

1 STATE OF MISSOURI  
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
3  
4 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
5  
6 Local Public Hearing  
7 March 26, 2018  
8 Sikeston, Missouri  
9 Volume 5  
10 In the matter of Liberty )  
Utilities (Midstates Natural )  
11 Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty ) File No. GR-2018-00163  
Utilities' Tariff Revisions ) Tariff No. YG-2018-0036  
12 Designed to Implement a )  
General Rate Increase for )  
13 Natural Gas Service in the )  
Missouri Service Areas of the )  
14 Company )  
15  
16 MORRIS WOODRUFF, Presiding  
17 CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE  
18 Maida J. Coleman,  
COMMISSIONER  
19  
20  
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A P P E A R A N C E S

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Good afternoon once again.  
3 Let's go on the record at this point. We're now ready  
4 for the second part of this local public hearing, which  
5 is our chance to take testimony from you to customers  
6 and interested people about the -- about the rate  
7 increase or proposed rate increase. Once again, my  
8 name the Morris Woodruff. I'm the chief regulatory law  
9 judge for the Public Service Commission, and to my  
10 right is Commissioner Maida Coleman a Sikeston native.

11 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Yes.

12 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Did you wish to make any  
13 opening remarks, Commissioner?

14 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Sure. Good afternoon  
15 everyone. Thank you so much for coming today. This is  
16 an opportunity for the commission itself to hear your  
17 concerns and opinions concerning this rate that's  
18 before you. I am one of five commissioners who will,  
19 once we hear the testimony, examine the evidence, and  
20 actually have an evidentiary hearing in Jefferson City,  
21 which the judge will inform you as to when that is, we  
22 commissioners will be at some point making a decision  
23 on this case.

24 Because I'm the only person here does not  
25 mean that it is not important. It just means that we

1 try to spread ourselves throughout the state for the  
2 hearings that will go on regarding this case and, of  
3 course, in others that we hear. You will be giving  
4 testimony that will be read and digested by the  
5 commissioners that aren't here so that an informed  
6 decision can be made. So when you come forward to  
7 testify, please feel free to let us know exactly what  
8 you'd like us to know relative to this case.

9           The judge mentioned that I am a Sikeston  
10 native. Yes. I am a Sikeston Bulldog, former  
11 cheerleader, and a 1972 graduate of Sikeston High  
12 School. And it's always a pleasure to come home and  
13 also to either go eat at Kirby's or haven't decided  
14 where -- if I'm going to the China Buffet. Don't know  
15 yet. It depends on how long you keep me. If I'm  
16 starving, I'm going to the buffet. If I'm not, I may  
17 only eat three hamburgers at Kirby's. So thank you all  
18 for being here today.

19           JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, Commissioner.  
20 The procedure will follow is I'll ask -- I have the  
21 sign-up list of people who asked to testify. If you  
22 didn't get a chance to sign up, that's fine. At the  
23 end of the -- at the end of the list, I'll just ask  
24 anybody else in the audience who might feel inspired to  
25 come forward and testify as well. I'll ask you to come

1 up to the podium here, and I'll swear you in to tell  
2 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.  
3 And we'll just go down the list, and we'll take your  
4 testimony.

5 I ask that you limit your testimony to about  
6 five minutes. I'll actually have a timer here.  
7 There's no trap door or anything if you go past the  
8 five minutes, but just kind of a courtesy to everyone  
9 else who would like the chance to testify. So before I  
10 take the first witnesses, I do need to take care of one  
11 more thing, and that is I need to find out which  
12 attorneys are here for the parties. So we'll take  
13 entries of appearance for the parties beginning with  
14 the company.

15 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you, Judge. Michael  
16 C. Pendergast appearing on behalf of Liberty Utilities.  
17 My business address is 423 South Main Street, St.  
18 Charles, Missouri, 63301.

19 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And for the Staff.

20 MS. ASLIN: Casi Aslin, counsel for Staff of  
21 the Public Service Commission. My information has been  
22 provided to the court reporter.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. For the Office  
24 of Public Counsel.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Judge.

