Exhibit No.:

Issue: Accounting Authority Order

Witness: Ronald A. Klote
Type of Exhibit: Rebuttal Testimony
Sponsoring Party: KCP&L Greater Missouri Operations Company
Case No.: EC-2019-0200

Date Testimony Prepared: May 23, 2019

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: EC-2019-0200

REBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

RONALD A. KLOTE

ON BEHALF OF

KCP&L GREATER MISSOURI OPERATIONS COMPANY

Kansas City, Missouri May 2019

REBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

RONALD A. KLOTE

Case No. EC-2019-0200

1	Q:	Please state your name and business address.
2	A:	My name is Ronald A. Klote. My business address is 1200 Main, Kansas City, Missouri
3		64105.
4	Q:	By whom and in what capacity are you employed?
5	A:	I am employed by Kansas City Power & Light Company ("KCP&L") and serve as
6		Director, Regulatory Affairs for KCP&L, KCP&L Greater Missouri Operations
7		Company ("GMO" of the "Company") and Westar Energy, Inc.
8	Q:	On whose behalf are you testifying?
9	A :	I am testifying on behalf of GMO.
10	Q:	What are your responsibilities?
11	A:	My responsibilities include the coordination, preparation and review of financial
12		information and schedules associated with rate cases and rider mechanism filings. In
13		addition, my responsibilities include the coordination, preparation and review of various
14		financial reporting and other miscellaneous regulatory filings including the Federal
15		Energy Regulatory Commission FERC Form 1/3-Q process.
16	Q:	Please describe your education, experience and employment history.
17	A:	In 1992, I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accountancy from the University of
18		Missouri - Columbia. I received my Masters of Business Administration Degree from the
19		University of Missouri – Kansas City in May 2016. I hold a Certified Public Accountant

certificate in the State of Missouri. In 1992, I joined Arthur Andersen, LLP where I held various positions of increasing responsibilities in the auditing division. I conducted and led various auditing engagements of company financial statements. In 1995, I joined Water District No. 1 of Johnson County as a Senior Accountant. This position involved operational and financial analysis of water operations. In 1998, I joined Overland Consulting, Inc. as a Senior Consultant. This position involved special accounting and auditing projects in the electric, gas, telecommunications and cable industries. In 2002, I joined Aquila, Inc. ("Aquila") holding various positions within the Regulatory Department until 2004 when I became Director of Regulatory Accounting Services. This position was primarily responsible for the planning and preparation of all accounting adjustments associated with regulatory filings in Aquila's electric jurisdictions. As a result of the acquisition of Aquila by Great Plains Energy Incorporated ("GPE"), I began my employment with KCP&L as Senior Manager, Regulatory Accounting in July 2008. In April 2013, I joined the Regulatory Affairs Department as a Senior Manager remaining in charge of Regulatory Accounting responsibilities. In December 2015, I became Director, Regulatory Affairs responsible for the coordination, preparation and filing of rate cases and other regulatory filings in our electric jurisdictions. Have you previously testified in proceedings before the Missouri Public Service Commission ("Commission" or "MPSC") or before any other utility regulatory

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Q:

agency?

Yes. I have testified before the MPSC, Kansas Corporation Commission, California
 Public Utilities Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission of Colorado.

Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?

- A: I will testify on a variety of accounting matters related to the accounting authority order ("AAO") requested by the Office of the Public Counsel ("OPC") and the Midwest Energy Consumers Group ("MECG") in connection with the retirement of Sibley generating units. My rebuttal testimony covers the following topics and is organized as follows:
 - In Section I, I explain how the request articulated in the direct testimonies of OPC witness Schallenberg and MECG witness Meyer is inappropriate and is not sufficiently clear for GMO to accurately identify and record deferral accounting entries even if such entries were appropriate;
 - In **Section II**, I explain how the estimates of the impact of the Sibley retirement on GMO's net income presented in the direct testimonies of OPC witness Schallenberg and MECG witness Meyer are inaccurate and overstated;
 - In Section III, I explain that the AAO which OPC and MECG seek to support in the direct testimonies of OPC witness Schallenberg and MECG witness Meyer, respectively, should be rejected because Messrs. Schallenberg and Meyer (a) ignore cost increases GMO has experienced, and will continue to experience, since its last base rate case order, and (b) fail to recognize GMO's historical inability to achieve its Commission-authorized earnings level; and
 - In **Section IV**, I explain certain differences between generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP") which govern the preparation of financial

