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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC HEARING

October 30, 2003
Columbia, Missouri
Volume 5

In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a Ameren UE for)
Authority to File Tariffs)Case No. GR-2003-0517
Increasing Rates for Gas Service)
Provided to Customers in the)
Company's Missouri Service Area)

RONALD D. PRIDGIN, Presiding
REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KELVIN L. SIMMONS, Chair
STEVEN GAW, Commissioner

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1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. We're on
3 the record. Good evening. The Missouri
4 Public Service Commission has set this time
5 for a local public hearing in Case No.
6 GR-2003-0517 in which Union Electric Company
7 doing business as Ameren UE seeks to implement
8 a rate increase.

9 The Missouri Public Service Commission
10 regulates the rates charged by investor-owned
11 utility companies in Missouri to ensure that
12 those rates are just and reasonable. The
13 Commission also regulates the quality of
14 service and safety of the operations of
15 investor-owned utilities. The Commission is
16 made up of five commissioners, two of whom are
17 here this evening. The Commissioners are
18 appointed by the governor to fixed terms and
19 confirmed by the Senate. The Commissioners
20 employ a staff of engineers, accountants,
21 attorneys, financial analysts and other
22 specialists in the field of utility
23 regulation.

24 I am Ron Pridgin. I am the regulatory
25 law judge assigned by the Commission to

1 preside over this evening's hearing. And with
2 me this evening to my right is Commissioner
3 and Chairman of the Commission Simmons and
4 Commissioner Gaw. I believe staff counsel --
5 I see David Meyer appear on my right.

6 This is an official hearing of the
7 Missouri Public Service Commission. And the
8 statements and testimony of witnesses will be
9 recorded by the court reporter and must be
10 given under oath. All of the commissioners
11 will have the chance to read your remarks.

12 In addition to this hearing, a trial type
13 evidentiary hearing will be held beginning on
14 January 2nd, 2004, and reconvening beginning
15 January 12th, 2004, starting at 9 a.m. at the
16 Commission's offices at the Hotel Governor
17 Office Building in Jefferson City, Missouri.
18 That hearing is a public hearing and the
19 company will have the burden of showing that
20 the proposed rate increase is just and
21 reasonable.

22 The parties will present witnesses for
23 and against the rate increase at that time.
24 The purpose of this hearing is to hear from
25 you on the subject of the proposed rate

1 increase. The company will not present
2 witnesses tonight and will not answer your
3 questions on the record. This is your chance
4 to testify and your remarks will be a part of
5 the official record of this case. I will call
6 the name of each witness who has signed up to
7 speak. I will call you in the order that you
8 signed up. When your name is called, please
9 come forward and sit up here in the witness
10 chair. And, again, please spell your name for
11 the court reporter so she can put it in the
12 record correctly. I will ask you some
13 preliminary questions such as your name and
14 address, and you can then make your
15 statements. There may be some clarifying
16 questions from counsel or from the
17 commissioners or from me. So I ask that you
18 not leave the witness chair until you're
19 excused.

20 To get as many of you on the record as
21 possible, I'll ask that you be brief. If a
22 previous speaker has already made the points
23 that you wanted to make, you may simply state
24 that you agree with what that person said.
25 There may be someone who wishes to testify but

1 because of religious convictions cannot take
2 an oath. If so, please tell me when I ask you
3 to be sworn, and I will instead ask you to
4 affirm your testimony.

5 Does anyone have any questions about the
6 procedure this evening? All right. Seeing
7 none, we will begin the public hearing on Case
8 No. GR-2003-0517 in the matter of Union
9 Electric Company doing business as Ameren UE
10 for authority to file tariffs increasing rates
11 for gas service provided to customers and the
12 Company's Missouri serviced area.

13 Will counsel make their entries of
14 appearance, please, beginning with staff?

15 MR. MEYER: Good evening. My name
16 is David Meyer. I represent the staff of the
17 Missouri Public Service Commission. Our
18 address is P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City,
19 Missouri, 65102.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Meyer, thank
21 you. On behalf of the Office of the Public
22 Counsel, please?

23 MR. MICHEEL: Doug Micheel appearing
24 on behalf of the Office of Public Counsel,
25 Post Office Box 2200, Jefferson City, Missouri

1 65102-2200.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Micheel, thank

3 you. On behalf of Ameren UE?

4 MR. BURN: Tom Burn appearing on

5 behalf of Ameren UE. My address is 1901

6 Cheauteau (ph.) Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri,

7 63103.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Burn, thank you.

9 Anyone here on behalf of Missouri Department

10 of Natural Resources? All right. Thank you.

11 I will begin to call witnesses. If I

12 mispronounce a name, I apologize in advance.

13 Please feel free to correct me, and I'll try

14 to pronounce it correctly. I see as the first

15 witness, John Wilkey. Good evening, sir. If

16 you would, please raise your right hand to be

17 sworn.

18 JOHN WILKE,

19 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

20 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

22 sir. If you would, please, take a seat. And

23 if you would, sir, please state your name for

24 the record and spell your last name.

25 MR. WILKE: My name is John Wilke,

1 W-i-l-k-e.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
3 please, sir?

4 MR. WILKE: I live at 7410 West
5 Country Hill, Midway area of Columbia.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. All
7 right. And are you a gas customer of Ameren
8 UE?

9 MR. WILKE: I am a gas customer.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statement you
11 would like to make to the Commission, sir?

12 MR. WILKE: Before I get to the meat
13 of my statement, I -- in response to some of
14 the comments that were made in the informal
15 session, I would like to make two observations
16 that are favorable towards the petitioner.
17 First of all, it doesn't go unnoticed that the
18 petitioner uses old trucks, old equipment and
19 apparently does try to avoid extravagant
20 expenditures in their operations here in the
21 Columbia area.

22 Secondly, prior to coming here, I was
23 wanting to research the salary of the CEO of
24 the Ameren Corporation. And, frankly, I was
25 surprised that it was less than a million

1 dollars. And I do make note that we choose to
2 pay a basketball coach here in Columbia more
3 than the CEO of the Ameren Corporation.

4 Getting to my statement, I wanted to
5 allude that I was on a fixed income. But I
6 would like to be so lucky. I live on interest
7 on CDs. And due to the arbitrary efforts of
8 Mr. Greenspan and the federal reserve, I
9 actually am on a diminished income. But that
10 leads me to my first comment. I was reading
11 that the standard in POORS (ph.) all industry
12 average showed a rate of return of 3.3 percent
13 in the first six months of this year. With
14 that in mind, the petitioner should be able to
15 attract adequate capital and borrow funds at a
16 rate much lower than historically documented.
17 On this basis, I ask the Commission to
18 consider current business environment and not
19 be locked in to the relatively high historical
20 rate of return that utilities have commanded.

21 I would like to submit a exhibit. This
22 first is merely a summary of my presentation
23 and is not meant to be entered as an exhibit.
24 But I would like to enter an exhibit of the
25 last six months of my gas bill. And there may

1 be a technical error in this, but I don't
2 believe it will affect the gist of my
3 presentation.

4 As you can see, I am somewhat frugal with
5 my gas consumption. I follow the instructions
6 put out to conserve energy, and I think I -- I
7 reap the benefits. But I point out that the
8 largest portion of those gas bills are the
9 fixed load for infrastructure maintenance and
10 repair. And my presentation is based, I
11 believe, on some erroneous information. I
12 came here on the understanding there would be
13 a \$9 increase on the minimum fixed load on the
14 gas bills. And I believe this has been
15 pointed out, I may be incorrect, but what I
16 would urge the Commission to do is try to
17 minimize the portion that is placed on the
18 fixed load for infrastructure repair and place
19 as much as possible on the capacity, the
20 volume control factors. I suggest that the
21 cost of my gas meter, its installation,
22 maintenance and replacement and the service
23 line to the gas main are the only things that
24 are absolutely fixed as a customer.

25 The service lines and the gas mains, the

1 metering stations, the odorizing adding
2 stations all have a function of number of
3 customers and the volume of product delivered.
4 By placing whatever necessary increase you --
5 you find appropriate on the per unit
6 consumption of gas does two things. It more
7 fairly allocates the fixed component and also
8 creates an incentive for others to strive to
9 conserve energy.

10 Finally, and briefly, Ameren UE says
11 conserve energy. Yet, within our county,
12 within a 5 mile area of where we stand, are
13 two huge gas consuming electric generating
14 turbines. These turbines are used primarily,
15 I understand, during the summer for peaking
16 purposes. But they consume enormous amounts
17 of product, reducing the stores of gas
18 available that tend to hit us consumers in the
19 winter by elevated PGA rates, the purchased
20 gas adjustments. I realize that the turbines
21 may not be regulated by the Commission. But I
22 urge you to carefully scrutinize the costing
23 factors for the wholesale gas turbine
24 consumers to be sure that none of this
25 increase which you may allow goes to build the

1 large capacity piping necessary to feed these
2 turbines that in turn run up the producer gas
3 adjustment charge.

4 Unless you gentlemen have a question or
5 if I can clarify something, that's the
6 completion of my presentation.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Wilke, thank
8 you. I -- I just have a couple of clarifying
9 questions and simply about what it is that you
10 brought up to the table here. It is entirely
11 up to you. Would you like these documents
12 entered as exhibits or -- you spoke about
13 them. They can be made a part of the record.
14 It's entirely up to you.

15 MR. WILKE: I will defer that to the
16 judgment of the -- the Commission. I do not
17 think they're of any real objective finding.
18 I was merely trying to point out that in my
19 situation, I strive to be conserving with my
20 use of gas. And by placing a high load on the
21 monthly fixed charge would be regressive to me
22 as a resident consumer in contrast to a larger
23 business or wholesale consumer.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.
25 Mr. Wilke, thank you. Let me see if we have

1 any clarifying questions from counsel, and
2 I'll also give them the chance -- opportunity,
3 to tell me if they have any feeling about
4 these proposed or potential exhibits.

5 MR. MEYER: Your Honor, I do have
6 one clarifying question for Mr. Wilke.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

8 MR. MEYER: Are you a budget billed
9 customer?

10 MR. WILKE: No.

11 MR. MEYER: Okay.

12 MR. WILKE: I anticipate my bill
13 this winter might be higher than the exhibit
14 that I offered to you.

15 MR. MEYER: All right. Thank you.

16 MR. WILKE: Thank you.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I'm sorry. If I
18 could just see if we have any other questions.
19 I'm sorry. Any other questions from counsel?

20 MR. MICHEEL: I have no questions,
21 your Honor.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
23 you. Chairman Simmons, any questions?