1 Commissioner. My name is Hampton Williams. I'm here  
2 on behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel. I have  
3 provided my information to the court reporter. Thank  
4 you.

5 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And is there anyone here  
6 for the intervening parties? I don't see anybody else.  
7 So we'll call the first witness, which is Chuck Grant.

8 MR. GRANT: I'm Chuck Grant --

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: I need to swear you in  
10 first.

11 MR. GRANT: Okay.

12 (At this time Chuck Grant was sworn in  
13 by the regulatory law judge.)

14 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. What you would  
15 you like to tell us.

16 MR. GRANT: I'm Chuck Grant from Sikeston.  
17 I've been here a long time as you can tell by looking  
18 at me. I'm retired, and I'm on a fixed income. I see  
19 here the monthly delivery charge, and I have a real  
20 tough time believing that we're going to pay 63 percent  
21 more than what we're paying now; is that correct? Is  
22 that correct?

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: We can't answer your  
24 questions at this point.

25 MR. GRANT: Okay. You can't answer that.

1 Nobody can.

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Well, you can talk to them  
3 informally afterward. Okay?

4 MR. PENDERGAST: I can answer your question  
5 afterwards, sir.

6 MR. GRANT: Okay. I'll ask you. Anyway, 63  
7 percent going up from the current rate to the proposed  
8 rate seemed like a heck of a lot to me. I'm just a  
9 country boy, but I can tell you one thing. I know  
10 percentages is kind of tough, and that's a tough one  
11 when you're on a fixed income some of these folks down  
12 here that can't make their bill anyway. I hate to see  
13 this pass. Thank you for your time. You all got more  
14 here than we got.

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Grant.

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Any questions? Any of the  
17 parties have any questions for Mr. Grant? Okay.

18 Next name on the list is Rhonda Council.  
19 Good afternoon.

20 MS. COUNCIL: Hello.

21 (At this time Rhonda Council was sworn  
22 in by the regulatory law judge.)

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. What would you  
24 like to say.

25 MS. COUNCIL: My name is Rhonda Council.

1 I'm from Sikeston, and I speak on behalf of myself and  
2 my grandmother, who is not here. She is on a fixed  
3 income. There's no way she can afford a \$14 increase  
4 in her bill. Even if it was \$10, she can't do it. Me  
5 personally I couldn't do it either. So I'm asking you  
6 all to take that into consideration when you do your  
7 review think about the people that cannot pay their  
8 bills now, you know. There's no way you can do it.

9 I know my mom's here. She's going to come  
10 up here and speak as well, but \$14 -- I know you said  
11 it may not be \$14. They can't tell us the exact amount  
12 what it would be, but the elderly people cannot afford  
13 this increase. So personally I oppose it. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. Next name on  
16 the list is Mike McGraw. Good afternoon.

17 (At this time Mike McGraw was sworn  
18 in by the regulatory law judge.)

19 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you very much.

20 MR. MCGRAW: My name is Mike McGraw, and I  
21 am the mayor of Caruthersville, and I'm also  
22 representing the City of Steele and the City of Hayti.  
23 The City of Hayti, unfortunately, is the poorest town  
24 in the State of Missouri, and Caruthersville is number  
25 three. I do not know where Steele ranks. The people



1 in our cities cannot afford such a rate increase, and I  
2 don't understand personally how if you buy something  
3 that's already fixed why do you have to raise it. I  
4 sold insurance for 30 years, and different companies  
5 have different rates. When you take those companies  
6 on, then that's the rate they have. This -- to me,  
7 this is exactly the same thing.

8 At least the tax rate is going to go down.  
9 So the utility company is going to be much better off  
10 from going from a 35 percent to a 21 percent tax  
11 increase, which I -- or tax decrease, which I think  
12 that's about 50 percent decrease in my head.

13 I did go through and look at the -- at our  
14 average income of our households, and it's exceedingly  
15 low compared to the rest of the state. And Pemiscot  
16 County of the counties that are represented in the  
17 southeast district is by far the lowest of the low. So  
18 that's all -- I guess that's all I have to say, but I'm  
19 definitely against the rate increase.

