

1 In the Matter of Laclede Gas)
Company's Tariff to Revise)GR-2007-0208, et al.
2 Natural Gas Rate Schedules)

3
4 May 30, 2007

5 Volume 6

6 NANCY DIPPELL, Presiding
DEPUTY CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

7
8 LINWARD "LIN" APPLING,
COMMISSIONER

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'd like to welcome
4 each of you here this evening. It's Wednesday,
5 May 30th, 2007, and we're here this evening for a
6 public comment hearing in Case No. GR-2007-0208 in
7 which Laclede Gas Company seeks to implement a
8 general rate increase for its natural gas service
9 in Missouri.

10 My name is Nancy Dippell, and I'm a
11 Regulatory Law Judge assigned to this case and
12 will preside over the hearing this evening. With
13 me tonight is Commissioner Lin Appling.

14 The Commission regulates the rates
15 charged by investor-owned utility companies in
16 Missouri to ensure that those rates are just and
17 reasonable. The Commission also regulates the
18 quality of service and safety of operations of
19 investor-owned utilities.

20 The Commission itself is made up of
21 five commissioners who are appointed by the
22 Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The
23 commissioners employ a professional staff of
24 engineers, accountants, attorneys and financial
25 analysts and other specialists to help them in the

1 field of utility regulation.

2 This is an official hearing of the
3 Missouri Public Service Commission and the
4 statements and testimony of witnesses will be
5 recorded by a court reporter and must be given
6 under oath or affirmation. All of the
7 Commissioners will have an opportunity then to
8 read the witnesses' remarks.

9 We have several staff members who
10 are here tonight, and I think you were able to
11 meet those earlier. Mr. Ochoa back in the back
12 there. Mr. Wood here by -- in the middle. Gay
13 Fred, who's back in the back.

14 MR. OLIGSCHLAEGER: Mark
15 Oligschlaeger.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mark Oligschlaeger.
17 Sorry about that, Mark. Who are all with our
18 staff and can answer questions afterward if you
19 have any.

20 We also have with us from the office
21 of the Public Counsel Marc Poston. He's an
22 attorney there and the Public Counsel represents
23 the general public before the Commission. Also
24 from Laclede Gas Company is Mr. Pendergast here in
25 the front, and I saw Mr. Zucker somewhere

1 wondering around also.

2 Do you have some customer service
3 people you want to introduce?

4 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes. Thank you,
5 Your Honor. For some of you who may have come in
6 after 5:30, we have Barry Cooper here, who is our
7 Chief Financial Officer. Chris Baker, who is our
8 Director of Customer Service. Mr. White's with
9 him. We have Eddy Sutton, who is Vice President
10 for Information Services. Rob Arrow (phonetic),
11 who is with Corporate Communications in the back.
12 Thank you.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. The
14 purpose of this hearing is to receive comments
15 from the general public regarding the rate
16 increase. The company will not present witnesses
17 and will not answers questions while we're on the
18 record. The Commissioners and I are also not
19 going to answer questions on the record, but we
20 want to listen to your comments. Like I said,
21 those comments will become part of the official
22 record in this case.

23 If you wish to testify and you
24 haven't already done so, we ask you if you'd sign
25 up on the sign-in sheet. I'll call the name of

1 each witness who has signed up to speak. After
2 everyone who has signed up has been called, I'll
3 ask if there's anyone else who would like to
4 speak.

5 The Commission has had several
6 public hearings in this case in the St. Louis area
7 and elsewhere. And we may be having -- most
8 likely will be having one more in the St. Charles
9 area.

10 When your name is called if you are
11 able if you could please come forward and stand
12 here at the podium. If you're not able to do so
13 and can speak up, I can let you talk from your
14 seat. Just let me know if you need assistance.
15 There may be some questions from the attorneys or
16 from the Commissioner or myself when you're
17 finished so I'll ask if you stay at the podium
18 until you've been excused.

19 I think that's pretty much it. I'm
20 going to begin by asking the attorneys to make
21 entries of appearance. Mr. Pendergast.

22 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes, Your Honor.
23 Michael C. Pendergast and Rick Zucker appearing on
24 behalf of Laclede Gas Company. Our business
25 address is 720 Olive Street, St. Louis, Missouri

1 63101.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Do we have staff
3 counsel here this evening? Mr. Poston.

4 MR. POSTON: Marc Poston appearing
5 on behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel,
6 P.O. Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Do we have counsel
8 for any of the interveners here this evening?

9 All right. Commissioner Appling,
10 did you have any opening remarks?

11 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Not really
12 any remarks, but I just wanted to say thank you
13 for coming out tonight. Tonight is your night to
14 say to us what it is you'd like to say and your
15 comments are important to us. Thank you for
16 showing up and I appreciate it. Hopefully you'll
17 be able to tell us what it is you'd like to tell
18 us. Thanks again.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right then.
20 I'll go ahead and call the first name I have on my
21 list, which is Dean Ritchey. Would you come --
22 would you mind coming down and standing at the
23 podium.

24 I call the names on the sign-up
25 sheet. If you decided you didn't want to comment,

1 just tell me so.

2 Would you please raise your right
3 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
4 testimony you're about to give at this hearing
5 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
6 but the truth?

7 (Mr. Ritchey nods his head).

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Can you spell your
9 name for the court reporter.

10 MR. RITCHEY: R-I-T-C-H-E-Y.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead
12 and give us your comments.

13 MR. RITCHEY: Now, if all of these
14 unnecessary government regulations could be
15 eliminated, then they could produce more natural
16 gas. More natural gas could be drawn out of
17 natural gas wells if only all of these unnecessary
18 government regulations could be removed.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Is that all of your
20 comments? Commissioner Appling, do you have any
21 questions for Mr. Ritchey?

22 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I don't think
23 so, but thank you for coming out.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Are there any
25 questions from the attorneys?

1 MR. PENDERGAST: No.

2 MR. POSTON: No.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir.

4 Gene Kittrick.

5 MR. KITTRICK: My questions were
6 answered in the question and answer period. Thank
7 you.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Edward
9 -- is it Snyder or Sider?

10 MR. SNYDER: Snyder.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you raise your
12 right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
13 the testimony you're about to give at this hearing
14 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
15 but the truth?

16 MR. SNYDER: I do.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. If you
18 could spell your name for the court reporter,
19 please.

20 MR. SNYDER: Sorry, I printed it
21 badly. S-N-Y-D-E-R, Edward S. and Fay.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead with your
23 comments.

24 MR. SNYDER: I have some things to
25 say that are somewhat pertinent and some that are

1 not pertinent to this situation at hand, but I'll
2 be very brief.

3 Last fall we had a request for
4 increase from Union Electric. And shortly
5 thereafter -- this is somewhat irrelevant, but not
6 truly -- shortly thereafter we had notification
7 from the county about the increases in our
8 property values. Incidentally, two years ago our
9 property value was increased by \$36,000 two years
10 ago and this year it's increased by \$37,000.
11 They're saying my property now in a period of two
12 years or a little more has increased by seventy
13 some odd thousand dollars.

14 Right on the heels of that we had
15 what rather now comes Laclede Gas looking for an
16 increase, and before I got that put in the file,
17 Missouri American Water Company notified that
18 they're looking for an increase.

19 I feel like a mismatched prize
20 fighter just covering up. This is getting really
21 troublesome. I hope that these individual people,
22 organizations, are taking into account that
23 they're not the only one asking for an increase
24 from the same constituency. It's getting pretty
25 hard to bear really.

1 I can't say anything about the cost
2 because I don't know anything about the cost, but
3 I was glad to see or happy to see that the
4 Commission has been apprised or has access to
5 audit the company. I'm further glad to see that
6 they aren't out of hand going to accept the
7 request for the full amount. They are proposing a
8 lesser amount by about 40 percent or 60 percent
9 less, which can be helpful. I hope that that's
10 what prevails. That's all I have to say.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.
12 Commissioner Appling, did you have any questions
13 for Mr. Snyder?

14 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Sir, thank
15 you very much. I hear exactly what you're saying
16 and we'll pay attention to your comments.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Were there any
18 questions from the attorneys?

19 MR. PENDERGAST: No thank you.

20 MR. POSTON: No.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you,
22 Mr. Snyder. Fay Snyder.

23 MRS. SNYDER: I have nothing to say.
24 He said it all.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. Fred

1 Miller, Junior. Welcome back, Mr. Miller.

2 MR. MILLER: Greetings.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you like to be
4 sworn in this evening or are you going to refuse
5 me again?

6 MR. MILLER: I will accept.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Do you solemnly
8 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to
9 give at this hearing will be the truth, the whole
10 truth, and nothing but the truth?

11 MR. MILLER: Yes, Your Honor, I do.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead
13 with your -- oh, spell your last name and then go
14 ahead with your comments.