24 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: I don't have a
25 question for Mr. Wilke. But I want to say

1 thank you, Mr. Wilke, for your testimony.
2 Thank you for your presentation. Didn't get a
3 chance to say earlier to each and every one of
4 you, but on behalf of the Commissioners, on
5 behalf of the Commission, we appreciate you
6 being here tonight. You could have been
7 anywhere else tonight, but you decided to come
8 here, and I want to let you know that we
9 appreciate your testimony, your presentations.
10 This will be entered into the record. The
11 other Commissioner -- the other three will
12 also be able to review your comments tonight,
13 and it is vitally important. It should be
14 noted that no decision has been made at this
15 point in time, and we do take into
16 consideration those issues that consumers
17 bring before us. So if there are quality
18 service, quality issues, we'd like to hear
19 about it. We'd like to hear about all the
20 issues that you feel that are important to you
21 tonight. And, again, Mr. Wilke, and to
22 everybody else that will come after you, we
23 definitely appreciate your testimony and your
24 presence here tonight. Thank you, sir.
25 MR. WILKE: Thank you for the

1 opportunity to testify.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Chairman, thank
3 you. Commissioner Gaw, any questions or
4 statements?

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Chairman
6 Simmons said it very well. Mr. Wilke, I may
7 have one brief clarifying question. What --
8 what do you utilize gas for at -- at the
9 address that you gave us?

10 MR. WILKE: My residence has a
11 natural gas water heater, and I do have
12 natural gas heat.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

14 MR. WILKE: Mr. Gaw, I believe we've
15 had previous encounters, and you know I am
16 cheap.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very
18 much, Mr. Wilke.

19 MR. WILKE: Am I dismissed?

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: You are. You are
21 free to go, Mr. Wilke. Thank you so much,
22 sir.

23 All right. I see the next witness Eugene
24 Elkin. If you would, please raise your right
25 hand to be sworn.

1 EUGENE ELKIN,
2 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
3 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,
5 sir. If you would, please have a seat. Would
6 you please state your name for the record and
7 spell your last name?
8 MR. ELKIN: My name is H. Eugene
9 Elkin. That is E-l-k-i-n.
10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
11 please, sir?
12 MR. ELKIN: 3406 Range Line Street,
13 Lot 81, Columbia, Missouri, 65202.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
15 customer of Ameren UE?
16 MR. ELKIN: Yes, I am.
17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any
18 statement you'd like to make for the
19 Commission, sir?
20 MR. ELKIN: I have several points
21 I'd like to bring up. There was an issue
22 earlier that I'd like to bring to -- to the
23 group. I am an individual who is on
24 disability. It will soon be ten years. And
25 this year I have to ask for assistance with my

1 gas bill, and I'm not looking forward to
2 asking for any assistance. This is not a real
3 fun thing to be sitting in front of you all
4 trying to talk. How can it be justified that
5 we have a 78 percent non-gas increase when
6 social security is only going to be giving us
7 about a 2 percent increase? As a member of
8 GROW, we feel that if I -- meaning, I emphasis
9 if, an increase is needed in non-gas charges,
10 then you need to be sure that it is shared
11 equally between residential and business
12 customers. I'm under the impression that
13 businesses get a break over residential
14 customers.

15 No. 3, we are actually shareholders in a
16 sense knowing that gas itself is being
17 increased without our comments. Our vote as
18 GROW members for any increases is a definite
19 no. Our utility prices affect other areas of
20 our lives, including groceries, gasoline,
21 medical expenses, et cetera, just plain
22 basics. We now have more people without
23 health insurance than in the -- all the
24 history of our country. Realize that
25 shareholders will also invest in those who

1 treat their consumers with respect and
2 dignity, not with a company who believes that
3 the poor can just get poorer.

4 With Missouri having the largest number
5 of jobs lost, I suggest that Ameren completely
6 drop the idea of a non-gas increase all
7 together. That's my personal opinion.

8 In the discussion earlier, there was
9 something about pipeline. It brought back a
10 memory. I was born and raised in the
11 Hallville area, Centralia's factory I worked
12 for, a company that had a major explosion in
13 the early 1980s. This goes back 20 plus
14 years. Recently, we had another explosion in
15 that town. Something needs to be done. When
16 we talk about appropriating money in the right
17 areas, what's going on is something getting
18 very old and out of date in that one town. It
19 could happen anywhere in our state. But we
20 need to be looking at those pipelines and
21 don't forget to bring that up at some certain
22 point in time. Thank you.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.
24 Mr. Elkin, thank you. Let me see if we have
25 any clarifying questions first from counsel.

1 MR. MEYER: No, your Honor.

2 MR. MICHEEL: No, your Honor.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.

4 Chairman Simmons?

5 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Mr. Elkin, thank

6 you for your testimony. Are you a member of

7 GROW?

8 MR. ELKIN: Yes, sir.

9 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you,

11 Mr. Elkin.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Elkin, thank you

13 very much for your time and your testimony

14 this evening.

15 All right. I see as the next witness,

16 Melissa Bass.

17 MELISSA BASS,

18 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

19 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

21 ma'am. If you would, please have a seat.

22 Would you please state your name for the

23 record and spell your last name?

24 MS. BASS: Melissa Bass, B-a-s-s.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your

1 address, please?

2 MS. BASS: 801 Washington, Columbia,
3 Missouri, 65201.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
5 customer of Ameren UE?

6 MS. BASS: Yes, I am.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statement you'd
8 like to make for the Commission, ma'am?

9 MS. BASS: Yes. I'm a single mother
10 who is on a fixed income with a child who is
11 sick and needs medical attention constantly.
12 And I can't afford to keep having my gas price
13 go up. In the summer, I didn't even have my
14 thermostat on, and I was getting a bill for
15 \$139, and I just can't afford it. And going
16 up is going to make it harder. And I have to
17 pay -- every two weeks I'm buying medicine for
18 my son. It makes it much harder. And if
19 prices are going up to think heat for my child
20 or his medicine. That's all I have to say.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Bass, thank you
22 very much. Let me see if we have any
23 clarifying questions from counsel first.

24 MR. MEYER: No.

25 MR. MICHEEL: No, your Honor.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you.
2 Mr. Chairman?
3 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Ms. Bass,
4 appreciate your testimony and thank you for
5 your courage. It seems like the baby is
6 asleep. But thank you for your courage, and I
7 appreciate your testimony.
8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, ma'am.
9 Commissioner?
10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Bass, are you
11 on budget billing?
12 MS. BASS: I get billed by Ameren UE
13 whatever.
14 COMMISSIONER GAW: So it
15 fluctuates from month to month?
16 MS. BASS: Yes.
17 COMMISSIONER GAW: And you were
18 having \$139 bills this summer?
19 MS. BASS: Yes. And I called Ameren
20 UE, and I just got stuck with the answering
21 machines and everything else.
22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Did you ever get
23 to talk to a person?
24 MS. BASS: No, I did not.
25 COMMISSIONER GAW: What -- did you

1 live at this residence last winter?

2 MS. BASS: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: What -- if you

4 want to say -- it's up to you -- what were

5 your bills running then?

6 MS. BASS: Well, I was pregnant at

7 that time, so I really didn't use the heat

8 because I was -- I got overheated, and it was

9 the same price since I didn't actually turn

10 the thermostat on.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. So your

12 bills -- okay. Your bills having -- have you

13 had any bills that have been less than \$139?

14 MS. BASS: No. I've had higher, but

15 the lowest I've ever had was \$139.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: How big is your

17 -- how big of a house is this?

18 MS. BASS: It's two bedroom house.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And you

20 have gas heat?

21 MS. BASS: Yes. And gas -- and

22 cooking.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Cooking. And

24 water heater?

25 MS. BASS: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Anything else?

2 MS. BASS: No.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is this an older

4 home?

5 MS. BASS: Yes. It has high

6 ceilings. My landlord's winterized it, done a

7 lot of work on it and is still working on it.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. You didn't

9 bring any of your bills with you, by chance,

10 did you?

11 MS. BASS: No. Because my landlord

12 -- he was upset with how -- he's been working

13 hard on it. And he's trying to figure out why

14 it should be like that even for myself.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes. I

16 understand. Okay. Thank you very much for

17 coming, ma'am.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Bass, thank you

19 very much for your time this evening.

20 I see as the next witness, Deborah

21 Kelvin. If you would, please raise your right

22 hand to be sworn.

23 DEBORAH CALVIN,

24 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

25 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
2 If you would, please have a seat.
3 MS. CALVIN: Okay.
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would, ma'am,
5 please state your name for the record and
6 spell your last name.
7 MS. CALVIN: All right. My first
8 name is Deborah, it's o-r-a-h. And my last
9 name is Calvin, C-a-l-v-i-n.
10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
11 please?
12 MS. CALVIN: It's 615 Park Avenue,
13 Columbia, Missouri, 65201.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
15 customer of Ameren UE?
16 MS. CALVIN: Yes, I am.
17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Do you
18 have a statement you'd like to make to the
19 Commission?
20 MS. CALVIN: Yes, I do. One thing
21 is I did bring along and I only have the one
22 copy -- I'll set it up here. This is my copy
23 of my medical prescription and medical
24 equipment, dressings and things like that.
25 This is from last October to this October.

1 And I would like to submit that. And my
2 budget that I have. This is very simplified,
3 but it drives home the fact that I am in the
4 negative every month. I am -- I am with GROW
5 and I am on Medicaid. I have got -- well, I'm
6 -- I do worry about the results of what is
7 going to happen.

8 I'm glad to see a large turnout. This is
9 the first time that I have been able to do
10 this because of illness. So I'm going to read
11 more or less what I wrote. I understand that
12 Ameren UE wants them to -- wants to increase
13 the fee for the administrative costs, and I
14 didn't -- and I obviously cannot do anything
15 about the gas costs. The costs -- the
16 increase for -- and I termed it administrative
17 costs to differentiate from the natural gas
18 itself. It will almost double my bill. And I
19 run about \$22. That's in the summer most of
20 the time. And it will get up to 55 to \$60 in
21 the -- in the winter. If it's -- in the
22 winter, we don't have zero -- I mean, really
23 low temperatures.

24 Because of my illness, I have to keep it
25 set -- I mean, I cannot go below 75, really.

1 I start hurting too much and chilling. What
2 I'd like to know is when and where I am
3 supposed to be able to come up with the extra
4 money for this. Last month, DFS, Division of
5 Family Services, cut my food stamps by \$38. I
6 was getting 128, and they decreased it to \$90.
7 No reason was given. And I have been ill and
8 I have not checked into that yet, why that
9 happened. I haven't bought a paper for
10 months. And I feel like I'm slowly -- slowly
11 losing a few points as events happen to which
12 I am unaware and throughout our country
13 throughout the world. The same goes with
14 Time, Newsweek, et cetera. I can't just go to
15 the library every time I want to read a
16 newspaper or Time or Newsweek or one of those
17 because I am basically homebound.

18 This was very important to me tonight.
19 And I was determined. And I did have help
20 getting here, and I'll have help getting home.
21 I send my aid to pick up books that -- what
22 keeps me from going to do these things myself
23 or from working is pain and medication and
24 exhaustion and just making it day-to-day with
25 -- my basic problem is Lupus, which has caused

1 me to be homebound for my other problems.

2 It disturbs me to -- I hear frequently on
3 the news about the elderly and the children
4 but not the invisible portion of the
5 population that is disabled like my age. I
6 should be at the height of my career now. I'm
7 50 years old. Instead, I spend time going
8 from hospital to home to hospital to home.
9 And, thus, the middle aged citizens on
10 disability really receive little or no
11 recognition when these problems are discussed
12 in the news.

