

In the Matter of Spire Missouri, Inc.

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Hearing before:

Judge John Clark

October 12, 2022

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vol 1

**PHIPPS REPORTING**

*Raising the Bar!*

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STATE OF MISSOURI  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Public Hearing  
October 12, 2022

St. Louis Community College - Florissant Valley  
3400 Pershall Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63135

Volume 1

In the Matter of:  
Spire Missouri, Inc. d/b/a )  
Spire's Request for )  
Authority to Implement a )  
General Rate Increase for )File No. GR-2022-0179  
Natural Gas Service )Tracking No. YG-2022-0244  
Provided in the Company's )  
Missouri Service Areas )

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JOHN CLARK, Presiding  
REGULATORY LAW JUDGE  
  
Commissioner Maida J. Coleman  
Commissioner Jason Holsman  
Commissioner Glen Kolkmeier

REPORTED BY:  
Shelley L. Bartels, CCR 679  
JOB NO.: 274908

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22 For: Spire Missouri

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For: Consumers Council of Missouri

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EXHIBIT INDEX

PUBLIC HEARING EXHIBIT

Exhibit 1\*

REC'D

St. Louis Board of Aldermen  
Resolution No. 116

120

\*Exhibit was retained by the Public Service  
Commission.

1 (On the record at 7:09 p.m.)

2 PROCEEDINGS

3 JUDGE CLARK: Let's go on the record.

4 Good evening. It's October 12th, 2022, at -- is that  
5 right -- at 7:15 p.m. and we are at the St. Louis  
6 Community College - Florissant Valley, I believe I  
7 said that right, in Missouri. And the Missouri  
8 Public Service Commission has set aside this time for  
9 a local public hearing in the file captioned  
10 GR-2022-0179 which is a general rate case which is In  
11 the Matter of Spire Missouri, Incorporated doing  
12 business as Spire's Request for Authority to  
13 Implement a General Rate Case -- a General Rate  
14 Increase for Natural Gas Service Provided in  
15 Company's Missouri's Service Areas.

16 My name's John Clark. I'm the regulatory  
17 law judge presiding over this local public hearing  
18 today. Now, the Missouri Public Service Commission  
19 regulates the rates charged by investor-owned utility  
20 companies in Missouri to ensure that those rates are  
21 just and reasonable. And the Commission also  
22 regulates the quality of service and the safety of  
23 operations of investor-owned utilities.

24 The Commission is made up of five  
25 commissioners. The chairman of the commission is

1 Ryan Silvey and commissioners are Scott Rupp, Maida  
2 Coleman, Jason Holsman, and Glen Kolkmeier. The  
3 commissioners are appointed by the governor to fixed  
4 terms and confirmed by the Senate. The commissioners  
5 employ a staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,  
6 financial analysts, and other specialists in the  
7 field of utility regulation.

8 Now, with me today are Commissioners  
9 Coleman, Holsman, and Kolkmeier. They are  
10 participating via Webex and are listening to comments  
11 here today.

12 Commissioners, would any of you like to  
13 make any opening comments? Okay. Hearing none --

14 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Yes, Judge.  
15 Mr. Holsman.

16 COMMISSIONER KOLKMEYER: Go ahead,  
17 Commissioner Holsman. This is Kolkmeier.

18 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Yeah. I just want  
19 to thank everybody for coming out tonight. It does  
20 matter, make the difference. And we will be  
21 listening and we do appreciate your time. Thank you,  
22 Judge.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner.

24 And the commissioners who are not here,  
25 because this is being taken by a court reporter, will

1 have an opportunity to read the transcript later and  
2 see your comments. I'll also tell you before you  
3 leave a way to make additional comments, or if you  
4 know somebody who wasn't able to be here tonight and  
5 would have liked to have made comments, you can tell  
6 them additionally.

7 Now, as I indicated before, a court  
8 reporter is transcribing this hearing. And so what  
9 I'm going to do at this time is I'm going to ask  
10 counsel to enter their appearance for the record  
11 starting with Spire Missouri.

12 MR. APLINGTON: Good evening, your Honor.  
13 Matt Aplington on behalf of Spire Missouri, 700  
14 Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63101.

15 JUDGE CLARK: On behalf of the Commission  
16 Staff? And I think we're having a mic problem. I  
17 didn't hear you so well, and I don't know if anybody  
18 else did.

19 MR. APLINGTON: My fault.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Do you want to give it  
21 another try?

22 MR. APLINGTON: Yeah. Did the court  
23 reporter hear me? Very good. Matt Aplington on  
24 behalf of Spire Missouri, Inc., 700 Market Street,  
25 St. Louis, Missouri 63101.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Aplington.  
2 And from the Commission Staff.

3 MR. STOKES: Yes. On behalf of  
4 Commission Staff, Curt Stokes at 200 Madison Street,  
5 Jefferson City, Missouri. And with me is Carolyn  
6 Kerr, senior counsel. Her name is Carolyn with a C,  
7 Kerr, K-e-r-r.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Stokes,  
9 Ms. Kerr.

10 For the Office of Public Counsel.

11 MR. CLIZER: John Clizer on behalf of the  
12 Missouri Office of the Public Counsel. My contact  
13 information can be found in the record.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Clizer.  
15 Are there any intervenors or other  
16 counsel present that I have not called?

17 MR. COFFMAN: Yes. Thank you, your  
18 Honor. Appearing on behalf of the Consumers Council  
19 of Missouri, my name is John B. Coffman. My address  
20 is in the record.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Coffman, thank you.  
22 Anybody else? Okay.

23 I have a rather lengthy list of people  
24 that would like to provide comments to the Commission  
25 today and that's great. It's nice to see that the



1 public is engaged and interested in what's going on  
2 at the commission. Now, for those who would like to  
3 make comments today, I'm going to call the name  
4 listed on the sign-up sheet in the order they appear.

5 Now, when I call your name, would you  
6 please come down to the front, in front of the  
7 microphone. At that time, because there's a court  
8 transcribing this, I'm going to ask you to state and  
9 spell your name for the record. Then I'm going to  
10 swear you in. And I'm going to give you an  
11 opportunity to offer your comments to the commission.

12 Now, there's, as I indicated, a rather  
13 large number of people who want to offer comments  
14 tonight so I'm going to ask that you keep your  
15 comments to less than five minutes. If you start to  
16 get repetitious about certain things, I may stop you  
17 and move on to the next person, but -- so everybody  
18 has an opportunity who wants to offer a comment to  
19 the commission, I'm going to ask that you keep your  
20 comments as brief as possible.

21 Also, after you've made your comments,  
22 please remain standing at the microphone until you've  
23 been excused because the commissioners may have  
24 questions for you or I may have questions that I want  
25 to ask you. If the attorneys have questions that

1 they wish to ask at any time, if they will flag my  
2 attention and let me know.

3 Now, the Commission and the commissioners  
4 will not be able to answer of your questions today,  
5 myself included, and that's because they have to  
6 remain partial [sic] until after evidence is  
7 presented at the evidentiary hearing. If you have  
8 questions, please speak to the representatives of the  
9 Company, the Commission Staff, or the Office of the  
10 Public Counsel.

11 Also, please be polite and courteous to  
12 everybody who's speaking today and treat them as you  
13 would like to be treated.

14 Okay. With that in mind, I'm going to  
15 call the first person. And I'm going to apologize;  
16 there's a lot of names here and I'm going to butcher  
17 quite a few of them. Please correct me if I get the  
18 pronunciation of your name wrong, and I mean no  
19 offense by it.

20 Gwendolyn Cobshell.

21 MS. COGSHELL: My name is Gwendolyn  
22 Cogshell.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Cogshell, I apologize. At  
24 least we're doing it out the door. Right?

25 MS. COGSHELL: Right. You want me to

1 spell it?

2 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please state your  
3 name again and spell it for the record.

4 MS. COGSHELL: It's Gwendolyn Cogshell.  
5 It's G-w-e-n-d-o-l-y-n, Cogshell, C-o-g-s-h-e-l-l.

6 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
7 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
8 this local public hearing is the truth?

9 MS. COGSHELL: I do.

10 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
11 tell the commission today?

12 MS. COGSHELL: Well, I'd like to -- I've  
13 got a number of concerns, but I'll just take two. I  
14 just got a call from Mr. David Williams, he's over  
15 the pipeline management. What's happening all over  
16 the city is that they're digging up the streets and  
17 they're leaving these big, you know, holes in the  
18 street. Now, when Lyda Krewson was the mayor, she  
19 had a contract with Spire to do blacktop after Spire  
20 had come in and dug up the streets. She was supposed  
21 to come over and blacktop, which she's not doing --  
22 she didn't do. So now you have these big old square  
23 blocks, usually on the south side of the street. And  
24 there are veins coming out and they're creating like  
25 potholes all over the city. And they're still doing

1 it and they haven't come -- you know, they haven't  
2 worked it out with the current administration, which  
3 it wasn't their responsibility, but it's a problem  
4 with us.

5 My problem is why did they take out  
6 the thermostat. Why did they take that outside? Why  
7 did they take that outside and put it on the -- I  
8 mean from the inside and put it on the outside. They  
9 said it was -- it was more convenient for maintenance  
10 purposes, but I lived in my house for 30 years and  
11 they've never had a problem with getting in.

12 And so they took it -- took it -- took  
13 the thermostat out, put it on the outside. Took  
14 a \$1.49 can of spray paint and sprayed it. And  
15 they're doing all this work for what. I think it's  
16 just to keep, you know -- you know, it's in the  
17 infrastructure cost, but I think it's to keep  
18 employment, number one.

19 And the last thing I want to talk about  
20 is my cost of my bill. You know, my bill was \$53  
21 this -- last year this time. It was \$53.78. They  
22 charged me \$58.80 to deliver \$53 worth of gas. And I  
23 noticed that this is not a flat rate. If my bill --  
24 last year my highest bill was \$345. The actual usage  
25 was \$245. They charged me \$160 to deliver

1 two-hundred-and-like-eighty dollars' worth of gas.

2 And they're charging me this customer  
3 charge of \$22. And when I call customer service,  
4 they told me the \$22 was maintenance on the meter.  
5 And I'm sorry; it wasn't the thermostat. Can I  
6 change that in the record? They took the meter from  
7 the inside and put it on the outside, not the  
8 thermostat. The meter. And they said it was  
9 customer service for the meter, but I've never seen  
10 anybody come to my house to maintenance any type of  
11 meter in the -- in the time that it's been outside.

12 So I just -- I just feel like that  
13 it's -- the problem is with the delivery charge.  
14 Why's the delivery charge so high? I think the  
15 delivery charge is where Spire's making their money,  
16 off the delivery charge, and I just think it's  
17 ridiculously high. If my gas bill is 245, you know,  
18 I expect to pay some type of fee, but not a certain  
19 percentage.

20 And then they have different rates for  
21 the east part of Missouri and the west part of  
22 Missouri. It's different rates, and I don't  
23 understand why that is. Although we had somebody  
24 explain it, I still don't understand why that is.

25 So that's all I wanted to say. Thank

1 you.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Can you stay  
3 for just a second. And thank you for clarifying the  
4 difference between the meter and the thermostat; that  
5 makes a lot more sense to me now; I appreciate it.

6 Are there any questions from the  
7 commission?

8 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: I have no  
9 questions, Judge.

10 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions at this  
11 time. Thank you for your comments.

12 MS. COGSHELL: Thank you.

13 JUDGE CLARK: If you have questions that  
14 you feel that the Company did not answer during the  
15 Q&A portion, you might consider contacting the  
16 company with those specific questions.

17 MR. HOLSMAN: Hey, Judge, this is  
18 Commissioner Holsman.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, Commissioner.

20 MR. HOLSMAN: Would you share the contact  
21 information for the PSC for those in the room who  
22 decide not to testify tonight, but would like to make  
23 a comment on the record?

24 JUDGE CLARK: Yes. At the end of the  
25 hearing I will offer a way for people to offer

1 comments, either through Public Counsel or through  
2 the Commission's website.

3 MR. HOLSMAN: Thank you, Judge.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner  
5 Holsman. Thank you for bringing that to my  
6 attention.

7 Next up I have Glenn Burleigh.  
8 Mr. Burleigh, good evening. Would you state your  
9 name and spell it for the record.

10 MR. BURLEIGH: Yes. My name is Glenn  
11 Burleigh. That's G-l-e-n-n; last name  
12 B-u-r-l-e-i-g-h.

13 And I work for the Equal Housing  
14 Opportunity Council. We're the St. Louis  
15 metropolitan area's fair housing enforcement  
16 nonprofit. We also do a lot --

17 JUDGE CLARK: Can I get you to raise your  
18 right hand to be sworn before you start?

19 MR. BURLEIGH: Yep.

20 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Do you solemnly  
21 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
22 give at this local public hearing is the truth?

23 MR. BURLEIGH: I certainly do.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. I'm sorry to  
25 interrupt. Please go ahead.

1 MR. BURLEIGH: Yeah. So like I said, my  
2 name's Glenn. I work for Equal Housing Opportunity  
3 Council. We're the area's fair housing enforcement  
4 nonprofit.

5 Part of our job outside of fair housing  
6 non -- enforcement is helping tenants that are behind  
7 on their bills on various things and -- and getting  
8 rental assistance. And the percentage of our clients  
9 that come in that have significant arrears on top of  
10 their rental arrears that are going to make it hard  
11 for them to avoid eviction because if your gas gets  
12 cut -- gets cut off, that can be a reason for  
13 eviction, right.

14 So what I'm saying is that we see lots  
15 and lots of people already that are way behind in  
16 their bills. And frankly, an 11 percent increase on  
17 this -- and as commissioners have mentioned, this has  
18 nothing to do with gas prices which are projected to  
19 go up, right. So the actual gas prices that they're  
20 paying coming down the pipeline are projected to go  
21 up as well. So the increase that they're asking for  
22 now isn't even the total increase that most consumers  
23 should be expecting in the next couple years.

24 So we're just asking that the Commission  
25 deny them this exorbitant increase in rates. Thank



1 you.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Could you --  
3 any questions from the commission? I have no  
4 questions either. Thank you very much for your time  
5 and thank you for your comments.

6 Next I have Danielle Spradley.

7 Ms. Spradley, would you please state your name and  
8 spell it for the record.

9 MS. SPRADLEY: My name's Danielle  
10 Spradley. It's D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e S-p-r-a-d-l-e-y.

11 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise right  
12 hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
13 that the testimony you're about to give at this local  
14 public hearing is the truth?

15 MS. SPRADLEY: I do.

16 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
17 tell the Commission today?

18 MS. SPRADLEY: Dear members of the Public  
19 Service Commission, thank you for convening this  
20 hearing. My name is Danielle Spradley, and I serve  
21 as the Outreach Director for Congresswoman Cori Bush.  
22 I am grateful to testify this evening behalf of the  
23 congresswoman in Missouri's First District.

24 Make no mistake, access to affordable and  
25 clean energy is a human right, and far too often, it

1 is a matter of life and death, especially in extreme  
2 cold winter months like we see in Missouri. We  
3 cannot keep forcing our most marginalized  
4 communities, those with low incomes, our elders,  
5 families with small children and so many others to  
6 choose between eating or having heat, between  
7 affording life-saving medications or keeping their  
8 children warm at night.

9           And what's worse is that the burden of  
10 high energy cost is not equally felt. It's black and  
11 brown people and families across St. Louis who will  
12 be stretched to the brink by this exorbitant rate  
13 hike. And it comes at a time when resources are  
14 already thin because of rising food prices,  
15 transportation costs, and stagnant wages.

16           Utility companies like Spire must do  
17 better, yet they're refusing to do so by asking for a  
18 raise on cost on St. Louis families. Year after year  
19 Spire's imposed rate increases put an undue financial  
20 burden on those who can afford these hikes the least.  
21 All of this happened while Spire took in record  
22 earnings. Just last year it was reported that  
23 Spire's CEO received a compensation of 5.6 million,  
24 a 26 percent pay increase from the 12 percent pay  
25 increase she received in 2019. In a country where

1 widening income and equality is commonplace, this  
2 might make sense. But in a society where utilities  
3 are guaranteed as a fundamental human right, and we  
4 believe people should be able to have their material  
5 needs met, it's immoral and outrageous that this  
6 company is profiting off the backs of communities  
7 like ours, forcing people, elders, and children to  
8 freeze in the dead of winter because they are unable  
9 to afford exorbitant utility bills.

10           It's not just the cost -- it's not the  
11 cost of service, and it can -- it could -- cannot and  
12 should not be tolerated. Last year as a part of our  
13 office's work on the House Committee on Oversight  
14 Reform, Congresswoman Bush led the effort and asked  
15 for a public correction from the Federal Agency [sic]  
16 Regulatory Commission, FERC, after Spire's misleading  
17 campaign threatening to shut off heat for the  
18 St. Louisans. The congresswoman and our office heard  
19 from so many families afraid that they wouldn't be  
20 able to stay warm last winter. That is no way to  
21 live and as someone who has experienced utility  
22 shutoffs herself, the congresswoman refused to stay  
23 silent. She spoke up for St. Louis just as we're  
24 doing today to say we cannot put profits over  
25 people's lives. We cannot prioritize dangerous

1 pipelines over the health and safety of our  
2 community.

3 On behalf of Congresswoman Bush it is of  
4 utmost importance that these opportunities for public  
5 input are priorities, and we are glad to see so many  
6 people out this evening. Thank [sic] many of you, we  
7 firmly disagree with Spire's decision to ask for  
8 raised utility prices for our St. Louis community  
9 members and are calling on the PSC to act in the best  
10 interest of our communities. Thank you.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from the  
12 commission? I have no questions. Thank you for your  
13 comments.

14 Kathryn Cryts. Would you please state  
15 and spell your name for the record.

16 MS. CRYTS: I'm Kathryn Cryts. It's  
17 spelled K-a-t-h-r-y-n C-r-y-t-s.

18 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your  
19 right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or  
20 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
21 this local public hearing is the truth?

22 MS. CRYTS: I do.

23 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
24 tell the commission this evening?