1		accounting statements filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission
2		("SEC") and requirements of the Uniform System of Accounts ("USoA")
3		of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC") which have been
4		adopted by Commission rule for use in Missouri (4 CSR 240-20.030),
5		including the setting of retail rates by this Commission. I provide this
6		explanation to refute a portion of OPC witness Schallenberg's direct
7		testimony where he suggests that an accounting entry made by GMO to
8		comply with GAAP requirements in connection with the Sibley retirement
9		is evidence that supports the Commission imposing the AAO requested by
10		OPC and MECG. This specific accounting entry was not made by GMO
11		pursuant to the governing standards of the USOA as interpreted by the
12		Commission and thus provides no evidence supporting a finding that the
13		Sibley retirement is extraordinary or gives rise to extraordinary items.
14 15 16 17	I.	THE AAO REQUESTED BY OPC AND MECG IS INAPPROPRIATE AND THEIR EVIDENCE IS TOO VAGUE TO PERMIT GMO TO MAKE ACCURATE DEFERRAL ACCOUNTING ENTRIES EVEN IF SUCH ENTRIES WERE APPROPRIATE.
18	Q:	Have OPC and MECG clearly articulated the AAO they request that the
19		Commission impose on GMO?
20	A:	No, their requests have been inconsistent.
21		In the filing made by OPC and MECG on December 28, 2018, which the
22		Commission has characterized as a complaint, OPC and MECG stated that they were
23		requesting
24 25 26		that the Commission order GMO to defer to a regulatory liability account all revenues associated with non-existent costs and return on Sibley investments associated with GMO's Sibley

generation units 1, 2, 3 and common plant that were included in the revenue requirement and used to set rates.¹

But in his direct testimony OPC witness Schallenberg describes it differently, stating that the AAO is ". . . to reflect all costs associated with the generating units at Kansas City Power & Light Greater Missouri Operations (GMO)'s Sibley station that customers are currently paying in base rates"² And later in his direct testimony, OPC witness Schallenberg describes the AAO OPC requests in yet another way, by referring to ". . . cost savings it [GMO] will receive in the Sibley retirement"³

MECG witness Meyer testifies that the AAO will create "... a regulatory liability to capture the capital and operating costs currently included in KCP&L Greater Missouri Operations Company's ('KCPL-GMO') rates following the retirement of the Sibley generating units." Yet later in his direct testimony, MECG witness Meyer also states that "MECG is asking that the Commission order a deferral of all cost savings associated with the retirement of the Sibley units, and not a deferral of a specific dollar amount."

Because OPC and MECG have described the AAO they request in different ways, it is not clear to me precisely what they want the Commission to order GMO to record to a regulatory liability account. In addition, OPC and MECG refer to "cost savings from the Sibley retirement" to suggest that they can be readily identified and quantified when, in actuality and as I describe in more detail below, there is substantial disagreement about the level of cost savings GMO may experience in connection with the Sibley retirement.

¹ Petition for an Accounting Authority Order, para. 15, p. 4, filed December 28, 2018.

² Schallenberg Direct, p. 2, ll. 18-20.

³ Schallenberg Direct, p. 15, ll. 14-15.

⁴ Meyer Direct, p. 2, 11, 3-6.

⁵ Meyer Direct, p. 14, ll. 15-17.

1	Moreover, the estimates placed by OPC and MECG on the amounts they believe should
2	be deferred are oversimplified, erroneous and overstated.