13 I already cannot meet my needs now
14 without this increase. And I need for you to
15 deny the increase of the non-gas portion of
16 the Ameren UE hopefuls. By increasing my
17 utilities, I'd be more subject to turn-off.
18 And if you live anywhere in Missouri, you live
19 in public housing, having your utilities
20 turned off is grounds for eviction. And every
21 -- everyone, every tenant signs this in a
22 contract. So if there's any time that I would
23 lose utilities, I could be in a lot of
24 trouble, and I really don't want to be. I
25 went from being one fantastic nurse and I

1 supported a husband through medical school and
2 residency while I raised two children to come
3 to the point now where I am too sick to work.
4 You can't see my illness and you can't see my
5 exhaustion or bone pain or the asthma or the
6 many problems that come from the Lupus.

7 Since I've gotten home, I don't know how
8 I would do about getting my medications if it
9 was not for my Medicaid. But there are still
10 medicines that they do not pay for. And so I
11 have about a hundred dollars a month that I
12 have to pay on my own. I count -- I counted
13 the amount of co-pay that I have paid since
14 coming home from the hospital September 4th,
15 and I have paid as a co-pay \$108.50 on
16 medications.

17 Then I have bought my own -- after the
18 visiting nurses was discontinued, I'm doing my
19 own dressing changes. I was -- I could not
20 get dressing supplies there. They are not
21 supplied by Medicaid or paid for by Medicaid.
22 And that -- and that has amounted to
23 approximately about \$50. I use a pharmacy in
24 town that is probably more -- probably is more
25 expensive on my non-medical -- or prescription

1 medical needs because they deliver. At this
2 point, I have -- one of the dressings they use
3 is called Pearlex, and it's a rolled gauze
4 bandages, 4 inches. I can get one of those to
5 last me for two days. I have to have -- and I
6 have already paid for this today. I had \$5
7 and I had to pay \$4.66 plus tax on two Pearlex
8 until I get paid tomorrow.

9 I haven't cut my hair for four months.
10 My car needs work, I can't afford to have it
11 done. And it would be nice to -- it would be
12 nice to drive. There is one kind of shampoo I
13 have that I -- I purchased with great
14 trepidation, but it keeps my hair from falling
15 out. And even those of us who are in poverty
16 -- like I said, once I was a nurse and I was
17 proud of my work. I was a good nurse. And
18 now I am down to being on public assistance,
19 and it's very hard. It would be very hard to
20 ask for assistance this winter, and I'm sure
21 there will be a point where I have to.

22 I recently had to replace my eyeglasses.
23 And it wasn't time yet as far as Medicaid was
24 concerned, so they were a \$165. A
25 well-meaning friend left my air conditioning

1 turned up high while I was gone, and she was
2 there to feed my kitty. And so that bill was
3 \$31 over what I usually pay.

4 I simply -- my bill -- my bills I've
5 totaled them up. And I have about a \$50
6 deficit each month where I don't make ends
7 meet. So that means something has to go,
8 whether it's a prescription that I maybe don't
9 need as much and can get by without. It means
10 no newspapers, no books, no movies, no
11 magazines. I don't drink. I'm a non-smoker.
12 I don't get my hair cut. I don't buy -- and,
13 actually, I haven't bought any clothes for
14 about two years.

15 I have -- I don't have the money to pay
16 for an increase. My increase every year --
17 I'm currently getting a 100 -- \$542 a month
18 plus my food stamps for \$90. I had one other
19 point. The 542 was an increase over 532 the
20 year before. So I basically get \$10 more per
21 month every January. And that's definitely
22 not even -- that's not -- doesn't keep up with
23 cost of living. And then I get a notice after
24 a week -- a week after I'm -- after I get --
25 after I get my notice that I'm going to get my

1 increase in my SSI, I get a notice from
2 Division of Family Services that they will cut
3 my food stamps \$2 for every \$3 raise from my
4 social security and SSI. So it was basically
5 I lose -- I get to keep \$4 of my increase
6 every year. And that is basically -- I just
7 wanted to show you from one person's point of
8 view what it is like to try to live day in and
9 day out on this and then see the possibility
10 of my heat going up.

11 And I -- for example, I mean, I have to
12 have a phone. I'm ill, and there's been
13 several times we've had to call 911. It's
14 almost a standing joke at home. And I live
15 alone. And so I need a phone for people to
16 help me, so I can call for help or an
17 ambulance. That is basically what my -- my
18 plea is to keep -- keep it where it is at
19 least and not give us an increase that we
20 can't afford. I'd like to try to light one
21 candle rather than curse the darkness. So I
22 hope I've done that. And I don't know who
23 should get this.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'll take care of
25 that. Mr. Wood, thank you. I was just going

1 to ask you.

2 MS. CALVIN: And that's the
3 conclusion of my testimony.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Calvin, thank
5 you very much. Let me see if we have any
6 clarifying questions from counsel.

7 MR. MEYER: I don't have any.

8 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Ms. Calvin, I
9 understand that you had great difficulty being
10 here, and I just want to let you know how much
11 I appreciate you coming tonight, too, and
12 giving us your testimony. Ms. Calvin, are you
13 on budget billing at all or any other type of
14 assistance? Or have you ever tried to receive
15 any kind of assistance with your utility
16 bills?

17 MS. CALVIN: I have received -- oh,
18 like maybe once a year some dollar assistance.
19 In fact, right now, because my -- my electric
20 bill is \$35 higher while I was in the hospital
21 with my -- my friend leaving my air turned up,
22 I'm asking the Salvation Army for assistance
23 right now. I have a hard time -- it's easier
24 to get electric assistance, at least it has
25 been my experience, than to get assistance

1 with a gas bill.

2 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Thank you.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Chairman, thank

4 you. Commissioner Gaw?

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: Would you follow

6 up on that just -- just a minute, Mrs. Calvin?

7 You said it was easier to get electric

8 assistance. Can you -- can you expand on that

9 just a little?

10 MS. CALVIN: It seems there's --

11 when I've call companies in the past, I've

12 used the Health Department, HDC. And even HUD

13 has assisted me the last three years. They

14 will have money available, funds available for

15 electric cut-offs or disconnect notices, but

16 they -- they have not had the money for the

17 gas. Now, HDC did one time. They had gas

18 assistance.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Calvin, I just

21 have some -- a clarifying question about the

22 -- about the exhibit. And I've marked this as

23 Exhibit No. 1. For the record and -- and Ms.

24 Calvin, I understand -- I've counted this as

25 being 14 pages. Feel free to correct me if

1 I'm wrong. But it looks to be a patient
2 profile listing from Kilgore's Medical
3 Pharmacy dated October 29th, 2003; is that
4 correct?

5 MS. CALVIN: Right.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I'll --
7 I have that marked as Exhibit No. 1, and this
8 is the only copy that I have. I will be glad
9 to make this available for counsel to -- tp
10 make copies at a later time.

11 Ms. Calvin, thank you so much for your
12 time and for your testimony this evening. We
13 appreciate it.

14 MS. CALVIN: Thank you.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you.

16 MS. CALVIN: Appreciate the -- the
17 opportunity.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Absolutely. All
19 right. I see as the next witness, Peter
20 Freiden -- or Freidin. I apologize if I got
21 the name right wrong.

22 MR. FREIDIN: You got it right.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry. Is it --

24 MR. FREIDIN: Freidin.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Freidin. Thank you,

1 sir. Mr. Freidin, if you'd raise your right
2 hand to be sworn.

3 PETER FREIDIN,
4 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
5 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,
7 sir. If you would, please have a seat. And
8 if you would, sir, please state your name for
9 the record and spell your last name.

10 MR. FREIDIN: Peter Freidin,
11 F-r-e-i-d-i-n.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And, Mr. Freidin,
13 your address, please?

14 MR. FREIDIN: 1201 Packin Street,
15 Apartment No. 406, and that's Columbia, 65201.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
17 customer of Ameren UE?

18 MR. FREIDIN: Not at the time. I'm
19 -- I am a public housing, which does use
20 Ameren UE so --

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

22 MR. FREIDIN: My basic -- I guess I
23 am.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
25 you, sir. Any statement you have for the

1 Commission, sir?

2 MR. FREIDIN: Regardless of how much

3 money one person may make, it's not enough to

4 put food on the table, pay their bills, pay

5 the child support. Even if they don't have

6 child support and they take their kids to

7 school, their shoes. Some people in our

8 communities just like this one all throughout

9 Missouri and throughout Illinois have lived in

10 homes that are not suitable to maintain

11 proper heat. Their heat goes out the door,

12 out the window. They can put plastic all

13 around the house. You can get Saran Wrap.

14 It's not going to work.

15 Ameren UE should not have to -- you know,

16 a 78 percent rate hike? No. They should put

17 78 percentage back into the communities, make

18 it safer for the people who live in these

19 homes, make it -- work with the landlords,

20 work with the people to do something to make

21 it a better and more safer community for all,

22 both here and in Illinois. It's not that

23 hard. Like they said, they've been profiting

24 the last two years, so it's time they dipped

25 into their pockets, not ours. But my pocket's

1 running thin. All I'm doing is pulling out
2 lint. That's pretty much all I have to say.
3 And I do agree with what Deborah had to say
4 and what a few other people have said, too.
5 Thank you.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Freidin, thank
7 you so much, sir. Let me see if we have any
8 questions first from -- from counsel to
9 clarify.

10 MR. MEYER: No.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Seeing none --
12 Mr. Simmons?

13 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: I have no
14 questions, but thank you, Mr. Freidin, for
15 your testimony.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Gaw?

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you,
18 Mr. Freidin.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much
20 for your time and your testimony, sir. We
21 appreciate it.

22 MR. FREIDIN: Okay.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next
24 witness -- I hope I pronounce this quickly.
25 Sherry Bower.

1 PERSON IN CROWD: Already did it.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry.

3 And I also see a -- is it a Samuel -- the

4 same? Thank you very much.

5 WOMAN IN CROWD: Forget it.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see a couple of

7 names that are crossed out, but I'll call them

8 just in case. I do see a James Colvin, but

9 apparently the name is crossed out. Does

10 James Colvin wish to testify?

11 MR. COLVIN: No, thank you.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank

13 you very much, sir. And Steve Boyce, I see

14 the same thing.

15 MR. BOYCE: Same thing.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

17 sir. I appreciate it. I see the next name

18 Mary -- is it Hussmann?

19 MS. HUSSMANN: Yes.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank

21 you very much, ma'am. Did I pronounce your

22 last name correctly?

23 MS. HUSSMANN: Yes. It's Mary

24 Hussmann, H-u-s-s, as in snake, m-a-n-n.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank

1 you. If you would, please raise your right
2 hand to be sworn.

3 MARY HUSSMAN,

4 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
5 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.