15 MR. MILLER: Last name is Miller.
16 It's M-I-L-L-E-R. Basically I'm going to I guess
17 reiterate some statements that I made at one of
18 your earlier meetings.

19 Our main concern is the monies that
20 are being asked for. We know that there was
21 monies that were asked for in the disaster of
22 Katrina. We know that those funds was
23 misappropriated. Now, this document here, it is
24 very limited in what it says. There are no
25 guarantees on how these funds will really be used.

1 I have my doubts between what can
2 happen now and what can happen if Laclede Gas is
3 allowed to have this rate increase. This amount
4 of money is not just for one year. It is for if I
5 might use the term a lifetime or until Laclede Gas
6 CEOs wish to make another request to increase
7 their monthly rates.

8 We know that the political arena
9 plays a great deal in what happens in any city,
10 and we know that there are goings on in the
11 political arena that are not in the best interest
12 of the people.

13 I am not here to judge. But I do
14 know a right and I know a wrong when I see it.
15 Until we have some assurances that this statement
16 is going to be met and how these funds are going
17 to be applied and used, I have to say that I
18 really wish that there was more on this to give me
19 and those I represent more satisfaction.
20 There's no guarantees, none, that these words will
21 be met.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: You're holding up a
23 postcard. Can you tell me what that is. I just
24 want to have it clear.

25 MR. MILLER: This is the notice that

1 Laclede Gas sent out stating that they wish to
2 increase the gas rates by \$6.50 per month.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

4 Commissioner Appling, did you have anything?

5 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I don't have
6 any comments, but Mr. Miller, thank you for coming
7 out tonight. Good to see you again.

8 MR. MILLER: Yes, sir. Thank you.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Any questions from
10 the attorneys?

11 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions.

12 MR. POSTON: No.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Mr.
14 Miller.

15 MR. MILLER: I would like to say I'm
16 disappointed in the audience. I wish there would
17 have been more, much more. We're becoming
18 passive, very passive and passivity was how Hitler
19 got to where he was.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Next witness is
21 Aubrey Warren.

22 MR. WARREN: I'd like to say I was
23 here earlier and my question has already been
24 answered

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir.

1 Keith Walleman.

2 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
3 the testimony you're about to give at this hearing
4 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
5 but the truth?

6 MR. WALLEMAN: I do.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. If you
8 could spell your name for the court reporter and
9 then give us your comments.

10 MR. WALLEMAN: W-A-L-L-E-M-A-N. I
11 wanted to take this time. I own a house in the
12 City of St. Louis, I own two houses actually. My
13 son and myself lived in the one house. I got
14 married and I moved in with my wife just six
15 blocks away. My problem is I turned all my gas
16 off except for the furnace. I set it down to 45
17 degrees, pilot light on the hot water heater, no
18 stove, no nothing working but the furnace.

19 I kept receiving these high gas
20 bills on my house. I'm sorry, my son moved out of
21 my house and I put it up for sale. It's
22 completely empty. I kept receiving these high gas
23 bills. I would call every month and tell us, call
24 customer service. They were very rude. They were
25 not friendly. I would ask for a supervisor. They

1 were worse.

2 They would send somebody out and
3 they would check it, everything is fine. First
4 they'd tell me at customer service, well, somebody
5 lived there last year or the gas bill last year
6 compared to this bill, your bill now is fine. I
7 tried to explain to them, nobody lives in there,
8 it's not fine. I told them exactly what I did and
9 they'd ask me all the questions, do you have
10 thermal windows, do you have this, do you have
11 that, insulation, yes, it's completely redone.
12 They'd send somebody out. They'd say, oh,
13 everything is fine.

14 So the next month, next bill would
15 come, it was even higher. Compared to the house I
16 was living in, which we take a -- each of us, my
17 wife and I, take a shower every day. We have the
18 stove, we work that, we get our thermostat up
19 there because it's winter time. I'm talking from
20 October on of last year on to this year.

21 They'd say, well, I'm sorry but, you
22 know, everything seems fine compared to last year.
23 I tried to explain, no, last year somebody was
24 living there, this year nobody is. I've got
25 everything shut off. Everything is fine they'd

1 always tell me every month until it was the March
2 bill. I got a bill, let's see, my January to
3 February bill from January 19th to February 20th
4 was \$245.51. The house I live in was \$189.82.

5 Now, the very next month, my bill
6 goes down to \$38. The house I live in went down
7 to \$100. I call them up. The lady on the
8 telephone, oh yeah, something must be wrong
9 because they're not making the money. Now all of
10 a sudden something is wrong with my meter. I
11 said, well, I've been saying this all along that
12 something is wrong with my meter. I'd been asking
13 them to change my meter and the AMR deal. They
14 kept saying, no, we can't do that. Why not,
15 something is definitely wrong for these bills to
16 be this high. And they would never do it until I
17 got where my bill went down so drastically over
18 \$200, then they said something was wrong with it.

19 They said, oh, we're going to change
20 your meter and your AMR. I said, okay, so that's
21 another problem I have. Laclede Gas with their
22 mismanagement they tell me, well, you've got it do
23 it between 8:00 and 12:00 or 12:00 and 4:00. I
24 said, okay, I am working 3:00 to 11:00 that day, I
25 need it in the morning. I have to be out of there

1 by 12:00 because I have to get ready for work.

2 Well, I get a call -- I sit all
3 morning waiting for them, all morning. At 11:35,
4 11:40 right in there the guy calls me and says I'm
5 ready to come over. I'm going, you can't change
6 the meter out and the AMR and everything else in
7 that amount of time, I can't do it. I spent my
8 whole day waiting for them. That's the
9 mismanagement that Laclede Gas has. Until they
10 can manage their own company, I mean that's what's
11 costing us all sorts of money.

12 The customer service is terrible.
13 They are rude as can be. You talk to a
14 supervisor, they are even worse. The service is
15 terrible. I mean, you try to -- I mean, my time
16 is worth money also. Until they can manage their
17 company and make it where it's good for the people
18 they're supposed to service, I don't think they
19 deserve anything.

20 I can prove everything that I've
21 said. I've got a letter here and I'll read it.
22 Now, after the lady I called told me something was
23 definitely wrong and I needed to get my meter
24 changed. Here's what it was. I received this
25 letter -- it was sent out May 15th. It says, in

1 response to your inquiry regarding the amount of
2 your gas bill, we have reviewed the bill and
3 completed a premise inspection to verify the
4 accuracy. On March 3rd, our service technician
5 completed a premise inspection. Service
6 technicians checked the accuracy of our meter and
7 made a visible check of your gas appliances, which
8 I do not have any except for a furnace and it's a
9 brand new furnace by the way. I just had put it
10 in in I think it was September. Service
11 technician verified that the meter was registering
12 accurately and the meter reading was 8673. He
13 also noted your appliances appear to be operating
14 satisfactorily. Additionally, the aforementioned
15 meter reading indicates additional consumption
16 over what has already been billed. Based on the
17 most recent reading and results of this
18 inspection, your bill is correct.

19 Now, I have one lady telling me
20 something is definitely wrong, we need to get out
21 there and change it. Why did they wait till May
22 15th to send me this letter when this is from
23 March 3rd, and the lady on the phone tells me
24 something is definitely wrong and then they send
25 me this letter.

1 I have a lot of problems. Until
2 they can manage their company properly -- the
3 right hand does not know what the left hand is
4 doing. You get one thing from one person you talk
5 to, another thing from another person you talk to.
6 In fact, the technician even told me he don't know
7 -- the meter seemed to be working properly, but he
8 doesn't know why I wasn't using any therms at the
9 time because he read it, and he goes, you've only
10 used so many therms and I don't know why you
11 haven't used more compared to your past bills. He
12 said it just made him just at a loss for words.

13 At the end, I just think this is the
14 wrong time. Everybody's bills are getting raised
15 on everything. This is just completely out of
16 context. I think it's time that, you know, the
17 utility companies that get a net profit guarantee
18 give back to the community instead of taking from
19 the community.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir. I
21 just had a couple things I wanted to ask you. Is
22 your meter at the house that you have problems
23 with your billing on, is that an indoor meter or
24 outdoor?

25 MR. WALLEMAN: Indoor meter.

1 There's no way nobody can hook up to it and steal
2 from it.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: How long have you
4 had the AMR device on there?