- 3 II. THE ESTIMATES OPC AND MECG PLACE ON COST SAVINGS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SIBLEY RETIREMENT ARE OVERSIMPLIFIED, ERRONEOUS, OVERSTATED AND DO NOT JUSTIFY COMMISSION IMPOSITION OF AN AAO.
- Q: On what evidence do you rely for the assertion that there is substantial disagreement about the level of cost savings GMO may experience in connection with the Sibley retirement?
 - A: I will briefly describe areas of disagreement that, based on the direct testimony of OPC witness Schallenberg and MECG witness Meyer, I can presently identify. However, because of the cursory and vague nature of their testimony and the absence of a detailed or comprehensive description of what specifically they are requesting the Commission order GMO to defer, I cannot say for certain that the areas of disagreement I identify below are all-inclusive.

The first area of clear disagreement concerns property taxes. MECG witness Meyer testifies that property taxes should be included in the deferral, although he makes no attempt to quantify the amount of property taxes he asserts will be saved by GMO due to the Sibley retirement.⁶ As explained in more detail below, because of the methodology used by assessment authorities in Missouri to determine property tax obligations, the Sibley retirement is unlikely to have any meaningful impact on the level of property taxes paid by GMO in the future.

⁶ Meyer Direct, p. 14, ll. 17-20.

The second area of clear disagreement concerns Sibley depreciation expense. OPC witness Schallenberg includes this line item in his estimate of the magnitude of the deferral requested by OPC⁷ even though GMO is already recording Sibley depreciation expense to a regulatory liability account pursuant to the Commission's October 31, 2018, Order Approving Stipulations and Agreements in Case Nos. ER-2018-0146 and -0145 (hereafter, "Order Approving 2018 Rate Case Stipulations"). I will discuss this item in more detail below also.

The third area of disagreement concerns labor. OPC witness Schallenberg includes this line item in his estimate of the magnitude of the deferral requested by OPC.⁸ As I discuss in detail below, OPC witness Schallenberg has substantially overstated labor savings in connection with the Sibley retirement for a number of reasons.

The fourth area of disagreement concerns non-labor operations and maintenance costs ("O&M"). Mr. Schallenberg includes a line item estimate of non-labor O&M in his estimate of the magnitude of possible deferral amounts. GMO is already deferring a portion of these costs associated with major maintenance. In addition, Mr. Schallenberg used an amount that is simply overstated.

The fifth area of disagreement concerns fuel expense. OPC witness Schallenberg includes this item in his estimate of the magnitude of the deferral requested by OPC. OPC is already operating under a fuel adjustment clause rider mechanism that is an approved mechanism by this Commission. This AAO case is not the proper venue to be

⁷ Schallenberg Direct, p. 11, ll. 7-8.

⁸ Schallenberg Direct, p. 11, ll. 7-8.

⁹ Schallenberg Direct, p. 11, ll. 7-8.

¹⁰ Schallenberg Direct, p. 11, ll. 7-8.

analyzing the impacts on fuel costs. The appropriate venue would be the reviews associated with the fuel adjustment clause rider mechanism.

The sixth area of disagreement concerns the quantification of the undepreciated value of the Sibley units. OPC witness Schallenberg ascribes a value of approximately \$160 million¹¹ and MECG witness Meyer places that value at approximately \$300 million.¹² As I describe in more detail below, neither of these values is accurate. Company witness John Spanos has provided the net plant amount for the Sibley generating station as of June 30, 2018.

a. GMO's Property Tax Liability is Unlikely to Change Due to Sibley Retirement.

Q: Please explain your understanding of OPC witness Schallenberg's and MECG witness Meyer's position regarding property tax savings due to Sibley's retirement.

In both Mr. Schallenberg's and Mr. Meyer's testimony there are general references to savings associated with property taxes. Yet, there is absolutely no explanation of why they believe there are property tax savings associated with the Sibley retirements. OPC witness Schallenberg references property taxes on page 11 in a footnote and MECG Meyers references property taxes on page 14 stating the following on line 17 – 19: "Thus, there will be other components, not included in my materiality calculation, which should be deferred. For instance, I have not included property taxes, O&M costs, and other rate base components."

A:

¹¹ Schallenberg Direct, p. 3, l. 18.