7 And if you would, again, please state your
8 name and spell your last name for the record.

9 MS. HUSSMANN: Okay. Mary Hussmann,
10 H-u-s-s-m-a-n-n.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
12 please?

13 MS. HUSSMANN: 5306 Rice Road,
14 Columbia, Missouri.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
16 customer of Ameren UE?

17 MS. HUSSMANN: Yes, I am.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, ma'am.

19 Any statement you'd like to make for the
20 Commission?

21 MS. HUSSMANN: Okay. I'm a little
22 surprised that you're mascarading yourselves
23 here as Skip Elkin tonight and Keith Snarr.
24 So I was a little surprised to see the names
25 there. This is a serious situation, though,

1 so I am speaking tonight on behalf of myself,
2 my soon to be 88-year-old mother, Bertha, and
3 all of our GROW organizing families. Our GROW
4 membership is composed of over 300 families in
5 the mid Missouri area. Most of the GROW
6 families are of low income at or below poverty
7 rate. We are a non-profit organization in the
8 State of Missouri. We work to give voice to
9 individuals and communities in the pursuit of
10 economic justice and human rights.

11 Clearly, our voice tonight is needed. So
12 let it be one that is loud and crystal clear.
13 To the Missouri families of low income, a rate
14 increase like this is not a minor irritation
15 or inconvenience. Our families have children
16 that will learn less if their homes are cold
17 and stressed by the inability to pay. Many of
18 our families live in public housing and have a
19 contract that says they must keep their
20 utilities on or they will be evicted. Our
21 families work hard every day and still find
22 themselves unable to stretch the dollar to
23 assure adequate food, clothing, health care
24 and shelter. Our elderly and disabled live on
25 fixed incomes and struggle to keep their heads

1 above water surrounded by a sea of rising
2 prices. People will become sick if this
3 increase is passed. People will neglect other
4 areas of need if this increase is passed.
5 People will become homeless if this increase
6 is passed. People will have their gas
7 disconnected if this increase is passed. Some
8 people will become hopeless and die if this
9 increase is passed.

10 There are people that say that the job of
11 a for profit corporation like Ameren UE is to
12 make decisions about how to be the most
13 profitable they can be. So be it. But that
14 is not your job. Your job as the Public
15 Service Commission is to be fair, to be just,
16 to be representative of the best interest of
17 all the consumers in Missouri.

18 We've all heard the old saw that life is
19 not fair. But you can be. The proposed
20 increase in a non-rate gas rate is not fair or
21 just. It is also said that everything has a
22 trade-off. Tonight the stakes are too high to
23 justify the increase. We implore our Missouri
24 Public Service Commission to deny the entire
25 78 percent increase.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Hussman, thank
2 you very much. Let me see if we have any
3 clarifying questions first from counsel.

4 MR. MICHEEL: No.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Seeing none,
6 Chairman Simmons?

7 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Ms. Hussmann,
8 hello.

9 MS. HUSSMANN: Hello.

10 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: How are you? I
11 bet you were responsible for getting a lot of
12 these people out here tonight, right?

13 MS. HUSSMANN: They wanted to come.

14 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Well, we
15 definitely appreciate them coming, and I say
16 that seriously because I've gone to a Public
17 Service Commission hearing and only had one
18 person. But I knew if I was coming Columbia
19 we'd have more, and I know that you were
20 responsible for members of GROW. But I
21 appreciate your testimony and I appreciate you
22 coming out here and telling us what's on your
23 mind. Thank you.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Chairman, thank
25 you. Commissioner Gaw?

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just to echo
2 that, Ms. Hussmann, it's -- I was in Mexico
3 last night. You had members there as well
4 expressing their opinions. And -- and I -- I
5 think that -- that it's important to have
6 networks that help to get people interested
7 and involved in the public part of the
8 process. And you're doing that and your
9 organization is doing that. And it -- it
10 gives voice to many out there who -- who might
11 not otherwise have it. And so I thank you for
12 the work that you all do. And it's evident
13 tonight that you've again had a success in
14 getting people involved and -- and letting
15 them have that voice. So thank you.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw,
17 thank you. Ms. Hussmann, thank you very much
18 for your time and for your remarks this
19 evening.

20 The next person I see is Bill Earley, if
21 I'm reading that name correctly.

22 MR. EASLEY: Well, that's close
23 enough.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Close enough?
25 If you would, sir, please raise your right

1 hand to be sworn.

2 BILL EASLEY,

3 being first duly sworn to testify the truth,

4 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,

5 testified as follows:

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

7 sir. If you would, please have a seat and

8 state your name for the record and spell your

9 last name, please.

10 MR. EASLEY: Bill E-a-s-l-e-y.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I apologize for

12 mispronouncing your name.

13 MR. EASLEY: That's all right.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Your

15 address, please, sir?

16 MR. EASLEY: 705 Cook, Columbia.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas

18 customer of Ameren UE?

19 MR. EASLEY: Yes, sir. I have been

20 for quite a few years.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any

22 statement have you for the Commission, sir?

23 MR. EASLEY: Well, I'm on no income.

24 I just got my last -- last winter bill paid

25 about two months ago. And it has got down a

1 little cool, and I didn't want to kick it on.
2 But now if I'm in the 8,000 dollar bracket, I
3 would have kicked it on. But, I mean, some of
4 us low income people got to -- I supposed be
5 in there, so I don't see how I'm -- how my
6 bill could get much worse than it did last
7 year. But it did. And -- and I -- I cut it
8 down as much as I can. But, I mean, my water
9 froze up. That cut it down. And I had
10 trouble with that. But I -- but I made it.
11 But I'd like to see -- I'd like to see you all
12 use common sense and think about some of these
13 poor people that you have heard. And, I mean,
14 some of these big -- big people in this
15 Ameren, they could take little cuts. Golly,
16 it's awful. It's awful. I had water froze up
17 and -- and I mean -- and some of these people
18 are bad. And it's going to get worse. And
19 you all got to have common sense. You all
20 have got to have a conscience. And -- and --
21 well, I think -- I think that these big-shots
22 got to cut down.

23 And since I've been at my house since
24 '95, I haven't seen nobody. I used to see a
25 meter reader once in a while. I think they

1 can cut the staff back. I really think Ameren
2 UE can use some common sense and cut back.
3 Like they said a while ago, these pipes last a
4 long time. They can gently take a slow
5 increase and build it -- build it. They don't
6 have to go whole hog 90 miles an hour. I mean
7 -- well, I think Ameren UE has got to stop and
8 look at these customers like this one guy said
9 about the small business, going to chase them
10 out of business. You're going to chase them
11 out of business, and that's going to hurt
12 Ameren UE. You could go broke. I'd like to
13 see Ameren UE go skinny and cable and some of
14 these -- some of these companies. Thank you.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Easley, thank
16 you very much for your remarks. Let me see if
17 we have any questions, clarifying questions,
18 from counsel.

19 MR. MICHEEL: No.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you.

21 Mr. Simmons?

22 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Thank you,
23 Mr. Easley. Appreciate it.

24 JUDGE PRIDGEIN:
25 Commissioner Gaw?

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you, sir.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you for your

3 time and your remarks, sir. Let's see. The

4 next person is Jerome Peters, if I'm reading

5 that correctly.

6 MR. PETERS: That's correct

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank

8 you, sir. Mr. Peters, if you would, please

9 raise your right hand to be sworn.

10 JEROME PETERS,

11 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

12 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

14 sir. If you would, please have a seat. And

15 if you would, please state your name for the

16 record and spell your last name.

17 MR. PETERS: My name is Jerome

18 Peters, DDS, retired. I'm a resident of 605

19 Dustin Drive here in Columbia.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas

21 customer of Ameren UE?

22 MR. PETERS: I'm a gas customer, and

23 I've been living here with my lovely wife for

24 three years.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

1 MR. PETERS: Come from Michigan.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

3 sir. Any statement that you have for the

4 commission?

5 MR. PETERS: Yes. I'm not a wealthy

6 man. I'm not a poor man. But I'm

7 comfortable. My wife and I are on the other

8 side of 80 years of age, which means that when

9 I was a young boy, I survived the Depression.

10 And I know what it is to see people evicted

11 and have their home furnishings on the street.

12 I know what it is to see my neighbors

13 unhealthy, sick and going hungry. I know what

14 it is once a month somebody would jump off the

15 roof. That was the Depression. And few of

16 the present generation have any conception of

17 anything like that happening here in America.

18 I'm nervous because I'm angry. I see once

19 again my fellow citizens pleading for the

20 right for warmth in winter and to have some

21 coolness in our hot summers.

22 I'm a Veteran of World War II and of the

23 Korean War. I enlisted on both occasions.

24 And I served as an officer. I never saw

25 combat. I survived. I ended up as a dentist.

1 I practiced in Michigan for 32 years and had
2 to retire because of health conditions. I
3 wear this cap because of my eyesight. I hope
4 for your forbearance. And I just don't know
5 how to express my feelings to see the possible
6 return of what I endured as a young boy. Is
7 all this worth it?

8 In Michigan, it gets pretty darn cold
9 compared to here. We have our snow and we
10 have our sub zero temperatures there. And the
11 house that we lived in there wasn't at all as
12 insulated. Of course, the cold as our present
13 home here, which is very well insulated. When
14 my wife told me what we paid for gas in
15 Michigan and what we're faced with paying for
16 gas here, I erupted because it physically
17 shouldn't be possible. So I -- I always felt
18 that if you're going to deal with an enemy you
19 better find out who he is and what he is. And
20 so I went to the internet. And though I'm not
21 an accountant or a financial expert, I got the
22 balance sheet and looked into the qualities of
23 Ameren. The first thing I did is a looked up
24 their rating as a company with the WEISS
25 research, which is a sort of consumer report

1 for corporations. If you want to know what a
2 company is doing, they'll give you a report.
3 And I got a thumbnail sketch.
4 Mr. Weiss classifies companies on the order of
5 A, A plus, falling down to C and D. And low
6 and behold, Ameren was a B plus. That's
7 pretty good. This isn't something like Mohawk
8 Valley Utility. This isn't a fly by night.
9 This is a good corporation, and so he stated
10 to me in his thumbnail sketch. I then looked
11 up their financial accounts or statements and
12 looked for someplace where they could with
13 their financial standing pay for whatever
14 operating increases they're enduring and in
15 what they already have.

16 I was asked some questions while I was
17 sitting here waiting to address you. And a
18 charming lady asked me what -- or wondered
19 what the pay scale was for a CEO. And the
20 information I got from the internet was that
21 Mr. Mueller, 64, earns \$1.84 million. Now,
22 she thought it was exuberant, or too much. I
23 -- I didn't think so for this type of company,
24 I thought that was pretty good.

25 I also have here a little summary of the

1 company. For the nine months ended 9/30/03,
2 that's this past month, revenues increased 17
3 percent to \$3.55 billion. That's not million.
4 That's a billion. Net income before
5 accounting changes increased 13 percent to
6 468,000,000. And you can see that they have
7 had apparently quite an expensive account to
8 deal with to go from 3.55 billion to --
9 468,000,000. The information I have here I
10 can only validate it as what I found on the
11 internet. And beyond that, I cannot claim any
12 -- anything other than that. What interested
13 me was that their total revenue as of June
14 30th, '03 for the past -- for the past four
15 quarters of that year, which is 3.308 billion
16 dollars a year. Their gross profit, as they
17 stated here for the year was 2.17 billion
18 dollars a year.