20 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Do you have any questions?

21 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: No. Thank you,  
22 Mayor.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir. All right.  
24 The next name on the list is Jessica Britton.

25 (At this time Jessica Britton was sworn

1 in by the regulatory law judge.)

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. What would you  
3 like to tell us.

4 MS. BRITTON: My name is Jessica. I live  
5 here in Sikeston. I just want to say that I oppose the  
6 rate increase. The rates currently are hard to pay,  
7 and I believe that with the increase it will make it  
8 more difficult for low income houses. Thank you.

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you.

11 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Next name on the list is  
12 Steve Burch, and Burch is spelled with a U?

13 MR. BURCH: B-U-R-C-H. Sorry. I didn't  
14 write very well.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: You did it clearly. I just  
16 wanted to make the court reporter understood.

17 (At this time Steve Burch was sworn  
18 in by the regulatory law judge.)

19 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. What would you  
20 like to tell us.

21 MR. BURCH: As mayor of Sikeston, as a  
22 lifelong resident of 54 years, and a businessman of  
23 sizable business operation here in Sikeston and I know  
24 people all over the Bootheel, and I echo their concerns  
25 about how hard it is to make a living in southeast

1 Missouri. I actually wished I had spent a little more  
2 time on the front end figuring how to look at the  
3 financials of Liberty. Let me say this. I don't think  
4 any of us have any problem with the local service and  
5 the delivery of the product. I think they do a great  
6 job. This concept of socialization of rates just  
7 doesn't carry any weight with any of us that have been  
8 around here and go back to the Atmos and Associated  
9 days and back for a number of years.

10 Typically, what we see in this part of the  
11 country is that the Bootheel's cost of delivery for  
12 most businesses is cheaper. Our cost of living is  
13 cheaper, and, for example, when in my own company  
14 whether it's the Bootheel or whether we're in northeast  
15 Arkansas or northwest Tennessee where we operate, the  
16 products we sell we can typically sell those products  
17 considerably less than companies selling the exact same  
18 products in St. Louis or Chicago or other parts of the  
19 country. And when you get down to it, it's always  
20 because, you know, the labor rates down here are  
21 usually a little less expensive. The cost of  
22 somebody's home is a little less, and just we're more  
23 efficient. We have a stronger work ethic.

24 So typically when somebody coming around and  
25 starts talking about socialization of rates, we end up

1 being the losers, and we're adamantly opposed to that.  
2 It impacts everybody in Sikeston and throughout the  
3 Bootheel. The -- and I'm sure there's a way that  
4 this -- if I read this right -- and I don't understand  
5 how the Public Service Commission and this process  
6 works, but when they talk about spending capital  
7 dollars for automatic meters, again I stated -- I had  
8 some questions earlier about that from a philosophical  
9 perspective, because if they're making that capital  
10 investment that should be based on their ability to  
11 recover that through efficiency and cost savings  
12 long-term. An investment like that should not have an  
13 impact on the rate payers because they're doing that  
14 long-term so they can offset costs and be more  
15 efficient.

16           When -- when we think -- when those of us  
17 who are paying the rates think about the capital that  
18 has to be put in an organization that you might offset,  
19 they refer to one up in the northeast about replacing  
20 cast iron pipe. Well, that makes sense, but to factor  
21 in technology that they will use to save costs  
22 long-term for the rate payers to have to pay that as  
23 part of the recovery, it just does not make sense. And  
24 we just don't accept that at all. Thank you very much.

25           JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.

1 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you, Mayor.

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Next name on the list is  
3 Ron Herber. Good afternoon.

4 MR. HERBER: Hi.

5 (At this time Ron Herber was sworn  
6 in by the regulatory law judge.)

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you very much. What  
8 would you like to tell us.