25 MS. CRYTS: Thank you so much to the

1 Missouri Public Commission for holding these public  
2 hearings and giving me the opportunity to speak on  
3 this case that affects me and family. It's so  
4 important that members of my community get the option  
5 to have their voices heard on matters that affect  
6 them, and we all really appreciate your time.

7 My name is Kathryn Cryts, and I live in  
8 O'Fallon, Missouri. Spire's rate increase proposal  
9 comes at a time that is so financially troubling to  
10 so many people, a time when young people like myself  
11 or a lot of us who are already stuck with student  
12 debt are coming to terms with the fact that the cost  
13 of living is barely affordable. And I'm one of the  
14 lucky ones. The rest of my family is not so lucky  
15 and cannot afford their expenses.

16 My sister who barely makes over minimum  
17 wage comes over to my house to eat some of my food  
18 because she struggles to pay for her own. My parents  
19 are retired and on a fixed income. And inflation has  
20 been particularly unforgiving to the retired.  
21 Instead of taking my help, my parents dig themselves  
22 into more debt to pay for their dental care and  
23 medical care when Medicare does not fully cover it.  
24 My parents are in their 60s and 70s and they have  
25 over \$100,000 of debt that they will most likely

1 carry to their graves.

2 I'm here to speak for my sister and all  
3 of the young people in her situation, especially  
4 those not fortunate enough as my sister to have a  
5 family member they can depend on for food. Spire's  
6 rate increase would cause them to sacrifice even  
7 more. And I'm here to speak for my parents and to  
8 speak for all retired people who already can't afford  
9 to survive on their fixed income and they certainly  
10 can't afford a price hike from a gas company that  
11 already has very comfortable profits.

12 I remember very specifically getting a  
13 letter from Spire last winter telling us that we  
14 needed to support their pipeline or risk gas  
15 shutoffs. I remember being very afraid when I got  
16 that letter. I remember how scared it was that my  
17 family might freeze to death by winter. And I  
18 remember coming to terms with that, that reality, and  
19 trying to find a way that we would survive, like  
20 staying at a friend's house in the area whose house  
21 had electric heating. It was terrifying. Spire knew  
22 what they were doing when they sent that letter.  
23 They wanted us to be afraid.

24 They did not send that letter for our  
25 safety. They sent it because they knew that they

1 hold our lives in our hands [sic] and that if we  
2 feared for our lives, we would have no choice but to  
3 take their side and help them secure their gas empire  
4 and secure their business and profit increases for  
5 years to come.

6 This case is no different. They know  
7 that they still hold our lives in their hands and  
8 they know, as the gas monopoly in the area, that if  
9 they raise the rates, we would pay it to avoid  
10 freezing, even if it means sacrificing other  
11 essentials.

12 We cannot continue to let Spire take to  
13 advantage of us. Please vote no on Spire's proposed  
14 rate increase. Thank you so much.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Any commissioner questions?  
16 I have one question for you. You said you received a  
17 letter from Spire asking that you support the  
18 pipeline. When did you receive that?

19 MS. CRYTS: I want to clarify that it  
20 wasn't asking to support the pipeline. It was just  
21 saying that -- that if they didn't get support for  
22 the pipeline, that there would be -- there would  
23 potentially be gas shutoffs.

24 I received it, I believe, last December  
25 in 2021. I'm not sure the exact date.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
2 comments.

3 MS. CRYTS: Thank you.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Barbara Robinson.  
5 Ms. Robinson, would you please state and spell your  
6 name for the record.

7 MS. ROBINSON: My name is Barbara  
8 Robinson. And my first name is spelled  
9 B-a-r-b-a-r-a, Robinson, R-o-b-i-n-s-o-n.

10 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your  
11 right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or  
12 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
13 this local public hearing is the truth?

14 MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

15 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell  
16 the Commission this evening, Ms. Robinson.

17 MS. ROBINSON: Well, To Whom it May  
18 Concern: You're telling me that it -- that Spire is  
19 going to raise our gas prices. I just don't  
20 understand. I have three -- I am a schoolteacher and  
21 I have three grandchildren and a retired husband. I  
22 don't get food stamps because they say I make too  
23 much money. But I don't. To take care of all those  
24 kids. So if gas prices are going up and I would --  
25 and I will -- and I would have to choose between



1 buying food and -- with food prices going up, I have  
2 to choose between buying food and paying bills. This  
3 price increase is a burden on me. And if the gas  
4 prices go up, you know, I just don't know what --  
5 what's going to happen, because last winter we had  
6 high gas bills.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Can you say the last part  
8 again? I had a hard time hearing you.

9 MS. ROBINSON: I said if the gas price is  
10 to go up, it's going to be hard for me to pay bills  
11 because my husband's on a fixed income.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Robinson.

13 Any questions from the Commission? I  
14 have no questions. Thank you for your comments.

15 Sheila Davis. Ms. Davis, would you say  
16 and spell your name for the record.

17 MS. DAVIS: My name is Sheila Davis,  
18 S-h-e-i-l-a D-a-v-i-s.

19 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your  
20 right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or  
21 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
22 this local public hearing is the truth?

23 MS. DAVIS: Yes, I do.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
25 tell the Commission this evening?

1 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is  
2 Sheila Davis, a senior citizen and a resident of  
3 Fountain Park, living in the house that my  
4 grandmother bought in 1940. There has been six  
5 generations of my family there. I have been in my  
6 home; I have used coal heat, oil heat, and now gas  
7 heat. I need repairs to restore my home, but my  
8 utility bills are so high, I cannot afford it.

9 Being on a tight budget is like energy  
10 versus basic needs. I am 70 years old, a single home  
11 owner, and still working a full-time job. Employed  
12 by the City of St. Louis for 18 years, I'm afraid to  
13 retire because I will not be able to -- or have  
14 enough income to pay all my bills. So it's all on  
15 me. Currently working hard informing my community  
16 and trying to keep and maintain my property.

17 It would hurt if there was an increase in  
18 utility rates. I may have to move out of my home  
19 that I have lived in most of my life. I grew up  
20 there.

21 Take in consideration what an increase in  
22 utility rates would do. I love my home, my  
23 community, and the people that live in it. On behalf  
24 of the Fountain Park and Louis Place Spirit  
25 Committee, this is my energy burden story.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from  
2 commissioners? I have no questions.

3 Thank you, Ms. Davis.

4 Chris Willcox. Would you please state  
5 and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. WILLCOX: Yeah. Chris Willcox,  
7 C-h-r-i-s W-i-l-l-c-o-x.

8 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
9 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
10 this local public hearing is the truth?

11 MR. WILLCOX: Yes.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Please give us your  
13 comments.

14 MR. WILLCOX: Good evening. My name is  
15 Chris Willcox. I am the mutual aide and policy  
16 associate for A Red Circle, a nonprofit organization  
17 that serves and advocates for residents of North  
18 St. Louis County.

19 I am here because we oppose the proposed  
20 rate hike that will hurt our poorest and most  
21 vulnerable neighbors the most. Many policy decisions  
22 do this, but it's rare to find a possible outcome  
23 with such perfect precision could affect -- afflict  
24 the afflicted and comfort the comfortable. Raising  
25 utility rates would be a grievous injury to our

1 poorest neighbors still struggling to maintain  
2 housing at the worst possible time.

3 Most of us have had to make sacrifices  
4 after the onset of COVID-19 in 2020. Spire's one of  
5 the few who have not because people need heat to  
6 survive, whether they can afford it or not. While I  
7 was still trying to scrape together for my own rent  
8 and utilities that year, on Grub Hub income, I  
9 started speaking directly to neighbors who need help  
10 as part of St. Louis Mutual Aid. Easily the most  
11 frequent need was financial assistance to be able to  
12 maintain their housing. With so many people having  
13 lost incomes, they went into debt for rent and then  
14 utility bills and have had precious little help  
15 catching back up.

16 I will never forget what it felt like --  
17 what it felt like talking -- taking calls from  
18 neighbors in need in the winter of 2020 when all the  
19 public assistance from the CARES Act had been  
20 expended, leaving us with nothing to offer. But we  
21 act like COVID-19 is gone. It emphatically is not.  
22 This is particularly the case for households that  
23 include people who are immunocompromised, some of  
24 whom were working prior to COVID, but the risk today  
25 remains far too grave.

1                   At A Red Circle the calls we get for help  
2   are much the same. People are struggling to afford  
3   food, rent, and utilities. That's because -- that's  
4   become more apparent since we started holding clinics  
5   for such families applying for federal rental,  
6   mortgage, and utility assistance. Between all  
7   our volunteers we've met with families for this  
8   purpose 54 times this year, and these encounters  
9   represent at least 95 people. Overwhelmingly these  
10   are families with children. Help with utilities is  
11   the single-most frequent need as people who don't  
12   have enough income have to prioritize rent to keep  
13   from being evicted and becoming homeless or  
14   prioritize food to keep families from being  
15   malnourished.

16                   Two weeks ago, I got a call from a mother  
17   with two infants in her home because her utilities  
18   were being shut off. She has already applied for  
19   federal assistance but the wait times are getting  
20   longer from the massive demand. She has been unable  
21   to restore her utilities because she has already  
22   asked every local charity and the funds are just not  
23   there.

24                   It has always been strange to me that  
25   profits has been so consistently prioritized for

1 government support relative to the lengthy and  
2 painful process people must go through to get help  
3 just to survive. Very few businesses have a  
4 guaranteed profit margin. Fewer still more than 10  
5 percent for a service that nearly every household  
6 must purchase -- must purchase in some form. Rate  
7 increases have -- may not be felt much for households  
8 that are doing fine, but the pain is felt most  
9 acutely by households who have the least to spare  
10 because of thousands of dollars in medical and dental  
11 bills, unfortunately, not uncommon for households. I  
12 myself have had to put rent on the credit card,  
13 incurring extra fees because there is not enough in  
14 my account to cover it at the start of the month.

15 Low-income families struggle the most  
16 with medical bills because of their social  
17 determinants of health that coincide with poverty.  
18 All of it amounts to what is more than a modest  
19 family can bear -- modest-family income can bear.  
20 Utilities are a public service, and in this case the  
21 government at least has the ability to decide how  
22 much Spire gets to profit. Spire is doing just fine  
23 and as long as it keeps cutting off vital services  
24 for families and children, it doesn't need to squeeze  
25 that much more from the rest to pad its bottom line.

1 Thank you.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from  
3 commissioners? Do you have a question,  
4 Mr. Aplington?

5 MR. APLINGTON: Yes. Thank you so much  
6 for coming and sharing your story. The woman that  
7 you gave the example of with the two infants and you  
8 said that her utilities were cut off -- you said that  
9 her utilities were cut off, did that include gas?

10 MR. WILLCOX: I believe so.

11 MR. APLINGTON: Okay. Would you be able  
12 to share her contact information with the community  
13 services folks in the back so we can assist?

14 MR. WILLCOX: Sure.

15 MR. APLINGTON: Thank you.

16 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions for  
17 you. Thank you for your comments.

18 Francis Bonhem. And please state and  
19 spell your name for the record.

20 MS. BONHEM: I'm Francis Bonhem,  
21 F-r-a-n-c-i-s B-o-n-h-e-m.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Bonhem, would you  
23 raise your right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly  
24 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
25 give at this local public hearing is the truth?

1 MS. BONHEM: I do.

2 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
3 tell the Commission this evening?

4 MS. BONHEM: First, thank you for being  
5 in St. Louis in person. As nervous as I am, I don't  
6 want to do a Zoom call.

7 When I was still a teenager, I had bad  
8 experience using a credit card and got myself into  
9 some trouble. Once I resolved that issue, I decided  
10 I'd never get another credit card. Since then I've  
11 only ever used cash, checks, and finally a debit  
12 card. I pay all my bills in full and on time each  
13 month. I try to never run up a bill that I can't pay  
14 right now. To help with that I have my utilities put  
15 on budget billing and that helps because it helps me  
16 to judge how much I'm going to owe each month and  
17 that way I can be sure to be able to pay those bills  
18 in full and on time.

19 This means I'm hyper aware of how much  
20 gas and electric I use each month. During the winter  
21 I do what I can to not even turn on the heat. I  
22 routinely wear a shirt, a T-shirt, and at least one  
23 sweater. I wear socks with my slippers. I sleep  
24 under at least three blankets and actually use a hot  
25 water bottle to heat the sheets before I get into



1 bed. And I cover the windows because I rent my  
2 apartment, and the insulation is almost nonexistent.  
3 I religiously sign up for LIHEAP each winter and that  
4 does help a lot. And because I'm so careful, I'm  
5 able to pay my bills on time in full every month.

6 This past summer I was sitting in front  
7 of a fan, checking to see if the heat index was over  
8 a hundred because that's when I allow myself to turn  
9 on the air conditioning. And a funny thing occurred  
10 to me. This year I had one of those birthdays that  
11 ended in zero and it forced me to realize that I am  
12 now officially an old person. We all know the  
13 elderly are more susceptible to weather-related  
14 deaths and I was thinking how stupid it would be if I  
15 were to be one of those people who were found dead in  
16 their apartment from a heatstroke when there was no  
17 working -- when there was a working air conditioner  
18 available, but it just wasn't turned on. I didn't  
19 want to be that person so this summer I decided that  
20 I'd keep the air conditioner on an extra day or so  
21 and I edged the thermostat down just a little so the  
22 room didn't have to be quite so hot before the air  
23 conditioning kicked on.

24 I use my heat a little differently. I  
25 have the heat turned on all the time in winter, but I

1 set the thermostat so that it only comes on when the  
2 room reaches a certain temperature. Consequently I  
3 set it so that it rarely ever turns on.

4 Now, this old person is contemplating the  
5 upcoming winter. I had thought maybe I would set my  
6 thermostat just a degree or two lower to be just a  
7 little warmer and budget a little more for the gas.  
8 This rate case is about raising how much I'll have to  
9 pay in full and on time for my gas use. This is on  
10 top of everything else costing more right now. I  
11 think it's an awful time to ask for a rate increase,  
12 but it's unconscionable to ask for such a large  
13 increase when we all are hurting so much.

14 I'm on a fixed income and my annual  
15 Social Security cost of living increase is nowhere  
16 near the 11 percent that Spire is asking for. I  
17 already live very frugally to keep within my budget,  
18 which means I'm already making sacrifices to be able  
19 to pay my bills in full and on time. I really don't  
20 see where I'm going to be able to economize further  
21 to pay this large increase in my monthly gas bill.  
22 Thank you.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Any  
24 commissioner questions? I have no questions. Thank  
25 you for your comments.

1 I apologize if I butcher this; I'm just  
2 having a little difficulty reading it. Mia Tierre.  
3 Would you please state and spell your name for the  
4 record.

5 MS. TURNER: Sure. It's Mia Turner,  
6 M-i--

7 JUDGE CLARK: I think the mic went out.  
8 So wait just a second and we'll get that taken care  
9 of.

10 MS. TURNER: Hi. I'm Mia Turner, M-i-a  
11 T-u-r-n-e-r.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And would you raise  
13 right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or  
14 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
15 this local public hearing is the truth?

16 MS. TURNER: Yes.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Turner.

18 MS. TURNER: I'm here to testify about  
19 women that I work with. I work with a lot of  
20 prenatal, postpartum moms. I have two women in  
21 particular on my caseload, because I work for a  
22 not-for-profit, and this rate increase will really  
23 hurt them because the two women that I'm speaking of,  
24 I was speaking with them at a visit and they just got  
25 out of the hospital with having their babies. And

1 one of them don't even know why her gas bill was so  
2 high when she wasn't even at home to really be using  
3 it. She was in the hospital.

4 And then with the unpaid maternity leave  
5 that a lot of these companies are inflicting on these  
6 moms, you know, they don't even get paid when they're  
7 on maternity leave. They've got to fight for it. So  
8 therefore, their utilities are going up. They're not  
9 at work. They have to take a -- you know, they're on  
10 maternity leave for about six weeks and then they  
11 can't pay their bill. And then they've got to decide  
12 on, you know, if I'm going to buy formula, especially  
13 with the formula shortage, and Pampers and recourses  
14 for their babies, how are they going to afford their  
15 utilities. So this utility rate hike will really,  
16 really hurt a lot of prenatal and postpartum mothers.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from  
18 commissioners? I have no questions. Thank you,  
19 Ms. Turner.

20 Shirley Ferguson. Ms. Ferguson, would  
21 you please say and spell your name for the record.

22 MS. FERGUSON: I'm sorry, say that again,  
23 sir.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please say and  
25 spell your name for the record.

1 MS. FERGUSON: Yes. My name is Shirley,  
2 S-h-i-r-l-e-y, Ferguson, F-e-r-g-u-s-o-n.

3 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Ferguson, do you  
4 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
5 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
6 truth?

7 MS. FERGUSON: Yes, I do.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Please tell us  
9 whatever you would like to tell us.

10 MS. FERGUSON: Okay. My name is Shirley  
11 Ferguson, and I am a senior citizen and resident of  
12 St. Louis County. But before I start my testimony, I  
13 would like to take the opportunity to thank all the  
14 commissioners for allowing us to attend and hear our  
15 stories as to our thoughts on the increase that Spire  
16 is selecting. I'm sorry. Not selecting, but  
17 requesting.

18 I want to say that first of all last year  
19 I was enrolled in a program through Spire called the  
20 Spire Payment Partner Program that was designed to  
21 help me stay in control of my utility bill, which  
22 would be the Spire. Well, in August of this year I  
23 received a letter from Spire, from the particular  
24 program telling me that I had graduated and that I  
25 successfully completed the program and I would be put

1 on a budget plan. Now, that's the first that I heard  
2 of that in terms of information from them saying I'm  
3 no longer on the program. That was a shocker.

4 But even with tonight and what I heard,  
5 it stuns me that some representatives from Spire said  
6 that they want to increase the program. Okay.  
7 You're going to increase the program. I'm being cut  
8 off, number one. And then secondly, you're asking  
9 for an increase. That's a double whammy. You're  
10 taking my credits away from me and you're also  
11 requesting an increase. That's one step from being  
12 hilarious to the point that you want to cry.