¹² Meyer Direct, p. 13, 1. 7.

- 1 Q: Is GMO's property tax liability expected to fall as a result of the retirement of
- 2 Sibley?
- 3 A: No.

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- 4 Q: How are property taxes assessed in the state of Missouri?
 - A: Based on my experience in assessing property tax expense in numerous Missouri rate cases over my career and through consultation with the Company tax experts, my understanding is that by statute in Missouri, electric utilities like GMO are valued at the state level instead of the county or local level for all property except rail cars, construction work in progress, vehicles, and certain real estate and personal property. This is generally referred to as being "centrally assessed." The Missouri State Tax Commission starts by determining the fair market value of the entire company as a whole (i.e., GMO legal entity in this case and not the fair market value of the Company's assets or property). Once the fair market value of the entire company is determined, then the value is allocated pro-rata to the counties based on the miles of electric distribution and transmission lines ("pole miles") in each county. Once each county has been allocated its share of the "fair market value" of the entire company, it then applies the mill levy determined for that year and sends the tax bill. For the non-central assessed rail cars, construction work in progress, vehicles, and certain real estate and personal property, the fair market value of each asset is determined by each county and then the county applies the mill levy determined for that year and sends the tax bill. The aggregate amount of these bills represents the total amount of property taxes paid by GMO in a year.

- 1 Q: Please explain why property taxes paid by GMO are unlikely to change in any material way in connection with the Sibley retirement.
- 3 A: In the state of Missouri, the overall unit value of the operating assets of the entire 4 company is determined by the State Tax Commission. A portion of this unit value is 5 allocated to the State of Missouri based on a ratio of the entire company's Missouri 6 system to the total system of the entire company, which determines the state property tax 7 value. Items that are locally assessed by the county assessors, including rail cars, 8 construction work in progress, vehicles, and certain real estate and personal property are 9 subtracted from the unit value that had been allocated to the state of Missouri. The 10 amount that remains is then centrally assessed and the value distributed over the pole 11 miles in the state. The retirement of the Sibley locally assessed property will result in 12 lower property taxes at the Sibley location. However, the reduction in locally assessed 13 property at Sibley will be offset by an increase in the state centrally assed value. And, as 14 there are no current plans to retire any transmission lines there should be no material 15 impact to the centrally assessed pole mile allocation and no material impact on GMO's 16 overall property tax liability or overall property tax payments.
- 17 b. Sibley Depreciation Expense is Already Being Deferred
- 18 Q: Please explain why OPC witness Schallenberg's and MECG witness Meyer's
 19 discussion of Sibley depreciation expense does not support Commission imposition
 20 of an AAO in connection with the Sibley retirement.
- A: In both Mr. Schallenberg's testimony and Mr. Meyer's testimony, there are calculations of the total income effect and cost savings associated with the retirement of Sibley.

 Included in both of their calculations are depreciation expense savings which were already considered in GMO's 2018 Rate Case, No. ER-2018-0146. Paragraph 15 on page

1 9 of the first Stipulation and Agreement approved by the Commission in that case states 2 the following associated with depreciation expense: 3 GMO will create a regulatory liability to capture the amount of 4 depreciation expense included in GMO's revenue requirement 5 beginning when each of the following units is retired and depreciation expense is no longer recorded on GMO's books: 6 7 Sibley units 1, 2, and 3, including common plant, and Lake 8 Road unit 4/6. 9 The depreciation amounts will accumulate in the regulatory 10 liability account until new customer rates are established in a subsequent rate case. At that time, the regulatory liability account 11 12 will be closed into accumulated depreciation. Additionally, the 13 closing of this regulatory liability into accumulated depreciation 14 will be reflected in rates that are established in that rate case. 15 The Stipulation and Agreement approved by the Commission in GMO's 2018 Rate Case 16 has already provided for regulatory accounting treatment associated with the Sibley 17 assets. The assets continue to be depreciated and the regulatory liability continues to 18 accumulate these cost amounts month after month. Including these amounts in this 19 Sibley AAO request is simply incorrect and ignores the regulatory accounting treatment 20 that was agreed to and ordered by the Commission in the 2018 Rate Case. 21 c. OPC Witness Schallenberg's Estimate of Labor Savings Due to Sibley's Retirement is Erroneous and Overstated. 22 23 Please explain your understanding of how OPC witness Schallenberg estimated Q: 24 labor savings resulting from the Sibley retirement. 25 A: Table 1 on page 11 of Mr. Schallenberg's direct testimony includes a line item entitled 26 "Labor" that purports to quantify the labor and benefit savings associated with the Sibley retirements. The total amount of "Labor" savings included in this table is \$14,706,742. 27 28 The source for this amount appears to come from GMO's response to Data Request No.