5 MR. WALLEMAN: Well, it's been
6 replaced once or twice. It's been messing up.
7 And that's another thing I'd like to say. I don't
8 believe these AMRs are working properly. Laclede
9 Gas is trying to push this down everybody's throat
10 saying it's a benefit to us and I don't believe it
11 is. I believe the old meters were just as good.
12 Whether they had to come by and read them
13 manually, which was fine or if I sent in a card
14 every month. I think that's just as good. These
15 AMRs, I'm sorry, I do not trust. I've already had
16 I know two meters, if not three, that have not
17 worked properly in my house already.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: And were the bills
19 that you're questioning, were those estimated
20 bills or --

21 MR. WALLEMAN: These are actual
22 meter readings. Well, there was one -- well, it
23 was in my son's name, the bill, because he was
24 living with me. I allowed him or he was living
25 with me, he made the bills as far as gas and

1 electric and he just -- that was his payment for
2 living with me. He got a bill at one time and it
3 was last year for like \$50 in January, and then
4 the next bill was like \$350. It messed up and
5 they came and changed it. It's just -- I don't
6 believe these AMRs are working properly. I think
7 it's -- Laclede Gas has got all this money
8 involved in this situation, and they're not going
9 to back out of it because they have so much money
10 involved in it and they're not working properly.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

12 Commissioner Appling, did you have questions?

13 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Keith, what
14 part of the city do you house in and the one you
15 don't live in anymore?

16 MR. WALLEMAN: They're both in Beevo
17 (phonetic) area. My house I live in is six blocks
18 from the other house. I am -- the house I live
19 in, and I can show you the bills, that does not
20 have any thermal windows, does not have any
21 insulation, it's a brick house. The house I own
22 and it's up for sale, I've got thermal windows
23 throughout, I insulated it, it's all redone. My
24 bills are higher at that house than they are in
25 the house I live in and nobody lives there.

1 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I'm going to
2 ask you to speak to someone before you leave here
3 tonight.

4 MR. WALLEMAN: I've talked to
5 everybody with Laclede Gas on the phone, and
6 that's what I'm saying. Their customer service is
7 so rude and the supervisors are worse.

8 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I understand.
9 Thank you for coming out.

10 MR. WALLEMAN: Thank you, sir. I
11 appreciate it.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Were there any
13 questions from any of the attorneys?

14 MR. PENDERGAST: Just a couple, sir,
15 if I could. Mike Pendergast with Laclede. Can
16 you tell me how long your house has been
17 unoccupied and for sale?

18 MR. WALLEMAN: It's been occupied
19 since June of last year.

20 MR. PENDERGAST: So it's been on the
21 market for about nine, ten months?

22 MR. WALLEMAN: It was about
23 September of last year I put it up for sale.

24 MR. PENDERGAST: There's been nobody
25 living in it --

1 MR. WALLEMAN: No. Nobody
2 whatsoever since June of last year.

3 MR. PENDERGAST: If you could talk
4 to me or one of our customer service people here,
5 and I apologize if you've had an unsatisfactory
6 experience with our company --

7 MR. WALLEMAN: Very unsatisfactory
8 with your customer service.

9 MR. PENDERGAST: And I apologize for
10 that. If somebody hasn't been as courteous to you
11 as they should be. I think --

12 MR. WALLEMAN: I've probably had one
13 out of everybody I've talked to.

14 MR. PENDERGAST: We're going to try
15 and make it two. If we can go ahead and take some
16 information from you and see if we can go ahead
17 and help address your situation, we certainly want
18 to go ahead and do that. You can go ahead and
19 talk to Chris Baker right back there and we'll see
20 what we can go ahead and do for you. Thank you.

21 Your Honor, I also wanted denoted we
22 have Mark Darrell, our general counsel. When I
23 was introducing people before, I neglected to
24 mention him. Since he's my boss, I thought I'd
25 correct the oversight.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Poston, any
2 questions?

3 MR. POSTON: No. Thank you.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

5 MR. WALLEMAN: Thank you.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Andrea Topps.

7 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
8 the testimony you're about to give at this hearing
9 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
10 but the truth?

11 MS. TOPPS: I do.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. If you
13 could spell your name for the court reporter and
14 then give us your comment.

15 MS. TOPPS: T-O-P-P-S, Andrea,
16 A-N-D-R-E-A.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead.

18 MS. TOPPS: First of all, I'd like
19 to start by saying I am here representing my
20 parents. They're elderly. Back in December of
21 2005 they received a bill that totaled close to
22 \$2,000. There was an arrearage amount on the bill
23 that was over \$1,300 with no type of explanation
24 whatsoever. I called in to try to get an
25 explanation of what was going on, and to no avail

1 -- I have to piggyback on what the gentleman
2 before me said, customer service representatives
3 were rude. It took five days for a manager to
4 call me back, and she was in turn curt. She was
5 impatient and she offered no type of recourse and
6 provided no assistance whatsoever. Basically,
7 what I was asking for was something that anybody
8 would ask for in terms of receiving this huge
9 amount on a bill and Laclede Gas expecting them to
10 pay it. Well, after that, after getting no type
11 of satisfaction, I filed a complaint with the
12 Public Service Commission.

13 Back in December of 2004, my parents
14 had a bad gas leak at their home. It was on
15 Christmas Eve of 2004 and the house had to be
16 evacuated. The day after that, a house down the
17 street from them blew up from a gas leak. Well,
18 we were told that the meter wasn't working
19 properly and that was from January of 2004. I
20 didn't understand because if we had that gas leak,
21 I think things should have been tied together.
22 And I'm going to read the complaint that I filed
23 back in May of last year.

24 Basically it states a bill with a
25 prior balance of over \$1,300 was received. A bill

1 had not been received at the address since
2 September of 2005. No other correspondence had
3 ever been received stating where this amount
4 originated from. A request was made to have a
5 technician come to the address to read the meter.
6 We were advised after the technician came out that
7 the information would be available at the end of
8 the week in regards to the findings.

9 In January of 2006 another bill was
10 received and the amount was over \$2,000. We still
11 had no idea where the prior balance came from.
12 After calling Laclede Gas a couple of times to
13 obtain clarification, a call back was requested to
14 explain these charges. After five days, a
15 manager, I believe her name was Ms. Murray or
16 Mrs. Murray, called back, and she could not
17 explain in laymen's terms why or where these
18 charges came from.

19 Now, fortunately I deal with tariffs
20 so I know about the tariffs, but I'm a resource
21 that most people don't have because they don't
22 know what the tariffs read or what these utility
23 companies can and can't do. So my parents are
24 very fortunate to have me.

25 It was explained that Laclede Gas

1 had gone back to January of '04 to rebill, and
2 again to my understanding from the tariffs, they
3 can't go back more than one year. Also, if they
4 were estimating, they should have given a full
5 written explanation of this and also allowed the
6 same amount of months for the catch-up if the bill
7 amount is greater than \$60.

8 It's basically unfair because I know
9 this is happening to other people. When they call
10 in and they hit a brick wall, then they just pay
11 the bill. But I'm pretty persistent and I almost
12 gave up because my dad was really ill and I just
13 didn't have the energy.

14 Since then my dad has passed away,
15 and we went through back and forth. I was
16 supposed to go to a hearing in Jeff City in
17 December, it was scheduled for December, and my
18 dad passed away in January. I was called and
19 asked if I wanted to settle, and I say yeah
20 because I didn't feel comfortable traveling
21 because I knew he was -- they hadn't given him a
22 lot of time.

23 If I had the time I would be an
24 advocate for anybody out there because it's unfair
25 what utility companies do to people and how

1 they're pretty much strong armed because you don't
2 have any other resources. When monopolies are
3 created, it's very unfair. You have to go to this
4 person or this company to obtain this, this, this.
5 And it's just it's very unfair.

6 Until Laclede Gas, until they can
7 provide exemplary customer service, they shouldn't
8 get anything because like I said, I know that the
9 problem that we have, it's happening all over and
10 it's happening to a lot of elderly people that
11 don't understand these bills and they call in and
12 they get rude customer service representatives and
13 rude managers and then their backs are against a
14 wall. They don't want to get their services
15 turned off. So they make provisions and they make
16 arrangements to pay these amounts.

17 Now, as on the staff reports that I
18 received from the complaint that was filed,
19 basically January 7th of 2004 Laclede Gas loses
20 its ability to get reliable meter readings. On
21 September 22nd of 2005, Laclede replaces the meter
22 and installs the AMR and regains the ability to
23 measure usage. December of 2005, Laclede issues a
24 first bill based upon regained ability to measure
25 usage. There were no subsequent revised bills.

1 So tell me what happened to those bills between
2 September and December.

3 February 9th, I filed an informal
4 complaint on behalf of my parents, and on May 26th
5 of 2006 I filed a formal complaint on behalf of my
6 parents. In July 2006, while there were a number
7 of revisions that occurred over time, the final
8 adjustment occurred in the July 2006 billing
9 reflecting usage from January 7th of '04 to July
10 6th of '06. September 2006, Laclede completed
11 collecting all prior billing via budget billing
12 including the amount in dispute. They never told
13 me that the amount that was disputed, that the
14 budget billing was going to cover that. I believe
15 they should have stated that because I was told
16 and I was surprised that the balance had been
17 taken care of. Once we found out that my dad was
18 sick, I started paying all the bills at the house
19 and taking over all of the financial
20 responsibility. I had them put on a budget
21 billing. I didn't know that the budget that we
22 were paying, that it was going toward that.

