç	2.	So a disconnection
9	I	A.	A disconnection is actually dispatching a
10	field pe	ersonn	nel to that.
11	Ç	2.	You're saying actually physical?
12	I	A.	Yes.
13	Ç	2.	But before that, you would have gotten a
14	shut-off	E noti	.ce?
15	I	A.	In order to get that far, yes.
16	Ç	2.	In order to get to a disconnection?
17	I	A.	Yes.
18	Ç	2.	Okay.
19	I	A.	But you could have, in theory, had
20	multiple	e shut	-off notices and not been disconnected at
21	all or n	naybe	just one time and
22	Ç	2.	Getting back to our application. So you
23	ask on t	chere	if you ever had any disconnections?
24	Į	A.	Not on our application.
25	Ç	2.	You don't?

If you're asking -- if you're sending a 1 Α. 2 letter of credit from another utility in order to like waive your deposit --3 No. I'm not asking -- I don't want 4 0. 5 letter of credit. On your application --We do not ask --6 Α. 7 -- do you ask --0. 8 Α. No. 9 -- how many disconnections you've had 0. 10 or --No. 11 Α. 12 -- shut-off notices? 0. JUDGE CLARK: Let him finish his 13 question, please. 14 15 BY MR. STIENS: 16 0. So that -- so there's no question on 17 there how many disconnections have you had or have you 18 had any or have you received any shut -- a shut-off notice ever? 19 20 Α. No to all of those. 21 Q. Okay. 22 No, sir. Α. 23 Q. All right. I believe that's all. 24 Thank you, Mr. Stiens. Any JUDGE CLARK: cross-examination from the Commission Staff? 25

1 I do have a few questions. MS. PAYNE: 2 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PAYNE: Ms. Simkin, you mentioned when you were 3 0. 4 discussing the online payment portal IVR. So that's over the phone, I'm sorry. 5 Α. 6 Ο. No, that's okay. I just wanted to 7 clarify. In relation to this complaint, did Liberty 8 review the language of its shut-off notice? 9 Α. Yes. The Commission did ask us to make some changes. And the change, on the shut-off notice 10 it says, May be shut off on or after, and then it 11 12 gives a date. And I think -- I believe it said, May be shut off on or after payment -- if payment has been 13 made I believe is what we had changed to. It was the 14 15 suggestion from the Commission. 16 Okay. Thank you. 0. 17 Α. Uh-huh. 18 Did Liberty check Mr. Stiens' meter in 0. connection to this complaint? 19 20 Α. Honestly, I -- I'm not sure on that one. I apologize. I could probably find out for you. 21 22 Q. Okay. 23 Α. I apologize. I'm not 100 percent sure on that and I don't want to say the wrong thing. 24 Did Mr. Stiens ask to have his meter 25 0.

checked in connection with the complaint? 1 No, sir -- no, ma'am. 2 Α. And in the line of questioning you kind 3 Ο. of answered this, but I wanted to clarify a little 4 5 bit. You said occasionally customers receive a 6 shut-off notice even though they've sent payment 7 because the payment hasn't been processed yet. Would 8 you say is this something that's happening weekly, 9 monthly? I mean every -- I would say every great 10 Α. once in a while. I don't know. I mean we have, you 11 12 know, several hundred thousand customers and so it's not -- not anything that we've been concerned with. 13 14 We don't get very many phone calls about it at all. It's something pretty rare. I mean it's a timing 15 16 thing on when everything happens. 17 0. So the company wouldn't say that there's a consistent scenario of this happening? 18 19 No, ma'am. Α. 20 Ο. Okay. I think that's all I have. 21 Α. Okay. 22 Thank you. Q. 23 QUESTIONS BY JUDGE CLARK: 24 Okay. Ms. Simkin, I have just a couple 0. questions actually. Maybe just one. You had 25