9 MR. HERBER: Let me get my eyeballs on  
10 first. I'm a commissioner from Dunklin County. We are  
11 one of the top three poorest counties along with  
12 Pemiscot County in the State of Missouri. Almost 100  
13 percent of our schools are considered at risk because  
14 of our income levels, and due to the recent increase  
15 for the PGA for Liberty back on December 1st, almost  
16 every one of our customers -- their customers have seen  
17 a 30 percent increase in their utility bills.

18 I have a few here that I've taken for an  
19 example, and just about every one of them that I  
20 calculated if I took a 26 cent increase that they had  
21 of our existing 29, it roughly averages 30 percent  
22 increase across the table. So customers who were used  
23 to paying \$70 a month are now paying 105 or whatever,  
24 and this additional burden putting on them with this  
25 increase that we're discussing today is too high for

1 them to bear.

2           Again, I know this is related to the cost  
3 increase in December, but from a standpoint that I'm  
4 looking at, I've looked at the historical rates of  
5 natural gas over the years. And today's rate is the  
6 same as what it was 30 years ago. They've had spikes  
7 because of different events, but it's remained pretty  
8 much stable. And so from our standpoint, we're paying  
9 30 percent more for a product that they're paying the  
10 exact same thing they were for 30 years ago if that was  
11 strictly for just the cost of gas.

12           Now they come along, and they're asking for  
13 us another increase to deliver it to us. And as the  
14 mayor from Sikeston said, I'm a businessman. I do  
15 accounting. If I decide I want to buy a \$10,000  
16 printer because it will print returns faster, copy  
17 them, staple them, bind them, whatever, I can't pass  
18 that along to my customers, or they -- I'd lose them  
19 all. I'm afraid that Liberty is going to start seeing  
20 that their customers are unable to pay their bills  
21 because of these increases that they're wanting.

22           I guess our standpoint is that, you know, is  
23 this -- is it strictly for the automatic meter readings  
24 that they're doing, and if so, why are we paying for  
25 that business decision. Or is this part of

1 administrative salaries that are inflated on the  
2 executive level that we're having to bare the burden on  
3 that, and I know it's the parent company of Liberty.  
4 But the parent company had an 80 percent increase in  
5 revenue last year. Had 85 percent of earnings before  
6 income taxes and depreciation. They got a \$20.4  
7 million increase on the increases that they got last  
8 year, and they're looking at 44.9 million for this  
9 year. I don't understand why they need this money from  
10 people who can't afford it, and they're lucky to pay  
11 their bills as it is.

12           And so that -- if the increase has to be  
13 made, I would ask that it be done in increments instead  
14 of all at once like it was done in December. A lot of  
15 people were hurt financially pretty good with the cold  
16 winter that we had and then this 30 percent increase on  
17 top of it. So if there was some way to put it in  
18 increments to have it implemented over a period of  
19 time, that would be great, too. That's all I've got.

20           JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.

21           COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you,  
22 Commissioner.

23           JUDGE WOODRUFF: Next name on the list is  
24 the Reverend Charl D. Smith. Good afternoon.

25           MS. SMITH: Good afternoon.

1 (At this time Sharl Smith was sworn  
2 in by the regulatory law judge.)

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

4 MS. SMITH: I would just like to say on  
5 behalf of the senior citizens, which I am, and other  
6 people that would be unable to pay the bill you're  
7 looking at people that will be cold. They won't have  
8 any heat. They would do without because they don't  
9 have the money to pay the bill. I don't see that.  
10 That is not justified. Thank you.

11 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, ma'am.

12 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Excuse me, Reverend  
13 Smith.

14 MS. SMITH: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Can you tell me what  
16 area you live in and --

17 MS. SMITH: I live in Sunset.

18 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay.

19 MS. SMITH: I live in Sunset.

20 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay. Thank you very  
21 much for your testimony.

22 MS. SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: All right. The next name  
24 on the list is Leechia Wilder. For the benefit of the  
25 court reporter, would you spell your first name.



1 MS. WILDER: L-E-E-C-H-I-A. I'm very  
2 impressed that you got it the first time.

3 (At this time Leechia Wilder was sworn  
4 in by the regulatory law judge.)