23 Since then the budget -- previously
24 the budget was 200 -- I believe it was \$250,
25 between \$250 and \$270, I can't remember. It's

1 gone down \$100 a month. It's \$170 now. That bill
2 that was \$1,300 originally, it got basically cut
3 in half to a little over \$700. That's a lot of
4 money when you think about people that are on
5 fixed incomes.

6 I guess -- I could say a lot more,
7 but that's just, you know, my personal feeling and
8 unfortunately I work for a utility also -- not
9 unfortunately, but I work for a utility also. We
10 provide good customer service. Thank you.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you very much
12 for your comments. Commissioner Appling, do you
13 have any questions?

14 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Ms. Topps,
15 thank you for coming in. Where do you stand on
16 your bills right now? What are you up --

17 MS. TOPPS: Yes. Everything is
18 fine. Everything has been paid. Like I said, the
19 budget has gone down.

20 COMMISSIONER APPLING: What happened
21 to the first \$1,300? There was twice you got
22 billed for \$1,300 --

23 MS. TOPPS: No. We only got billed
24 once for \$1,300. The other amount that came in,
25 the monthly bill was over \$600. When I stated

1 that \$2,000 bill. It was over that one -- I
2 believe it was the month of January or so, it was
3 like \$600.

4 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Since you
5 work for a utility, you understand how to get in
6 and out of utility offices. Have you been down to
7 Laclede and talked to anyone?

8 MS. TOPPS: Actually, yeah. I met
9 Mr. Zucker. Like I said, we were supposed to have
10 a hearing and we had an informal hearing over the
11 phone in -- I think that was in October. We were
12 scheduled for December. With my dad being so ill
13 then, you know, I was called and asked if I wanted
14 to go ahead and settle. I said yes because I was
15 just tired and I wanted to focus more on my dad.

16 I told my mother, I said, I don't
17 have the energy for this. She made a statement,
18 she said, if you can't do it, nobody can do it.
19 So that kind of pushed me out there. Otherwise,
20 it would have gotten paid and it shouldn't have
21 been. If they make mistakes, they should eat
22 them, like anybody. If you know you're not
23 supposed to do something, then in the public's
24 best interest, why would you do it. We trust
25 them. We can only go by what they tell us. It's

1 just like with these meters, we can only go by
2 what they're stating. We don't know. We don't
3 work there.

4 COMMISSIONER APPLING: You didn't
5 count Mr. Zucker in one of those people in the
6 public --

7 MS. TOPPS: He was nice. He was
8 very nice. Mr. Zucker was very nice.

9 COMMISSIONER APPLING: He wasn't
10 rude at all?

11 MS. TOPPS: No, he wasn't rude at
12 all. He was very nice. I met him a couple times,
13 but he was very nice.

14 COMMISSIONER APPLING: He's very
15 nice to me, too.

16 MS. TOPPS: That's good.

17 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Is there
18 anything else we can do or share with you tonight?

19 MS. TOPPS: I just can't state how
20 important it is for people to provide or for the
21 customer service reps to provide good customer
22 service. I mean, if it wasn't for the customers,
23 they wouldn't have a job. They wouldn't be
24 working. We pay their salaries. A lot of times
25 they forget that.

1 It's just so -- it's just so
2 important to try to do as much as you can for the
3 customers so that you stay in business and that
4 you keep a job. But a lot of people lose sight of
5 that. I guess they feel you can't go to anybody
6 else so that's just too bad. You have to take
7 what I'm telling you.

8 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you
9 very much for coming out tonight. I appreciate
10 it.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast, did
12 you have any questions?

13 MR. PENDERGAST: I don't really have
14 any questions. I just want to say I am deeply
15 sorry for your loss. I know I had discussions
16 with Mr. Zucker while this was going on. I know
17 it was a big burden on you. If there's anything
18 that's left unresolved, if we can talk to you, Mr.
19 Zucker is here and so am I, please let us know.

20 MS. TOPPS: It's fine now.

21 MR. PENDERGAST: I appreciate your
22 comments about customer service.

23 MS. TOPPS: Thank you.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Randolph Laatsch.

25 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that

1 the testimony you're about to give at this hearing
2 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
3 but the truth?

4 MR. LAATSCH: Yes, I do.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you could spell
6 your last name for the court reporter.

7 MR. LAATSCH: Last name is Laatsch,
8 L-A-A-T-S-C-H.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead
10 with your comments.

11 MR. LAATSCH: This is almost the
12 exact opposite of the previous two people. My
13 wife normally pays the bills, we normally pay by
14 check. I guess about a year ago, summertime gas
15 bills got low, the amounts were small and I didn't
16 pay too much attention. We were going into the
17 fall and the winter months, the gas bills stayed
18 the same but I never noticed.

19 My wife says, gee, this seems low.
20 I look and it's the exact same amount we were
21 paying in the summer. It's like a monthly
22 membership fee when you consume virtually no gas.
23 So I started calling Laclede Gas. Maybe three
24 calls over the space of six weeks or so. I had
25 been making meter readings now and then when we --

1 when I became aware that the gas bills were low
2 and the gas meter had stopped moving. It had a
3 remote reading system. So I called the gas
4 company and on the third call they finally agreed
5 to replace the meter. I was at home when the
6 technician came out, and I said, now are they
7 going to look inside the meter and see how much
8 was actually used. No, he said, they'll go by
9 last year's readings.

10 For about nine months, maybe six
11 months of above average -- above the summertime
12 usage, we were being billed the minimum. I'm
13 thinking, what kind of company doesn't charge for
14 what they're selling the company. So where these
15 people were being billed extremely high, we were
16 being billed extremely low. Now I think this is
17 maybe the second generation remote reader and it's
18 operating -- the first one evidently did something
19 that froze up the gears inside.

20 When Laclede complains about not
21 being able to make enough money on the previous
22 rate schedule, perhaps if they just charged for
23 what they actually sold the customer they could.
24 I think that electricity is good for making light,
25 gas is good for making heat, and if I wanted to

1 pay a monthly membership fee, which I think in
2 today's world with electronic billing, maybe a \$2
3 monthly fee for the privilege of getting a bill
4 would be sufficient. I think 90, 95 percent of
5 the cost of a consumer's bill should be based on
6 the price of natural gas.

7 I'm not here to provide the staff of
8 Laclede Gas with golden parachute type retirement,
9 I'm here to buy a certain number therms. So if
10 electricity is fine for doing light and gas is
11 good for doing heat and a monthly membership fee
12 should go to a golf club, then I think my gas bill
13 should reflect what I use.

14 I think there should be an energy
15 conservation incentive. If you have a twenty or
16 so dollar monthly membership fee, that's a
17 disincentive for conservation. Missouri is
18 woefully inadequate when it comes to conservation
19 incentives for alternative -- let me rephrase that
20 -- when it comes to preferred energy sources such
21 as solar or wind or geothermal, I don't think
22 Missouri has even the first piece of legislation
23 in place. So that's about all.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Let me
25 ask you just a question now. When did you stop

1 getting the regular monthly bill that was too low
2 and had your meter changed?

3 MR. LAATSCH: That was maybe
4 February, March, somewhere in there.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Of this year?

6 MR. LAATSCH: Of this year, yes.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: But you haven't
8 received a catch-up bill?

9 MR. LAATSCH: Oh, yes, I have. Yes,
10 I have. It was based on the previous year's
11 billing. Now, in the past year I've added one
12 small solar collector for heating, for wintertime
13 heating. I intend to put on a second. I mean,
14 I'm on the fringe when that comes.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner
16 Appling.

17 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Just a couple
18 questions, if you would. What do you hear about
19 -- do you have any background in wind energy?

20 MR. LAATSCH: I have maybe a
21 smattering. I know that the State of Missouri has
22 virtually no commercially viable wind sites in the
23 state. And I don't think they have any oil wells
24 either, maybe a few. But there's precious little
25 place to legitimately make money with a wind farm

1 in Missouri.

2 COMMISSIONER APPLING: There's no
3 place but up in the north and western part of the
4 state. I don't think Laclede owns anything up
5 there and it's very doubtful anybody would want
6 to --

7 MR. LAATSCH: I'm not saying that
8 Laclede should do this --

9 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I'm not
10 criticizing at all. I'm interested in what you
11 have to say, very interested. Believe it or not,
12 we live in the greatest country in the world, but
13 if we don't get a little bit smarter about some of
14 the resources that we have, we're going to have to
15 come up with something else.

16 MR. LAATSCH: You're absolutely
17 right. You know, the largest wind farm state
18 right now I believe is Texas. Some of the larger
19 wind farms there I think are being operating by
20 Florida Power and Light. Texas has probably more
21 oil wells than -- well, maybe except Alaska or
22 something. There is a state that has plenty of
23 energy and they're doing wind power big time in
24 Texas.