13 I'm on a fixed income. I have had four  
14 years, three years consecutively of serious  
15 illnesses. I've had two surgeries requiring body  
16 parts if you will. And the next incident -- the  
17 first one was serious surgery in 2019. 2020, a year  
18 later, I had the second surgery on my other femur.  
19 And then the third year which was 2020 I was back in  
20 the hospital for another condition. I have increased  
21 medical expenses. I have increased doctors' visits,  
22 sometimes testing or whatever. I'm not going to go  
23 into that, but I want to say this: This is not a  
24 good time for seniors or anybody else to have to look  
25 at a rate increase.

1 Cost of living has expensed. Clothing,  
2 footing -- food, sorry. Other expenses. Medical  
3 expenses. I have a lot of medical expenses like a  
4 lot of other people do. But the issue is the timing  
5 is wrong. And I am totally against across --  
6 increase in the rate, and especially when it's not  
7 about the gas.

8 That's another mind blower. It is not  
9 about the cost of gas. My food is high; my medical  
10 is higher. There are other expenses that are higher  
11 that are needed for living and you guys are talking  
12 about an increase and it's not about the gas. And I  
13 speak for myself because I can tell my story better  
14 than anybody else, but I want you to know there are  
15 other senior citizens that I am involved with, people  
16 from my church, people from a couple of organizations  
17 that I belong to and when we talk, those are some of  
18 the main things we talk about. How are we going to  
19 make it. How are we going to make it. The things  
20 that we need are things for our livelihood.

21 We're not trying to go out and do other  
22 things that people are going to do. And that's fine,  
23 I have no problem with it. We're trying to live.  
24 And for you guys to come to us when everything that  
25 it takes to live is going up, it's utterly ridiculous

1 and I am against it and I'm asking the Commission to  
2 listen to my story because I can tell it better than  
3 anybody else, but also know that there are other  
4 stories from seniors who are going through some of  
5 the same issues that I know. There's nothing what I  
6 heard other than out of their mouths.

7 And I'm asking you to take the time and  
8 not agree, not agree at all to this insane increase  
9 that Spire wants. Thank you.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Any questions from  
11 commissioners? I have one question for you. I'm  
12 familiar with the Budget Billing Program. You had  
13 indicated, and I'm sorry, you said it faster than I  
14 could write it down, you had graduated from a  
15 different program through Spire that was being  
16 expanded you said. What's the name of the program?

17 MS. FERGUSON: The name of the program is  
18 Senior -- I'm sorry, it is Spire Payment Partner  
19 Program.

20 I was in the program a year, but when my  
21 year was up, they sent me a letter telling me I had  
22 graduated and that I was no -- basically no longer in  
23 the program; I would not be getting those credits.  
24 Those credits helped. They helped a lot. And now  
25 they're taking the credits away and they're also



1 asking for an increase. That's a double whammy.

2 And I -- I along with anybody else that  
3 may be involved, and I'm not saying that they are, I  
4 don't know how I'm going to do it. I just don't know  
5 how -- I'm going to have to sacrifice something that  
6 it takes for me to live, be it medicine or food or  
7 another necessity for life to try to make that  
8 sacrifice. So what am I going to do. I got a  
9 mountain of hospital bills over three years, two of  
10 them surgeries. That's got to be paid. I'm doing  
11 what I can, but it's not much. I'm almost being sued  
12 to tell you the truth, but anyway, that's just the  
13 way life is. But I have to make sacrifices to live.  
14 They can make sacrifices for something that's not  
15 attributed to gas.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Aplington.

17 MR. APLINGTON: Yes, just a quick  
18 question. Thank you so much. Have you looked into  
19 whether you would be able to get back on the Payment  
20 Partner Program or the Medical Registry Program?

21 MS. FERGUSON: I just got the letter in  
22 August, like I said. But the way the letter is  
23 written, it's like, You're off. I mean, we're going  
24 to put you on a payment plan. They didn't ask me to  
25 reapply. They just told me I was going to be put on

1 a payment plan.

2 MR. APLINGTON: I understand. Please  
3 don't leave without talking to our customer support  
4 reps in the back. You can get back on the program  
5 and there's some other programs that might be able to  
6 assist you.

7 MS. FERGUSON: Thank you. Thank you.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Ferguson, thank you for  
9 your comments.

10 MS. FERGUSON: You're welcome, your  
11 Honor.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Is it William Wallace? Did  
13 I say that right?

14 MR. WALLACE: Yes, you did.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please say and  
16 spell your name for the record.

17 MR. WALLACE: My name is William Wallace,  
18 W-i-l-l-i-a-m, Wallace, W-a-l-l-a-c-e.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
20 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
21 this local public hearing is the truth?

22 MR. WALLACE: I do.

23 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
24 tell the Commission?

25 MR. WALLACE: Thank you. Good evening,

1 everybody. My name is Bill Wallace and I'm the  
2 executive director of Missouri Veterans Endeavor.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Say that again please, I'm  
4 sorry?

5 MR. WALLACE: The executive director of  
6 Missouri Veterans Endeavor, where our acronym is  
7 MOVE, M-O-V-E. We are a nonprofit that provides  
8 housing, case management, therapeutic services, and  
9 an attachment to needed resources for veterans and  
10 their families experiencing homelessness here in the  
11 St. Louis region. I'm also an executive committee  
12 member for the St. Louis County Continuum of Care of  
13 homeless service providers. I'm a veteran myself and  
14 a former Missouri Veterans commissioner.

15 I'm testifying today on behalf of my  
16 veteran peers who are far less fortunate than myself,  
17 as well as for all of our St. Louis neighbors who are  
18 themselves experiencing homelessness, feel  
19 marginalized or unheard, and who find themselves  
20 financially challenged during these exceedingly  
21 challenging times. My thoughts tonight also reflect  
22 those of my peers and homeless service provision  
23 across the St. Louis region.

24 We feel very strongly that the 11-plus  
25 percent rate increase proposed by Spire for this

1 supply and distribution of natural gas products is  
2 not only unwarranted, but will be a cruel and harsh  
3 contributor to our region's growing number of people,  
4 families, and children entering homelessness.

5           During the past two and a half years, our  
6 region's citizens have been forever changed from  
7 COVID and the ripple effects of its contributing  
8 factors which include loss of jobs, unstable income,  
9 mental and physical health strains, equity issues  
10 impacting underserved and under-recognized  
11 communities, the placements and then lifting of  
12 moratoriums on evictions and utility disconnections  
13 and a great deal of uncertainty as to what may still  
14 lie ahead.

15           All of those factors have contributed to  
16 an increase of 25 to 35 percent across the St. Louis  
17 region, including surrounding counties, in the number  
18 of people who are experiencing homelessness today.  
19 You couple that with the fragile state of the  
20 economy, the increase in fuel prices across the  
21 board, inflated prices for food and essentials and a  
22 serious lack of affordable housing, and we are  
23 finding more and more of our neighbors homeless,  
24 living on the streets, in their cars, or in unsafe  
25 structures not meant for human habitation.

1           A huge and generational contributor to  
2 homelessness is utility debt and utility insecurity.  
3 If an eligible person is unable to attain utilities  
4 in his or her name, then they are unable to secure a  
5 lease or certainly a mortgage on their own home.

6           The great majority of our neighbors  
7 experiencing homelessness have this utility  
8 insecurity. For example, virtually all of the  
9 homeless veterans and their family members who live  
10 in our veteran community in St. Louis County enter  
11 our program and permanent housing opportunity with  
12 utility debt, including debt owed to Spire. Our  
13 organization pays their utility bills. They enter  
14 into payment plans with Spire. They pay us back when  
15 they are able. And we also seek private, direct  
16 financial assistance grants to help them pay their  
17 debt and their bills to the hopeful point where they  
18 can place their utilities in their own names, perhaps  
19 build up their own credit and so that when they move  
20 on from our program to the greater community, they  
21 are able to get those utilities in their own names  
22 that they must have.

23           Now, this is just a small snapshot, but  
24 our financially challenged neighbors or those  
25 experiencing homelessness face every single day.

1           We believe that Spire's proposed rate  
2   increase is entirely financially driven. That's what  
3   we, as homeless service providers, feel and believe  
4   as do our neighbors. We heard about the compensation  
5   packages, talk about common stock dividends being  
6   increased over the years, and we talk about the fact  
7   that they want a higher profit margin. This is  
8   something that we believe.

9           We live in such fragile and uncertain  
10   times. What we do know that is concrete and for  
11   certain is that based on our region's Homeless  
12   Management Information system, we have seen an  
13   increase from 1,700 to 2,400 homeless individuals and  
14   families in the past year alone. And that is just in  
15   St. Louis City.

16           We know for a fact that winter is coming.  
17   It is predicted to be harsh. We know for certain  
18   that those who still have homes and pay their Spire  
19   bills, that many will have to make choices about  
20   whether to pay their Spire bill, maybe pay their  
21   electric bill, or pay for food or clothing or medical  
22   expenses. Many will be unable to pay their bills,  
23   will accrue more debt which will compound, or even  
24   worse, have their Spire services disconnected. They  
25   will lose their housing and they will be subjected to

1 the uncertainty as to how to keep themselves, their  
2 families, and their children safe, secure, and warm.

3 So many of our neighbors do not have  
4 viable choices. But the executives and board of  
5 Spire do.

6 We are asking you to do the right thing  
7 for the right choice. Don't increase your natural  
8 gas rates. Work to help our neighbors, your  
9 community remain safe, warm, and secure. Help us end  
10 homelessness in a pending public health crisis which  
11 is on the horizon and create reasonable payment plans  
12 and create another moratorium on the disconnection of  
13 utilities. Thank you very much.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Any commissioner questions?  
15 I have no questions. Thank you for your comments,  
16 Mr. Wallace.

17 MR. WALLACE: Thank you.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Brittany Kiefer.  
19 Ms. Kiefer, would you say and spell your name for the  
20 record.

21 MS. KIEFER: Brittany, B-r-i-t-t-a-n-y  
22 K-i-e-f-e-r.

23 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Kiefer, do you  
24 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
25 about to give at this local public hearing is the

1 truth?

2 MS. KIEFER: I do.

3 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
4 tell the Commission?

5 MS. KIEFER: Good evening. My name is  
6 Brittany Kiefer. I am a St. Louis city resident and  
7 a full-time student working towards my Master of  
8 Social Work.

9 In school I have spent much time studying  
10 racial inequity in St. Louis and the specific impact  
11 of unaffordable housing costs on racial wealth  
12 inequity. I'm calling on Missouri Public Service  
13 Commission to consider the impact of Spire's proposed  
14 rate increase on marginalized populations in our  
15 city, namely low-income families of color, people  
16 living with disabilities, the elderly, and children  
17 living on poverty who are at increased risk for  
18 homelessness and hunger.

19 Black children in St. Louis are 2.5 times  
20 more likely to live in energy-insecure homes than  
21 white children. Access to utility services like  
22 natural gas are essential to health and safety, but  
23 are increasingly unaffordable to many. Low-income  
24 families and those living on fixed incomes, like  
25 Social Security and disability insurance, experience



1 financial hardship when essential costs of housing,  
2 utilities, food, and fuel raise due to inflation and  
3 rate increases. These households that are struggling  
4 to make ends meet are further burdened by service  
5 disconnections and nonpayment fees that are  
6 associated with not being able to meet rising costs  
7 and necessities.

8 Black and brown households in St. Louis  
9 are more than twice as likely than white households  
10 to forego food or medicine to pay for energy costs.  
11 In many cases, especially for children, the elderly,  
12 and those living with disabilities, these community  
13 members experience higher rates of medical  
14 complications resulting from energy insecurity or the  
15 inability to adequately meet household needs.

16 In Missouri utility service can be shut  
17 off if payment is not made 21 days after the mailing  
18 of a combined bill. The provider is required to  
19 postpone a shutoff for up to 21 days only if the  
20 shutoff would aggravate an existing medical emergency  
21 of a customer. In this case the customer must  
22 provide reasonable evidence of the existing  
23 emergency. Not only does this process establish  
24 barriers to service for those who are at their most  
25 vulnerable, but the charging of late fees, deposits,

1 and other punitive charges further punishes  
2 struggling households and contributes to --  
3 contributes to systematic criminalization of the  
4 poor. Oftentimes utility providers use shutoffs as a  
5 collection tool, which is inhumane and denies  
6 consumer protections.

7           Spire has filed for a \$151.9 million rate  
8 increase which would increase St. Louis household's  
9 bills by nearly 11 percent or almost \$10 a month at  
10 best cases, and it was already granted a rate  
11 increase less than a year ago that yielded over a 9  
12 percent corporate profit. Their proposed utility  
13 rate increase poses risks to St. Louis residents when  
14 many are already struggling to make ends meet.

15           I ask the Missouri Public Service  
16 Commission to consider the livelihood and the safety  
17 of Missouri residents and deny this rate case.

18           JUDGE CLARK: Any commissioner questions?  
19 I hear none. I have no questions for you,  
20 Ms. Kiefer. Thank you for your comments.

21           MS. KIEFER: Thank you.

22           JUDGE CLARK: To kind of shortcut things,  
23 if the commissioners have questions, if they would  
24 just interrupt me or chime in with their questions,  
25 I'll just not ask every single time.

1 MR. HOLSMAN: Thank you, Judge. I will  
2 let you know.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you very much,  
4 Commissioner Holsman.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Jeanette Oxford. Would you  
6 please state and spell your name for the record.

7 MS. MOTT-OXFORD: Jeanette Mott-Oxford,  
8 J-e-a-n-e-t-t-e, Mott like the applesauce, M-o-t-t,  
9 Oxford like the university, O-x-f-o-r-d.

10 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
11 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
12 this local public hearing is the truth?

13 MS. MOTT-OXFORD: I do.

14 JUDGE CLARK: And would what would you  
15 like to tell the Commission this evening?

16 MS. MOTT-OXFORD: Well, thank you for  
17 being here. I'm old enough to remember when there  
18 were more public hearings before rate increases were  
19 granted than there are now. I think that's important  
20 to be very accessible to the public and be very  
21 accessible, so thank you for being here in St. Louis  
22 at the community college.

23 I have studied utility issues for a long  
24 time from a lot of different perspectives. I served  
25 in the Missouri House of Representatives from 2005

1 to 2012, and I was on the Energy and Environment  
2 Committee where we looked at a number of utility  
3 issues. I've directed two statewide not-for-profits  
4 that worked on poverty issues, and in both of those  
5 positions one of the major issues that we looked at  
6 was housing insecurity. And the cost of utilities is  
7 a major driver of that.

8           And then I'm an active member of my  
9 community. I belong to Epiphany United Church of  
10 Christ in Benton Park. We have something called the  
11 Axe War Fund in our congregation where we help people  
12 in our church community, not just members, but also  
13 people that stay engaged with us over time that maybe  
14 they haven't formally joined the church, but they're  
15 definitely a member of our community. And when they  
16 can't pay their utility bills or their rent or pay  
17 for medicine, we often assist with that. And members  
18 of the congregation contribute to the Axe War Fund.

19           So I'm very familiar with the needs of  
20 some of my neighbors because I help to raise funds to  
21 supplement for their needs. One of those neighbors  
22 calls me frequently with her utility problems. And  
23 this year she had a story that sounded a lot like  
24 the one that we heard from this lady here on my  
25 right in that she had been paying, I believe she told

1 me either 60 or 70 dollars a month and suddenly it  
2 was going to go to \$170 a month. She lives on less  
3 than \$800 a month of SSI. She's 67. She has mental  
4 illnesses and physical illnesses that are chronic.  
5 And she has a learning disability that's impeded her  
6 ability to earn adequate income through most of her  
7 life, thus being a senior now living on SSI.

8           You can imagine if you live on less  
9 than \$800 a month how a \$170 a month gas bill would  
10 impact on your life. And so I started trying to  
11 help her find help by, you know, reaching out to  
12 the company, reaching out to the community, et  
13 cetera. It took weeks to -- to get some help and  
14 it's not quite really resolved yet. I'm sorry that  
15 she can't be here tonight to talk to the folks, but I  
16 might pass on her name and number to them and see if  
17 they would contact her and see if we can get her back  
18 into a better program than the one she's in right  
19 now.

20           She has trouble sleeping from her worries  
21 about whether she can pay her utility bills. And she  
22 already has hypertension, and I really feel like not  
23 just her, but literally tens of thousands, if not  
24 hundreds of thousands of people in the St. Louis  
25 area, have other health conditions exacerbated over

1 their worries about whether they're going to keep  
2 their housing stable and keep their utilities stable.

3 So there's just a whole lot of pain in  
4 our community, and I hope that you all will consider  
5 that as you are looking at this rate increase  
6 request. I think it's very appropriate that the  
7 investors share the pain of our community. Most  
8 people have not had their incomes go up any 10  
9 percent or 11 percent in recent years.

10 The minimum wage was stagnant year after  
11 year after year until we took the power into our own  
12 hands here in Missouri by collecting signatures on  
13 petitions and getting the minimum wage to go up some.  
14 But it -- that still didn't cope with the true cost  
15 of living. And certainly there are so many people  
16 that still can't keep their basic needs stable right  
17 now.

18 So given inflation, given wage  
19 stagnation, given that a lot of us haven't had our  
20 incomes go up any 10 or 11 percent, having investors  
21 who are often in pretty comfortable shape be  
22 guaranteed that level of profit seems inappropriate  
23 to me. They should share the pain that the rest of  
24 the community is sharing.

25 And this is a very painful time. I'm 68

1 and watching what's happening with my, you know, with  
2 my financial investors and my -- the company that  
3 helps me with my financial planning reporting to me  
4 what's happening with my nest egg out there right now  
5 makes me pretty nervous because it's the time of my  
6 life that I'm going to be needing that very soon. So  
7 a lot of us are feeling uncertainty and pain, and  
8 investors ought to share that pain with us I believe.

9 I don't think 9 percent is appropriate.  
10 I appreciate the Office of Public Counsel fighting to  
11 get that down, but I think even 9 percent is too  
12 much. So I think that the pain should be shared.

13 And then finally in terms of the helping  
14 programs, yes, they should go to at least 300 percent  
15 of the poverty level and here's why. The poverty  
16 level has nothing to do with whether people have an  
17 adequate amount of income to secure basic human  
18 needs.