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1	indicated that Mr. Stiens' bill was due on April the
2	9th; is that correct?
3	A. Yes.
4	Q. And the shut-off notice was issued on the
5	12th?
6	A. Right. The disconnect notice was the
7	12th, yes.
8	Q. Now, without having the rules in front of
9	me or Liberty's tariffs, is there a reason why it was
10	issued three days after the due date?
11	A. It's we give you the two days as a
12	grace period. So it's actually was actually
13	printed on the 11th or created on the 11th and mailed
14	on the 12th. So that would be your two days on there.
15	I'm sorry.
16	Q. Now, when you say a grace period, you
17	believe that's a grace period that Liberty provides
18	and it's not part of any Commission rule or our tariff
19	rule?
20	A. Correct. Correct. To my knowledge,
21	that's not.
22	Q. All right. Thank you. That answers my
23	question.
24	JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens, do you have any
25	questions based upon questions from the Bench? Based

upon the question I just asked. 1 2 MR. STIENS: No, I don't. 3 JUDGE CLARK: I don't know if the court 4 reporter heard that. I'll say that Mr. Stines --5 Stiens indicated no. 6 Staff, any follow-up based upon the Bench 7 question? 8 MS. PAYNE: No questions, thank you. JUDGE CLARK: And any redirect based on 9 upon the question? 10 11 MS. CARTER: Yes. 12 REDIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: Ms. Simkin, when you were talking with 13 0. 14 Staff counsel, she asked you if the company had made a 15 change. 16 Uh-huh. Α. 17 0. And you stated that it was suggested by the Commission. Was that actually a suggestion by the 18 Staff of the Commission? 19 20 Α. Yes. I'm sorry. I just wanted to make sure that was 21 Ο. clear. 22 23 Α. I'm sorry. Yes. 24 0. Thank you. 25 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Simkin, you can step

I'm going to ask that you stay here for at 1 down. 2 least a little while in case other questions come up. THE WITNESS: 3 Sure. 4 JUDGE CLARK: Liberty, you may call your next witness. 5 6 MS. CARTER: Jon Harrison. 7 (Jon Harrison sworn in by Judge Clark.) 8 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead, Liberty. 9 JON HARRISON, having been sworn, testified as follows: DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: 10 Thank you. If you'll please state and 11 0. 12 spell your full name for the court reporter. Jon Harrison, J-o-n H-a-r-r-i-s-o-n. 13 Α. 14 Q. How are you employed? 15 I'm the director of Customer Experience Α. for Liberty Central Region in Joplin, Missouri. 16 17 0. What are your job duties in that position? 18 19 They include Billing, Contact Center Α. 20 management, Credit and Collections, Communications. And I also have responsibility for system 21 22 implementations and I will handle damage claims and 23 net metering responsibilities. 24 And Ms. Simkin, who just testified, is 0. she within your department? 25

1	A. She is.
2	Q. Is it your understanding that the
3	company's billing practices are in line with the
4	company's tariffs and the Commission's rules?
5	A. Yes.
б	Q. Why is it the company's policy to send a
7	disconnect notice two days after a missed payment?
8	A. I think there's several reasons for that.
9	First, the disconnect notice does serve as a reminder
10	that a payment is due. That's important so customers
11	are aware that there's an outstanding balance to
12	prevent additional arrears from accruing.
13	We want to make sure that we are
14	communicating effectively with customers to prevent
15	them from having to enter into payment agreements, for
16	example, or to have to pursue some sort of financial
17	assistance through our different agencies.
18	I think it's important to recognize that
19	notices that payments are past due also serve to
20	reduce delinquencies and bad debt expense, which
21	reduces cost to the company, and also reduces cost to
22	ratepayers.
23	And then I think also importantly
24	disconnect notices are is a document that's
25	required should customers require financial assistance