19 Further down, they have something called
20 operating income or loss and they have a net
21 income from continuing ops., or operations.
22 And that is \$401 million a year.

23 Now, I was anxious to learn what the
24 company expects to accrue by this raise.
25 How much money is going to -- is going to this

1 company when they make their raise? I don't
2 have that information. On the basis of
3 knowing that, then I would be able to look for
4 a method by which they might be able to take
5 care of that raise and so, really, the -- the
6 community for that debt. Some of the things I
7 learned -- and here is is something I have
8 questions about. This comes under net income,
9 cash flow. And there is a section here,
10 Investing Activities, cash flows provided by
11 or used in. They have a sub title, capital
12 expenditures. They have it divided according
13 to the quarterly reports. I added them up.
14 And they are losses. These are not gains.
15 They are losses in the amount of \$731 million
16 dollars if my calculator is right. They have
17 lost what they called capital expenditures. I
18 do not know what that is -- if somebody could
19 tell me in the corporation.

20 Along with that, they have a title,
21 Investments. That's completely blank. And
22 they have other cash flows, which amounts to
23 also a loss of \$477 million. Their total cash
24 flows from investing activities is at \$1.208
25 billion loss.

1 Now, I would like to know, and I'm sure
2 the community would like to know and I'm sure
3 it would be your obligation to know how that
4 loss was made. What did it consist of? Where
5 -- where did the loss come from? Were they
6 investing in the rivers? Were they investing
7 in bonds, stocks, mutual funds? With whose
8 money? Do their investors know that they're
9 investing in a company that without their
10 guidance as to what to invest in the company
11 was investing in these derivatives and bonds
12 and whatever it is? Whatever? I submit that
13 that is unconscienable. This business is not
14 just about money.

15 One of my previous witnesses mentioned
16 the health situation. For 32 years, I served
17 in the health service. My initial interest
18 was in bacteriology. As you have seen
19 tonight, a definite section of our community
20 is at an economic distressed level where they
21 cannot afford to pay the present gas rates,
22 let alone at this rate. With the economic
23 conditions that exist today, the loss of jobs,
24 the amount of people who are in that group,
25 unfortunate group, is going to rise. And what

1 we are reading there, there aren't enough
2 sweaters to keep them warm in the winter.
3 There are innocent children, maybe not so
4 innocent elderly like myself who are going to
5 be compromised in their health. And as one
6 witness before me mentioned, not just
7 uncomfortable. These children who are
8 submitted to this kind of a health problem are
9 going to pay for it the rest of their life and
10 so is our community. And she mentioned
11 deaths. We're dealing with life and death
12 here. We're also dealing with a group of our
13 community that health-wise is the basis for an
14 influenza breakout because they're living
15 under conditions of heat and cold that are
16 beneath health conditions.

17 In World War I, we had a lot of -- World
18 War II and World War I, we had a lot of
19 casualties. Many of my generation lie in
20 Europe, South Pacific and North Africa. And I
21 grieve for them every day. But with all those
22 casualties, here in the United States, we had
23 an influenza outbreak that probably matched
24 all those casualties. And we had that because
25 the conditions under which the population was

1 living at that time are getting closer and
2 closer to what these people face right here in
3 Columbia. Now, as far as the company is
4 concerned, if they meet their moral
5 obligations and allow these people to have
6 their heat, they have to also realize that
7 that commitment on their part is going to cost
8 them increasingly the more they close down on
9 the heat supply to these people.

10 And with the loss of jobs, that's going
11 to increase. You're looking forward to meet
12 your obligation on increased death in the
13 interest of that money part. I'm sure you're
14 -- you're full of what I've had to say, and I
15 want to thank you for being so understanding.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Dr. Peters, thank
17 you for your remarks. Let me see if we have
18 any clarifying questions first from counsel.

19 MR. MICHEEL: No questions.

20 MR. MEYERS: (Mr. Meyers shakes
21 head.)

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
23 you. Chairman Simmons?

24 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Dr. Peters, thank
25 you for your testimony. Appreciate it.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?
2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Dr. Peters, a
3 little earlier, you were talking about the
4 difference in your -- in what you saw in your
5 bills in Michigan compared to Missouri.
6 MR. PETERS: Could you talk a little
7 louder? I paid \$2,000 for this hearing aid,
8 but --
9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Let me see if I
10 can use the mic. It might be help. You
11 talked earlier about your bills in Michigan
12 being lower than your bills in Missouri.
13 MR. PETERS: Yes.
14 COMMISSIONER GAW: And I was just
15 wondering if you had any additional
16 information on that and -- or -- or had any --
17 MR. PETERS: You'll have as to ask
18 my wife.
19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Understanding why
20 that would be. Is she going to testify?
21 MR. PETERS: No. But --
22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Can we talk her
23 into testifying?
24 MRS. PETERS: No.
25 MR. PETERS: She -- she has a bad

1 leg and she's --

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: That's all right.

3 I -- I just thought if you had a little bit

4 more, I was interested in it.

5 MR. PETERS: She can tell me, and I

6 can tell you.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Whatever --

8 whatever works is fine with -- with me.

9 MR. PETERS: Sarah, what was our

10 bill?

11 MRS. PETERS: What I remember in

12 Michigan, our winter bills were under a

13 hundred dollars. That's winter.

14 MR. PETER: What are they now?

15 MRS. PETERS: Here, it's well over

16 200 in the winter.

17 MR. PETER: Now we're going to a 17

18 percent more or 27 percent, whatever. We are

19 -- I am standing on a cliff. I am comfortable

20 now. But I'm looking down that cliff and

21 things like this are going to shove me over.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Dr. Peters, just

23 so I get some -- I have some perspective --

24 MR. PETERS: I'm sorry if I raised

25 my voice.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: It's okay. Is --
2 you can raise your voice all you want to as
3 far as I'm concerned.
4 MR. PETERS: Okay.
5 COMMISSIONER GAW: That would be
6 fine. What I want to know is whether -- was
7 your -- was your residence in -- in Michigan
8 about the same size as your residence here?
9 MR. PETERS: No. It was a slab.
10 This house is somewhat bigger.
11 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right.
12 MR. PETERS: But the wind whistled
13 through that house.
14 COMMISSIONER GAW: You have better
15 insulation here?
16 MR. PETERS: It was built in 1958.
17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. The
18 one in Michigan?
19 MRS. PETERS: Right.
20 MR. PETERS: Yeah.
21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes. And the one
22 you have here is -- is a more modern house?
23 MR. PETERS: Gorgeous house except
24 for the basement floor.
25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir.

1 MR. PETERS: Whoever built it didn't
2 know their -- whatever from whatever.
3 COMMISSIONER GAW: I -- I get the
4 picture. And you've been here about three
5 years you say?
6 MR. PETERS: Three years.
7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very
8 much, sir. I appreciate you your time.
9 MR. PETERS: I want to thank you for
10 your forbearance.
11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Dr. Peters, thank
12 you very much. Thank you for your time and
13 your remarks, sir. Thank you.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I see as
15 the next witness, Christine Doerr, if I'm
16 pronouncing that correctly, I hope. Did I
17 pronounce your last name correctly?
18 MS. DOERR: Yes. That's right.
19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
20 you. If you would, please raise your right
21 hand to be sworn.
22 CHRISTINE DOERR,
23 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
24 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:
25

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
2 you very much. If you would, have a seat and
3 please state your name for the record and
4 spell your last name.

5 MS. DOERR: Christine Doerr,
6 D-o-e-r-r.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
8 please?

9 MS. DOERR: 2510 Brookside Court,
10 Columbia, 65201.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
12 customer of Ameren UE?

13 MS. DOERR: Yes, I am.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any
15 statement you have for the Commission?

16 MS. DOERR: Well, I came here
17 tonight with the understanding that there was
18 going to be a flat rate increase of 16 to \$18
19 per customer. I averaged my last -- my -- the
20 past year's bills. They average \$43 a month.
21 And that would be equivalent -- a \$16 increase
22 would be equivalent to 37 percent of my
23 average monthly bill. That's -- that's too
24 much. That's outrageous. I do everything I
25 can to keep my gas consumption low, obviously.

1 We don't have our heat turned on yet. I don't
2 take hot baths during the summer. We keep our
3 hot water heater very low. And I depend on
4 gas for my heat, my hot water and cooking.
5 We're very efficient. We've done everything
6 we can to lower the bills and use less. I
7 feel like -- I may -- I may have been misled
8 about the -- the increase. I still -- I'm
9 reading the information on the table. I still
10 don't know what's being proposed here. But it
11 seems to me that if there's a flat rate
12 increase, people like myself who pay -- my
13 monthly gas bill last month was \$20. All of a
14 sudden sumping from that to 36 or \$38, I'm
15 very quickly losing the incentive to conserve
16 gas usage.

17 I feel like there should be some sort of
18 a limit put on the percentage for -- for a
19 customer's gas. 37 percent is way too high.
20 It should be something more like a limit of 3
21 or 4 or 5 percent or 10 -- I mean, 10 percent
22 maybe. 10 percent -- if they're going to do a
23 flat rate increase, 10 percent of my summer
24 bill would be \$2, which is more reasonable. I
25 -- I guess that's all still up in the air just

1 how you're going to do it. But it seems to me
2 that in order to maintain reasons for
3 conserving energy, we need to -- to find ways
4 to -- to encourage people to cut back. And if
5 I'm facing a \$16 a month, 18, \$20 a month flat
6 rate fee increase that incentive is lost.
7 That's all I have to say.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mrs. --
9 is it Mrs. Doerr? All right. Thank you.

10 MS. DOERR: Yes.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
12 you very much for your testifying. Let me see
13 if we have any clarifying questions first from
14 counsel. All right. Thank you. Chairman
15 Simmons?

16 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Mr. Doerr, we
17 appreciate your testimony tonight. Thank you
18 for coming. But is that your daughter that's
19 with you tonight?

20 MS. DOERR: Uh-huh.

21 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: She's been so
22 good and she's come here with you. And what's
23 her name?

24 MS. DOERR: Maria.

25 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Maria. Maria,

1 thank you for coming with your mom tonight.
2 We appreciate you being here and we appreciate
3 your testimony. Thank you.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you Mr.
5 Chairman. Commissioner Gaw?

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you
7 very much, ma'am.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you for your
9 time and for your remarks. We appreciate it.
10 All right. I see -- again, I'm sorry if I
11 mispronounce the name. Sharon --

12 MS. ALVERS: Sharon Alvers.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Sharon
14 Alvers. Thank you. If you would, ma'am,
15 please come forward to be sworn.

16 MS. ALVERS: My name is Sharon
17 Alvers.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm going to swear
19 you in, and I'll ask you to state your name.
20 Thank you.

21 SHARON ALVERS,
22 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
23 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
25 you very much. If you'd like to, have a seat.