- 1 8513 in this case. The response quantified the labor and benefits for the 2018 Rate Case
- 2 test year period of July 2016 to June 2017 associated with the Sibley plants.
- 3 Q: Are GMO's labor costs expected to fall by \$14.7 million due to the Sibley retirement
- 4 as asserted by OPC witness Schallenberg?
- 5 A: No. Mr. Schallenberg's estimate of labor savings is erroneous and overstated.
- 6 Q: Please explain why OPC witness Schallenberg's estimate of labor savings due to
- 7 Sibley's retirement is erroneous and overstated.
- 8 A: First of all, the amount include in the response to Data Request No. 8513 is actual O&M
- 9 labor and benefits costs charged to the Sibley operating units during the test year period
- July 2016 to June 2017. Therefore, this is not truly an accurate reflection of ongoing
- 11 labor costs included in rates.
- 12 Q: Why is Mr. Schallenberg's estimate of labor costs erroneous?
- 13 A: When calculating labor costs in a rate case, base salaries are typically quantified at a
- 14 "point in time" such as June 2017 which is what was included in GMO's Direct
- Testimony filing in the 2018 GMO Rate Case. In a later phase of the rate case process,
- base salaries were updated to the true-up date of June 30, 2018, which typically captures
- any merit increases and personnel changes during that period, and thus will be a more
- accurate reflection of ongoing labor costs.
- 19 Q: How has OPC witness Schallenberg's approach to estimate labor savings due to
- 20 Sibley's retirement overstated labor savings?
- 21 A: Labor costs in rates were captured at the true-up date (June 2018) thus reflecting an
- ongoing level of costs. For former Sibley personnel, the headcount was 76 employees
- with base salary level of \$7,249,652 at the true-up date. (This amount is labor only,

consisting of salary and wages paid to employees and does not include benefits costs. The cost of benefits piece is typically calculated on the basis of a percentage of actual labor charges). This headcount already reflects a reduction in headcount from both the beginning and ending periods of the test year. The employee headcount at the beginning of the test year in July 2016 was 111 employees which far exceeds the amount of employees at the true-up date in the rate case of June 30, 2018. In addition, the amount of employees at the end of the test year June 2017 was 98 employees. Once again this far exceeds the 76 employees that were employed at the end of the true-up period. This demonstrates that the number used in Mr. Schallenberg's testimony based on the test year in GMO's 2018 Rate Case (July 2016 to June 2017) included employee levels that were not in existence at the time of the true-up period June 30, 2018 and are not pertinent to GMO's current rates.

A:

Q: Is there additional evidence to show that OPC witness Schallenberg's estimate of labor savings is overstated?

Yes. While headcount levels have continued to decrease at the Sibley plant, there are a significant number of Sibley personnel that transferred to other departments. We strove to leave positions open, where possible, that could be filled by employees who had worked at Sibley. Thus, there are no labor savings associated with the portion of the currently active 62 employees that continue to be employed and work at Sibley or in other departments supporting GMO operations. In addition, as of May 1, 2019 there are 7 employees still remaining at the Sibley plant to wind down operations. As such, the labor savings claimed by Mr. Schallenberg are not correct and are overstated. In fact, only 14 employees at the Sibley plant have actually severed their employment. This is