in our low-income programs. That document enables 1 2 them to get that, assuming they qualify financially for that assistance. 3 Will Mr. Stiens receive another 4 0. 5 disconnect notice in this situation or has the company 6 taken some action to see that that doesn't happen? 7 No, ma'am. He will not receive another Α. 8 disconnect notice because we have taken the action to 9 suspend the notices for Mr. Stiens should he be qualifying for one in the future. 10 So if it happened that his payment 11 0. 12 crosses in the mail, there won't automatically be a disconnect notice generated on his account again; is 13 14 that correct? 15 Yes, that's correct. Α. 16 Why can't the company or why doesn't the 0. 17 company do that for everyone? The reminders of past due balances are a 18 Α. best practice. It's an industry standard, a utility 19 20 industry standard. It's an important reminder. As I mentioned, it's required for low-income support. 21 So this is a document -- should a customer have a 22 23 financial need and they present that need to an agency, for example, in our low-income housing 24 program, LIEAP, housing assistance program, that 25

document is required for a customer to get a grant. 1 2 So it's a critical piece of information to support the grant application. 3 The utility is obligated to provide the 4 notice in advance of the field disconnect. 5 Okay? And it also triggers certain work flows, which 6 7 systematically the two calls that we've talked about 8 in the prior testimony come subsequent to the 9 disconnect notice, ten days later, so it's part of the work flow process as well. 10 Ms. Payne had asked Ms. Simkin about a 11 Ο. 12 suggested change in practice. 13 Right. Α. Is it your understanding that the Staff 14 Ο. 15 of the Commission investigated Mr. Stiens' allegations in this complaint? 16 17 Α. Yes. It's my understanding they did. And that they found there were no 18 Ο. violations by the company? 19 20 Α. That's my understanding. But they did suggest a change in 21 Ο. practice? 22 23 Α. Correct. 24 What was that suggested change? 0. Staff identified payment language that 25 Α.

could be misinterpreted and recommended it be changed 1 2 to make it more understandable. And is this on the disconnect notice 3 Ο. itself? 4 5 Α. It is. 6 0. Do you happen to know what the change is, 7 what the language change is? 8 Α. I do. I do. And basically it -- we made 9 a change -- and this was an example from an actual disconnect notice where that language stated, 10 Disregard if the payment is made after a certain date. 11 12 And that language was changed to, Please disregard if this past due amount has already been paid. 13 14 Ο. So in the situation of, for example, Mr. Stiens when he received his, it would be -- no 15 matter when he made the payments, it would be telling 16 17 him to disregard the notice --18 Yes, ma'am. Α. -- if payment had been made? 19 Q. 20 Α. Correct. And the company agreed to make that 21 Ο. change on Staff's suggestion? 22 23 Α. We did. 24 And it's already been implemented and it 0. now is in practice; is that correct? 25

1 Α. Yes, that's correct. 2 Q. Thank you. I don't have any other 3 questions. 4 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens, do you have any 5 questions for this witness? 6 MR. STIENS: Just a few. 7 JUDGE CLARK: Can you get a little closer 8 to the microphone, please? 9 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. STIENS: All right. Okay, Mr. Harrison. You just 10 Q. mentioned about additional expenses, disregard if the 11 12 bill has already been paid. How many days do you let that go before you send that out? 13 14 Α. The disconnect notice, sir? 15 Yes. Shut-off notice rather. Ο. 16 Right. Okay. So the policy is ten days Α. 17 after the due date. We basically will have -- a due date in your case was -- let me just make sure my 18 dates are right. We mailed you the statement on the 19 20 5th, your due date was on the 9th, payment was in the Lockbox on the 12th. 21 So the disconnect notice was mailed 22 23 effectively 12 days after the due date -- two days after the due date, excuse me. And then there's a 24 25 ten-day period subsequent to that.