1 And, again, if you'll state your name for the
2 record and spell your last name, please?

3 MS. ALICE: My name is Sharon
4 Alvers, A-l-v-e-r-s. I live at 310 Fishel
5 Walk Way (ph.), Columbia, Missouri in the
6 housing authority.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
8 you. And are you a gas customer of Ameren UE?

9 MS. ALVERS: Yes, I am.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. You have
11 a statement you have for the Commission?

12 MS. ALVERS: Yes. I have a
13 statement. I'm here on behalf of my daughter.
14 My daughter is in -- is in a section 8 house.
15 Okay. Her light bill last year was 700-some
16 dollars because she's in an old house and her
17 landlord -- her -- her furnace is under the
18 ground. And in order for her to move out of
19 this house, she has to pay \$500. She has a
20 job. She's got an epileptic child that has
21 seizures, so she don't get to work half the
22 time because sometimes in school he'll go to
23 sleep. Or he's not asleep. He just had a
24 seizure. So we've been -- for the last 12
25 years -- he will be 12 in January. We've been

1 to the hospital that many times about his
2 seizures. Now, her bill this month is five --
3 almost \$500. You know, that's ridiculous.
4 This summer it was 250 in June. Why?

5 The Section 8 put her in an old house.
6 There's no insulation in it. And she's on
7 fixed income. She doesn't get child support
8 because the daddy do not want to pay. So what
9 do she supposed to do? And they keep passing
10 this raggedly house that this -- they put her
11 in, but why won't they do something about it?
12 I mean, you know, my daughter cannot afford --
13 and I'm on a fixed income. I retired from the
14 University. I've been working for the
15 University for 35 years, and I got sick. I
16 had asthma. I can't help her no more.

17 And I'm asking you would you consider not
18 raising her bill. Because I don't know what
19 she'll do. I live in a one bedroom. I can't
20 take her in. I don't know. My -- my father
21 is dead. We -- he used to help us and we
22 can't -- he can't help us no more. My mother
23 can't help us. And I can't help her. So what
24 can I do to help my daughter? I can't --
25 there's nothing I can do. And I'm begging you

1 all don't raise her -- this. Because she
2 can't do it no more. That's all I have to
3 say.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Let me
5 see first if we have any clarifying questions
6 from counsel. Seeing none, Commissioner
7 Simmons?

8 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Thank you, Ms.
9 Alvers, for being here. Just curious, have
10 you sought any type of utility assistance in
11 the past?

12 MS. ALVERS: She did. They paid her
13 last year. But they told her they're not
14 going to keep paying her bills like this. And
15 then she works two jobs, but she don't get off
16 till 7:00. Why her bill is so high, I do not
17 know. She is not home through the day. They
18 are in school. She don't come home until
19 7:00. She has to turn it up to 75 to 80 to
20 get it -- to get, I mean, heat because it's so
21 cold. The house is completely old. The
22 windows shake when you walk. She put new
23 windows in because every time -- the paint was
24 falling off the walls and they kept passing
25 this house. It's no account. And I blame

1 Section 8 for doing this.

2 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Give me an idea
3 of how big her house is.

4 MS. ALVERS: She is in a two bedroom
5 house. There is a back bedroom they consider
6 as a three bedroom. The heating is sitting in
7 the floor in the back bedroom. She has a leak
8 last year in the -- the stove. He put a stove
9 in, and it was leaking. The furnace is in the
10 back bedroom under the house. And when it
11 goes out, which they cut off -- they had to go
12 under the house to light it. He will not put
13 it up. He told her that if she could do it,
14 it's going to be over \$1500 just to bring it
15 upstairs. And he will not do that. So she
16 can't afford to do that. She has no car. She
17 has nothing.

18 And I'm here -- I've got another daughter
19 that's in the -- is in a better situation. I
20 mean, you know, when you've got nobody to help
21 you and you're -- the kid's daddy don't want
22 to help you, what can you do? What can she
23 do? And the more you go down to Section 8
24 housing down there, these people down at
25 Section 8 putting people -- old folks anybody

1 in those -- the raggediest house you can get,
2 and they expect to pay them a great big high
3 gas bill. It's not right. People running
4 around here younger than my daughter that I
5 live in the projects that ain't even got a
6 job, we paying their bills. They don't work.
7 They on Section 8. They don't work. They --
8 I knew a girl that lives right next door to
9 me. She don't even work. She's in the
10 Section 8 housing. She is 24 years old. She
11 don't have a job. And my daughter's out there
12 trying to scrape. What is it? I mean, what
13 can we do? They got people walking around
14 here in Section 8 houses and people that's in
15 the projects don't work that's 21, 22 years
16 old, got two or three babies and they -- all
17 they got to do is go out there and say, Well,
18 I need this. They give them a lot of food
19 stamps and they don't work. We paying they
20 bills. We paying they gas bill because they
21 don't want to get out and work. And they are
22 younger than my kids. They're younger than
23 anybody around here.

24 You can come to Columbia and go down on
25 Park. There will be a whole bunch of girls

1 walking the streets. Don't work and is
2 younger than I am and got babies, carrying
3 one, got one coming in and ain't got a job at
4 all. But Section 8 is putting them in their
5 houses and the projects are letting them do
6 it. We paying -- I'm paying double for --
7 because they don't pay rent. So, my rent is
8 249 to help them to pay what people don't pay.
9 But Section 8 don't care and the projects
10 don't neither. They keep doing it. So UE, I
11 don't understand why that the people around
12 here in Columbia is making young girls can
13 walk the streets and do anything they want and
14 old folks like me, I'm -- I'm retired and the
15 other old folks got to pay while these young
16 girls can walk the streets doing nothing.
17 They get a check. I know a girl that going to
18 college, supposed to be going to school, got
19 one child. She gets \$65 back. She don't pay
20 rent. She don't pay a light bill and she
21 don't pay gas bill. And she is going to
22 college three days a week. Why didn't she get
23 a job on the weekend? Why can't she work at
24 night? Why do we have to pay her bills? And
25 there's -- nobody understands what's going on

1 and everybody wants to raise everything up.
2 Why didn't you -- why did UE move the -- move
3 the -- the what they call -- the station in
4 the first place? Why did they have to move
5 it? We were doing pretty good here. Why did
6 they move it to St. Louis? Why? Everybody's
7 talking about the bills that's going up.
8 Okay. I know it's going up. But what about
9 the old folks that's running around here
10 that's got on fixed income, can't afford to
11 pay a gas bill?

12 My daughter was told last year if she
13 didn't get her bill paid before June her gas
14 was going to be cut off. They told her that.
15 She called numbers. She went up there. She
16 called and they told her that if she didn't
17 pay her gas bill, it's going to be cut off.
18 And you got people running around in Columbia
19 doing nothing. I mean, you -- they need to
20 take a look what is going on before they
21 decide to raise it. They need to take a look
22 at the -- Section 8 needs to take a look at
23 who is paying what. You all need to take --
24 they need to take a look at the bills, who is
25 paying gas bill, who ain't paying a gas bill.

1 The old housing do not pay a gas bell. That's
2 all included in their rent. But the people in
3 the projects where I live at, they are old.
4 They can't afford it. They on fixed income.
5 They cannot afford to pay a high gas bill. I
6 got a girl next door to me don't work. I ot
7 one over here don't work. What are you
8 supposed to do?

9 My daughter is trying to make ends. I
10 got a grandson that's going in the hospital
11 November the 18th to take an MRI of his brain
12 to see if he needs to come off his seizure
13 medicine. He's been like that for 12 years.
14 She's been scrubbing ever since that little
15 baby was six months old. And ain't nobody
16 doing nothing to help her. The time she --
17 she gets cut off of this, they're going to cut
18 her off her check. What is she supposed to
19 do? What is she supposed to do? She's
20 supposed to let this baby just -- this baby,
21 you know how much he -- do you know how much
22 she has to pay for his insurance? \$95 for
23 life insurance because he's a high risk
24 because of seizure. That's half of her check.
25 And by the time she pays his insurance, her

1 insurance -- her insurance is a 100 some odd
2 dollars for all three of them. What's she
3 going to do? When you got a gas bill almost
4 \$500 every time you turn -- every time she
5 comes, gas bill comes in, it's almost double
6 for what she paid. Now she's got gas bill
7 just the other day. Her gas bill was \$150.
8 It hadn't even got cold. Hadn't even got
9 cold. Now what is she supposed to do? Nobody
10 wants to seem to -- nobody cannot answer my
11 question when I was down there last time.
12 What is she supposed to do?

13 If she don't pay this, they going to cut
14 her off. They going to cut her off. That's
15 what the woman told her when she she called.
16 They going to cut her off if she don't get
17 that paid for. She don't make that much to do
18 nothing because she's not there half the time
19 because every time she goes to work she always
20 got to go home because the baby will go to
21 sleep in school because he has a seizure. He
22 has a grand mall seizures. And you know what
23 that is? When you sit there and look right --
24 I can look right at you, and he'd be asleep.
25 And you have to holler at him to say, Dearcher

1 (ph.), wake up. Are you all right? We have
2 been to the hospital for -- for the last 12
3 years for him. And it ain't getting no
4 better. Nobody wants to. So that's all I got
5 to say.

6 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Thank you.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.

8 All right. I see as the next witness signed
9 up, Edward Blakey.

10 MR. BLAKEY: Pleased to be here,
11 Commissioners.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If I could get you
13 to raise your right hand to be sworn, please.

14 MR. BLAKEY: Sure.

15 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole
16 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
18 you, sir. Would you please state your name
19 and spell your name for the record?

20 MR. BLAKEY: Sure. My name is
21 Edward Blakey. That's B-l-a-k-e-y.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,
23 please, sir?

24 MR. BLAKEY: It's 1807 Mary Ellen
25 Drive, Mary Ellen, two words.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in
2 Columbia, sir?

3 MR. BLAKEY: Yes, sir. Columbia,
4 Missouri.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas
6 customer of Ameren UE?

7 MR. BLAKEY: Yes, I am.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statement you
9 have for the Commission, sir?

10 MR. BLAKEY: Sure. First of all, I
11 wanted to say that I want to impress upon the
12 Commission that the issue that we're really
13 dealing with here with respect to this rate
14 increase, as I understand it, is the standard
15 of what is really just and what is reasonable.
16 And that's the most important thing that I see
17 in this -- as coming out of this. And it
18 seems to me that the burden of proof is on
19 Ameren UE who is seeking to increase the rate
20 if I'm correct in my understanding. To me, it
21 seems to me that in assessing a question of
22 reasonable and just, credibility is a big
23 issue in my mind. And we have to take a look
24 at the credibility. We have people that have
25 come here and taken time out of their evening,

1 people who have struggled to get here, people
2 who don't have opportunities to have
3 transportation to get out and people have come
4 and spoken out tonight. And I think it's
5 important to recognize and applaud the people
6 who have come here as a show of credibility.