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

6 MS. WILDER: My name is Leechia Wilder.  
7 I've lived in Sikeston for the past five years now, and  
8 I've recently moved to a home that has gas heat. I  
9 recognize that it's more efficient, but I have to tell  
10 you this winter it stayed way down. And I used  
11 electric to compensate because I knew that I was not  
12 going to be able to afford those rates as they were.

13 I have a job. I am amongst the working  
14 poor. I'm not ashamed of it, but I know that if this  
15 rate goes up even though they say it's going to be less  
16 it's still going to be more. And I know that I  
17 personally will not be able to afford it. Thank you.

18 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you,  
20 Ms. Wilder.

21 JUDGE WOODRUFF: John Graham. Good  
22 afternoon.

23 MR. GRAHAM: Good afternoon.

24 (At this time John Graham was sworn  
25 in by the regulatory law judge.)

1 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. What would you  
2 like to tell us.

3 MR. GRAHAM: My name's John Graham, and I'm  
4 running for mayor for Sikeston. And I've been knocking  
5 on a lot of doors talking to people, and the majority  
6 of the people that I've knocked on their door their  
7 number one complaint's utility costs. And I know from  
8 me being a businessman my utility cost has virtually  
9 doubled. I own a restaurant. I use a large amount of  
10 fuel, and the discrepancies that some of the people are  
11 complaining about in their bills is the fact that  
12 there's so many charges on there. It's very difficult  
13 for those people to understand to begin with but also  
14 understand profit margin and being able to make a  
15 profit as a company.

16 But what I don't understand is when you had  
17 a rate increase you've purchased a company. Then you  
18 have a rate increase, and then you're wanting another  
19 rate increase. My concern is looking at profit margin,  
20 and that's what I understood them to say to keep the  
21 margin up to where they need to have it for their  
22 stockholders and their investors at the backs of people  
23 that literally cannot afford it.

24 I was at a house. The gentleman said he  
25 can't afford to run heat. It was freezing cold in

1 there, and it wasn't that cold a temperature. But  
2 rather than take his money that he uses for food to pay  
3 his gas bill he chose to have something to eat, and I  
4 think changing the rate at this point would serve  
5 extreme detriments to so many people that the Public  
6 Service Commission should look seriously at just  
7 tabling this or stopping it until we all get over --  
8 like I said, my fuel costs has doubled at my  
9 restaurant, and it's -- and turn around and our  
10 electricity in Sikeston has done virtually the same  
11 kind of thing.

12 So you have a very large number in this town  
13 that cannot afford what they currently have. I think  
14 the stockholders should take the back burner to  
15 somebody deciding on food or medication versus paying a  
16 gas bill for somebody to have extra money for their  
17 profit margin. I saw how they put on the smart meter  
18 attachment onto the meters. Basic electronic device  
19 that pop the face off, stick on it, stick it in, and  
20 it's about what it takes to do it. I saw the young man  
21 do it to my restaurant, and that is a cost of doing  
22 business. It's like me buying a spatula. It's a cost  
23 of me doing business. If we break one, we have a  
24 problem with it, or have someone that I don't need to  
25 be flipping something, basically what you need to have

1 is to look at your business plan and say, you know,  
2 we're going to keep our margin here because this rate  
3 increase is going to destroy a lot of people's lives in  
4 southeast Missouri.

5 And Service Commission should seriously look  
6 at margins -- quite honestly, if they bought something,  
7 they should've known that in advance. If I'm buying  
8 stocks or I'm buying anything, I'm going to look at the  
9 long-term cost or am I going to make a profit at that.  
10 Rather than come back to you all at the backs of the  
11 burdens of the rest of the people and say, hey, I need  
12 more money because I need more for my back pocket never  
13 mind you got to decide between food and medication and  
14 your own way of doing life.