1		significantly lower than the 76 employees that were employed at the end of the true-up
2		period in GMO's 2018 Rate Case and even lower than the 111 and 98 employees that
3		were employed at the beginning and end of the test period which is the basis for Mr.
4		Schallenberg's labor savings amounts.
5	Q:	In the revenue requirement settlement approved by the Commission in GMO's most
6		recent general rate case (Case No. ER-2018-0146), was the level of labor costs
7		included in rates a specifically agreed-upon item?
8	A:	No. That issue was settled on a "black box" basis, so there is no agreed-upon baseline
9		amount of labor costs for Sibley. This makes calculation of amounts to be deferred
10		difficult if not impossible and is an additional fact that makes the AAO proposed by OPC
11		and MECG unreasonable.
12 13	d.	OPC Witness Schallenberg's Estimate of non-labor O&M Savings Due to Sibley's Retirement is Overstated.

- 14 Q: Please explain your understanding of how OPC witness Schallenberg estimated non-
- 15 labor O&M savings resulting from the Sibley retirement.
- 16 A: Table 1 on page 11 of Mr. Schallenberg's direct testimony includes a line item entitled
 17 "Non-Labor O&M" that purports to quantify the non-labor O&M savings associated with
 18 the Sibley retirements. The total amount of "Non-Labor O&M" savings included in this
 19 table is \$12,414,468. The source for this amount appears to come from GMO's response
 20 to Data Request No. 8513 from its 2018 Rate Case which for the test year period of (July
 2016 to June 2017) quantified non-labor O&M savings associated with the Sibley plants.
- 22 Q: Is the amount provided in the non-labor O&M savings line overstated?
- 23 A: Yes, it is. I have a few issues with the amount that he has provided in his Table 1. First, 24 the amount that Mr. Schallenberg provided was the test year amount of non-labor O&M

costs that occurred during the test year of July 2016 thru June 2017. Yet, in the 2018 rate case true-up process a 4-year average of maintenance costs was proposed by the Company and Staff. This amount was provided in DR 8513 which totaled \$11,714,051.

Secondly, already included in the amount Mr. Schallenberg provided for non-labor O&M costs in Table 1 are accruals for major plant maintenance that are accumulated in a regulatory liability year over year to provide for significant maintenance activities at the Sibley plant. Accruals already continue to be recorded after the retirement of the plant and are accumulating in a regulatory liability. These accruals should not be included in any additional deferral since they are already being recorded and will continue to be recorded to a regulatory liability account until the next rate case. The amount of major maintenance associated with the Sibley generating plant is approximately \$1.1 million annually.

Finally, the Sibley generating station was retired in November 2018 and has entered into the retirement and dismantlement phase. As such, there will continue to be annual non-labor O&M costs that will be incurred at the plant site while the retirement and dismantlement activities are completed through 2021. This type of activity was simply not considered in Mr. Schallenberg's analysis. Because non-labor O&M costs will continue to be incurred at Sibley post-retirement, Mr. Schallenberg's inclusion of all non-labor O&M included in rates for Sibley in estimating the magnitude of the deferral he proposes is unreasonable.

- 1 Q: In the revenue requirement settlement approved by the Commission in GMO's most
- 2 recent general rate case, was the level of non-labor O&M costs included in rates a
- 3 specifically agreed-upon item?
- 4 A: No. That issue was settled on a "black box" basis, so there is no agreed-upon baseline
- 5 amount of non-labor O&M costs for Sibley. This makes calculation of amounts to be
- deferred difficult if not impossible and is an additional fact that makes the AAO proposed
- 7 by OPC and MECG unreasonable.
- 8 Q: Please summarize why Mr. Schallenberg's estimate of non-labor O&M costs to be
- 9 deferred is unreasonable.
- 10 Mr. Schallenberg has used data from the wrong time period to estimate the amount of A: 11 non-labor O&M costs for Sibley included in rates. He also fails to recognize that non-12 labor costs continue to be incurred at Sibley as well as the fact that certain major 13 maintenance costs are already being recorded to a regulatory liability account as a result 14 of the ratemaking process for GMO. Given all of these facts as well as the absence of an 15 agreed-upon baseline of non-labor O&M costs for Sibley included in GMO's rates, there 16 is no basis for his estimate of the magnitude of the deferral he proposes in connection 17 with the Sibley retirement. Under these circumstances, and especially because the Sibley 18 retirement is not extraordinary as GMO witness Ives describes in detail in his rebuttal

testimony, there is no basis for the Commission to grant the AAO requested by OPC and

MECG.