Г

1	Q. I'm just wondering. Additional expense				
2	to the company to send out and states that				
3	disregard if it's been paid, you know, you've gone				
4	through all this paperwork, you've got to send it out				
5	through the mail which, you know. costs a little bit.				
6	If you've got that many customers as as they				
7	stated, why would you put disregard? Wouldn't you				
8	just wait a longer time and not send that out and that				
9	would be less expense for the company?				
10	A. Well, I think the answer to that really				
11	lies in the fact that the past due reminder, in this				
12	case the disconnect notice, serves multiple purposes.				
13	The first is in the event that the customer forgot to				
14	mail the payment, wasn't able to get a stamp				
15	there's a number of reasons why a customer might				
16	forget to mail that payment so it serves as a				
17	reminder, number one.				
18	Two, it also supports, you know, our				
19	efforts to be paid on a timely basis.				
20	Three, I think the important point here				
21	though, particularly with regard to customers in need,				
22	that document serves as a as evidence that the				
23	customer has, in fact is subject to a disconnect				
24	notice and if they qualify financially for low-income				
25	assistance, that disconnect notice then is part of the				

application package to get that assistance. 1 2 Ο. So of course, when I called in and I was 3 not happy with your customer service reps, I was so mad that I would like to have told them to keep your 4 5 gas, I'll go somewhere else. But isn't it true I 6 can't go anywhere else? You're the only player in 7 town? 8 MS. CARTER: I'm going to object to the 9 question that that's not relevant to this proceeding. 10 JUDGE CLARK: I'm going to allow him to answer, if he knows the answer. 11 12 THE WITNESS: I'm not aware of other sources of gas in this -- in this part of Missouri. 13 BY MR. STIENS: 14 15 So the Staff did come up that there were 0. no violations as far as procedures, but it's my 16 17 contention that they weren't comparing apples to apples. Do you think they were doing the same thing 18 looking at your procedures as the shut-off notice 19 20 covers whether you paid your bill or not? JUDGE CLARK: Can you clarify that 21 question? I'm not sure I understand the question. 22 23 MR. STIENS: I think I'll just withdraw. 24 JUDGE CLARK: I don't want to keep you 25 from asking it. I just didn't understand the question

when you said apples to oranges [sic]. Are you 1 2 talking again about a policy regarding whether -whether or not there's a policy for when this happens? 3 MR. STIENS: Okay. Well, yes. The Staff 4 5 was looking at your rules and regulations as a shut-off notice if someone is in arrears or actually 6 7 hadn't paid their bill, was getting ready that needed 8 to be shut off or pay it or -- and that would be 9 apples to apples. But in this case, the bill was paid and 10 the Commission really -- or the Staff really couldn't 11 12 look at anything because it would be looking from apples to oranges, because there really wasn't any 13 14 policy in place of what happened if you did pay it and you got a shut-off notice. 15 16 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. That -- that sounded 17 less like a question and more like a comment. 18 MR. STIENS: A comment, okay. JUDGE CLARK: And secondly, I don't know 19 20 that that was a question for this witness, if it's about Staff's report. I think Staff's witness would 21 22 be more appropriate. 23 MR. STIENS: I'll just withdraw. And that's all. 24 25 JUDGE CLARK: You can try and ask that of

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Staff's witness. Do you have any further questions? 1 2 MR. STIENS: No. No. JUDGE CLARK: Any cross-examination from 3 the Commission Staff? 4 MS. PAYNE: Just one out of curiosity. 5 6 CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS. PAYNE: Did Liberty check Mr. Stiens' meter in 7 0. 8 relation to this complaint case? 9 I'm not aware that Liberty did. Α. Okay. Thank you. That's all I have. 10 0. QUESTIONS BY JUDGE CLARK: 11 12 Okay. I have one question for you and Ο. that regards these shut-off notices. And it seems 13 like a lot of Mr. Stiens' concern is that he's 14 15 received this notice and in his mind he can't unreceive it. It's been issued and he's received it 16 17 and he received it having sent payment in. In these rare instances where this 18 happens, where things may cross in the mail or mail 19 20 may get delayed but the customer has sent in payment timely and they've expressed concern about that, is it 21 possible for the company to issue a notice recalling 22 23 or rescinding the shut-off notice such that Mr. Stiens could say no, I haven't received one; it was recalled, 24 25 slash, rescinded?