19 The poverty level, if you don't know how  
20 it was created, it's a formula created by a woman  
21 named Mollie Orshansky who was an economist who  
22 graduated from Hunter College. She worked for the  
23 Social Security Administration. And she came up with  
24 a formula that was only about the cost of food,  
25 nothing else. It doesn't include rent. It doesn't

1 include taxes. It doesn't include transportation  
2 costs, health care costs. It's only based on a  
3 formula about food and a very minimum amount of food  
4 at that, not an exorbitant amount of food, but a  
5 thrifty amount of food.

6 And there was a formula about how much  
7 most poor people tended to pay for their food in  
8 the 1950s and 60s that the poverty level was  
9 constructed on. That's never been changed. Why?  
10 Why haven't we changed it to reflect reality, what  
11 things really cost? Well, what president wants to  
12 own the fact that the number of people who are listed  
13 as officially poor went up to double or three times  
14 the amount that they were before they were elected  
15 president by basing a number on reality. But you  
16 know what, when we don't base things on reality,  
17 everything falls apart. Let's get real about what  
18 level of income people need help at and make these  
19 programs have income eligibility guidelines that are  
20 based on at least 300 percent of the poverty level.

21 And I'd welcome any questions you have.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
23 comments, Ms. Oxford. I have no questions.

24 Marsha Johnson. Ms. Johnson, would you  
25 say and spell your name for the record.



1 MS. JOHNSON: Myisha Johnson, M-y-i-s-h-a  
2 J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

3 JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry, I mispronounced  
4 your name. Would you raise your right hand to be  
5 sworn. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the  
6 testimony you're about to give at this local public  
7 hearing is the truth?

8 MS. JOHNSON: I do.

9 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
10 tell the Commission this evening?

11 MS. JOHNSON: I am a community member of  
12 Dutchtown, also an activist in that community. There  
13 are a lot of people in that community that will be  
14 harmed if you continue to raise these rates. As you  
15 said, you raised the rates in December. That took a  
16 toll. A lot of -- it put a lot of pressure on the  
17 elders in my community, the young folks in my  
18 community, and those that are barely surviving.

19 Housing is like a huge deal right now.  
20 People are looking for it. As the gentleman stated  
21 before, that there are 24,000 [sic] families at risk  
22 right now of freezing over the winter. There's not  
23 enough beds in the spaces where they can go to stay  
24 warm.

25 When folks on Section 8 do not pay their

1 utilities, they are evicted. So look at those  
2 numbers that -- of those families that you are going  
3 to displace by raising these hikes.

4 It is not -- I don't feel myself that it  
5 is up to us to have to pay for us this pipeline.  
6 This is something that you all wanted. And it  
7 would -- it would add more hardship to not just  
8 myself, but other family members and community  
9 members that's surrounding me.

10 I really hope that you guys take into  
11 consideration that a lot of people have lost family  
12 members during COVID season that bring in most of the  
13 income to help families survive.

14 Right now food is, like, outrageous. I  
15 have to pick and choose meals for how to feed my  
16 children throughout the week. Not only that, they  
17 took away the school buses for like a month and a  
18 half and I had to pay to take my daughter to school  
19 and make sure that she had the proper education so  
20 the system wouldn't come for me.

21 With adding all the extra things that we  
22 need, hand sanitizers, we're back to masks, it takes  
23 from us. It hurts to tell our children we can't take  
24 trips throughout the year. The small things like  
25 buying my daughter a gown to wear to homecoming, I

1 had to do without meds. I had to decide what I was  
2 going to take away so my daughter can enjoy her high  
3 school years. The rate increase won't allow me to do  
4 that if this happens again.

5 I'm already struggling to where am I  
6 going to take away each month. Not only myself, but  
7 I talk to my neighbors to hear their stories. The  
8 building next to me, people have come in and out  
9 because they couldn't keep up with their bills. They  
10 had to move in with other family members. And then  
11 they get evicted from those spaces because they're  
12 not allowed to subcontract -- sublease I mean, I'm  
13 sorry -- and allow others to move in that's not  
14 already on the lease. This will continue to happen.  
15 The homeless community will continue to grow.

16 You will continue to see babies -- I've  
17 been helping with the Unhoused Outreach Group and  
18 they're now requesting Enfamil, diapers, diaper  
19 wipes, clothing for the babies. Those babies that  
20 will freeze over the summer [sic], that would be on  
21 you if you continue to raise this increase.

22 We're not angry. We are pissed that you  
23 continue to come for the poor and ask us to give you  
24 something that we don't even have to give our  
25 families to survive. It's inhumane. It's not fair.

1 And as a Christian woman, what would God do, what  
2 would Jesus do if he was sitting here with you. This  
3 is coming from an angry black woman who lives in the  
4 Dutchtown community. Thank you.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Johnson, thank you for  
6 your comments.

7 Kimberly Finnegan.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. What  
9 order are you using to call these names? I mean, I  
10 was like the fifth -- fourth or fifth or sixth person  
11 and others who have come in after me --

12 JUDGE CLARK: I have three sheets here  
13 and they are numbered 1 through 37 and I've just been  
14 going down them in that order.

15 Please, Mr. Stokes. What's your  
16 question? Hold on. No.

17 Sorry. I apologize for the slow rate  
18 that we're going through this. I'm trying to give  
19 everybody an opportunity to tell the Commission what  
20 they'd like to tell the Commission, and it appears  
21 that people have a lot to say. I'm calling people to  
22 the best of my ability in the order that they were  
23 signed up as the sheets were given to me. So I  
24 apologize for your wait. I know it's late in the  
25 evening. I know a lot of you have sacrificed to be

1 here. The Commission takes your comments very  
2 seriously. It's very important to us that we hear  
3 what you have to say, even if we can't answer your  
4 questions today or comment.

5 Ms. Finnegan. Would you please state and  
6 spell your name for the record.

7 MS. FINNEGAN: Kimberly Finnegan,  
8 K-i-m-b-e-r-l-y F-i-n-n-e-g-a-n.

9 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
10 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
11 this local public hearing is the truth?

12 MS. FINNEGAN: I do.

13 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
14 tell the Commission?

15 MS. FINNEGAN: My name is Kimberly  
16 Finnegan. I am a social worker, an attorney, and  
17 really I am an advocate for low-income clients. I  
18 work with the most vulnerable populations in  
19 St. Louis and I've really devoted my career to  
20 working with folks with disabilities, veterans, older  
21 adults, our rural communities, and just really those  
22 people who are in need.

23 And so what I would like the Commission  
24 to know this evening is that although, you know, we  
25 may not have hundreds and hundreds of folks providing

1 testimony, that the testimony that is provided is  
2 representative of the community and should be taken  
3 seriously. And so I just ask that you really --  
4 really be thoughtful in your considerations of what  
5 has been said tonight and know that folks are really  
6 hurting and just be mindful of that in your decision  
7 making. Thank you.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
9 comments.

10 Elyse Mack. Ms. Mack, would you please  
11 say and spell your name for the record.

12 MS. MACK: My name's Elyse, E-l-y-s-e,  
13 Mack, M-a-c-k.

14 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Mack, do you  
15 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
16 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
17 truth?

18 MS. MACK: I do.

19 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
20 tell the Commission today?

21 MS. MACK: Good evening. My name is  
22 Elyse Mack; I use she/her pronouns.

23 Thank you, sir.

24 I'm a resident of the city of St. Louis,  
25 and I am here to testify against the greedy rate

1 increase Spire is seeking tonight.

2 I personally am an entry-level public  
3 servant, my partner is a teacher, and we do not have  
4 the budget necessary for life-saving utilities to  
5 increase in price by, on average, more than \$100 a  
6 month. Despite keeping our home at 55 degrees at  
7 night, our energy bills are already exorbitant.  
8 This year I've already paid an average of \$80 a month  
9 to Spire, and I expect that number to rise as we  
10 enter a colder period. My highest bill this year was  
11 over \$175, so this increase will be like adding an  
12 entire bill to my annual budget.

13 My 2022 average payments constitute a \$10  
14 a month increase from what I paid in 2021, an average  
15 of \$70 a month. And this doesn't begin to include  
16 other bills we have to account for like student loan  
17 debt, car payments, and thousands in medical bills  
18 due to a genetic heart condition I have.

19 We know that as human-caused climate  
20 change exacerbated by companies like Spire continues  
21 to increase the severity of weather patterns, more  
22 winter storms will ravage our area and the need for  
23 heat to survive will only become more acute for all.

24 It is greedy and unjust for Spire to  
25 ask for more money when just last year they hiked

1 rates by 3 percent. Why should we pay more for a  
2 service that pollutes our air and our water when  
3 Spire made \$300 million in profits last year. I'm  
4 going to repeat, \$300 million in profits last year.  
5 Why should we worry for our families freezing to  
6 death when Spire's chief executive officer, Suzanne  
7 Slitherwood, got a \$1.5 million raise last year. She  
8 sure can pay her bills. And ours, yes.

9 So in conclusion I'm personally asking  
10 for the Public Service Commission to stop Spire from  
11 increasing rates. Our families, our budgets, and our  
12 planet simply cannot afford to entertain this greed  
13 any longer. Thank you.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for the comments.  
15 Jacob Amme.

16 MR. AMME: Hi.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Hi. Would you please say  
18 and spell your name for the record.

19 MR. AMME: Jacob, J-a-c-o-b, Amme,  
20 A-m-m-e.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
22 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
23 this local public hearing is the truth?

24 MR. AMME: For sure.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Mr. Amme, what would



1 you like to tell me?

2 MR. AMME: I've been a resident of the  
3 city of St. Louis for almost seven years now, and I'm  
4 here to testify like virtually everyone else here  
5 who's not affiliated with Spire against the proposed  
6 rate increase. I was -- I cannot afford it  
7 personally. I work on a tight budget. I know many  
8 others in the room have already expressed they do as  
9 well, as hundreds of thousands, if not millions of  
10 people across this state can attest to that as well.

11 I was personally offended when I got a  
12 letter in the mail a few weeks ago from Spire like,  
13 letting me know, clueing me in, Hey, we're going to  
14 propose a rate increase. You know, show up to our  
15 hearing. At first I said, No, I'm not going to show  
16 up for the hearing. I thought more about what it and  
17 said, Well, what choice do I have. It's the only  
18 thing I can do. So I'm here. I drove out here after  
19 work. I have to go back to work after this; I have  
20 multiple -- I have more hours of work to do still,  
21 but I'm still here because I want to testify.

22 Now, something that's already been said  
23 twice, the previous speaker reiterated several times,  
24 but I want to reiterate again, I think that  
25 personally this is an unethical proposed rate

1 increase given that in this last year Spire has --  
2 their profits in this past year were \$300 million;  
3 the CEO, over \$5 million, an increase by over 25  
4 percent like many others have already said. When is  
5 it enough. Like, when is that amount enough.

6 Some representatives of Spire here today  
7 have talked about -- have made sort of euphemistic  
8 vague overtures about fair rates of return. And to  
9 be clear, a rate of return is just a profit margin.  
10 But you come in and hide behind this language to make  
11 it feel more nice and clean and for us to not really  
12 realize what's going on.

13 Let's see. I made a few other notes  
14 while other people were speaking. I mean, to me this  
15 is nothing more -- and this is my opinion; I think  
16 many others of you would probably agree with me -- a  
17 cash grab by an investor-based for-profit  
18 corporation, you know, seeking to pad their bottom  
19 line. The opinion in this room is unanimous.

20 And, Commissioners, I humbly ask you to  
21 recognize that opinion and to reject this outright  
22 and to not put an even greater undue burden than we  
23 already have from the previous rate increases and  
24 from all the other increases that we have to face as  
25 citizens in this state, in this country at this time.

1 Thank you.

2 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions. Thank  
3 you for your comments.

4 And I appreciate that everybody kind of  
5 wants to chime in when somebody's up here in support,  
6 and I think that's great, but if you can hold that  
7 until they're done speaking. I think the clapping is  
8 certainly appropriate, but while people are speaking,  
9 please let them speak.

10 Sam Jones.

11 MR. JONESI: Sam Jonesi.

12 JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to  
13 mispronounce your name.

14 MR. JONESI: That's fine. Spelled S-a-m  
15 J-o-n-e-s-i.

16 JUDGE CLARK: And, Mr. Jonesi, do you  
17 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
18 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
19 truth?

20 MR. JONESI: I do.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And what you like to  
22 tell the Commission this evening?

23 MR. JONESI: Well, I will say that I'm  
24 approaching this from a different angle than probably  
25 everybody else in this room because I seem to be

1 about the only person in this room who isn't worried  
2 about the price of his utility bills. I'm very  
3 fortunate. But I am worried about where exactly that  
4 money in the raise and otherwise is going to.

5 I moved to St. Louis in the year of 2015.  
6 Since then I have sandbagged three times. I cleaned  
7 up after the tornados in Jefferson City. I attended  
8 the vigil for the workers who were killed in the  
9 Amazon tornado. And during the winter storm Erie, I  
10 helped out with homeless shelters.

11 I bring all this up because the fact that  
12 Spire is, of course, a natural gas company. Natural  
13 gas is being advocated as a transition fuel towards  
14 decarbonization. Now, I personally do not take a  
15 stance on that; however, many of the people who do  
16 are paid by anti-science institutions and think  
17 tanks. And none of this is to accuse Spire of  
18 anything. This is a concern that I have about the  
19 energy industry as a whole.

20 What I ask is that the Commission look  
21 into where exactly this raise is going to and give it  
22 scrutiny and to make sure that none of the money is  
23 earmarked towards that. Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Can you hold on for just a  
25 second because I do have some questions.

1 MR. JONESI: Please.

2 JUDGE CLARK: You had indicated that you  
3 were not worried about your own bills but you're  
4 worried about what is happening to the money.

5 MR. JONESI: Yes.

6 JUDGE CLARK: And can you be -- I kind of  
7 got a vague overtone there of where you were going.  
8 Can you be -- is it possible you can be more specific  
9 just so I can get a better grasp.

10 MR. JONESI: Well, when it comes to the  
11 part of not being worried, I mean, part of it --

12 JUDGE CLARK: It's not the not worried as  
13 much as you were concerned about what is happening to  
14 the money from a rate increase. Can you explain that  
15 to me more clearly?

16 MR. JONESI: I would like to emphasize  
17 that none of this is to accuse Spire of any  
18 wrongdoing. My concern is about simply the energy  
19 industry as a whole, and Spire is, of course, an  
20 energy company. I want to make that clear. As for  
21 the, shall we say, the lies that I am concerned  
22 about, it is lies specifically about the existence or  
23 nonexistence of climate change which is of course  
24 provable.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you for

1 clarifying that for me. And thank you for your  
2 comments.

3 And I'm sorry, I'm going to butcher this;  
4 I apologize. Jahi Bakari. And would you please  
5 state and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. BAKARI: Well, I wish you all had  
7 took some of that rate increase last year and bought  
8 some Lysol or something. We are in the middle of a  
9 pandemic. But I'll try. I'll try. Jahi Bakari,  
10 J-a-h-i B-a-k-a-r-i.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Bakari, do you solemnly  
12 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
13 give at this local public hearing is the truth?

14 MR. BAKARI: Yes.

15 JUDGE CLARK: And I apologize; I know  
16 you've waited patiently, so I appreciate you sticking  
17 around to give your comments.

18 MR. BAKARI: Okay. This is not going to  
19 be long. I just want to not thank Spire for being  
20 here, no thank you to the Missouri Public Commission,  
21 no thank you to the commissioners because this is a  
22 sham. This is a farce.

23 I was told at the first part of the  
24 meeting that not once has Spire ever been rejected a  
25 rate increase; they only didn't get as much. So

1 we're going through all this, all of this, and you're  
2 going to offer them 9 percent? My bank doesn't even  
3 give me 4 percent. It's tough out here. I mean, why  
4 can't Spire take an L like the rest of us. Why you  
5 all still gotta make money? Your investors are  
6 making money while people are homeless.

7 All these stories, they are breaking my  
8 heart. I'm not even in a bad position. And you all  
9 sit up there in these thousand dollars suits and  
10 whatnot asking for money. Please.

11 Commissioners, if you have any decency,  
12 don't give them 9 percent, don't give them 11  
13 percent, don't give them zero percent. Show some  
14 guts and just say no to this whole process. And  
15 let's get another utility company to compete with  
16 them. Because I promise you, you wouldn't be asking  
17 for 11 percent if you had another gas company out  
18 here offering a decent rate. It's just not fair.  
19 You all are in the same bed together. I don't  
20 appreciate you wasting my time this evening. And I  
21 promise you, you're going to be hearing so much more  
22 from me, you'll wish you'd never sent me that letter.  
23 I'm done.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. I have no questions  
25 for you. Thank you for your comments.

1 Kristian Blackmon. Would you please say  
2 and spell your name for the record.

3 MS. BLACKMON: Yeah, Kristian Blackmon,  
4 K-r-i-s-t-i-a-n B-l-a-c-k-m-o-n.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
6 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
7 this local public hearing is the truth?

8 MS. BLACKMON: I do.

9 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
10 tell the Commission this evening.

11 MS. BLACKMON: Yeah. So again, my name's  
12 Kristian Blackmon. I work at Homes Across St. Louis.  
13 We are a housing justice advocate organization. Our  
14 motto is housing is a human right. And all night  
15 I've been hearing a lot about programming and  
16 programs and assistance and all of that. Like, for  
17 me I got a bit annoyed with that because for many of  
18 us, many people in the room, we know about the  
19 programs. We're constantly working with tenants and  
20 renters helping them get the programs, helping them  
21 get the assistance. And oftentimes they are still  
22 finding themselves not having everything that they  
23 need.

24 What I'm also quite frustrated about this  
25 evening is the fact that we have to -- we have to



1 continue to come up as communities and basically  
2 share all these sad sob stories proving our humanity.  
3 You all know what's up. You all know. Like we're  
4 all living in the same reality. We know what's  
5 happening with inflation. We know what's  
6 happening -- what has happened with, like, more  
7 issues that have come during the pandemic around  
8 people not having enough. So the fact that so many  
9 people have to come up, share these very sad, sorry  
10 stories to prove to you all that this increase is not  
11 okay is -- is just really crazy to me. It's  
12 frustrating to me. I think it's an insult to us as a  
13 community.