- 1 e. OPC Witness Schallenberg's estimate of Fuel Costs Included in Base Rates is misplaced.
- 2 Q: Does OPC witness Schallenberg include fuel costs in GMO's base rates in his
- 3 estimate of the magnitude of the deferral he requests in connection with the Sibley
- 4 retirement?
- 5 A: Yes, and I don't understand why, as there is no reason to do so.
- 6 Q: Is this AAO case the appropriate proceeding to be addressing deferral of changes in
- 7 fuel costs?
- 8 No. GMO currently employs a fuel adjustment clause ("FAC") which accounts for A: 9 changes in fuel costs from the level included in base rates. So, changes from the base 10 fuel cost currently included in GMO's rates will be deferred in accordance with the 11 operation of GMO's FAC. The FAC is subject to periodic prudence review and that 12 would be the appropriate venue to discuss whether fuel costs have been impacted by the 13 retirement of the Sibley generation station. There should be no consideration given to 14 deferring fuel costs in this proceeding when they are already being accounted for now in 15 another ratemaking process that has been approved by this Commission.
- 16 Q: Please explain why it would be unreasonable to grant an AAO with respect to fuel costs that are already being deferred in accordance with GMO's FAC?
- A: Granting a deferral of fuel costs in this AAO case would simply complicate the existing

 FAC process that accounts for fuel costs as part of the Company's cost of service. Fuel

 costs that are above or below the amount determined to be in base rates are deferred for

 recovery today. Deferral of fuel costs through an AAO ordered in this case would create

 additional deferrals associated with the same fuel costs that will be scrutinized by

 Commission Staff, and would likely lead to confusion and errors. It would be

1 unproductive and unreasonable to over-complicate the FAC process which is already

- 2 complex.
- f. <u>The Estimates Placed on Sibley's Generating Station Undepreciated Value by OPC and MECG are Inconsistent and Wrong.</u>
- 5 Q: Please explain your understanding of the estimates placed on the Sibley generating
- 6 stations undepreciated value by OPC and MECG, respectively, and how these
- 7 values were derived.
- 8 A: First, it appears from the testimony supplied by OPC witness Schallenberg that he
- 9 believes the estimate of the undepreciated value of the Sibley generating station is
- approximately \$160 million which is the amount of the GAAP-required regulatory asset
- 11 that was disclosed in the Company's 2018 10K. I provide later in my testimony the
- differences between the GAAP financial books and records and the FERC books and
- records. Secondly, MECG witness Meyer bases his estimate of the undepreciated value
- of the Sibley generating station to be approximately \$300 million. This estimate appears
- to be based on the Staff accounting schedules in the 2018 rate case.
- 16 Q: Are the estimates placed on Sibley generating station's undepreciated value by OPC
- 17 and MECG accurate?
- 18 A: No.
- 19 Q: Has the Company's depreciation expert Mr. John Spanos provided a calculation of
- 20 the net book value of Sibley's generating station?
- 21 A: Yes. GMO witness Spanos provides a net book value of \$145.7 million as of June 30,
- 22 2018 for Sibley on page 3 of his rebuttal testimony.

- 1 Q: Why is this amount different from the amount included in Staff's accounting schedules which is the basis for Mr. Meyer's estimate?
- A: Determining the actual net book value of the Sibley generating station accurately is not possible without specialized analysis provided by an expert like GMO witness Spanos.

 The amount included in Staff's accounting schedules is simply a book allocation of the accumulated depreciation reserve and in no way reflects the complexities included in a detailed depreciation study which Mr. Spanos has performed for the Company on several occasions.
- 9 Q: Why was it necessary for Mr. Spanos to calculate the net book value of the Sibley
 10 generating station as of June 30, 2018?