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1	A. I think it would be very possible. Not					
2	necessarily to rescind it, but to acknowledge that the					
3	payment had been received on a timely basis;					
4	therefore, it was appropriate to disregard the notice					
5	that was sent.					
6	Q. So you think you could send something to					
7	that effect, even if you couldn't send a notice					
8	rescinding or recalling?					
9	A. Yeah. Based on a customer request, I					
10	think the company would be glad to do that if that					
11	was if that was important to a customer. My					
12	feeling is that this would simply be an					
13	acknowledgement of what was already expressed on the					
14	phone call.					
15	Q. Okay. Thank you. I have no further					
16	questions.					
17	JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens, do you have any					
18	questions based upon my question?					
19	MR. STIENS: I have one more.					
20	JUDGE CLARK: Come on up.					
21	RECROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. STIENS:					
22	Q. The Judge made a good point here. I					
23	would you say that instead of disregarding the					
24	shut-off notice, that one should the company should					
25	send one that should say void void the previous					

1	shut-off notice?
2	A. I think every circumstance is unique. So
3	in the event a customer were to make a specific
4	request, I think the company would certainly be
5	receptive to that request. Because what we're doing
6	is we're basically documenting what was discussed on
7	the call relative to the disconnect that was sent and
8	crossed with your payment, suggesting that it was
9	appropriate to disregard the notice. And we I
10	think we would be glad to acknowledge that in any form
11	that the customer would require.
12	Q. So you're saying it should be the
13	customer to initiate it, not the company?
14	A. I think it's because the company the
15	company feels that the customer has been satisfied by
16	virtue of communication that may have taken place in
17	the Contact Center or certainly because the customer
18	is aware that the payment has processed, there's no
19	arrears on the account and the disconnect notice is
20	not in effect.
21	Q. Wouldn't it be actually on the company
22	to if you sent a shut-off notice that was
23	incorrect, to send a notice, Sorry, we made a mistake,
24	void this, and then that would be void? I think that
25	would be clearer. Would you agree to that?

1	A. I don't believe the shut-off notice was					
2	sent incorrectly.					
3	Q. But if a shut-off notice was sent					
4	incorrectly.					
5	A. I'm not aware of any situation where a					
6	shut-off notice was sent incorrectly.					
7	Q. I'll give you one example. Mine on					
8	April 9th, 13th, 12th, whatever it was. That was					
9	incorrect. There's your example.					
10	JUDGE CLARK: That's testifying. Is					
11	there a question based upon that?					
12	MR. STIENS: No further questions.					
13	JUDGE CLARK: Staff, any questions based					
14	upon my question from the Bench?					
15	MS. PAYNE: No questions, thank you.					
16	JUDGE CLARK: Any redirect from the					
17	company based upon my question?					
18	MS. CARTER: No, Judge. But I would ask					
19	if I could recall Ms. Simkin for one additional direct					
20	testimony question that may resolve or may address					
21	some of this.					
22	JUDGE CLARK: You can object. I'd be					
23	interested to hear why.					
24	MR. STIENS: She's already testified					
25	THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I can't					

1 hear him. JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens says he's 2 objecting because she's already testified. 3 4 MR. STIENS: Oh, I'm unclear of 5 foundation. JUDGE CLARK: Well, it's testimony. 6 It's 7 not foundation for an exhibit that's been offered. 8 I'm going to overrule your objection and allow -- you 9 may step down and allow Ms. Simkin to come back and answer a few more questions, if it helps clarify any 10 of these issues. 11 12 I will give you, Mr. Stiens, an appropriate opportunity to ask any questions based 13 14 upon -- well, to ask any questions after Liberty asks 15 their clarification questions. MS. CARTER: Thank you, Judge. I'll be 16 17 brief. (Angie Simkin recalled.) 18 ANGIE SIMKIN, having been previously sworn, testified 19 20 as follows: FURTHER REDIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. CARTER: 21 22 Ms. Simkin, you just heard Mr. Harrison's Q. 23 testimony. Correct? 24 Α. Yes. And there was discussion about 25 0.