14 We've -- you've heard the numbers. We  
15 know the numbers, how much money Spire has made, how  
16 much money the CEO has made. And I think that  
17 ultimately for me it just shows that you don't care  
18 about community.

19 I wish that we wouldn't do things like --  
20 like, I appreciate the public hearing, people who  
21 come and share and give their testimony, things  
22 like -- I'm not saying that. But I'm saying the fact  
23 that we have to go to such great lengths to prove the  
24 fact that this is not okay, to continue to share  
25 stories saying that this is not okay.

1           So many people have come up, talked  
2 about -- thinking about my mother, I've heard "fixed  
3 income" so many times tonight. But talking to my  
4 mother who's a retired St. Louis public school  
5 teacher, all she wanted me to tell you all is that  
6 she's on a fixed income. She doesn't understand why  
7 there's another increase when we just had one at the  
8 end of last year. And my mother's a widow. It's  
9 just her in the house. So another story to add to  
10 the other hundreds of stories that you all will  
11 continue to hear, testimony that you're going to  
12 continue to hear.

13           I would say this increase is not okay,  
14 period. I don't understand why -- I heard what you  
15 all said. I also love the fact that you pointed out  
16 that part of this increase is going to employees.  
17 Yet the CEO has made millions, but you didn't point  
18 that part out. You pointed out that some of this  
19 increase is going to the other employees, but you  
20 didn't point out the fact that your CEO has made so  
21 much money during a pandemic that we're still in.

22           So I just -- tonight I really just have  
23 frustrations with the fact that this -- hearing this  
24 again, hearing the fact that we've got to talk to  
25 tenants, talk to renters that -- so real quick, a

1 number I'm going to throw out. I'm not really a big  
2 stats person, but sometimes it matters to you all.  
3 Most folks that are -- that work at poverty or below  
4 poverty, over -- almost 70 percent of their income  
5 just goes to rent alone. It just goes for them to  
6 have a household -- to have a house over their head.  
7 That doesn't even add in the utilities. It doesn't  
8 add in the food. It doesn't add in if they have  
9 children, how they have to take care of their  
10 children.

11 So again, I'm about to wrap it up, I'll  
12 be done. The increase is not cool. Many -- many of  
13 us in the community like myself will continue to  
14 speak out against this, but when we leave here, we've  
15 got to go and deal with community, work with tenants,  
16 support tenants, make sure that they can stay in  
17 their homes, make sure they can keep their gas.  
18 They're like -- you all don't -- you all don't -- I  
19 get that you all have programs. You have people call  
20 angrily. But we are actually with community and with  
21 them trying to make sure that people survive when  
22 folks should be thriving. Thank you.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
24 comments. Ashli Bolden.

25 MS. BOLDEN: Good evening. My name is

1 Ashli Bolden, A-s-h-l-i B-o-l-d-e-n.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
3 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
4 this local public hearing is the truth?

5 MS. BOLDEN: Yes, sir.

6 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
7 tell us tonight?

8 MS. BOLDEN: Well, that scary email about  
9 the pipeline came 11/4/2021. I sent a Tweet out on  
10 January 25th saying how my bill went from \$300 to  
11 like a thousand because of those increases.

12 I am a homeowner in St. Louis city. I  
13 live in a duplex, so I pay you all twice a month.  
14 Nobody's upstairs because I'm busy paying this high  
15 Spire bill and can't rehab my top floor. All that  
16 rain, we have roof damage. I pay for that.

17 We -- I cannot deal with another  
18 increase. I don't want to pay you all. I want to go  
19 on vacation. I don't want to give you all my whole  
20 check. I don't want to get a second job.

21 I have been looking into electric stoves  
22 because I love hot tea. I love to cook. It costs  
23 too much for me to go out to eat. I have been  
24 looking into electric broilers because I love my old  
25 home. I have radiator heat. Yes, I grew up putting

1 plastic over the windows. Yes, we reinsulate. But I  
2 don't want another increase. I don't have much more  
3 money to give to you all. But I have to take out of  
4 my pocket to buy new stuff to keep up with  
5 everything.

6 And then like the sister said, you all  
7 took our stuff from the inside, put it on the  
8 outside, and didn't even beautify it. It's just two  
9 ugly things on the front of my house. My neighbor's  
10 meters are on my property. That needs to be removed.

11 Please, no more rate hikes. Thank you.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Hold on just a second.

13 Ms. Bolden, you had indicated this 11/4/21 letter you  
14 received and I assume that was about the pipeline.  
15 Correct?

16 MS. BOLDEN: Yes. That was about the  
17 pipeline. And in it, it said that if we can't get  
18 the pipeline, then there's going to be some outages.  
19 All I could think about was those people in Texas who  
20 did not have heat for days.

21 When I saw my bill, I called Spire and I  
22 said, what happened. Can you please explain my bill.  
23 And I said, You know what, I don't need to get an  
24 attitude with you today because I'm sure you have  
25 gotten a thousand calls about this increase, the

1 first increase. That was ridiculous.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Aplington.

3 MR. APLINGTON: Yes, ma'am. Would you be  
4 willing to share your address so we could look at the  
5 meter location issue?

6 MS. BOLDEN: No. I'll call in for that.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And please, nobody  
8 share your address. This is a public record, so I  
9 don't -- we have rules against revealing  
10 customer-specific information, so I'd rather not do  
11 that.

12 Thank you for your comments, Ms. Bolden.

13 Scott Will. Would you please say and  
14 spell your name for the record.

15 MR. WILL: My name is Scott Will,  
16 S-c-o-t-t W-i-l-l.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
18 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
19 this local public hearing is the truth?

20 MR. WILL: I do.

21 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
22 tell the Commission this evening?

23 MR. WILL: I apologize, I'm going to be  
24 looking at my phone. I'll try to be brief.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Take your time.

1 MR. WILL: Spire should not be allowed to  
2 raise their rates. In fact, their rates should be  
3 frozen, their profits should be taxed at a higher  
4 percentage, and frankly, the company should be  
5 dissolved and they should become a utility held in  
6 common by the people of Missouri.

7 Why should anyone be allowed to profit on  
8 what is a basic need. Spire's argument for needing  
9 this rate increase is, at least partly, to offset the  
10 infrastructure investments they've made. They claim  
11 that they couldn't have possibly foreseen how much  
12 more money they would need to cover these costs after  
13 their last rate in December 2021. Instead of making  
14 this our problem and giving Spire more money while  
15 we're in the midst of -- in the midst of inflation  
16 and economic downturn, I might suggest Spire simply  
17 budget their wallets better.

18 Spire recorded near record profits  
19 in 2020, doubling their actual profits from 2019  
20 to 2020. What happened to all that money. If Spire  
21 is so strapped for cash, why did they increase their  
22 stock dividend payouts in 2021. Why did they give  
23 their CEO a 26 percent raise in 2021. What kind of  
24 company, supposedly coming to us hat in hand, can  
25 afford to give their CEO nearly \$3 million in stock.

1           To me at least this newest rate increase  
2 just seems like another attempt by Spire to try and  
3 fleece the residents of St. Louis.

4           Let's talk about these infrastructure  
5 investments. I'm sure I'm not the only one to have  
6 the absolute pleasure of driving on Spire's massive  
7 metal plates they've left strewn across the city and  
8 county. I'm not the only one that's been stuck in  
9 endless traffic as Spire rips up the same section of  
10 road for the fourth time this year. Frankly, we  
11 should take a page out of Kansas City's book where  
12 they froze all Spire improvements until Spire  
13 actually fixed the roads they destroyed or in Leeds,  
14 Missouri, where they were called out by residents for  
15 leaving debris strewn across lawns and street.

16           And what about -- sorry, did not mean to  
17 hit the mic there. What about their pipeline which  
18 federal commissions called unneeded, which every day  
19 threatens to dump its contents into the Mississippi.  
20 The pipeline that's currently operating on a  
21 temporary certificate with no environmental impact  
22 statement from the feds, for an indefinite period.  
23 The same pipeline that they've used for the past  
24 three years as a cudgel to threaten us with utility  
25 shutoffs and freezing us out if they don't get their



1 way.

2 When Spire shuts off working-class folks'  
3 utilities this winter, will they take solace in the  
4 new profits that line their pockets. Will they smile  
5 in their warm homes seated around a blazing natural  
6 gas fireplace as they pump methane back and forth  
7 across the river. Probably. While we're left out in  
8 the cold, while our neighbors freeze, at least we'll  
9 know that the good folks at Spire were able -- were  
10 able to keep their revenues in the black. Good for  
11 you all.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
13 comments. I have no questions.

14 Sarah Watkins.

15 And I appreciate everybody being patient.  
16 I will get to everybody who wants to speak tonight.

17 Would you please say and spell your name  
18 for the record.

19 MS. WATKINS: Yes. My name is Sarah  
20 Watkins. It's spelled the right way. S-a-r-a-h,  
21 last name W-a-t-k-i-n-s.

22 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
23 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
24 this local public hearing is the truth?

25 MS. WATKINS: Absolutely.

1 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
2 tell me tonight?

3 MS. WATKINS: I'd like to start off with  
4 my testimony from a personal point of view. I'm a  
5 single mother in St. Louis. I -- when I first came  
6 to St. Louis in 2013, I was homeless and I moved in  
7 with my friend in her multi-family home. However,  
8 there were three adults in the house and we could not  
9 get the gas turned on in that house because we all  
10 owed, had previous bills. So I spent five years in a  
11 two-story house with no heat. Five cold winters. I  
12 remember waking up one night under my sleeping bag  
13 and two very heavy blankets thinking, Wow, it's  
14 colder than it was when I went to sleep. And I  
15 looked at my phone and it was negative 14 degrees in  
16 my house. A lot of folks will experience that if you  
17 vote yes on this increase.

18 I make my living by talking to tenants  
19 and renters every day, mostly in the city, but also  
20 in the county. A lot of tenants that we talk to are  
21 still behind on utilities. You may be familiar with  
22 the program SAFHR that offers rental assistance and  
23 utility assistance by the State. In case you haven't  
24 checked or heard the numbers, just this week, just  
25 this week SAFHR awarded \$12 million in utility

1 assistance to Missouri residents.

2           And when we talk about programs, like  
3 most of us have said, people will fall through the  
4 gaps -- through the gaps. Those gaps are cold and  
5 dark and lonely. We know with the cold weather rule,  
6 what usually happens is there comes a lot of  
7 disconnects right before. This will affect low  
8 household -- low-income households. This will affect  
9 black and brown families with children. This will  
10 affect elderly folks, a lot of who I talked to today  
11 who couldn't be here because they're in bed and they  
12 can't move because of their health issues.

13           This comes during the wintertime when  
14 folks will be home more. You have the holidays, kids  
15 on breaks. No one has the extra money to spare. And  
16 I feel like, and I know that Spire's out of touch  
17 with reality and their community to sit up here and  
18 suggest we pay you more money to line your pockets.

19           And so I want to ask the PSC to act in  
20 the interest of the people that it serves. Someone  
21 needs to represent the consumer. Someone needs to  
22 represent people. Someone needs to stand up and say,  
23 This doesn't make any sense and it's not right. A  
24 yes on this vote will displace people. It will leave  
25 folks homeless. Folks will be evicted if they cannot

1 pay their utility bills.

2 And so when you hear these numbers about  
3 the influx in unhoused folks and the influx of people  
4 on the streets, I want you to think about your  
5 decision and what you're asking, because that's  
6 what's going to happen. So think about all those  
7 people that will be in the cold, all those people  
8 that will be displaced when you want to make more  
9 money I guess.

10 And then I guess the last thing I'd like  
11 to say, which, I mean, a lot of this has already been  
12 said before, but like we said, everything is raising.  
13 Rents are increasing, almost doubling. Food is  
14 outrageous. People in this room have said that  
15 they're choosing between medicine and other basic  
16 necessities. It's just not the time. It wasn't the  
17 time last -- in December, and it is not the time now.  
18 And we don't appreciate -- we don't appreciate the  
19 effort to make this rate increase sound like it'll be  
20 helping folks in your community when you're throwing  
21 us under the bus to do that. Thank you.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
23 comments, Ms. Watkins.

24 Grace Tedder. Would you please say and  
25 spell your name for the record.

1 MS. TEDDER: Grace Tedder. That's  
2 G-r-a-c-e T-e-d-d-e-r.

3 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
4 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
5 this local public hearing is the truth?

6 MS. TEDDER: I do.

7 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
8 tell the Commission this evening?

9 MS. TEDDER: I want to say thank you for  
10 the opportunity to testify tonight. I have some  
11 stuff that I prepared, but this is my first rate  
12 hearing that I've been to and I was a little  
13 surprised to see that, you know, commissioners are on  
14 Zoom and maybe not everyone's present. I know it's  
15 public record, but for me that was a little  
16 frustrating; I don't know if other people share that.  
17 But, you know, we take the time to be here, and --  
18 you know, there's things that come up, but it would  
19 be great to see all the commissions here or even be  
20 able to see the commissioners.

21 But with that, on the rate case, my name  
22 is Grace Tedder like I said. I live in St. Louis.  
23 And I'm here tonight to ask you to not allow Spire to  
24 raise rates. You know, I have a pretty decent  
25 situation. I live with a partner. The utility bills

1 are doable. Our apartment's not well-insulated, so  
2 it's not as warm as I'd like, but it's okay.

3 But this year, you know, we've got --  
4 everything is just costing more, like food and  
5 everything is a lot higher. We've got student loan  
6 payments that are about through the zoom [sic] and,  
7 you know, I'm kind of worried about the next couple  
8 winters if we have this rate increase and just the  
9 cost of fracked gas itself rising another 30 percent  
10 or more outside of what Spire is controlling  
11 directly.

12 And I'm really, really worried about  
13 friends and neighbors who have already really been  
14 struggling with their utility bills and have been  
15 struggling to keep the heat on, or not being able to.  
16 And to be honest, it's pretty insulting for Spire to  
17 request another rate increase after they received a 3  
18 percent increase just last year, and after they spent  
19 last fall fear mongering about the Spire STL pipeline  
20 that's now tied up at FERC over self-dealing  
21 questions.

22 I think it's obscene for Spire to ask for  
23 increased profits for their executives and their  
24 shareholders when St. Louisans are struggling to keep  
25 the heat on, at a time when our fossil gas prices

1 themselves are steeply rising due to those  
2 aftershocks of the winter storm Erie and the war in  
3 Ukraine and pandemic-related issues. And I think,  
4 you know, personally it's downright dangerous to keep  
5 giving Spire money in the form of rate increases for  
6 expanding this fracked gas infrastructure in  
7 St. Louis when we're already feeling the impacts of  
8 their dirty fuel in terms of climate change as well  
9 as the immediate impacts of health issues associated  
10 with gas usage.

11 And I'm a community organizer with a  
12 group called River City Climate Collective and we  
13 believe the people should own and control our  
14 utilities, not investors, and that we should be  
15 pulling the emergency brake on our use of fossil gas.

16 And while it's no long-term solution, not  
17 adding on to the already exorbitant executive pay and  
18 company profits by declining this rate increase would  
19 be one small step in the right direction.

20 So, Commissioners, I ask that you please  
21 listen to the people, not Spire, and that you vote no  
22 on Spire's rate increase.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
24 comments. I have no questions.

25 Dama Gray.

1 MS. GRAY: Hello. I'm Dana Gray, D-a-n-a  
2 G-r-a-y.

3 JUDGE CLARK: That's my poor reading, I  
4 apologize.

5 MS. GRAY: No worries.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
7 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
8 this local public hearing is the truth?

9 MS. GRAY: Most certainly. I work with  
10 Tower Grove Community Development Corporation. We're  
11 an affordable housing provider in the city of  
12 St. Louis, and we've collected feedback from just a  
13 few of our tenants about how the Spire rate increase  
14 would impact them.

15 Prepandemic the average annual income of  
16 our tenants was \$25,536 a year --

17 JUDGE CLARK: Can you say that again one  
18 more time?

19 MS. GRAY: Yes. Prepandemic the average  
20 annual income for our tenants was \$25,536.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

22 MS. GRAY: We offer rent at 30 percent  
23 below the market rate. We target households with  
24 incomes between 30 percent to 80 percent of the area  
25 median income, so we are targeting low-income



1 families for our affordable housing. We've got  
2 comments from a few of these tenants.

3           Susie, who lives in Tower Grove South,  
4 she's a renter, single head of household, and she  
5 asked the Public Service Commission to not impose  
6 more utility costs on working and poor families who  
7 will be impacted greater than others. This -- the  
8 utility company is reaping record profits and even as  
9 COVID has ravaged the economy and people's health,  
10 it's driving families into dire financial straits.  
11 Please don't add to the cost of what is already a  
12 very trying time.

13           Matthew, a renter in the Shaw  
14 Neighborhood is struggling with all of his utility  
15 bills, housing, and food costs.

16           Amber, a renter in Tower Grove  
17 Neighborhood asks why is her utility rate increasing  
18 when her service is the same. Amber's household lost  
19 two incomes during the pandemic.

20           Jamie who lives in the Shaw Neighborhood  
21 is a single parent, head of her household, and says  
22 her budget billing payment is \$90 and she cannot  
23 afford that. With the increased cost of food, fuel,  
24 and electric, she cannot afford another utility rate  
25 increase. She has a growing teenager and makes too

1 much gross income to receive public assistance.

2 Jamie's family was negatively impacted by the  
3 pandemic.

4 Another singer -- single parent and  
5 renter who wished to remain anonymous said that Spire  
6 is a monopoly and their demand for money at this time  
7 would totally negatively impact their household and  
8 countless others. She asked the Public Service  
9 Commission to protect families.

10 Another renter in the Shaw Neighborhood  
11 who wished to remain anonymous says they struggle to  
12 pay all of their bills. They work as an independent  
13 contractor so their income varies month to month.  
14 They stick to a very strict budget, but when costs  
15 increase, it makes it really hard to make things  
16 balance. This person was severely impacted by the  
17 pandemic.

18 Nora, a single trans person, said the  
19 pandemic greatly impacted her and she lost jobs  
20 during that time. If she gets sick again, she won't  
21 have sick leave and will miss pay. Everything she  
22 earns is less now with all the added costs.