25 COMMISSIONER APPLING: We have to

1 look towards Kansas, which is our closest state
2 that has fields being used for that. Thank you
3 very much and thanks for your comments. If you
4 have anything else you want to talk about
5 renewable energy, I'd be happy to hear what you
6 have to say at any time.

7 MR. LAATSCH: Well, maybe we should
8 trade e-mail addresses.

9 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I'll get your
10 card before you leave here and you can do that.
11 Thank you very much.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast, do
13 you have anything?

14 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes. Hi, sir, how
15 are you?

16 MR. LAATSCH: Just fine.

17 MR. PENDERGAST: I just wanted to
18 make sure, is the meter you have there now
19 functioning?

20 MR. LAATSCH: Yes.

21 MR. PENDERGAST: You're getting
22 bills based on your actual usage?

23 MR. LAATSCH: Yes. That and the
24 membership, the club membership.

25 MR. PENDERGAST: Still getting the

1 membership fee. And I also want to let you know
2 we've got a conservation proposal in our case, so
3 if you've got any suggestions about that, I'd be
4 interested in hearing them. We'll be around until
5 after the meeting is over.

6 MR. LAATSCH: Okay. Thank you.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Poston,
8 anything?

9 MR. POSTON: Thank you, sir.

10 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Let me give
11 you one of my cards.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Larney Shannon.

13 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
14 the testimony you're about to give at this hearing
15 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
16 but the truth?

17 MS. SHANNON: I affirm.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you spell your
19 name for the court reporter, please.

20 MS. SHANNON: S-H-A-N-N-O-N. I'm a
21 little tired.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: That's all right.

23 MS. SHANNON: I am a senior citizen,
24 I am retired, and I'm on a fixed income. These
25 are supposed to be my golden years. Laclede Gas

1 has nothing to do with that except that it is
2 ridiculous.

3 Last summer they said they installed
4 meters, the meters didn't work. And then we were
5 asked to pay for the months in question. I
6 thought that was fair if we were going to pay what
7 we had paid the previous years, but that didn't
8 work out. We paid more. For every month in
9 question the bill was higher. I, like some of the
10 other people that have spoken, called Laclede Gas.
11 The woman I spoke to was a first class snot. I
12 did not appreciate her tone, her attitude and what
13 I got from her is, I'd say, why is my bill higher
14 now than what it was the previous year? Well, the
15 Public Service Commission authorized it and plump,
16 she hung up.

17 And needless to say I was very
18 upset. I was not happy at all. What the Public
19 Service Commission had done, they gave Laclede Gas
20 a blank check to charge what they please based on
21 guesstimation. Now, if the bills had been equal
22 to what was the previous year I could understand.
23 But why the excess?

24 Now, they spoke about they had the
25 equipment, the equipment wasn't working, but did

1 they go back to the manufacturer and ask for some
2 compensation? Did they go back to the
3 distributor? Did they go back to the store on the
4 corner where they purchased this equipment? This
5 was put on the backs of the public and it should
6 not have been.

7 Trying to talk to Laclede Gas I
8 found that you do not call public service because
9 they are nasty. So I wrote to the governor. I
10 haven't received an answer yet. I also wrote to
11 my state representative, I have not received an
12 answer. The Public Service Commission did not do
13 the audits that they should have done. I know
14 that are not elected, they're appointed, but since
15 they were appointed and they accepted the job then
16 they should do the job. My source that they did
17 not do the audits that they should have done came
18 from Channel 4 when they interviewed them.

19 Now, Laclede Gas and all of the
20 utilities are asking for raises. And the bottom
21 line is greed. Greed is flourishing across this
22 country. Everybody wants to stand on the back of
23 the working person. Like I am, we wear out. I
24 think it's time that somebody stand up for the
25 public and say no. That includes UE, the water

1 company and the sewer company because everybody is
2 asking for more money.

3 I think when Laclede Gas said that
4 they need so many millions of dollars, that one
5 has to believe that they are totally incompetent
6 or they're liars. I do not believe, my personal
7 belief, I not believe that they are incompetent.
8 That's all I have to say.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Ms.
10 Shannon. Can I just ask you, who did you say your
11 representative was?

12 MS. SHANNON: Jake Zimmerman.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner
14 Appling, did you have a question?

15 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I don't think
16 so. I've heard what you have to say very loud and
17 clear. I will be considering this company in a
18 very short period here around August sometime in
19 their rate increase. We do take an extremely hard
20 look at these companies before we do anything, and
21 we usually take eleven months to take a look at
22 that. We'll be doing that over the next seven
23 months. When we come out with whatever we come
24 out with a decision that is made, it's through a
25 lot of things that have to be pushed and pulled.

1 Nothing is simple in this world and you know that
2 as well as I know it. We will do our very best
3 with Laclede.

4 Thank you for coming out, ma'am. I
5 appreciate your comment.

6 MS. SHANNON: Thank you for the
7 time.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Ma'am, if you
9 haven't yet spoken to the Public Service
10 Commission about your complaint, you might just
11 see Ms. Fred back in the back there and she can
12 give you information on how to -- if you'd like
13 our customer service people to see if they can
14 help you with your situation.

15 MS. SHANNON: I spoke to the Public
16 Service Commission earlier, and the only way they
17 can help me is put a block on the rising costs of
18 all our utilities. Thank you.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: I appreciate your
20 comments. Mr. Pendergast. Mr. Poston.

21 Thank you, ma'am. Are you able to
22 get down the steps all right or do you need some
23 assistance?

24 MS. SHANNON: No, I'll make it.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Richard Dockett.

1 Would you please raise your right
2 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
3 testimony you're about to give at this hearing
4 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
5 but the truth?

6 MR. DOCKETT: I do indeed.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you could spell
8 your name for the court reporter, please.

9 MR. DOCKETT: Richard Dockett,
10 Dockett, D as in door O-C-K-E-T-T.

11 I live at 6844 Crest Avenue dash
12 2537 right here in St. Louis County in the City of
13 University City. I'm the President of the Roth
14 Grove Neighborhood Association, which represents
15 the cradle of civilization of University City
16 where it originated, where it began.

17 In my capacity as President of the
18 Roth Grove Neighborhood Association, I represent
19 over 3,500 households. I'm here to speak today
20 about and to raise my righteous indignation about
21 the killing, and I say the killing because I say
22 that these rate increase or even the attempt of a
23 rate increase is an act of a -- is a terrorist
24 act. People will say, well, you're accusing
25 Laclede Gas of terrorism, yes, I am. Because

1 often not, every time one of those rate increase
2 goes up, they kick somebody out of the market to
3 be able to go and have those services for Laclede
4 or any of these other utilities that are often
5 here.

6 I'm saying that we should stop the
7 killing and we should realize that myself and my
8 elders here, Warren Garnett, whom I think will
9 speak after me, when utility -- Laclede Gas once
10 again, they tried to raise the rates and we had a
11 protest there. We had a protest at the Missouri
12 Public Service Commission. We marched both inside
13 and out of the place. We marched on Laclede Gas
14 both inside and out. And we came from the
15 judicion (phonetic) of my cousin, Ivory Perry
16 (phonetic), as many of you may know that's been
17 involved in the struggle for justice for poor and
18 ordinary people. We happen to be the vast
19 majority of the people that's in this area here
20 and that's in this country. And it's time that
21 the ordinary people and the poor people got some
22 representations and benefits from the taxes that
23 we pay.

24 I heard you Mr. Appling, and I don't
25 necessarily like to disagree with you that we live

1 here in America in the greatest country in the
2 world, but it also has some third world conditions
3 and all, the places at the bottom of everything
4 here in America here. I'm here to speak to those
5 people and for those people, the ordinary people,
6 the poor people who cannot necessarily be here
7 today. I'm here to mourn the loss and the memory
8 of the people that have lost their lives down
9 there that was frozen and hydrated and frozen to
10 death in their places and all with their families
11 and their children and etc. and all. I'm here to
12 voice concerns like about that because I doubt it
13 very seriously whether or not you'll read in the
14 paper or you'll see on the TVs and all that
15 Laclede Gas is once again can be attributed to the
16 death and the destruction of many people in etc.
17 and all. I'm here today to tell you
18 that what we did is that we appealed and the Post
19 Dispatch, KMOX, all the other TV stations they
20 came out. We appealed those decisions and at the
21 end of the day, when Laclede Gas had threatened to
22 make that rate increase and they went ahead with
23 it and at the end results back in February service
24 years passed, they reversed that amount as you
25 probably can recall, your records should reflect,

1 because we are an organized group of citizens. We
2 formed a group called the gas patrol.