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1	Mr. Stiens' account and whether it would reflect that				
2	he has received a past due notice, a disconnect				
3	notice. Do you recall that?				
4	A. I do, yes.				
5	Q. Currently on Mr. Stiens' account with				
6	Liberty, does it show that he received the disconnect				
7	notice that we're here talking about?				
8	A. No. I changed the credit history so it				
9	does not reflect that because we knew it was such of				
10	an importance to you, it really bothered you. And				
11	then if you were to go off service with us and need a				
12	letter of credit, it will not show up on there.				
13	Q. That's all I have. Thank you.				
14	JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens, any questions?				
15	MR. STIENS: Yes.				
16	JUDGE CLARK: Please come up.				
17	FURTHER RECROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR. STIENS:				
18	Q. You stated you went in and you changed				
19	the credit history?				
20	A. Yes.				
21	Q. Can you explain that to				
22	A. Yes. So you have either paid on time,				
23	not paid on time, a shut-off notice, and a disconnect				
24	notice are our credit histories. And right off, if it				
25	goes that far, if it's a closed account, goes to				

1	write-off. So because we knew it bothered you so
2	much, we changed that and we took off I deleted the
3	shut-off notice. That way if you were to ever go off
4	service with us, we would not be reporting that.
5	Q. Did you send me any type documentation
6	that stated that stating that you did that?
7	A. No, sir. I'd be happy to send you a
8	letter of credit though as soon as I get home. I can
9	mail that to you. That way you'd have it for your
10	reference and it will not show that on there.
11	Q. That will be fine. What's the
12	significance of doing that?
13	A. If it if you were to go off service
14	with us and go to another utility, if you moved and if
15	they asked for a letter of credit to you know, that
16	we do that to you know, as a way for you to not
17	have to pay a deposit. So if we send you a letter of
18	credit that's good and you go to another utility, as
19	long as they go by those rules, you should not have to
20	pay a deposit. Like if you were coming on service
21	with us, with a good letter of credit we would not
22	charge you a deposit.
23	Q. Correct. But if I went to another
24	company and you wouldn't have changed that, you would
25	have sent them a letter of credit and it would have

showed a shut-off notice. Correct? 1 2 Α. It would show one shut-off notice. We give the last 12 months history. 3 4 So that's a negative mark on me. 0. 5 Correct? 6 Α. Yes. You can have five late pays in 7 Missouri and waive the deposit. So that one is -wouldn't -- wouldn't harm you. 8 9 Is that a rule or company policy or 0. Commission policy --10 11 Α. Yes. 12 -- or what? Ο. 13 It's a Commission policy in the tariffs. Α. 14 Q. So basically if that was on there, isn't 15 that like a credit report? 16 It's not a credit report as far as Α. 17 through a credit bureau. It's just a letter of credit is how it's called. 18 Right. So now I'm finding out that that 19 0. 20 really could damage me if you would not have changed 21 that. 22 No. One late pay would not have damaged Α. 23 you, sir. 24 0. Well, you really can't answer for another 25 utility, can you?

In Missouri, yes. It's five late pays 1 Α. 2 that are acceptable. But my question is, you really can't 3 0. answer for another utility? 4 5 Α. If they file -- if they are under the 6 Commission's jurisdiction, five late pays are 7 acceptable. If they're under the Commission's 8 jurisdiction. If it's a municipality, I mean, that's 9 a whole different ball game. I don't know what they do. But if it's under the Commission, we're following 10 the tariffs there. 11 12 If they follow that. But like a 0. municipality or someone else, it could possibly be 13 damaging or, like I said earlier, it could cause a 14 15 deposit, higher deposit? In my professional opinion -- I've been 16 Α. 17 doing this for 23 years. We give letters of credits 18 to municipalities, to co-ops, and I've never seen anybody charged a deposit based on one late pay. 19 20 Ο. So there is a letter of credit. Are 21 you -- would you say that's the same as a credit 22 report? 23 Α. No, it's different. It's your -- it's -it's a letter of credit what your credit is with our 24 25 company. And that's a common thing with utilities.