23 Another single occupant of an apartment  
24 in Tower Grove South says, Every increase is less  
25 that I have down -- to pay down my credit debt or be

1 able to put away anything for retirement.

2 They're 42 years old. As a performing  
3 artist, they lost their career overnight in the  
4 pandemic and have had to go back to school and learn  
5 a new career path.

6 All of our tenants are on low incomes and  
7 would be severely impacted by another rate increase,  
8 so they ask that the Public Service Commission not  
9 approve the rate increase.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
11 comments.

12 Jeffery Booker. Would you please say and  
13 spell your name for the record.

14 MR. BOOKER: J-e-f-f-e-r-y B-o-o-k-e-r,  
15 Jeffery Booker.

16 JUDGE CLARK: And, Mr. Booker, do you  
17 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
18 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
19 truth?

20 MR. BOOKER: Yes.

21 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell  
22 the Commission?

23 MR. BOOKER: Good evening, everyone. And  
24 I just want to say first of all that in reference to  
25 the rate increase from last year, if the money that

1 was asked for was used properly, there wouldn't be  
2 another rate increase this time. Because if you use  
3 the money like you claim you were going to use it  
4 for, what's the -- where's the result. If I go to  
5 the bank and ask to borrow money and I don't use that  
6 money adequately and I go back to the bank and ask  
7 for an additional amount of money, they're going to  
8 ask me questions. What did you do with the first  
9 amount? Where is that going? Can you actually prove  
10 that you used that money for what you claimed you  
11 were going to use it for?

12 So in this situation where Spire had  
13 claimed that they need additional money -- and like  
14 the gentleman said, they're the only game in town.  
15 We can't go anywhere else to get gas. We can't go  
16 Walmart, Sams, Costco. We've got to deal with this  
17 company because we're stuck with them. And they're  
18 not using their money adequately. They're not  
19 adequating their money in a proper business-like  
20 manner. And it's hurting many families.

21 My dad is a widow, widower; my mother  
22 passed away. He's dealing with some issues  
23 financially as a result. But again, that's another  
24 sob story.

25 But the bottom line is no to this rate

1 increase and no to any rate increase in the future  
2 until Spire can adequately prove that they're using  
3 their money for what they claim they're using it for.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
5 comments.

6 MR. BOOKER: Thank you.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Stephanie Booker. Would  
8 you please say and spell your name for record.

9 MS. BOOKER: Stephanie,  
10 S-t-e-p-h-a-n-i-e, Booker, B-o-o-k-e-r.

11 JUDGE CLARK: And, Ms. Booker, do you  
12 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
13 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
14 truth?

15 MS. BOOKER: I do.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. What would you  
17 like to tell the Commission this evening?

18 MS. BOOKER: Okay. The first thing I  
19 wanted to address, so many people have said concerns  
20 that I was going to bring forward. What I'm -- my  
21 concern is the reason I'm frustrated about the rate  
22 increase, I've been a victim of poverty.

23 I was without gas for three years because  
24 of going through a divorce. I had to use electric  
25 heaters to keep my children, my three children warm.

1 The room caught on fire because, I mean, they had --  
2 we had to literally put the fire out, call the fire  
3 department. The fire department wanted to know why  
4 do you not have gas. I can't afford it. I have  
5 three children. I'm paying the electric bill.  
6 I'm paying for food. I can't afford gas. So he gave  
7 me the name of a program. He said, Well, you know,  
8 people feeling -- see if that'll help. So call them  
9 and see if you can get some assistance.

10 Well, after four months, I get  
11 assistance; they turned the gas back on. Now I move.  
12 I'm in a residence where I've been -- I'm in a  
13 duplex. Two -- I pay two electric bills; there's two  
14 gas bills. The upstairs has not had gas for 20  
15 years. I can only afford to heat the first floor,  
16 the first floor.

17 Now, I'm not looking for commiseration,  
18 just consideration as such a time as this. We got  
19 winter coming up. People -- fires has been going on.  
20 Firefighters have to work harder because people are  
21 trying to use heaters to warm up. Are you guys that  
22 are proposing the rate increase, is it affecting you?  
23 I mean, this rate increase will infect -- will affect  
24 all of us. All of us. So we're just asking for  
25 consideration at a time as this.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for comments,  
2 Ms. Booker.

3 Ashton Kuehnel.

4 MS. KUEHNEL: Hi, my name is Ashton  
5 Kuehnel, spelled A-s-h-t-o-n K-u-e-h-n-e-l. It's a  
6 really German last name.

7 JUDGE CLARK: Can you say that for me one  
8 more time.

9 MS. KUEHNEL: Yes.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Kuehnel?

11 MS. KUEHNEL: Yes, the U and H are  
12 silent.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
14 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
15 this local public hearing is the truth?

16 MS. KUEHNEL: I do. And forgive me as I  
17 pull up my testimony really quickly. I came up a lot  
18 quicker than I thought; I was one of the very last  
19 ones.

20 All right. Hello. Good evening. My  
21 name is Ashton Kuehnel. I'm a grass-roots organizer  
22 for the Sierra Club. I live in St. Louis. I'm a  
23 recent college graduate from St. Louis University. I  
24 want to thank you, your Honor, and the commissioners  
25 for the opportunity to speak today on Spire's

1 proposed rate increase.

2 It's crucial for customers like me to be  
3 involved in the utility decision that will impact us  
4 and our community. Affordable, reliable, and clean  
5 energy is a public good and we must ensure the voices  
6 of the community are being centered tonight. I hope  
7 tonight's turnout will lead the Public Service  
8 Commission to holding more public hearings in the  
9 future as many people have a lot to say.

10 But I am here to speak in opposition to  
11 this increase. Last winter I saw my gas bill  
12 increase, like so many others here tonight, after I  
13 received an email from Spire saying that we might  
14 lose our heat because of, quote, New York  
15 environmentalists. I soon found out that that was  
16 because Spire was being held accountable for problems  
17 with its proposed St. Louis pipeline and that they  
18 were, in fact -- that we were, in fact, in no threat  
19 to losing heat from our -- lose heat in our  
20 households, but lose heat from Spire itself.

21 Spire's email scared me and my neighbors,  
22 especially knowing the extreme weather we can face  
23 here during a Missouri winter, which is worsening  
24 each year due to our reliance on fossil fuels like  
25 fracked gas. In addition to gas prices going up, I



1 learned that Spire has also increased my bill.

2 So now here Spire is asking for more  
3 money from its customers after one, just being  
4 approved for an increase and rates not even a full  
5 year ago and two, misleading and scaring community  
6 and customers about freezing to hide from their  
7 wrongdoings.

8 As someone who is paying for student  
9 loans, trying to plan a wedding, and struggling to  
10 deal with already-increasing prices everywhere as so  
11 many folks have said before, I am strongly opposed to  
12 my bill and all other customers' bills going up. As  
13 a community organizer I know there are a lot of  
14 customers, including some of my friends and  
15 neighbors, who are worried about their rates going up  
16 who cannot be in this room tonight. I care about and  
17 am very concerned about my neighbors who do not have  
18 a voice in this room who are already financially  
19 struggling.

20 This proposed rate case will negatively  
21 impact people who Spire is supposed to serve,  
22 especially when one in six households in America are  
23 already behind on utility bills. One in six. It is  
24 a time -- it is time that Spire is held accountable  
25 for the decisions they are making and providing

1 energy in a safe and affordable way.

2 Please vote no on Spire's proposed rate  
3 hike.

4 And I also want to add, I do believe  
5 that the federal poverty limitation needs to go up  
6 from 200 to at least 300 if not more so more people  
7 can have access to the programs that they so  
8 desperately need to pay their bill. Thank you.

9 JUDGE CLARK: You indicated you received  
10 an email from Spire and I'm assuming New York  
11 environmentalists is a paraphrasing of yours. Is  
12 that correct?

13 MS. KUEHNEL: No, that was a quote.

14 JUDGE CLARK: That's a quote?

15 MS. KUEHNEL: That's from -- from my  
16 understanding, yes. I read that from Spire. It  
17 might not be in the email, but it was in  
18 communication from Spire.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Do you remember when you  
20 received that email roughly?

21 MS. KUEHNEL: Probably -- there was a  
22 series of emails sent out. The first email I  
23 remember receiving was in November of 2021.

24 JUDGE CLARK: You said a series of  
25 emails?

1 MS. KUEHNEL: Series of emails, yeah.

2 JUDGE CLARK: And the first one you  
3 remember is November of '21?

4 MS. KUEHNEL: Yes.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Did you also receive a  
6 letter from them regarding the pipeline like some of  
7 the others have indicated?

8 MS. KUEHNEL: Not a physical letter, but  
9 an email communication.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you for your  
11 comments.

12 MS. KUEHNEL: Thank you.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Clara Chavez-Ives.

14 MS. CHAVEZ-IVES: Clara Chavez-ives,  
15 C-l-a-r-a C-h-a-v-e-z, dash, I-v-e-s.

16 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
17 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
18 this local public hearing is the truth?

19 MS. CHAVEZ-IVES: Yes.

20 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
21 tell the Commission?

22 MS. CHAVEZ-IVES: First of all I want to  
23 say thank you to the Public Service Commission for  
24 giving us the opportunity to speak on the proposed  
25 rate increase by Spire.

1 I'm an undergrad student at Wash U and I  
2 am pretty concerned about the impact yet another rate  
3 increase would have on my community as is everyone  
4 else in this room. Last winter, as everyone keeps  
5 saying, Spire sent out these fear-mongering emails  
6 insisting that they would be unable to guarantee gas  
7 supply for heating our homes without support for  
8 their illegally-constructed STL pipeline. They used  
9 this fear to ask for higher rates which they were  
10 approved.

11 Now it's been less than a year and they  
12 want to increase their prices again, by a much  
13 greater percentage. While they're claiming they want  
14 to provide for their customers, these profit-  
15 motivated actions indicate otherwise. They already  
16 have high fixed fees, and increasing rates further  
17 already burdens their customers more.

18 This is also a racial justice issue. As  
19 the Environmental Racism in St. Louis Report notes,  
20 low-income, black, and renting households in  
21 St. Louis face significantly higher energy burdens  
22 than the St. Louis population at large. So Spire's  
23 just taking advantage of our most vulnerable  
24 community members just to make up the profit they've  
25 lost due to legal fees they've incurred for their

1 floating pipeline.

2 As an environmental studies student, I'm  
3 acutely aware of the environmental and public health  
4 impact of Spire's practices. Fracked gas plants and  
5 pipelines are making the air we breathe dirtier and  
6 St. Louis in particular already has poor air quality  
7 and high rates of air pollution. These practices of  
8 Spire are contributing to this exacerbating the  
9 public health impacts of poor air quality like  
10 asthma.

11 And so I guess just to the MO PSC, you  
12 say your mission statement is to ensure that  
13 Missourians receive safe and reliable utility  
14 services at just, reasonable, and affordable rates.  
15 So don't allow another rate increase that supports  
16 Spire's continued exploitation of their customers.  
17 Please vote no. Thank you.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
19 comments.

20 Eileen Jamieson. Would you please state  
21 and spell your name for the record.

22 MS. JAMIESON: Thanks, Judge. It's  
23 Eileen, E-i-l-e-e-n, Jamieson, J-a-m-i-e-s-o-n.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
25 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at

1 this public hearing is the truth?

2 MS. JAMIESON: I do.

3 I'm going to start off thanking the  
4 Public Service Commission for allowing me to speak  
5 today. It's important for community members to be  
6 involved in utility decisions like this that are  
7 going to impact our community and our shared  
8 environment.

9 Again, my name is Eileen Jamieson. I  
10 live in St. Louis. I have since 2018. I'm from  
11 Texas. Last winter I saw my gas bill increase after  
12 Spire stoked fears in an email claiming that gas  
13 would run out and St. Louisans would freeze because  
14 they were being held accountable for breaking the  
15 law. And now Spire's trying to increase their rates  
16 again not even a full year later.

17 I am privileged in that I can afford to  
18 pay the last increase without having to sacrifice  
19 essential necessities like groceries and medicine,  
20 but I can imagine the struggle of those less  
21 fortunate than me that did have to make those  
22 sacrifices.

23 I've been sitting through this whole  
24 hearing just thinking about all the people that we  
25 lost in Texas. And I'm remembering my fear getting

1 the email last year. And it doesn't even affect me  
2 personally, but Missouri is a lot colder than Texas,  
3 y'all. It's a lot colder. I remember my first year  
4 living here there was a day it was like negative 20  
5 degrees during the day. It was the coldest I've ever  
6 felt. And I just can't imagine people feeling that  
7 in their homes because they can't keep the gas on.

8 I'm a student of social work getting my  
9 Master's concentrating on communities and  
10 organizations, and I care about my neighbors who  
11 don't have a voice in this room.

12 Fracked gas plants and pipelines are  
13 making the air we breathe dirtier. And not everyone  
14 has the liberty to be here on a workday to submit  
15 testimony.

16 I also speak for my elderly neighbors who  
17 are disabled and living on a fixed income. They have  
18 to make a choice between food, medicine, and gas  
19 bills. No one should have to make the decision  
20 between eating or paying their utility bill or just  
21 living.

22 Like many others I am irritated and do  
23 not want any of the utility bills to go up,  
24 especially during a time of crisis. We're already  
25 high across the area for necessities and especially

1 when it goes to serve corporate profits and legal  
2 fees from polluting pipelines.

3 To the MO PSC I ask that -- to reiterate,  
4 I ask that you stay true to your mission statement of  
5 ensuring that Missourians receive safe and reliable  
6 utility services at just, reasonable, and affordable  
7 rates.

8 Please vote no -- please vote no on  
9 Spire's proposed rate hike. Thank you.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Now, you received an email.  
11 Did you also receive a letter?

12 MS. JAMIESON: I don't remember.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
14 comments.

15 MS. JAMIESON: Thank you.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Nyree Bradley. Please say  
17 and spell your name for the record.

18 MS. BRADLEY: Yes. Nyree Bradley. My  
19 name is spelled N as in Nancy y-r-e-e B-r-a-d-l-e-y.

20 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
21 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
22 this public hearing is the truth?

23 MS. BRADLEY: I do.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
25 tell the Commission?



1 MS. BRADLEY: Good evening, your Honor.  
2 My name is Nyree Bradley and I'm a second year law  
3 student at St. Louis University School of Law. I'm  
4 also a low-income Spire customer and a single mother  
5 of three small children.

6 Approving Spire's rate increase request  
7 will perpetuate social injustice and exploitation of  
8 low-income families and individuals with children.  
9 Research shows that there are a growing number of  
10 households that earn above the federal poverty level  
11 yet are struggling to afford basic living expenses.  
12 These households include workers who are working two  
13 or more jobs and whose wages cannot keep up with the  
14 rising cost of utility services. These workers keep  
15 our local communities running, but often have to make  
16 the tough decision of paying their gas bill or  
17 putting gas in their car to maintain employment.

18 Utility services like Spire's requires a  
19 large percentage of family budgets. Approving the  
20 rate increase will potentially lead to a larger  
21 financial need for ongoing existence and unexpected  
22 events such as disconnection or shutoff fees. This  
23 poses the question of whether existing customer  
24 assoc -- I'm sorry -- customer assistance programs  
25 such as LIHEAP are sustainable when the community

1 need is high. We would need to look into, if the  
2 Commission approves this request, another or maybe  
3 additional customer assoc -- assistance programs,  
4 excuse me, that are both preventative and responsive  
5 to consumer needs.

6 As a lot of consumers here stated,  
7 traditional measures such as median incomes and  
8 poverty guidelines are inadequate to successfully  
9 capture the number of affordability households in the  
10 community.

11 Rather than aim to promote social  
12 justice by offering affordable rates to its  
13 low-income consumers, Spire is de facto requesting  
14 that we permit it to burden an overly-strained  
15 group of consumers so that Spire's president and CEO  
16 can continue to receive her, I'm sorry, base salary  
17 of \$925,000 a year. According to the Security  
18 Exchange Commission, Spire's highest earning  
19 executives received more than \$12 million in  
20 compensation in 2021.

21 Shifting the financial burden to  
22 low-income families and individuals with children is  
23 not a just solution to Spire's problem. Spire must  
24 strive to balance revenue stability while ensuring  
25 its customers' bills reflect the actual cost of their

1 relative service requirements. Thank you.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
3 comments.

4 Ashley Redd. Would you please say and  
5 spell your name for the record.

6 MS. REDD: Ashley Redd, A-s-h-l-e-y  
7 R-e-d-d.

8 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
9 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
10 this local public hearing is the truth?

11 MS. REDD: I do.

12 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
13 tell the Commission?

14 MS. REDD: When I decided to testify at  
15 this meeting, it was hard to know where to begin.  
16 This is partially because I'm from Phoenix, Arizona,  
17 a place until recent years legally permitted the  
18 state's primary utility provider to shut off their  
19 services during the hot summer months when a client  
20 got behind in their payments, resulting in the harsh  
21 reality that every year even to this day a  
22 significant number of news articles would suffocate  
23 my news feed with the plastered headlines that read  
24 of another child or elderly person dying from lack of  
25 utility service.

1                   While I don't think energy shutoffs in  
2 Arizona are entirely comparable to the rising costs,  
3 utility costs in St. Louis, I believe St. Louis has  
4 unique characteristics that indicate just as serious  
5 of consequences to energy burdens as I mentioned for  
6 Arizona. For instance, the building quality in the  
7 St. Louis region is a critical aspect.

8                   The Affordable Housing report card  
9 estimated that 25 percent of renter households in  
10 St. Louis had their homes identified to have severe  
11 problems caused by poor insulation, air leaks, and  
12 old heating and cooling systems. These issues are  
13 more prevalent with low-income communities which  
14 account for 52 percent of households that pay 25  
15 to 60 percent above-average energy costs per square  
16 foot in the St. Louis region.

17                   JUDGE CLARK: Can you say that again  
18 please?

19                   MS. REDD: Which part?

20                   JUDGE CLARK: The statistic.

21                   MS. REDD: It was that 52 percent of  
22 low-income households pay between 25 to 60 percent  
23 above-average energy costs per square foot.