3 I think that this gas patrol is
4 going to have to be initiated again here today. I
5 think that we're going to have to call on the
6 continuous support from Governor Matt Blunt and
7 Jay Nixon. I think, if I'm not mistaken, that
8 they've gone on record of being in opposition to
9 this rate increase from Ameren UE and some of
10 these other utility companies. As I have called
11 for an audit by our auditor Susan Montee to audit
12 Metro -- I mean to audit Laclede, not Metro, but
13 Laclede Gas Company, but it'd be good to audit
14 them as well and complete it and all.

15 Because what I'm talking about is
16 taxpayers' dollars. I'm talking about save our
17 people, safe our children, save our community. We
18 live in a different world today. When I came up
19 as a child in a place called Cross Grove Village
20 (phonetic) in downtown St. Louis, a household had
21 a mother and a father there and parents like my
22 father and all. They had two and three jobs and
23 etc. and all, but it was a man and a woman in a
24 house.

25 In today's society and today's

1 world, be you white or black, yellow or brown,
2 over 70 percent of the households are headed up by
3 a female. That person, that female, is driven
4 into a position where they have no extra funds in
5 order to be able to pay these rate increase. So
6 that's another sector of people who happen to be
7 the majority of the people that you're giving a
8 death sentence to.

9 Someone has got to stop this
10 killing. This is nothing but a terrorist act.
11 I've did and told everything that the lady said
12 before me and the other speakers said before me
13 and all, but it didn't really take a mass like
14 army of people to do this. We hit them right.
15 They couldn't even justify that rate increase.
16 They just went on because we haven't had one in
17 six months or whatever the period of time was and
18 all. They had to acknowledge that. The gas
19 prices that they were saying they had to pay us
20 for the natural gas, we exposed a lie that they
21 have told and all.

22 In shining memories of Ivory Perry
23 -- and Ivory Perry used to say when he would come
24 into the community that the price that he would
25 pay for -- to capitulate or go along with Laclede

1 Gas Company was doing and saying that for every
2 gas price, that they would be reduced. They have
3 the natural gas price and etc.

4 And in memory of Ivory Perry, my
5 elders and the other people and all, there was a
6 group of us which included my daughter and
7 grandsons and etc. and all, we marched on them and
8 we will march again because we cannot idly sit
9 back while our people here in America, born in
10 America and all are given a death sentence. I
11 would encourage you to work with us and
12 incorporate with us to get Susan Montee, the state
13 auditor, to come in here and audit this Laclede
14 Gas Company. People are saying that they don't
15 care, they're cowards and they got a monopoly.

16 When I was a kid coming up in St.
17 Louis, it wasn't just Laclede Gas Company when you
18 research your records and the electric wasn't that
19 same way either. When you get these monopolies
20 here, the way that those service people operate --
21 I'm not trying to make any excuses for them
22 because I've been abused in the same or similar
23 manner from them. The tone is set from these
24 arrogant executives that you have that's speaking
25 and all. They act like they're outraged because

1 we don't want to support a rate increase. They're
2 coming up with all kind of excuses and etc.
3 and all as to why we ought to accept a death
4 sentence, why we should want to be frozen out.

5 I say once again that it's in your
6 hands, sir. You're in a very powerful position,
7 and I've heard and participated in other forums
8 with you at UMSL and etc. and all. I know that
9 you told us about the conditions that you had with
10 your cancer and all, sir, and talking about what
11 you had to go through.

12 Let's like search in the hearts and
13 the minds and let's try to have some conscious
14 going on here in America and all. That's what
15 these people have been asking for. Consider me.
16 Let me have a chance.

17 I'm going to say this and I'm going
18 to close my statement. I'm retired from General
19 Motors since 1993, and I've served in different
20 capacities at General Motors, all with the
21 exception of the plant manager. So I have a
22 managerial training and plus labor relations
23 training with the UAW, United Auto Workers, etc.
24 At one point I headed up General Motors
25 Transmission and Motor Division. It's about

1 production. Me or anyone else couldn't stay there
2 if we didn't produce.

3 But Laclede Gas is just producing
4 trouble for us. They're not improving a better
5 product, they're not providing a better service.
6 I heard a lady said it earlier and all, until a
7 certain time that that did, they shouldn't think
8 about coming to you, me or anyone else talking
9 about a service increase. General Motors would
10 have had them out in the street or been fired or
11 they would no longer be there. They're not
12 producing anything but trouble and death for us.

13 With that, I'm going to close. If
14 we have to, we're going to March on you all again,
15 and we're going to make it real clean this time so
16 you will never ever again in this lifetime think
17 about killing some more of us and end this act of
18 terrorism right here in the good old USA in St.
19 Louis, Missouri in the heart of the USA. We want
20 an end to it. Thank you.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you,
22 Mr. Dockett. Do you have any questions
23 Mr. Appling?

24 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Dr. Dockett,
25 I thank you. I think you and I met each other at

1 UMSL, I believe it was.

2 MR. DOCKETT: Yes, sir.

3 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I still
4 repeat that will live in the greatest country in
5 the world because I spent thirty years in the Army
6 and retired as a Colonel and traveled to more than
7 twenty-five different countries in my lifetime. I
8 realize it's tough here.

9 I was born in Georgia to a family of
10 fourteen where my mother had twelve kids and my
11 father lived to be ninety, so did my mother and
12 they all struggled. I've seen my part of it.
13 When you talk about raising or single parents, I
14 can equal any lady. I raised my daughter from the
15 age of seven as a single parent and she's quite a
16 young lady and she lives here in St. Louis. She's
17 still paying Laclede and my bills, too. I just
18 wanted to say that to you.

19 I appreciate your comments here.
20 Maybe one day you and I when I take the time to
21 come down can sit down and have a cup of coffee
22 because I would like to talk.

23 MR. DOCKETT: I'm a father of twins
24 and I raised them as a single parent from twelve
25 years of age to today and they're thirty-two years

1 of age. Perhaps your daughter and my sons and
2 all, we can get together for this discussion and
3 this dialog.

4 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you
5 very much and thanks for your time.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast.

7 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions.

8 Thank you, sir

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Warren Burnett.

10 Would you raise your right hand.

11 MR. BURNETT: My hearing isn't too

12 good.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm sorry, could you
14 raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or
15 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
16 nothing but the truth?

17 MR. BURNETT: I do.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you could spell
19 your name for the court reporter, then give us
20 your comment.

21 MR. BURNETT: I didn't hear that.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you spell your
23 name for the court reporter.

24 MR. BURNETT: W-A-R-R-E-N

25 B-U-R-N-E-T-T.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead with your
2 comments.

3 MR. BURNETT: I'd like to begin by
4 saying I resent the fact that natural resources
5 that man did not make that the creator saw fit to
6 put here for all of us to use and enjoy, I resent
7 the fact that a group of people are controlling
8 this resource and putting themselves in a position
9 to exploit and rip off the people period.

10 Now, I am of African descent, and
11 like other people of African descent, we're at a
12 disadvantage. We didn't have the resources to
13 invest in some of these utility companies.
14 Therefore, when the rate increases are put in
15 play, the people that don't have the resources
16 suffer greatly. Whereas those who have holdings
17 in these utility companies, their pockets are
18 filled when the rates go up. My suggestion is
19 somewhere down the line people are going to wake
20 up and see these resources should be controlled
21 not by a group of people seeking profit, but by a
22 nonprofit organization.

23 The other thing I want to speak
24 about is the customer service. I've stayed on the
25 phone sometimes as much as a half an hour or

1 longer trying to get through. I want to say this,
2 whoever thought up that number system wasn't
3 thinking like a human being, he was thinking like
4 a robot.

5 Having said that, I can't think of
6 anything else to say other than that these
7 utilities should be put under a nonprofit
8 organization. Now, you can call it communism,
9 socialism, I don't give a hoot what you call it.
10 If it's going to benefit the people, that's what
11 we need to have instituted.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner
13 Appling, did you have any questions?

14 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No questions.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast.

16 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir.

18 That was the last person I had signed up. Is
19 there anyone else who wishes to speak? Mr.
20 Schulte.

21 Please raise your right hand. Do
22 you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
23 you're about to give at this hearing will be the
24 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

25 MR. SCHULTE: Yes, I do.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you could spell
2 your name for the court reporter.

3 MR. SCHULTE: Joseph Schulte,
4 S-C-H-U-L-T-E.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead with your
6 comments.

7 MR. SCHULTE: The only comment I
8 had, I just wanted to remind the Commission during
9 the last rate increase they was going to take into
10 consideration the amount of management people
11 Laclede Gas had compared to worker. At that time
12 it was something like two and a quarter workers to
13 each management person. I don't know any private
14 industry out there that can survive by working
15 that way. I suspect that it's even lower now
16 since there's been a lot of meter readers
17 terminated and let go with this new AMR device. I
18 wanted to reaffirm that and bring that to the
19 Commission's attention that that would be taken
20 into consideration, the amount of management
21 people that Laclede has to worker.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner
23 Appling, did you have any questions?