If you're transferring from one to another, you can 1 2 ask for a letter of credit in order to waive your 3 deposit. 4 Not a credit report, but a letter of Q. 5 credit? Yes, sir. 6 Α. 7 So aren't they basically the same? 0. 8 Α. A credit report would probably have like 9 your credit card information, banking information. I -- this does not have any of that. We don't have 10 any of that information. This is just your payment 11 12 history with our company. That's -- a payment history, that's what 13 Ο. 14 credit cards do is your payment history, so. 15 I mean I -- I've looked at a credit Α. 16 report and it's completely different than what we 17 send. 18 0. Then --I mean so I would -- it's a letter of 19 Α. 20 credit. It's different than a credit report. So anyway, you did go in there and 21 0. correct it? 22 23 Α. Yes, sir. 24 It all looks good, the way it should be? 0. Yes, sir. 25 Α.

1 Q. Okay. And you --2 Α. And I'd be happy to mail that to you. Do that. And you did that on your own? 3 Q. 4 Yes, sir. Because we knew -- we knew you Α. were very, very upset by this. That was not our 5 6 intention. It's not our intention at all. And we 7 were trying to -- you know, if for some reason you were to move, we wanted to make that right and get 8 9 everything straightened out for you, make you happy. No more questions. 10 Q. JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from the 11 12 Commission Staff? 13 MS. PAYNE: No questions. Thank you. JUDGE CLARK: And I have no questions 14 15 from the Bench. You can be excused. 16 Liberty, do you have any other witnesses 17 or evidence you want to present? 18 MS. CARTER: We do not. Thank you. JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Commission Staff, 19 20 you can call your first witness. 21 MS. PAYNE: Thank you. Scott Glasgow. 22 (Scott Glasgow sworn by Judge Clark.) 23 JUDGE CLARK: You may proceed, Staff. SCOTT GLASGOW, being first duly sworn, testified as 24 follows: 25

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MS. PAYNE: 1 2 Would you please state and spell your Q. name for the court reporter. 3 4 My name is Scott Glasgow, S-c-o-t-t Α. 5 G-l-a-s-g-o-w. 6 Ο. And by whom are you employed and in what 7 capacity? I work for the Missouri Public Service 8 Α. 9 Commission in the Customer Experience Department and I'm a senior research data analyst. 10 And are you the same Scott Glasgow that 11 0. 12 conducted Staff's inter-- I'm sorry, Staff's review of this complaint and drafted the Staff report? 13 14 Α. I am. 15 Ο. And do you have any changes to make to the Staff report? 16 17 Α. I do not. MS. PAYNE: Okay. I would like to offer 18 the Staff report into the record for this case. 19 20 JUDGE CLARK: We'll call that Staff's Exhibit 1-- 200. Any objections to admitting Staff's 21 22 Exhibit 200, the Staff report, onto the hearing 23 record? 24 MR. STIENS: I'd like to object. 25 JUDGE CLARK: Okay, Mr. Stiens. What's

your objection? 1 2 THE COURT REPORTER: I can't hear him. 3 JUDGE CLARK: Can you come up and make 4 your objection closer to the microphone, please? And I'm sorry, this is the best microphone I could get for 5 6 this, so I apologize. 7 I object. I believe it MR. STIENS: 8 doesn't reflect the accurate facts of this case as in 9 comparing apples to apples. JUDGE CLARK: And that has to do with --10 with your assertion that there's no rule that 11 12 addresses this because it involves a customer payment and the receipt of a shut-off notice after a valid 13 14 payment? 15 MR. STIENS: Correct. 16 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I'm going to 17 overrule that objection. Staff's report, Exhibit 200, will be admitted onto the hearing record. 18 (Exhibit 200 was received into evidence.) 19 20 MS. PAYNE: Thank you, Judge. And I will tender this witness for any questions. 21 22 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Stine -- Stiens, 23 do you have any questions for this witness? And this would be concerning anything that was in the Staff 24 report or any questions that you have for Staff in 25