24                   May I continue?

25                   JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Go ahead.

1 MS. REDD: The extent of that issue is  
2 well beyond financial hardships in the terms of  
3 housing for those who experience the most severe  
4 energy burdens.

5 There's also studies that show as high  
6 as 40 percent of struggling households will put off  
7 medical treatment to pay necessary bills such as  
8 utilities. These households are more vulnerable and  
9 at higher risk of life-threatening consequences to  
10 their health because of these rising costs.

11 Before I go further I want to take a  
12 moment to acknowledge that as a student resident in  
13 St. Louis, I continue to hold some privilege when it  
14 comes to living off of a fixed income and  
15 experiencing rises in cost of living. At the same  
16 time the burden that my family and I have to carry as  
17 all areas of living expenses continue to rise is also  
18 a valid concern for this issue.

19 Before the impact of the 20 -- of  
20 COVID-19 pandemic, students already -- 52 percent of  
21 students already felt that they were housing  
22 insecure. And that same survey showed that  
23 in 2020, 14 to 29 percent of all college students  
24 could not pay their entire utility bill.

25 Speaking from my own perspective as a

1 graduate student, I am expected to maintain full-time  
2 status and meet all the set requirements for  
3 graduating on time. This makes me responsible for,  
4 on average, 27 hours of course work per week on top  
5 of the 20 hours of unpaid field education work. My  
6 studies consume over the amount of a full-time work  
7 position, and the sole cost of my tuition makes it  
8 critical that I do not neglect my studies in any way.  
9 I am in a situation where I cannot get a job that  
10 could supplement the rising costs that are unable to  
11 be covered by my student loans.

12           Furthermore, my family is still  
13 recovering from COVID. My mom is a small-business  
14 owner who was forced to close -- who is being forced  
15 to close her doors once her lease ends in February,  
16 and my dad had lost his job. While they are still  
17 forced at times to help, because all areas of living  
18 expenses have been rising, neither of them would be  
19 able to sustainably support me if utility costs  
20 increase. I am unsure where this would leave me if  
21 the rate increases continue to be approved as they  
22 have.

23           So as I conclude, I'd ask you to please  
24 think of the consequences that everyone has brought  
25 up tonight for low-income and also for those

1 struggling students whose financial burdens are often  
2 forgotten or expected to be placed on already-  
3 struggling families.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
5 comments, Ms. Redd.

6 Mr. Aplington, go ahead.

7 MR. APLINGTON: Thank you. On the  
8 citation -- or actually do you have a citation or  
9 source for that stat that you gave to the judge about  
10 the energy burden per square foot? That was  
11 interesting.

12 MS. REDD: Yeah, I do. It's from the  
13 Affordable Housing report card. Oh, actually, that  
14 one actually might be from the Environmental Racism  
15 in STL Report.

16 MR. APLINGTON: Got it. Thank you so  
17 much.

18 MS. REDD: No problem. Thank you.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Latasha Barnes. Would you  
20 please state and spell your name for the record.

21 MS. BARNES: Latasha Barnes.

22 L-a-t-a-s-h-a, last name Barnes like the hospital,  
23 B-a-r-n-e-s.

24 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
25 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at

1 this public hearing is the truth?

2 MS. BARNES: Yes, I do.

3 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
4 tell the PSC?

5 MS. BARNES: Thank you. To the honorable  
6 commission and to all parties involved, my name is  
7 Latasha Barnes. I'm an attorney in the senior law  
8 program at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. Legal  
9 Services is a private, nonprofit organization  
10 dedicated to advancing justice through legal  
11 representation, education, and supportive services.  
12 Our clients are low-income, seniors, and people with  
13 disabilities covering 21 counties in eastern  
14 Missouri. Our promise to the community is action,  
15 justice, and hope.

16 We are here tonight to fulfill that  
17 promise to our community members. Last year we  
18 helped over 37,000 people. We are here on their  
19 behalf tonight.

20 As a part of our mission we've partnered  
21 with the community to improve lives, promote  
22 fairness, and create opportunities for those in need.  
23 Utility access and affordability are central to our  
24 mission because our clients are unfairly and  
25 disproportionately carry the burden of high energy



1 costs, often with grave risks to their health. The  
2 question tonight is who should bear this burden. I  
3 promise you, our clients cannot afford to do so. And  
4 I'll share a couple of their stories.

5           Lori is a disabled Army veteran with a  
6 fixed income. She spends almost \$300 a month to meet  
7 her medical expenses. During the winter months  
8 Ms. Lori sometimes alternates between buying certain  
9 medicines and paying her Spire bill to make ends  
10 meet.

11           Vernon is an 80-year-old St. Louis city  
12 resident. His only source of income is \$750 in  
13 Social Security benefits. He often does not have  
14 enough money to pay his rapidly-mounting gas bill.  
15 When I spoke to him before tonight's hearing, he  
16 described an incident that happened on Saturday  
17 night. As the temperatures dropped into the 40s just  
18 this past Saturday, Mr. Vernon refused to turn on his  
19 heat. He instead turned on the oven to 400 degrees  
20 and sat by the stove to keep warm.

21           Fran is a widow and a mother of two. Her  
22 lease requires that she initiate and maintain utility  
23 services at all times or face eviction. She tried  
24 her best to make partial payments to keep up with  
25 these obligations, but her gas bill quickly ballooned

1 to over \$1,800 because of late fees and penalty  
2 charges. When her services were disconnected, her  
3 landlord filed an eviction action.

4 David lives in a small brick bungalow  
5 in St. Louis city. His house was built in the  
6 early 1900s. His home is poorly insulated and the  
7 heating and cooling system is very dated. It was the  
8 only rental home he was able to afford. Despite his  
9 best efforts to control his usage and to be energy  
10 efficient, his gas bill is often twice the amount of  
11 those he knows. He is unable to afford ongoing gas  
12 expenses.

13 These clients are unable to afford their  
14 current gas bill. They will certainly be unable to  
15 afford any increase that is imposed above them --  
16 imposed upon them. And these stories are not  
17 uncommon.

18 On average, low energy -- low-income  
19 energy burdens are two to three times higher than the  
20 median energy burden. An estimated 1.1 million  
21 Missourians were with [sic] necessary expenses for  
22 food and medicine to pay an energy bill just last  
23 year. Over 650,000 Missourians kept their homes at  
24 unsafe or unhealthy temperatures to control costs.  
25 And 15.7 percent of Missourians were unable to pay

1 their energy bill in full last year.

2 Many of our clients at Legal Services and  
3 low-income Missourians across the state already  
4 experience difficulties paying their bills and are  
5 making impossible choices between maintaining natural  
6 gas service and meeting basic needs for health,  
7 safety, and well-being. It is very easy for those  
8 with means to suggest what those without can afford.  
9 It is very easy to say that assistance programs are  
10 sufficient when you are not the one using them. Many  
11 of our clients do not get the help that they need.

12 People cannot afford to bear this burden.  
13 Many more households will struggle if Spire's granted  
14 another rate increase as a result of these  
15 proceedings. In this regard, we affirm the comments  
16 that have already been made by our colleagues, Nyree  
17 Bradley, Ashley Redd, Cori Bush, Glenn Burleigh, and  
18 Tower Grove Community Development Center.

19 In addition, higher gas prices will have  
20 a disparate impact on black, Hispanic, and other  
21 communities of color who already pay a much larger  
22 share of their income on energy bills. In this  
23 regard Legal Services stands with the City of  
24 St. Louis on Resolution No. 116 to note this fact,  
25 that a rate increase will undoubtedly perpetuate

1 social injustice and widen the racial wealth gap  
2 across our region.

3 At Legal Services we firmly believe that  
4 every Missourian deserves the right to have access to  
5 affordable basic utility services, including natural  
6 gas utility services provided by Spire. The  
7 Commission's denial of Spire's request for a rate  
8 increase will undoubtedly improve and protect the  
9 safety of low-income Missourians who are currently  
10 struggling to pay their current gas bill.

11 For this reason we urge the Commission to  
12 deny the pending request and we recommend an  
13 expansion of assistance programs to at or above 300  
14 percent of the federal poverty limit. We hope that  
15 your actions will ensure that all Missourians receive  
16 a safe and reliable utility service at a just,  
17 reasonable, and affordable rate. Thank you.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. I have no  
19 questions.

20 Megan Green. Please say and spell your  
21 name for the record.

22 MS. GREEN: It's Megan Green spelled  
23 M-e-g-a-n, green like the color, G-r-e-e-n.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or  
25 affirm that the testimony you're about to give at

1 this local public hearing is the truth?

2 MS. GREEN: Yes, I do.

3 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
4 tell the Commission?

5 MS. GREEN: As I said, my name is Megan  
6 Aliyah Green. I am the 15th Board Alderwoman in the  
7 city of St. Louis. And I am the lead sponsor of  
8 Resolution 117 [sic] that passed en banc last week  
9 through the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. What en  
10 banc means is that every single member of the Board  
11 of Aldermen signed on personally with their level of  
12 support to this resolution.

13 So we followed in the footsteps of the  
14 Kansas City City Council in passing this resolution  
15 that I would like to read to you.

16 It says: Whereas inflation pressures as  
17 reflected in changes in the consumer price index have  
18 rapidly increased over the past year; and whereas  
19 black, American Indian, Hawaiian-Pacific Islander  
20 households are more than twice as likely than white  
21 households to forgo food or medicine to pay energy  
22 costs; and whereas black and Hispanic children  
23 are 2.5 times and 1.5 times more likely to live in  
24 energy-insecure homes, meaning homes at risk of  
25 energy disconnection; and whereas the St. Louis

1 regional median energy burden, meaning the percentage  
2 of gross household income spent on energy bills is  
3 just over 4 percent while black households have an  
4 average energy burden of 7.4 percent; and whereas as  
5 price -- prices rise, risk of energy cost burden also  
6 grows; and whereas an increased utility rate will  
7 have a disproportionately negative impact on black  
8 St. Louis households and further contribute to  
9 racial wealth inequity in the city; and whereas on  
10 April 1st, 2022, Spire Missouri, Incorporated filed  
11 for \$151.9 million rate increase which is estimated  
12 to increase St. Louis area household bills by 11.5  
13 percent or \$9.42 per month; and whereas Missouri  
14 Spire, Incorporated was already granted a rate  
15 increase in December 2021 resulting in a \$1.52 per  
16 month increase for consumers in Missouri East that  
17 yielded a 7.39 percent corporate profit; and whereas  
18 Missouri Spire, Incorporated has already had some  
19 of the highest monthly charges that consumers must  
20 pay for any gas is -- and -- of any gas is consumed  
21 at \$20 -- \$22 per month for St. Louis and the eastern  
22 side of the state, there now fore [sic] it be  
23 resolved by the Board of Aldermen in the City of  
24 St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to  
25 assert that the national [sic] gas rate case No.

1 GR-2022-0179 filed by Spire Missouri poses risk to  
2 St. Louis residents and consumers at a time when they  
3 have already faced increased rates of inflation and  
4 energy burden.

5 Be it further resolved that the Board of  
6 Alderman in the City of St. Louis urges the Missouri  
7 Public Service Commission to carefully consider this  
8 rate case in light of these circumstances and the  
9 harm that it will cause to St. Louisans.

10 As I said, this was passed unanimously  
11 from the board. All of us who are elected officials  
12 in the city have been seeing an increasing number of  
13 our constituents who are falling on financial  
14 hardship. We are seeing more people in our eviction  
15 courts. We are seeing more eviction notices get  
16 filed. We are seeing more people not be able to meet  
17 very basic expenses, whether it be for medicine, for  
18 housing, for food. This is not the time for this  
19 rate increase.

20 So many people in our city already feel  
21 burdened. They already feel like they're living in  
22 the margins. And we don't want to see more folks  
23 evicted. We don't want to see more people on the  
24 streets when we're already struggling with capacity  
25 in a lot of our shelters. And we are struggling to

1 stand up the shelters that we need to adequately  
2 prepare for the coming winter months.

3 The last thing I'll say as sort of a  
4 point of personal privilege. This is not directly  
5 from the other members of the Board of Alderman, but  
6 I think many would also agree. We do also just want  
7 to make note to Spire that one of the biggest  
8 complaints that we get from our constituents is the  
9 way you mess up our streets. Over and over and over  
10 again I hear from constituents about problems with  
11 our streets.

12 As an alderman, I have \$300,000 per year  
13 for my ward capital budget. That has to go for every  
14 single capital expense in the ward that I represent.  
15 That has to pay for dumpsters, lighting, paving,  
16 any -- tree trimming, tree planting, any of those  
17 things. With \$300,000 per year I can afford to pave  
18 maybe one or two streets. That's it.

19 I think most of my constituents would  
20 agree that before Spire comes asking for another rate  
21 increase again, they need to fix our city streets.  
22 They're causing so many issues on people's cars,  
23 getting flat tires, having additional maintenance  
24 that they're having to put on their automobiles.  
25 That is a tax that is being put on to people without



1 their consent because of the impact that it is having  
2 on people's vehicles.

3 So I urge the Public -- the Public  
4 Service Commission to please vote no on this rate  
5 increase. And I also urge Spire to please come and  
6 fix the roads in St. Louis. Don't keep tearing up  
7 our streets and not coming and fixing it.

8 And can I give you the resolution? Is  
9 that okay?

10 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, you may. And I will  
11 put that in. Our court reporter with us virtually  
12 today which is fine we because we generally hang on  
13 to exhibits ourselves. So for the record I will take  
14 that as Public Hearing Exhibit 1.

15 (Exhibit 1 was received and made a part  
16 of the record.)

17 MS. GREEN: Did I have a question here?

18 MR. CLIZER: For the record, John Clizer,  
19 OPC. Is there a -- has that been published  
20 somewhere? Is there a citation that I can find that  
21 easily if I --

22 MS. GREEN: The resolution?

23 MR. CLIZER: Yes.

24 MS. GREEN: Yes. If you go on the Board  
25 of Aldermen -- St. Louis Board of Aldermen website,

1 all of our resolutions are listed there. It's  
2 Resolution 117, and it was passed last Friday.

3 MR. CLIZER: Thank you very much.

4 MS. GREEN: No problem.

5 JUDGE CLARK: And that actually leads  
6 into a question I have. I heard -- you said 117.  
7 I believe Ms. Barnes, unless I heard incorrectly,  
8 said 116. Are we talking about the same --

9 MS. GREEN: We are. I may be wrong.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. So it's just one --

11 MS. GREEN: Yes.

12 JUDGE CLARK: I just want to be sure --

13 MS. GREEN: Yes.

14 JUDGE CLARK: -- that I'm not looking at  
15 two different resolutions.

16 Thank you so much. Thank you for your  
17 comments.

18 MS. GREEN: Thank you for your time.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Ethan Bradley. Would you  
20 please say and spell your name for the record.

21 MR. BRADLEY: Ethan Bradley, E-t-h-a-n,  
22 B-r-a-d-l-e-y.

23 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear  
24 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give at  
25 this local public hearing is the truth?

1 MR. BRADLEY: I do.

2 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
3 tell the Commission?

4 MR. BRADLEY: Sure. So I said this in  
5 the Q&A but I'll say it again. I volunteer a lot  
6 with homeless people in St. Louis, specifically in  
7 the winter at these places we call Safe Havens. It's  
8 where you go if you have nowhere else warm to go. So  
9 it'll be homeless people; it'll also be people who  
10 just had their heat shut off or people who have had  
11 their heat shut off for a while.

12 And I volunteer, it's not my job, at the  
13 front with a clipboard. It's got like 33 spots.  
14 Those are all the cots we have in the building. And  
15 every -- it'll be 10:00 p.m. and we're out of spots.  
16 And somebody will come in who has their heat shut off  
17 and I have to tell them that we don't have a spot for  
18 them. And it's awful. And that's -- that's the  
19 position we're in.

20 And for the commissioners, on our way in  
21 there's pamphlets about what Spire does to help with,  
22 like, programs that people can be a part of to help  
23 them pay their bills; there's a big Ways We Can Help  
24 sign at the front of the room. Those are really hard  
25 to get people in. Like you've heard from people

1 tonight that this is the work they do work; they work  
2 with people all day to try to get them, like, into  
3 these programs. And that's hard to begin with  
4 because there's a lot of red tape and a lot of hoops  
5 to jump through. And as the woman who was right  
6 there said earlier, you could just graduate from them  
7 or get kicked off -- but that was the word Spire used  
8 is "graduate" from them a year later and you're stuck  
9 on a balanced billing program.

10           And Spire's in a position of power to be  
11 able to, like, come up with more ways we can help.  
12 There could be a lot more things on that sign.  
13 People have talked about increasing the spot where  
14 you qualify at 300 percent of the federal poverty  
15 level. That's a great idea. You could tie the  
16 programs that they have to whether or not you qualify  
17 for food stamps. You could tie it to whether or not  
18 you qualify for Medicaid. You could tie it to  
19 whether or not you've missed more than one utility  
20 bill. There's lots of great ideas that people in  
21 this room can help you come up with, if you reach out  
22 to local organizations to come up with ways you can  
23 help. You're in a position of power. Like, we need  
24 you to be able to do that.

25           And the fact that they're not doing that

1 and instead they're asking us to raise our utility  
2 bills 11 percent this winter, which the Farmers'  
3 Almanac and anybody who predicts the weather says  
4 it's going to be the coldest winter on record where  
5 I'm going to have more people coming to see me at the  
6 Safe Haven who are not going to have spots. And  
7 that's not their fault. Like, homelessness, like, as  
8 a -- as a thing in America is not Spire's fault. The  
9 fact that we don't have enough beds is not Spire's  
10 fault.

11 But you're the utility company for  
12 St. Louis. We -- like, you're a part of this  
13 community. You taking this 11 percent increase is  
14 going to cause more people to not have a place to  
15 stay that's warm. And you're responsible for that.  
16 It's on your shoulders.

17 And that's -- that's my position. If  
18 they want to make more money off of us, they can do  
19 the work to make sure that them making more money  
20 doesn't displace people. Until they do that work,  
21 don't give them any increase. Don't give them 9  
22 percent. Don't give them 2 percent. They don't  
23 deserve it. Thanks.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
25 comments. I have no questions.