7 I have -- I find it hard to believe that
8 Ameren UE is in such bad financial shape that
9 they have to increase their rates in order to
10 cover their costs. They seem to me to be a
11 strong company as -- as other people have
12 testified with statistics and with the
13 numbers. And I'm -- I'm sure that Ameren UE
14 is a stable company from a financial
15 standpoint.

16 We have to take a look, in my opinion, at
17 whether it's reasonable. If we're talking
18 about a company who, let's say, makes \$100
19 million profit versus a company who is going
20 to only make \$900 million or \$50 million
21 profit versus a company who is, let's say, on
22 the brink of bankruptcy, to me, those are two
23 separate -- separate situations. And we're
24 talking about a company who can barely make it
25 and needs to make a rate increase just in

1 order to get by, then that's -- then to me,
2 that's reasonable. But if a company is making
3 \$100 million profit and, you know, they want
4 to make a \$110 million profit and by -- and
5 by increased -- by increasing their profit
6 they're going to charge people money that are
7 going to put a lot of people over the edge, to
8 me, that just -- that just doesn't seem
9 reasonable and just in my -- in my estimation.

10 The other issue I want to look at is are
11 there other options, I mean, as opposed to
12 increasing the rate? Could Ameren UE, for
13 instance, find ways to be more efficient in
14 their own business and in their own operations
15 in a way to save the money that we -- that can
16 then be used to -- to do the type of things
17 that they want to do by way of -- to justify
18 the rate increase. It seems to me that, you
19 know, Ameren needs to look at that and you
20 guys as a Commission ought to -- ought to
21 scrutinize Ameren UE as they come to you
22 asking for additional -- the authority to
23 raise rates. They -- they need to be
24 critically evaluated as well as to whether or
25 not they're doing their job as efficiently as

1 they need to be.

2 About seven months ago, my wife and I

3 completed both in our own home building our

4 own home. And one thing strikes me as odd.

5 When we built our house, we tried to get an --

6 at a cost to us the most efficient furnace we

7 could and the most -- and the most appropriate

8 insulation that we could afford to put in our

9 home. It seems to me that, you know, the

10 majority of people don't live in brand new

11 homes, haven't just built their homes with the

12 state of the art and technology in terms of

13 the most efficient furnaces. There are a lot

14 of people out here who have furnaces from

15 homes that are 50, 60, 75, 80 years old. How

16 can it be just and reasonable for those people

17 to have to bear the burden of cost? People

18 telling me that -- as I've heard earlier

19 tonight that they're paying gas bills in the

20 hundreds of dollars in the summer is -- is --

21 is astounding to me. And we pay -- we pay 30

22 to \$56 a month in the summer for our house.

23 We don't expect to spend more than 150 to a

24 \$160 at worst in this coming winter for our

25 house. But that's because we have a very

1 efficient furnace. What about people who live
2 in homes who don't have those choices who
3 can't -- who didn't build a new house? They
4 don't have that option. They're stuck with an
5 inefficient furnace. And when those bills
6 start rolling in three, four, \$500 a month,
7 they're going to take a hit. That just -- to
8 me, that's just not reasonable. If you
9 compare that, against, let's say, to an
10 executive who is making \$1.5 million, let's
11 say he has to take a pay cut down to \$1.3
12 million. I think that it's still a
13 substantial pay cut, but I this in terms of
14 balancing the burden between one versus the
15 other, how you can you possibly consider
16 putting people over the edge to save a
17 company's profit margin?

18 If the company is already profitable, it
19 just doesn't seem justifiable to me to raise
20 the rates on people that would push them over
21 the edge. It just -- when you balance the
22 two, it just doesn't seem to me to be just and
23 reasonable when you just focus on what is
24 common sense just and reasonable. I mean,
25 \$1.8 million dollars and someone being

1 homeless, it just -- they just don't jive to
2 me. And those are -- those are the concerns
3 that -- that I have, you know. And -- and not
4 for me personally, but for a lot of other
5 people who -- who are not in a position to
6 afford to pay those bills. It's -- it's --
7 it's just -- it's just outrageous to me to --
8 to seek this kind of an increase. I'd just
9 impress upon you guys the importance of
10 focusing on that issue of what is just and
11 reasonable taking all the circumstances into
12 consideration.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Blakey, thank
14 you. Let me see if we have any clarifying
15 questions first from counse. I don't see any.
16 Chairman Simmons?

17 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Appreciate you
18 coming down here. Had an opportunity to talk
19 to you. You said you were going to come here.
20 You kept your word, and I appreciate your
21 presence.

22 MR. BLAKEY: Absolutely.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, Chairman
24 Simmons. Commissioner Gaw?

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very

1 much, Mr. Blakey.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Yes, sir. Thank you

3 for your time and your comments, sir.

4 MR. BLAKEY: I appreciate it. Thank

5 you for the opportunity to be here.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I see --

7 all right. I sees the next witness, Karen

8 Hiatt.

9 KAREN HIATT,

10 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

11 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

13 ma'am. If you would, please have a seat. And

14 state your name for the record and please

15 spell your last name for the court reporter.

16 MS. HIATT: My name is Karen Hiatt,

17 H-i-a-t-t. I live at 2908 Leeway Drive in

18 Columbia.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas

20 customer of Ameren UE?

21 MS. HIATT: Yes, I am, for three

22 years.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Do you

24 have a statement for the Commission?

25 MS. HIATT: Yes. And I -- I've

1 never done anything like this. I -- I'm not
2 giving these to you. But I have this year's
3 gas bills. Each spring, I turn -- I only use
4 the gas for my furnace. And each spring I
5 turn off the pilot. So I'm basically using
6 zero gas. It costs me \$9 a month to remain a
7 member, so to speak. I do and have
8 contributed to the Dollar More every month
9 since I have moved here. My highest gas bill
10 last winter -- and I'm cheap. I wish the
11 cheap man was still here. Well, where did it
12 go? \$34.39. It just -- if you add \$18 to my
13 bill -- and I'm only in the house like awake
14 two or three hours a day. I have a choice
15 whether to be a member of Ameren UE. And I
16 can as easily buy electric heaters and heat by
17 electric and get an electric blanket and just
18 not do gas. So it's like somebody else said
19 before, we do all we can to keep it low.

20 I even open the door on my apartment and
21 let the heat from downstairs in the laundry
22 room come up and do most of my heating. And
23 I'm doing everything I can. I don't have
24 cable. I don't have a cell phone. I don't
25 have a pager. I don't get the paper. I do

1 work. And just to increase my bill by \$16
2 just doesn't make sense to me at all. So
3 that's my thing.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mrs. Hiatt, thank
5 you. Let me see if we have any questions
6 first from counsel. All right. Seeing none,
7 Mr. Chairman?

8 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Ms. Hiatt, for
9 your first time, you did very well.

10 MS. HIATT: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Thank you for
12 here being here. Appreciate it.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
14 you. Commissioner Gaw?

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Hiatt, thank
16 you.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Hiatt, thank
18 you for your time and for your remarks. I see
19 Ms. Hiatt is the last witness who is signed up
20 to testify. Is there anyone else who wishes
21 to testify this evening? Yes?

22 MR. LOYD: Do I need to sign?

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would,
24 please. And I'll ask you to step up and be
25 sworn.

1 MR. LOYD: Okay. Sorry.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Could you give me

3 your name for the record, please?

4 MR. LOYD: Harold Lloyd.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay.

6 HAROLD LOYD,

7 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

8 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you sir. If

10 you would, please have a seat. And, again, if

11 you'll give your name for the record and spell

12 your last name for the court reporter.

13 MR LOYD: Harold Loyd, L-o-y-d.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And, Mr. Loyd, your

15 address, please?

16 MR. LOYD: 1030 Dolphin Lane, St.

17 Louis, Missouri, 63103.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas

19 customer of Ameren UE?

20 MR. LOYD: No. I'm an electric

21 customer of Ameren UE.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank

23 you. Any statement you'd like to make for the

24 Commission?

25 MR. LOYD: Yes. First of all, I'd

1 like to applaud everyone that has testified
2 tonight. It's kind of sad to hear some of the
3 stories that we've heard tonight, but I have
4 another sad story. I'm a 41-year-old man who
5 has worked since I was 13 years old. I was in
6 a career for 21 years that made me \$40,000 a
7 year. And within a two-week period, I was
8 forced to quit that job because of an illness.
9 I am under appeal for disability. I have been
10 in appeal since November of last year. I
11 still don't know when I'm going to get my
12 disability. There was a lot of things that
13 happened in my life.

14 Thank goodness that Medicaid felt that I
15 was disabled. If I didn't have Medicaid, I
16 would be paying for one prescription alone per
17 month \$1,000. Another prescription is \$600 a
18 month. And I have three others that add up to
19 about \$800 a month. I take 13 pills per day.
20 I have no income whatsoever. General Relief
21 was my only hope to be able to put shoes on my
22 feet, to buy toilet paper, to buy deodorant,
23 laundry detergent. Thank God that I was able
24 to get emergency food stamps. I'm a little
25 more fortunate than some of the other people

1 that spoke tonight. I get \$148 in food
2 stamps. I guess that's because I have no
3 income whatsoever. I have a daughter that's
4 in college. She's graduating in December here
5 in Columbia. As of a year ago, I couldn't
6 help her anymore. That was very, very hard
7 for me to deal with. The emotional stress of
8 my illness has been extremely hard for me to
9 deal with. I suffer from suicidal depression,
10 and I also suffer from social anxiety. But
11 thank God I have the medications I do or I
12 couldn't function on a daily basis.

13 I was at one point in my life where for
14 five months I didn't leave my home because I
15 couldn't deal with society. I couldn't deal
16 with my life. I just could not cope. And at
17 -- about three hours of figuring out whether I
18 wanted to jump in the shower and slit my
19 wrists and go to sleep, I decided the smartest
20 thing to do was not go upstairs, was to get in
21 my car and go to the nearest emergency room
22 and check myself in. That's what I did. I
23 spent two weeks in -- in a mental institution.
24 That was the best thing I've ever done for
25 myself. I thank God that I had the courage

1 and the wisdom to do that.

2 You know, I -- I've listened to a lot of
3 people here tonight. We've talked about not
4 being able to pay bills, not being able to,
5 you know, have an income. I see a
6 psychiatrist on a monthly basis. With over a
7 year's period I've been seeing this woman and
8 I have yet to pay a co-pay because I do not
9 have the money. Every time I go in, the woman
10 behind the desk is ready to tackle me for that
11 money that I owe, and every time I say I
12 promise I'll bring a turnip in next week. So
13 my story is different from others. But it's
14 very real to me. It's not as big as other
15 people's problems, but my problems are very
16 real.