general. 1 2 MR. STIENS: No. JUDGE CLARK: Liberty, did you have any 3 questions for Staff's witness? 4 5 MS. CARTER: No questions. Thank you. 6 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions at this 7 time either. Mr. Glasgow, you can step down. 8 Staff, do you have any other witnesses or 9 any other evidence you'd like to offer today? MS. PAYNE: We do not. Thank you. 10 JUDGE CLARK: So I think we've come to 11 12 the end of this. I think we're looking at a standard time on transcripts. Tracy, when would that be? 13 THE COURT REPORTER: Ten business days. 14 15 JUDGE CLARK: Hold on just a second. So 16 we're looking at it being available on the 30th? And 17 if I'm wrong, please let me know. 18 THE COURT REPORTER: No, you're right. JUDGE CLARK: We don't generally -- I 19 20 know that there's -- that people oftentimes want to equate this to a court proceeding and there's a lot of 21 similarities. One of the things that we're not 22 23 similar to a court proceeding is there's not usually a closing argument given. What we usually do in that 24 25 case is if the parties offer briefs. Basically you

file a written, here's where I think they were wrong, 1 2 here's the evidence that supports my assertion, here's what I think. 3 Do the parties have an opinion on whether 4 or not they'd like to submit briefs? 5 6 MR. STIENS: I would --7 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I can't 8 hear Mr. Stiens. 9 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens said he would waive the submission of briefs. Liberty? 10 11 MS. CARTER: Judge, we'd be happy to 12 submit a brief, if you feel that would be helpful or the Commissioners, but we wouldn't make the request to 13 require briefs. 14 15 JUDGE CLARK: Staff? MS. PAYNE: No, it's not a requirement 16 17 for Staff. JUDGE CLARK: Well, actually I am going 18 to order briefs in this situation because I think it 19 20 would help me wrap my head around it a little bit better. Your brief can be as brief as you'd like them 21 to be, but I'd like them to cite to the evidence and 22 23 the relevant law. 24 Mr. Stiens, you can submit a brief. And this is not a formal thing. You can write out 25

whatever you would like me to consider based on the 1 2 evidence that was offered. If you would like to, you can. If you do not wish to, I'm not going to require 3 4 to you submit a brief. 5 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I cannot 6 hear you, Mr. Stiens. 7 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens said that he believes he will submit a brief. 8 9 Okay. Based upon that, let's pick a day for the submission of briefs. I have the holiday 10 schedule coming up. Would it be unreasonable for 11 12 everybody to have their briefs in by the 21st of 13 January? 14 MR. STIENS: I believe I can do mine by 15 then. 16 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Stiens says that would 17 be fine with him. MS. CARTER: That's fine with the 18 19 company. Thank you. 20 MS. PAYNE: That's fine with Staff. 21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Briefs -- and I'm only doing one round of briefs. So briefs will be due 22 23 on the 21st of January. Are there any other matters that need to be addressed by the Commission before we 24 adjourn for the afternoon? 25

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1	MS. CARTER: None for the company.					
2	MS. PAYNE: None on behalf of Staff.					
3	JUDGE CLARK: I would like to thank					
4	everybody for their participation today. The hearing					
5	went very well. At this time I will adjourn these					
6	proceedings and we will go off the record.					
7	(Whereupon, the proceedings were					
8	adjourned.)					
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1	CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER			
2				
3	I, Tracy Thorpe Taylor, CCR No. 939, within the			
4	State of Missouri, do hereby certify that the			
5	testimony appearing in the foregoing matter was duly			
6	sworn by me; that the testimony of said witnesses was			
7	taken by me to the best of my ability and thereafter			
8	reduced to typewriting under my direction; that I am			
9	neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any			
10	of the parties to the action in which this matter was			
11	taken, and further, that I am not a relative or			
12	employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the			
13	parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise			
14	interested in the outcome of the action.			
15	man Z.J. Jaylor			
16				
17	Tracy Thorpe Taylor, CCR			
18				
19 20				
20 21				
21 22				
22				
23 24				
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