24 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I don't think
25 so, Mr. Schulte. Thank you for coming in. I

1 appreciate your time and I appreciate your effort
2 in coming back in and reminding us.

3 MR. SCHULTE: I'll be around. I'm
4 retiring, but I'll be around. I'm no longer with
5 the union.

6 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Retired.

7 MR. SCHULTE: Retired and a customer
8 of Laclede Gas.

9 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you
10 very much for coming in.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast, do
12 you have anything?

13 MR. PENDERGAST: No. Good to see
14 you again, Joe.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Mr.
16 Schulte.

17 Is there anyone else who wishes to
18 testify? Sir.

19 If you would please raise your right
20 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
21 testimony you're about to give at this hearing
22 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
23 but the truth?

24 MR. SCHER: I do.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you state your

1 name and spell it for the court reporter.

2 MR. SCHER: Yes. My name is Greg
3 Scher. Common spelling on the first name. Last
4 name is S-C-H-E-R.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead with your
6 comments.

7 MR. SCHER: I'd like to address the
8 panel tonight about something that started back in
9 '05. This soldiering with Laclede Gas actually
10 occurred through another utility. Back in the
11 summer of '05, I received a \$1,350 electric bill
12 because my air-conditioner was costing me too much
13 money. I completely gutted the house, put in R30
14 to R70 insulation in the roof, resided the
15 exterior, put flame retardant and insulation paint
16 on it, put in a furnace that was three times the
17 capacity called for by the home and a new
18 air-conditioning system. I also installed a full
19 blower, ceiling fans and a home humidifying
20 system.

21 My electric bills dropped to
22 virtually nothing. They went down to about \$60 a
23 month and my gas bills dropped in the summer --
24 and I've got full gas by the way. I've got gas
25 stove, gas furnace and gas water heater. They

1 dropped down to about \$15, \$18 a month during the
2 summer.

3 The wintertime came along. We had a
4 moderate winter. My gas bills ranged anywhere
5 from \$30 to \$55. Furnace would come on, run two,
6 three, four minutes and shut off. I left the
7 circulation fan going in the furnace because
8 that's the equivalent of running a 300 watt light
9 bulb for a month. It's \$5. It's a fair tradeoff
10 for gas energy. My bills were paid electronically
11 through Bank of America through a system that
12 Laclede Gas has set up with an outfit called My
13 Check Free.

14 During the fall of '05 -- I'm a
15 journeyman crane operator through Local 513 at St.
16 Louis. I operate some of the largest cranes in
17 the world. That required me to be transferred to
18 first San Francisco to work on the Bay Bridge and
19 then later down to Los Angeles last fall, last
20 Christmas, to work in Los Angeles hosting oil
21 tankers and oil platforms off the ocean.

22 I say that only to let you know that
23 my banking and my transactions have to occur with
24 these companies back in St. Louis electronically
25 because the likelihood of me reaching them by

1 phone during the day during normal business hours
2 is almost nil. I paid my bills just like
3 everybody else does, and I heard a recurring theme
4 tonight about this customer service.

5 During the last part of April or
6 first part of May of 2006, I received a gas bill
7 -- I actually received two gas bills at the same
8 time on the same date in the same mail from
9 Laclede Gas. The one was my usual monthly
10 statement. I was at home at St. Peters. The one
11 bill was for \$27 or \$28. The other bill was in a
12 yellow envelope. I opened it up and it's a late
13 payment notice telling me I owed \$931 in unused --
14 unmetered gas charges. Unmetered gas, to my
15 knowledge that means I've got a leak.

16 So I called up Laclede Gas. And the
17 lady that I first got on the phone was about as
18 sarcastic and rude as one individual can be and
19 still have God let them live and I bit my tongue.
20 When I told her, when she finally let me talk to
21 tell her, that the problem was unmetered gas, she
22 says, let me transfer you to the unmetered gas
23 department. This is a problem that occurs so
24 frequently that Laclede Gas has created an entire
25 department to handle it.

1 So I get another lady on the phone
2 who was every bit as curt and rude and snotty. On
3 the phone before I could say anything, the words
4 out of this woman's mouth were, we've got a
5 formula and it's been approved by the Missouri
6 Public Service Commission. I said, ma'am, I
7 guttled my home, I completely made it energy
8 efficient, my bills went down. She said, well, we
9 think your automatic meter reader is broken
10 because your bills are too low. I said, send
11 someone out to check it. If I owe it, I owe it.

12 They sent a Laclede technician by, I
13 was at the house. The man came up, put his meter
14 on the unit outside my home, he said, there's
15 nothing wrong with this meter. He said, what's
16 the matter, I showed him the bill, \$903. He said,
17 you stick to your guns pal. You don't owe us. So
18 I called back and I got ahold of the lady. She
19 said, well, we don't have his report yet. I said,
20 ma'am, I'm telling you he just now left here and
21 he said there's nothing wrong with that meter.

22 About a week later I get a
23 disconnect notice from Laclede Gas telling me if I
24 don't pay that \$931 or call them and make
25 arrangements, they're going to terminate my gas

1 service. I call back in and the woman hung up on
2 me. She would not talk to me. So I called the
3 Public Service Commission because I didn't want to
4 be without gas. They said they'd investigate.
5 The lady there that took my complaint was very
6 nice and said they'd received a whole lot of these
7 kinds of complaints. She said she would begin an
8 investigation. Took down all the information I
9 just told you, had me fax my documentation down to
10 her.

11 About ten days later I get another
12 notice from Laclede Gas and I call them back up.
13 I get their collections department now. They
14 automatically put me right through. The lady
15 said, no, there hadn't been any action from the
16 Public Service Commission, and she really couldn't
17 talk to me because I'd filed an action, I need to
18 call them.

19 I called back down to Jeff City at
20 my nickel, talked to another woman at that office
21 and she said, no, she was filling in but they
22 didn't have any record of me filing a complaint.
23 So I went back to the original process all over
24 again.

25 Now, to end this real quick, the

1 company transferred me back out to Los Angeles
2 last summer to complete a job. As you're aware,
3 there's an energy crisis in this country and we're
4 trying to revamp all the refineries and increase
5 their output. I first worked with BP and then at
6 Tesoro and later on at the Shell refineries.

7 During this process, Laclede was
8 steadily attempting to shut off my gas and because
9 I was completely at my wits end about what to do
10 with it remotely from Los Angeles, I just started
11 paying it off in increments. That bill started
12 out at \$931 and I've been paying it off since last
13 fall. I forgot my bill to bring it in tonight,
14 but Channel 2 has got a copy of it. They were
15 there today and there's still \$750 left on that
16 bill and I'm paying \$140 a month. I don't know
17 what school they went to to do the math, but it
18 doesn't square with the facts. I just paid my
19 last month's gas bill, which was \$40.

20 The problem is this. It's multifold
21 and I'll just encapsulate it for you. My gas
22 bills have been the same and consistent now that
23 they have been ever since I made my home energy
24 efficient, nothing's changed. Laclede Gas
25 sabotaging me with that bill after the fact is

1 akin to going to a QT or another filling station,
2 putting your debit card in there and filling your
3 tank for \$50 and having it come out of your
4 account, and two weeks later having them debit
5 your account for another \$50 because they didn't
6 think you paid enough for that gas. There is no
7 difference. And they've got you foist by that
8 petard because you've got nowhere else to go. I
9 can't go to ABC gas company and say, hey, this
10 outfit is a ripoff, I'm stuck with Laclede Gas and
11 they know it.

12 Their customer service is
13 nonexistent, their people are rude, they won't
14 work with you, and they know they're lying through
15 their teeth to you when they talk to you.
16 Everything that you could tell them when you get
17 them on the phone to tell them what their service
18 technician just did and looked at, they will come
19 up with another reason why that's not right.
20 They spend more time justifying their position
21 than they do simply listening to the customer and
22 accepting the facts on their face.

23 I've been playing a bill that's not
24 mine and it's totally unfair. It doesn't square
25 with the facts, and they can send any technician

1 they want to check it out. I'm just a customer.
2 I'm nobody special. But I'm telling you, I've
3 reached my absolute limit with Laclede Gas and
4 them wanting this rate hike to justify their
5 means. It's just beyond credible. It just shocks
6 the senses of a normal working person to think
7 that they want that much money to do less than
8 what they were doing in the first place. What
9 they need to do is get some customer service to
10 start with and we wouldn't be here tonight or at
11 least I wouldn't. They need to start charging
12 what we're using, not what they think we're using.
13 They're billing me for what the customers around
14 me are using. My neighbors don't pay my gas bill,
15 I pay it. That's all I have to say

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you,
17 Mr. Scher. Can I just ask you a couple things to
18 clarify. When did you redo your home?