15 You know, a lot of these people that are  
16 raising these -- are considering raising these rates  
17 don't have to live like most of the people in this area  
18 do, and quite frankly, it's sad when you knock on a  
19 door and somebody comes to the door and they got a  
20 couple of jackets on trying to stay warm in their own  
21 home because they can't afford the rate at it is today.  
22 And I know from everyone that I talk with from the  
23 electricity and then this gas on top of that we're all  
24 just paying entirely too much, and there's got to be a  
25 medium in between that we can do something about. And

1 I think the stockholders of this company should've  
2 thought in advance before they started coming back to  
3 you all wanting more money. I don't think it needs to  
4 pass, and I would ask you to vote against increasing  
5 the money. Thank you.

6 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.

7 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you.

8 JUDGE WOODRUFF: All right. The last name  
9 on the list is Lorenzo M. Ware, Senior. Good  
10 afternoon.

11 MR. WARE: Good afternoon.

12 (At this time Lorenzo Ware was sworn  
13 in by the regulatory law judge.)

14 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you very much.

15 MR. WARE: And I will not be long. I just  
16 want to approach this from a common sense aspect. You  
17 know, the best way to eat an elephant is one piece at a  
18 time, and incrementalization [sic] it's the way we need  
19 to approach this thing. I know they need to make  
20 money, and we need to stay warm. We just need to look  
21 at this thing incrementally. You can't force it down  
22 people's throats. So that's all I have to say.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: What do you mean by  
24 incrementally?

25 MR. WARE: Incrementally if they want to get

1 \$14 they need to incrementally get that money from us.  
2 Not all at one time because none of us in here are rich  
3 that I really know of. So that's my meaning of eating  
4 an elephant one piece at a time.

5 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you, sir.

7 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Mr. Ware was the last name  
8 on the list. Is there anyone else here who would like  
9 to testify at this point? Yes, sir. Come on up.

10 MR. LANCASTER: Do I need to approach you,  
11 sir.

12 JUDGE WOODRUFF: No. Come on up there, and  
13 if you'd tell us your name.

14 MR. LANCASTER: My name is Jay Lancaster.  
15 I'm from Sikeston, Missouri.

16 (At this time Jay Lancaster was sworn  
17 in by the regulatory law judge.)

18 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you very much. Let  
19 me start you over here.

20 MR. LANCASTER: That's probably enough time  
21 for me, sir.

22 JUDGE WOODRUFF: What did you want to tell  
23 us.

24 MR. LANCASTER: One thing I wanted to just  
25 approach the socialization aspect. I, like Lorenzo,

1 understand that people need to make money, and  
2 increases are natural. I -- one thing that I've become  
3 more aware of through my dealings here is that there  
4 are areas of the country that have socioeconomic  
5 indicators that other parts of the country do not, and  
6 the federal government has set up two agencies that  
7 deal with the areas that have some of the poorest  
8 people. One is the Appalachian Regional Council. The  
9 second is the Delta Regional Authority.

10 The Delta Regional Authority was the  
11 established to cover the Mississippi River Delta  
12 communities from southeast Missouri and southern  
13 Illinois down to New Orleans because of the -- because  
14 of the demographics and income and socioeconomic impact  
15 of areas of the communities that live along the Delta.  
16 Southeast Missouri is part of that area. So comparing  
17 them apples to apples with north and west Missouri I  
18 just don't think is a good comparison.

19 I would also give the counsel maybe reaching  
20 out to the Delta Regional Authority might have access  
21 to federal funding for infrastructure needs in a low  
22 income area. That's all.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Are you with the Delta  
24 Regional Authority?

25 MR. LANCASTER: I am not. I am with the

1 City of Sikeston. Any other questions?

2 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you.

3 MR. LANCASTER: Thank you, Commissioner.

4 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. Anyone else  
5 here wishing to testify? I have one other matter to  
6 take care of. A letter was handed to me before the  
7 hearing from a Darlene Margrabe, who was not able to be  
8 here today, but she sent us a written letter. And I  
9 will go ahead and mark that as an exhibit. It'll be  
10 made part of the record as well. We'll mark it as  
11 Exhibit 1. All right. Last chance for anyone any  
12 other comments. Mr. Pendergast.