1                   Anthony Green. Mr. Green, would you say  
2 and spell your name for the record.

3                   MR. GREEN: Anthony Green, A-n-t-h-o-n-y,  
4 Green, G-r-e-e-n.

5                   JUDGE CLARK: And, Mr. Green, do you  
6 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
7 about to give at this local public hearing is the  
8 truth?

9                   MR. GREEN: Yes, it is.

10                  JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
11 tell the PSC tonight?

12                  MR. GREEN: The first thing is I want to  
13 read something that I believe the Missouri Public  
14 Service Commission supplied us. One, the actual cost  
15 of the natural gas makes up 40 -- excuse me, makes  
16 up 50 to 55 percent of your current total monthly  
17 natural gas bill. So my arithmetic tells me if the  
18 actual cost of the natural gas makes up 50 to 55  
19 percent of my bill, the other 45 to 50 percent is  
20 non-gas related. And that's where we are today with  
21 case number GR-2022-0179. We need to know more  
22 specifically how the 45 to 50 percent non-gas cost is  
23 being spent.

24                  A lot of people have talked language and  
25 you have used a lot of terms tonight in terms of

1 semantics, and I want to kind to pull back some  
2 layers on the -- pull back some layers on the onion  
3 on that. One is the CEO of Spire has a fiduciary  
4 duty to make sure the money that it spends is spent  
5 in a way that's appropriate, that's relevant, and  
6 gets the most efficient use of that money. The CEO  
7 who earns whatever salary she makes has a fiduciary  
8 duty to do that day in and day out. And I think it  
9 just smacks of hubris to have done a rate increase  
10 last year, even if it was gas related, and then come  
11 to St. Louis and ask people to empty their wallets to  
12 finance corporate overhead.

13 I learned now that Spire is a  
14 publicly-traded company, which means possibly your  
15 CEO also receives executive compensation including  
16 stock options where she will receive reduced prices  
17 for stock for Spire and if she can figure out a way  
18 to engineer Wall Street and the analysts to give  
19 positive ratings quarterly to Spire, she stands to  
20 profit well above just the compensation that she  
21 receives. So she has a vested interest in hopefully  
22 getting this passed because Wall Street will look  
23 very favorably, Wall Street analysts will look very  
24 favorably at the fact that we, the citizens of  
25 St. Louis, have to pay, whether it's Spire West or

1 Spire East, that we're going to have to pay these  
2 extra costs and it will help to bridge this \$152  
3 million calculated gap that we're dealing with right  
4 now.

5 And all -- I mean, I'm all for, you know,  
6 CEOs getting paid what they're worth, but at some  
7 point there needs to be some due diligence at Spire.

8 Missouri -- excuse me. The Missouri  
9 Public Service Commission looked at a test year for  
10 you all and decided that of the 152 million you  
11 wanted to spend, they said that really it should only  
12 be -- let me make sure I get the numbers right --  
13 it should only be 70 -- 70.7 million and that the  
14 other 81.2 million, that's less, that's the  
15 difference, that shouldn't even be included in the  
16 calculation. I just want to take a pause on that.

17 They looked -- they picked a test year,  
18 you say based on your numbers and your accountants on  
19 the financial side, possibly cost of counsel as well,  
20 we need to bridge a \$152 million gap. They looked at  
21 a test year and said, We believe the numbers say 80  
22 million. Or excuse me. Excuse me. The numbers  
23 say 70 million, and 80 million is the difference  
24 between the 150 and the -- and the 70. The 80  
25 million is the difference. That's a huge gap.



1 Eighty million dollars is a lot of money.

2 And I think as an organization you need  
3 to do some due diligence about why you're spending  
4 that kind of money, whether it was litigation costs  
5 out of Washington, D.C. for the pipeline, whether it  
6 was settlement costs. I'm not exactly sure what the  
7 nature and extent and timing of all these extra costs  
8 were because usually they're wrapped in very general  
9 terms, general accounting terms on the balance sheet  
10 or on the financial statements that are provided.  
11 But the CEO has access to that.

12 And I really do think that it's time for  
13 a new precedent for the Missouri Public Service  
14 Commission. They need to decline this or at least  
15 defer it to one year. And you and your engineers and  
16 your well-heeled engineers, your well-heeled  
17 accountants, and your well-heeled lawyers go back in  
18 the back office and you really dig into the numbers  
19 and you really find out why you overspent that much.

20 According to an organization that  
21 regulates you, they say \$80 million in there is fat.  
22 This is a rate of fat that doesn't need to be there  
23 and they can't even justify it based on the test year  
24 that was chosen. I want to give more pause to that.  
25 Eighty million dollars. That's a lot of money.

1                   The CEO has to manage earnings. Again,  
2     so I understand, you know, that she has to do what's  
3     in the best interest of the organization to increase  
4     profits and also increase the bottom line, which will  
5     increase her bottom line. But I'll be quite honest.  
6     I'm not worried about her bottom line. I'm worried  
7     about mine.

8                   We have to be honest here, very  
9     intellectually honest. Spire is a regulated  
10    monopoly. We've all played the game formerly by the  
11    Parker Brothers. We know that on the four corners of  
12    the Monopoly board, you have the utilities. You have  
13    the railroad companies; that's one of the, you know,  
14    kind of public goods, providing logistics  
15    transportation. Another one is electricity. It  
16    needs to be regulated, right. And you -- and from my  
17    understanding when I -- when I moved here, I had so  
18    many choices of gas to choose from. I had Spire and  
19    then I had -- oh, it was just Spire. So you are a  
20    regulated monopoly.

21                  And from I understand, you have an  
22    elastic demand because regardless of what goes on,  
23    we're going to need the gas. So we are beholden to  
24    you because we can't go to SCANA Energy and get gas  
25    from them where you would have a free open market

1 enterprise where you have to compete day in and day  
2 out for our services. See, that would cause  
3 economies of scale and scope. But we don't have that  
4 here. We have Spire, formerly Laclede Gas.

5 The other thing I want to talk about real  
6 quickly is just a comparison because I like the term  
7 that someone used in calling Spire an empire, and not  
8 in a negative way. But empires have power, and  
9 absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.

10 So one thing I've noticed because I deal  
11 with Ameren also when I moved here. When I get  
12 electricity, Ameren is one of the electrical -- well,  
13 the only one that I know about where I live. And so  
14 they have -- they have used at least the smart meter  
15 technology where I can see my bill -- the bill  
16 projects my usage on the bill before month end. So  
17 if I go online Day One, Day Two, Day Three, it will  
18 tell me how much I've used in kilowatt hours and how  
19 much I'm projected to use if I continue to use energy  
20 the same way I've done the last ten days or whatever  
21 the actual billing period is for. So I don't have to  
22 wait for month end to find out or have a sense about  
23 how much my bill is going to be.

24 Now, I don't know how much of my bill  
25 I've already paid for that feature, but I'm really

1 concerned that an organization that's made \$300  
2 million last year seems to have a black box in the  
3 billing department where we don't know how much the  
4 bill is going to be until the bill drops.

5 We don't -- from my understanding, I've  
6 looked online, but maybe you have something, I  
7 haven't seen a feature similar to Ameren where midway  
8 in the month I can look online and you could say  
9 based on my gas usage for the first 15 days of my  
10 billing cycle, I should have a bill of this much if I  
11 tend to use the gas the same way or whatever. I've  
12 not seen that kind of predictive technology being put  
13 into my hands so that I can more effectively manage  
14 my billing that you're going to charge me, especially  
15 if these bills are going to go up, disproportionately  
16 the way they are. I think if this kind of technology  
17 is available, you should put it into our hands before  
18 a rate increases.

19 I think it is -- I think it's a  
20 disservice for you to increase the cost and then say,  
21 Well, you're adults, figure it out. That's not going  
22 to work for me. I think that you all should look  
23 into those types of technologies where we can see  
24 what our bill is going to look like before the bill  
25 drops. I think a lot of people, low-income and

1 otherwise, can be trained on that, can modify  
2 behavior on that, and not live in perpetual fear of  
3 when that bill comes in their mailbox because they  
4 have no transparency to the actual CCCFs used until  
5 the bill comes. It's too late at that point. The  
6 gas has been used and there has been no interim  
7 information that Spire has supplied them to be able  
8 to course correct during the billing cycle.

9           And that's what I like about Ameren. If  
10 I'm getting too fancy with my air conditioner, I can  
11 see in my -- in the -- in the -- I can see. I can  
12 change that. I can start using more fans and less  
13 air conditioning. There's something I can do in the  
14 billing -- in the middle of the billing cycle, or  
15 even at the beginning.

16           With Spire, if I go online, they'll show  
17 my last bill. There will not be any interim data  
18 that I can use to modify my consumption behavior.  
19 And I think you really need to look into that. You  
20 have plenty of industry partners and industry  
21 stakeholders, and again, I would encourage the CEO  
22 and the CFO to look into those things before rolling  
23 it out.

24           But I really do think the Missouri Public  
25 Service Commission should decline this because -- not

1 forever. They have to go back and really look at  
2 this and look at what they're giving us. What tools  
3 and resources, aside from just assistance programs,  
4 are they giving us to navigate this new, uncharted  
5 territory we're going into that's very inflationary  
6 driven, so I respect your business, you know, your  
7 business -- your business challenge in terms of  
8 managing costs in an inflationary economy.

9 But we have a personal economy on this  
10 side and we need you to partner with us to give us  
11 some more robust resources to see what our  
12 consumption looks like before the bill drops.  
13 Because I think that will help -- you know, help --  
14 help us and also help you. We won't overwhelm and  
15 jam up your customer service line because we won't --  
16 we don't have any transparency for the data.

17 I think that's it for what I covered.

18 Yeah, I think that's it. Thank you so much.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
20 comments. Those are all the people that I had signed  
21 up to speak tonight. Is there anybody who didn't get  
22 a chance to sign up and realizes now that they would  
23 like to say something to the Commission tonight?

24 Yes, sir. Come on up to the mic. And  
25 would you please state and spell your name for the

1 record.

2 MR. HANNON: My name's Robert Hannon,  
3 H-a-n-n-o-n.

4 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Hannon, do you solemnly  
5 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to  
6 give at this local public hearing is the truth?

7 MR. HANNON: Yes, I do, sir.

8 JUDGE CLARK: And what would you like to  
9 say to the Commission this evening?

10 MR. HANNON: First, I'm an investor in  
11 your company. My money goes to purchase shares. I  
12 want a profitable company. I don't expect that the  
13 Commission is going to file you into bankruptcy, but  
14 there needs to be probably, possibly a compromise  
15 between what maximum and minimum.

16 Nothing has been cast in stone yet, but I  
17 pay the same bills as everyone else. I pay the same  
18 utilities. I have medical issues. I'm an insulin-  
19 dependent diabetic using a Dexcom system and it's  
20 necessary to keep me alive. I also need heat. I  
21 have compromised. My compromise, I've turned my  
22 heating bill down. I have turned my hot water off  
23 for the summer. I do not have running hot water as a  
24 means of compromise, but I am mandatory to pay my  
25 utility bills or get evicted.

1 I am not on any commission, group  
2 receiving support from any organization. I own my  
3 home. I'm responsible for it, including utilities.  
4 My money goes to investments. I own stocks. I own  
5 shares and receive dividends, not by bankrupt  
6 companies, not by companies that have been forced to  
7 tear up their pipes because somebody wants to  
8 complain.

9 If you don't like the street, move. If  
10 you don't like the utility, shut your utility off.  
11 If you can't afford it, don't live here.

12 I have been put here because of my job.  
13 I'm a retired federal person. I receive a set amount  
14 of money every month and it has been reduced because  
15 of the Federal Government's decision to help  
16 everyone. Well, I don't have a complaint to say  
17 whether I like that or not.

18 If I don't like eviction, move. If you  
19 don't like St. Louis, move. You're not going to  
20 get -- face up. You're not going to get another  
21 utility company to give you another gas. What do you  
22 think, they're going to just come in and use the  
23 pipes.

24 People have spoken of many things here  
25 and realistically, face up. I can show you every



1 bill I have paid to all the utilities right here, my  
2 checkbook that goes back many, many months. I can  
3 list every utility I've paid: Electric, gas, water,  
4 and so on. I have compromised my house to stay there  
5 to avoid eviction. I have compromised my health in  
6 order to stay here.

7           Should I move because I can't afford it,  
8 because I don't like Spire. Where will I go. Will  
9 the Federal Government help me relocate. I expect  
10 not to. I have gone from being middle class to lower  
11 portion of the middle-class category. I receive no  
12 assistance other than what I receive from my  
13 retirement money, yet I have investments in much of  
14 the utilities in this area, including Spire. I  
15 expect to stay.

16           What kills me, my property tax bill, not  
17 the Spire bill, not my water bill. My property tax  
18 that gives me nothing back. My money goes to pay for  
19 everything else but nothing that I receive because I  
20 make improvements to my house, I replace my windows,  
21 I put in insulation, I put a new roof on, and I make  
22 repairs. How does it help me? My Spire bill has  
23 gone down. So has my electric bill. So has my water  
24 bill. And I am still here.

25           I owned my house already 22 years and yet

1 I was relocated here for federal reasons to maintain  
2 my job and I had no choice. Go or lose your  
3 position. I chose to come here. I chose to fix my  
4 house. I choose to cut down my utility usage.  
5 Questions? Please ask.

6 JUDGE CLARK: I have no questions, but  
7 thank you for your comments.

8 MR. HANNON: Thank you, sir.

9 JUDGE CLARK: Is there anybody else who  
10 did not get an opportunity to comment who wanted to  
11 offer comments to the Commission tonight.

12 Sir.

13 MR. WISLEDER: Hi, Deric Wisleder. I  
14 wanted to make --

15 JUDGE CLARK: Would you say and spell  
16 your name for the record please.

17 MR. WISLEDER: Oh, yeah. D-e-r-i-c is  
18 Deric and Wisleder, W-i-s-l-e-d-e-r.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Wisleder, do you  
20 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're  
21 about to give at this public hearing is the truth?

22 MR. WISLEDER: Yes. Several people  
23 commented about that we need to look past Spire, past  
24 the corporate solution. And what I didn't hear and  
25 so my brief comment was that I notice that the

1 Missouri Public Service Commission it's saying there  
2 that it's an independent commission and I would  
3 imagine that the taxpayers pay the -- pay for that  
4 commission. And part of the -- it seems to me that  
5 part of the solution would be that the State of  
6 Missouri should look into making that commission a  
7 part of the State, more a part of the State, more  
8 integrated with the State in the process of, as  
9 someone had mentioned, dissolving Spire and moving  
10 from a corporate solution to a public solution. And  
11 many people are saying that it should be obvious.

12 I know that the country has kind of gone  
13 the opposite direction over many decades in  
14 privatizing public services, public utilities. And,  
15 but, you know, we need to -- we need to think about  
16 that. And so I wanted to put that out there as a  
17 comment.

18 In the short term, please do say no to  
19 this -- these rate increases that are not justified  
20 and look into how we can start into a public solution  
21 and cut out the middleman and private profits,  
22 private corporate profits and so on and so forth.  
23 Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your  
25 comments.

1           Is there anybody else who wanted to offer  
2    comments tonight?

3           Well, it's been a long evening. I want  
4    to thank everybody for showing up and offering their  
5    comments to the Commission. This is the only way the  
6    Commission gets a window into the communities and how  
7    utility requests affect them. And so I appreciate  
8    everybody taking time out of their day to come and  
9    express their comments to the Commission.

10          Now, if anyone has additional comments  
11    that they wanted to offer or they get home and they  
12    have a friend who says, I wish I could have gone to  
13    that but was unable to, you can offer additional  
14    comments, written comments by going through the  
15    Missouri Public Service Commission's website.  
16    There's a spot where you can see to offer  
17    comments. When you're doing that, be sure and know  
18    the case number that you are commenting on. This one  
19    is GR-2022-0179.

20          Additionally, Public Counsel who has sat  
21    here at this table right here, you can also contact  
22    the Office of the Public Counsel if you have comments  
23    or someone you know has comments that they would like  
24    to make to the Commission.

25          Do any of the commissioners have any

1 closing remarks -- closing comments that they would  
2 like to make?

3 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Judge, this is  
4 Commissioner Holsman.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Thank you.

7 I just want to thank everybody for  
8 participating in this very robust hearing. It does  
9 matter. You know, we hung in there all the way to  
10 the end and appreciate everybody stepping forward and  
11 sharing their thoughts.

12 I want to thank you, Judge, for managing  
13 the hearing and for getting us through all the  
14 comments tonight. And just very appreciative. Thank  
15 you very much.

16 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Thank you very much,  
17 Commissioner Holsman.

18 To the parties, is there anything else  
19 the Commission needs to take up tonight? Spire?

20 MR. APLINGTON: No. Just to thank  
21 everyone who came. We really appreciate your  
22 participation and your comments and we look forward  
23 to serving you. Thanks.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Public Counsel?

25 MR. CLIZER: Very, very briefly. The OPC

1 anticipates that it might want to use some of the  
2 testimony that was given here today in preparation of  
3 surrebuttal. I want to make sure that the transcript  
4 would be filed before the due date for surrebuttal  
5 and request expedited treatment as necessary to  
6 achieve that end.

7 JUDGE CLARK: I can't grant or deny that  
8 right now, but I will certainly take your concerns to  
9 the Commission. Obviously the transcript will be  
10 made publicly available when it's available.

11 MR. CLIZER: Thank you.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Staff?

13 MR. STOKES: Nothing to add. Just thank  
14 you all for coming in and speaking to us tonight.

15 JUDGE CLARK: And anything from our lone  
16 Intervenor? Thank you very much.

17 Well, again, I would like to thank  
18 everybody for being here tonight. It's -- I've  
19 learned a great deal tonight. With that, this  
20 hearing is now adjourned and we will go off the  
21 record.

22 (Off the record at 10:12 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MISSOURI )

I, Shelley L. Bartels, a Certified Court Reporter, CCR No. 679, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the public hearing; and that the foregoing transcript, pages 1 through 141, is a true record of my stenographic notes.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, or attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 16th day of October, 2022.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Shelley L. Bartels, CCR 679

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