17 I can't -- I can't pay my gas bill. I
18 can't pay my electric bill. I have to depend
19 on charitable contributions. I have to call
20 every month to a caseworker and say, you know,
21 John, I -- you know, I'm still not working. I
22 can't work. I can't pay my bill this month.
23 Can you help me out again? It's very
24 embarrassing. I'm 41 years old and I can't
25 work. I can't work part time because I'll be

1 uneligible for disability. You know, Medicaid
2 says I'm disabled but -- and they go by the
3 same rules as disability. But you know what?
4 I don't have any disability. I was turned
5 down. And I've heard that everyone the first
6 time is turned down. There was a problem
7 there, but that's not the issue tonight. The
8 issue tonight is that there are other people
9 in this state in the same situation that I am
10 in that cannot pay their bills. This is very
11 embarrassing for me to sit here before you and
12 tell my story. It's not easy. I have a lot
13 of pride, and I've had to put my pride aside
14 for the past year. I have a daughter that's
15 23 years old that's going to graduate college.
16 She's my parent right now. She's helping me.
17 I'm a member of GROW. GROW has been such an
18 incredible amount of therapy for me because
19 I'm seeing that other people are out here that
20 are struggling, that are suffering. I don't
21 feel quite so bad. It kind of lifts -- lifts
22 the pressure off of me. And it also gives me
23 the opportunity to -- to speak out and realize
24 that if we don't all speak out together, that
25 one voice is not going to make a difference.

1 This voice tonight, I hope and I pray to God
2 it will make a difference.

3 This -- this percentage might seem low to
4 Ameren UE, but that percentage is very high to
5 those that don't have an income like myself.
6 You know, I don't like going to the phone to
7 -- to call my caseworker, which I have to use
8 my neighbor's phone because I don't have a
9 phone. I don't like calling him and saying,
10 you know, who is going to pay my bill this
11 month? I -- I get food stamps. I get food
12 from a food bank. It's very embarrassing to
13 have to walk into that place every two weeks
14 to get my food. It's very embarrassing to
15 stand in the front of that check outline and
16 say, EBT, food stamps.

17 I've worked since I was 13 years old.
18 I've worked in a that profession I absolutely
19 loved. It was my life, and I was forced to
20 quit that job. And I do not have an income.
21 And I am asking Ameren UE to reconsider what
22 they're proposing, and I'm asking the
23 Commission to make sure that what is done is
24 the fair and just thing for everyone in this
25 state, everyone in Columbia and all the people

1 that are -- I see that this is going to
2 trickle across this country. I got on the
3 internet and I saw that Ameren UE is the --
4 like 20 percent below the national average as
5 far as gas prices. My gas bill in St. Louis
6 -- I lived in a -- a three level condo that
7 has recently gone on the block for sale and I
8 lost my home. I've had to file bankruptcy.
9 My gas bill in the summertime was \$50. I have
10 cooking. I have my heat. I have my hot
11 water. I -- I don't get it. If -- if I'm
12 having a \$50 bill on my gas, how is this being
13 justified because I use a microwave? I cook
14 very little on the stove. My food that I get
15 from a food bank is all pre-prepared so that I
16 can throw it into a microwave and cook it. I
17 don't do that much laundry. I'm a single
18 person. I wear my clothes two days -- you
19 know, twice each week so that I don't have to
20 do a lot of laundry so that I can save on
21 drying those clothes.

22 There are a lot of people in my
23 situation. There are a lot of people in -- in
24 more desperate situations than mine that are
25 struggling. I had the opportunity -- a friend

1 took me to San Francisco for about four days a
2 couple weeks ago. I was -- I had such a rude
3 awakening. I didn't realize the homelessness
4 that's in this country. I didn't realize how
5 people are begging on the streets to survive.
6 I met a young man that had lived in San
7 Francisco for three years. The first year he
8 was there, he did well. He had a job. He
9 lost his job. He's lived on the streets for
10 about two years now. He's about 21, 22, 23
11 years old.

12 It's pretty sad and it's happening all
13 across this country. it's happening in
14 Columbia. It's happening in Mexico, Missouri.
15 It's happening across the state. You know, I
16 -- the reason I'm here is because I heard
17 these other people talk. I wasn't going to
18 testify tonight because I really didn't feel
19 that my testimony being from St. Louis, not
20 being a gas customer of Ameren UE would make
21 that much of a difference. But you know what?
22 I think my testimony does make a difference.
23 And my voice needs to be heard just as the
24 other people who have spoken here tonight need
25 to be heard. They need to be recognized. And

1 pushing people over the edge, that's exactly
2 what this is doing. You know, I've watched my
3 whole life crumble before me within a two --
4 you know, on a two -- two-week span up to this
5 point. Now a year later my whole world has
6 crumbled. And I have no choice but to depend
7 on the government to help me out. And at this
8 point, I don't know if the government is going
9 to help me out because they may not feel that
10 I am disabled. You know, I don't know what it
11 would do if I -- I have -- I have one -- I was
12 able to -- to Cobra my insurance. My premium
13 because of my illness has jumped up to \$600
14 per month. How in the world could I do that
15 without having health strategic initiative
16 step in and then once being accepted by
17 Medicaid having them step in and make those
18 premiums for me? I couldn't do it. I would
19 die without my medications.

20 I'm not the only one here tonight that
21 has a problem. I'm not the only one in this
22 state or in this country that is in this
23 situation. But there are a lot of us out here
24 and I am just asking that the -- that the
25 right and just thing be done. And that's all

1 I have to say.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Loyd, thank you
3 very much for your testimony. Let's me see if
4 we have any clarifying questions from counsel.
5 Seeing none, Chairman Simmons?

6 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: Mr. Loyd, thank
7 you for your testimony and thank you for
8 courage.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Yes, sir.
10 Commissioner Gaw?

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you,
12 Mr. Loyd.

13 MR. LOYD: Thank you very much.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Loyd, thank you
15 very much. We appreciate your time and your
16 comments. And Mr. Loyd is the last witness
17 who is signed up. Is there anyone else who
18 would wish to testify? Yes, sir.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Sir, I'll need to
20 have you sworn, please.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.
22 Mr. Forbis, if you'd raise your right hand to
23 be sworn, please.

24 ALLEN FORBIS,
25 being first duly sworn to testify the truth, the whole

1 truth, and nothing but the truth, testified as follows:

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much,

3 sir. If you would, please state your name for

4 the record and spell your last name.

5 MR. FORBIS: Allen Forbis,

6 F-o-r-b-i-s.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address,

8 please?

9 MR. FORBIS: 3504 CS Main Road.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in

11 Columbia, sir?

12 MR. FORBIS: Yes.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas

14 customer of Ameren UE?

15 MR. FORBIS: Yes.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any

17 statement you have for the Commission this

18 evening?

19 MR. FORBIS: Yes. It's two-fold.

20 One, I am a gas customer and I am concerned

21 with the rate increase. But my main concern

22 is I work for the Columbia School District.

23 And I am basically the one responsible for,

24 you know, getting the gas. And one of my big

25 concerns is in the transportation area. And I

1 noticed that on the rate that there was a
2 fairly good increase in the transportation
3 talks. I actually transport the gas for the
4 district. We have gone this way to try to
5 save as much money as we can. We have a --
6 like most a lot of the school districts, we
7 are very budget crunched. So when we're
8 looking at an increase of this nature, it
9 basically goes right against our savings the
10 way we transport the gas. We -- the
11 implications that I have is -- it's not an
12 entity, but we -- we have to have gas for our
13 schools. We -- if we can't, we have to then
14 go back to the public and then we are getting
15 to a thing where we're not -- to pay for the
16 rate increase, we have to go ask for, you
17 know, bond issues and stuff of that nature,
18 which goes back -- and, of course, no one --
19 that's just another tax.

20 So we're very concerned as that entity of
21 being able to -- I want to pay for -- the
22 transportation is warranted and that. But
23 does -- it's that I just want to make sure
24 that it is warranted and it's justified
25 because we do not have the -- the means and

1 the money to actually, you know, have that
2 increase. That's going to take away from
3 other avenues in the school district. And
4 that's pretty much all I wanted to say.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

6 Mr. Forbis, thank you very much, sir. Let me
7 see if we have any questions first from
8 counsel.

9 MR. MICHEEL: I have one, yes.
10 Mr. Forbis, were you aware that with respect
11 to the percentage increase that the
12 transportation service has only proposed a 3.5
13 percent increase over what they're currently
14 receiving?

15 MR. FORBIS: That's true. But I --
16 I guess my concern was that -- that I couldn't
17 really see where the transportation needed to
18 be going up at all. I mean, we basically -- I
19 got into the program early on. We actually
20 had to pay for our electronic meters about
21 \$5,000 a piece when we got into the program.
22 And then still paid for meter charge on to
23 that. I know that is now gone. But -- and
24 we're paying the charges -- it's pretty much
25 about \$86 per school that I have to pay -- I

1 don't even use any gas. I'm paying almost \$90
2 per account. And I have approximately 36
3 accounts. So that's my minimum that I have.
4 And my feeling was that the -- you know, I
5 want -- want to pay for the transportation and
6 I understand that. But I just didn't think
7 that this was the time that that
8 transportation cost was really warranted.

9 I don't have any problem paying the
10 transportation cost. But I just wanted to
11 make sure that it is justified.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
13 you, Mr. Forbis. Mr. Micheel, anything
14 further?

15 MR. MICHEEL: No, thank you.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank
17 you. No other questions from counsel I see?
18 Mr. Chairman?

19 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: No questions.
20 Thank you, Mr. Forbis.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any --
22 Commissioner Gaw?

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Mr. Forbis, thank
24 you very much.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you for your

1 time and your remarks again. Let me ask, is
2 there anyone else who wishes to testify? All
3 right. Seeing no further witnesses, let me
4 clear up the record and get some exhibits
5 entered. I believe Mr. Wilke had handed up a
6 couple of documents, and I will mark those and
7 enter them as exhibits. I'll have as Exhibit
8 No. 2 his presentation summary. It is a
9 one-page document. I have only this original
10 and I will be glad to provide copies to
11 counsel at a later time.

12 I have as Exhibit 3 some copies of Ameren
13 gas bills, again, from Mr. Wilke, and it looks
14 as if there are four or five of them. They're
15 2003 bills. And, again, I will make these
16 available for counsel to make copies.

17 I have as Exhibit 4 and looks to be my final
18 Exhibit a one-page letter to the Commission from a
19 Penny Berry of Boonville Missouri, and I do have
20 copies. If anybody likes copies of those, I can
21 provide those immediately after the hearing.

22 Let me see if we have any concluding
23 remarks. Mr. Chairman, anything else you
24 would like to add?
25

1 CHAIRMAN SIMMONS: I would only say,
2 again, reiterate that I appreciate your
3 attendance tonight. I appreciate you being
4 here. As was said by the gentleman earlier,
5 your voices do make a difference. It makes a
6 difference in terms of the other Commissioners
7 and what we will read. And especially those
8 that weren't here, they will read the
9 transcript. It's important that we hear from
10 you. We've heard from you and that is a part
11 of our consideration. This situation has not
12 been concluded. None of these issues have
13 been settled. And so this is something that
14 we will continue to take into consideration.
15 And thank you for your time tonight.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Chairman Simmons,
17 thank you. Commissioner Gaw?

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Well said. Thank
19 you all very much for your time.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I would echo
21 those comments and thank you for your
22 participation this evening. We will now
23 conclude this hearing. We are off the record.
24 Thank you.

25