13 MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah, Your Honor. I just  
14 wanted to take this opportunity to let folks know that  
15 if you do know somebody that is struggling to pay their  
16 utility bills there may still be some significant  
17 funding available from the federal light heat program  
18 in the way of ECIP funds, and please talk to Josh here  
19 because he can go ahead and put you in touch with  
20 people with the relevant social service agency and see  
21 if there's some funding available to help somebody that  
22 may be in need. So please take advantage of that if  
23 you know somebody.

24 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Excuse me.



1 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Yes, Commissioner.

2 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Can you come to the  
3 microphone, please.

4 MR. PENDERGAST: Pardon me?

5 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Can you come to the  
6 microphone, please.

7 MR. PENDERGAST: Sure.

8 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: How you doing today?

9 MR. PENDERGAST: I'm doing fine. Thank you,  
10 Commissioner.

11 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: So are you suggesting  
12 that there's some money left, or you know where there  
13 is some? Because I've been this these types of  
14 hearings with you before, and I've never seen you  
15 suggest that there might be some options available.

16 MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah. Well, I'm on the  
17 Community Action Agency of St. Louis County. I think  
18 you know the folks over there.

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay. Sure.

20 MR. PENDERGAST: And I know as of the last  
21 week or so they still had approximately \$1 million  
22 worth of ECIP funds available for distribution.

23 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay.

24 MR. PENDERGAST: And I know they're working  
25 to try and get that out to the people who need it. I

1 think Josh has a sense that there's probably some  
2 funding from the social service agencies community  
3 action agencies down here. So we'll certainly run it  
4 to ground, and if there's something available, make  
5 sure that they get hooked up with the people that need  
6 it.

7 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: That's good news.  
8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. PENDERGAST: You bet.

10 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And just for the record,  
11 that's Michael Pendergast. He is the attorney for the  
12 company.

13 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: And please make sure  
14 you make that same announcement in Jackson tonight.

15 MR. PENDERGAST: Absolutely we will.

16 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you very much.

17 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you, Commissioner.

18 JUDGE WOODRUFF: I see some hands back  
19 there.

20 MR. GRAHAM: I just have one.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Come on up to the microphone  
22 so we can hear you. You're Mr. Graham.

23 MR. GRAHAM: Yes. I'm John Graham. The  
24 information I just heard was something that I wasn't  
25 aware of either, and it would be very good for the

1 company to put that in the newspaper or put it out  
2 where people can actually know that it's available for  
3 help. There's a lot of people that are really proud.  
4 They wouldn't seek that, but if they had the  
5 opportunity and they knew it was available, maybe  
6 they'd take advantage of it because there's a lot of  
7 people that just can't afford what they're having to  
8 pay. Thank you.

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Mr. Grant, you had your  
10 hand up also. Go ahead.

11 MR. GRANT: I was just going to say I hope  
12 people can take average of that program, but in the  
13 long run, it costs the taxpayer. I mean, I appreciate  
14 your telling people about it, but in the long run, it  
15 takes money out of our pockets that pay taxes.

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: All right. Well, with that  
17 then that concludes the local public hearing, and we  
18 are adjourned. Thank you all.

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you for coming.

20 (WHEREIN, the hearing was concluded at  
21 1:07 p.m.)

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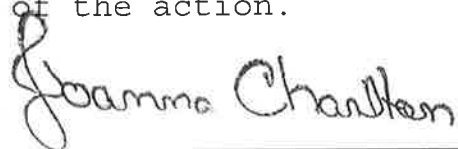
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, JOANNA CHARLTON, RPR, CCR(MO), CSR(IL),  
the officer before whom the foregoing public hearing  
was taken, do hereby certify that the witnesses whose  
testimony appears in the foregoing public hearing was  
duly sworn; that the testimony of said witnesses was  
taken by me to the best of my ability and thereafter  
reduced to typewriting under my direction; that I am  
neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of  
the parties to the action in which this public hearing  
was taken, and further that I am not a relative or  
employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the  
parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise  
interested in the outcome of the action.



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JOANNA CHARLTON,  
RPR, CCR(MO), CSR(IL)

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