19 MR. SCHER: In the summer of '05.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: And when did you
21 first speak to the PSC?

22 MR. SCHER: Shortly after I received
23 the first unmetered gas usage bill, which would
24 have been probably last part of April or first
25 part of May last year, of '06.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm going to ask you
2 if you don't mind to talk with Ms. Fred back in
3 the back. She's the supervisor of our customer
4 service part of our agency. I want to make sure
5 that -- I want to find out what happened within
6 the Commission with your complaint, and then I
7 want to make sure you get the ability to work
8 things out either with Laclede or through our
9 customer service people.

10 MR. SCHER: May I just partly
11 address that for you right now because I'll put it
12 on the record for you.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Yes.

14 MR. SCHER: Part of this becomes a
15 situation of diminishing returns. I'll explain
16 what I mean by that. My base rate, my hourly wage
17 when you consider my benefits is about 85 bucks an
18 hour. When I work out of state, it's about 190
19 bucks an hour. Every hour I have to take off of
20 work, I don't get paid. It's not like I have a
21 county job or I work for a business where you get
22 paid days off and sick leave. If you don't work,
23 you don't get paid. It's as simple as that.
24 Bills go on.

25 Laclede Gas has become such a

1 juggernaut that once they start this customer
2 service fiasco and pass you from department to
3 department to cubical to cubical and slide a piece
4 of paper around with your name on it, you start
5 from square one every time that you call down
6 there. If you don't have the person's name and
7 the reference number and the confirmation number
8 to all marry up together, it never happened.

9 So they -- it's a matter of
10 diminishing returns. I can invest tens of
11 thousands of dollars of my time and energy and
12 money trying to collect or break even on a \$931
13 bill that I'll never see daylight for. I've been
14 paying on it almost a year and it's still \$700.
15 And they know that. This is not news, this is
16 business as usual for these people. I'm standing
17 here in front of you telling you that under oath.
18 This is not some guy sniping from the sides.
19 There you have my bit.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: I understand and
21 it's your -- your time and the cost of your time
22 is the reason that I'm concerned if the PSC added
23 to that trouble by not keeping track of your
24 original complaint. If you have the time this
25 evening, I'd appreciate if you'd talk to Ms. Fred

1 just briefly. Then I'm going to ask staff to
2 follow up with the Commission about your complaint
3 -- your original complaint and just make sure we
4 haven't added to the cost of confusion.

5 I definitely understand what you're
6 talking about. I've been a customer, not with
7 Laclede, with other companies where I've felt the
8 same, that my time was not worth the cost of
9 the --

10 MR. SCHER: Quite frankly, ma'am,
11 I'd rather spend another Memorial Day weekend
12 locked in a closet with a life insurance salesman
13 than deal with another customer rep from Laclede.
14 That's a fact.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: I hope you won't
16 feel the same way about the Public Service
17 Commission's customer service agents. Do you have
18 any else, Mr. Appling?

19 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I can't help
20 but to laugh at your frustration. Anyway, I can't
21 say I've heard what you said, I had my ear plugs
22 in when you came up. Anyway, I want you to give
23 your name to Ms. Fred back in the rear.

24 MR. SCHER: Yes, sir.

25 COMMISSIONER APPLING: And I'm going

1 to call you myself personally, okay?

2 MR. SCHER: All right.

3 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I promise you
4 that. The only thing I can invite you to do it go
5 fishing with me. We might be able to sit down in
6 front of a big oak tree and talk about it. Give
7 her your name and we'll get back to you, okay?

8 MR. SCHER: If you're in to hunting,
9 I dropped a 1,592 pound elk last fall, too.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast.

11 MR. PENDERGAST: Sir, I just have a
12 few questions. I'm Mike Pendergast and I'm from
13 Laclede. I'm sorry you've had a problem. I just
14 wanted to know, do you have an inside meter or is
15 it on the outside?

16 MR. SCHER: It's external.

17 MR. PENDERGAST: And do you have an
18 AMR device on it now?

19 MR. SCHER: Yes, sir. It's the
20 original.

21 MR. PENDERGAST: The original. And
22 the bills you're getting now, are you satisfied
23 that they're accurate or is it -- do you still
24 have concerns about that?

25 MR. SCHER: They've been absolutely

1 accurate all along.

2 MR. PENDERGAST: It's this \$905 --

3 MR. SCHER: \$931.

4 MR. PENDERGAST: And were you

5 getting estimated bills at that time?

6 MR. SCHER: No, sir. I pay as I go.

7 MR. PENDERGAST: But they just said
8 it was for unmetered gas usage?

9 MR. SCHER: Unmetered gas usage.

10 MR. PENDERGAST: Did they explain to
11 you what that meant?

12 MR. SCHER: Oh, yeah, they did.
13 They said my gas usage could not be right, that it
14 was based on the meter reading the same every
15 month. When she went through the monthly bills
16 like I did, they were not the same every month.
17 It was fluctuating. It just wasn't as high as it
18 was previously. They used my former usage based
19 on the neighborhood usage and came up with this
20 formula to charge me. That's where the \$931 came
21 from. They just pulled it out of a vacuum and
22 decided I needed to pay it.

23 MR. PENDERGAST: I'm not sure why
24 you would have had that charge for unmetered gas
25 usage if you were getting actual usages, but I'd

1 like to get to the bottom of it, too. I know your
2 time is valuable and we want to try and get --

3 MR. SCHER: I'm here to get this
4 resolved. Mr. Pendergast was it?

5 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes, it is.

6 MR. SCHER: This can't be a secret
7 because they've got a whole department full of
8 this. I went down to Laclede downtown to visit
9 with them about this very thing and there was a
10 whole lot of people that knew nothing. If you've
11 got the inside track, my hat's off to you.

12 MR. PENDERGAST: We'll try and find
13 out what we can to see if we can get you an
14 explanation for what's going on, and we'll see if
15 we can do it as quickly as possible, okay?

16 MR. SCHER: Okay. If they don't
17 play a shell game with the facts and figures with
18 you, I'd be surprised.

19 MR. PENDERGAST: We try not to play
20 shell games, but I understand you're frustrated,
21 and I'm going to try and go ahead and see if we
22 can reduce that frustration for you and do it
23 quickly.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.
25 Mr. Poston, do you have anything?

1 MR. POSTON: No. Thank you.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir. Is
3 there anyone else who wishes to testify?

4 MR. WALLEMAN: I'd like to add a few
5 things to my statement before since I've heard him
6 and a few other people.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Repeat your name.

8 MR. WALLEMAN: Keith Walleman.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: You were previously
10 sworn in.

11 MR. WALLEMAN: Yes, ma'am, I know
12 I'm still under oath.

13 I told you about my son and the
14 meter being broke, and he also got a bill. The
15 \$350 was for unmetered gas. How is that? They
16 come in and they swept it, there's nothing
17 leaking, how is it unmetered. I have no idea.

18 He called the Public Service
19 Commission. They said it'd take eight to ten
20 weeks or whatever to investigate it. Within one
21 or two weeks he got a letter back saying, oh,
22 through this formula, everything is fine. They
23 said it would take that long, but within one or
24 two weeks he got this letter.

25 So anyway, I put the gas bill in my

1 name. I was having -- I shut everything down like
2 I explained, and I'm getting all these high gas
3 bills. I called the public utilities commission.
4 They tell me, oh, since your son did it a couple
5 months ago, we cannot investigate your complaint.
6 Why not? I'm a new customer. Why can't I make a
7 complaint? That's my question with a public
8 utilities commission why they would tell me that.

9 I also had a couple other things I
10 wanted to ask. On our bills we've always had the
11 price of the therms, it's always an average price.
12 Now, you can lock in. I understand they're trying
13 to get that. Why hasn't it always been a locked
14 in price? Why like gasoline companies cannot we
15 get a certain price per therm forever? Years
16 back, why is it an average cost? I have no idea
17 and we cannot figure out our bills and know does
18 the person across the street have a different
19 average? How do you know what you're paying
20 because it an average.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: I can't answer your
22 question, but I bet Mr. Wood can so I will ask him
23 to speak to you after we go off the record and let
24 him explain that part. As to the complaint
25 procedure, were you saying that your son made a

1 complaint and then you made a complaint about the
2 same bill or was it a different bill?

3 MR. WALLEMAN: It was a different
4 situation. They told me since he made one at the
5 same residence two months before or three months
6 before, I couldn't make one.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: I suspect there was
8 a misunderstanding there.

9 MR. WALLEMAN: I have no idea, but I
10 explained to them.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'd ask you also to
12 speak to Ms. Fred on your way out and get that
13 explained.

14 Is there anyone else who wishes to
15 testify? Seeing no further witnesses, then I
16 believe that concludes the on record portion. I
17 do appreciate everyone coming. We appreciate your
18 input. Thank you.

19 We can go off the record.

20 (Public Hearing concluded at 7:42.)

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