A:

Let me be clear on this. Through their request in this AAO docket OPC and MECG seek to segregate costs associated with the Sibley generating station as a single issue immediately after the conclusion of a rate case that was settled using a "black box" settlement. In particular, OPC and MECG are attempting to segregate the net book value of the Sibley generating station in order to attempt to calculate capital costs associated with it. In order to calculate the net book value of an asset you must have both the original cost and the associated accumulated reserve. During a rate case the Company provides a simple book allocation of the total reserve to the generating plants and this was done in the 2018 rate case. Since a depreciation study was completed for the 2016 GMO rate case in which a complete analysis of the total reserve balance was completed, no depreciation study was completed for the 2018 GMO rate case since depreciation studies are only required every 5 years. Because a segregated net book value of the Sibley generating station would be necessary if the Commission grants the AAO, a

depreciation expert must analyze the reserve balance among all generation plant in order to accurately calculate a proper accumulated depreciation reserve balance associated with the Sibley generating station. In this way, the total accumulated reserve balance is assigned to each of the generating stations and an appropriate reserve balance can be obtained for the Sibley generating station. Please see the testimony of Company witness John Spanos for the explanation and calculation of the Sibley generating station depreciation reserve.

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- 8 III. SINGLE-ISSUE AAO REQUESTED BY OPC AND MECG 9 WITH THE SIBLEY RETIREMENT **IGNORES** 10 INCREASES GMO IS EXPERIENCING SINCE THE TRUE-UP IN ITS RECENT 2018 RATE CASE, AS WELL AS GMO'S CONSISTENT INABILITY TO 11 12 ACHIEVE ITS COMMISSION-AUTHORIZED EARNINGS LEVEL.
- 13 Q: Why do you believe OPC and MECG have requested that the Commission impose 14 an AAO in connection with GMO's retirement of Sibley?
 - A: In my opinion, OPC and MECG believe that GMO will achieve greater than reasonable earnings due to Sibley's retirement and this is the reason they have asked the Commission to order GMO to record a regulatory liability in connection with that event. GMO witness Ives describes why this situation, even if true, does not meet the Commission practice and policy of granting AAO's through applying the extraordinary items criteria of USoA General Instruction No. 7. Further, in contrast to analysis undertaken during a general rate proceeding which considers all relevant factors, the AAO requested by OPC and MECG would only consider costs of Sibley included in GMO's rates. Although I have previously explained that the many problems and difficulties in identifying and quantifying such costs make their AAO request unreasonable, the fact that they propose to capture only costs they allege will be

- eliminated by Sibley's retirement and ignore new costs or other cost increases compounds the unreasonableness of their request.
- Q: Since base rates from GMO's 2018 Rate Case took effect in early December 2018,
 what earnings levels have been shown in GMO's quarterly surveillance reports?
- 5 For the twelve-month period ending December 31, 2018, GMO's achieved return on A: 6 equity ("ROE") was 7.98%. For the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2019, 7 GMO's achieved ROE was **8.42%**. These are the only quarterly surveillance reports 8 submitted by GMO since new base rates took effect. Although ROE and other issues 9 were settled in the 2018 Rate Case on a "black box" basis which did not specify an 10 agreed-upon ROE, the range of ROE recommendations made in that case was relatively 11 narrow. 9.85% was the point recommendation of both Staff and GMO, with MECG 12 recommending 9.30%. Although I believe earnings levels greater than these would not 13 be unreasonable in light of normal earnings variability of electric utilities and the fact that 14 GMO has historically under-earned relative to its Commission-authorized earnings levels, 15 it is clear that no factual basis exists to believe that GMO's earnings levels are excessive.
- 16 Q: Upon what information do you rely for your assertion that GMO has historically
 17 under-earned relative to its Commission-authorized earnings levels?
- 18 A: The table below shows ROE levels provided in surveillance reports submitted by GMO over the past 11 years compared to Commission-authorized ROE levels.

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				Earned	Earned	Earned
Case No.	Date Rates	Authorizeded	Calendar	ROE	ROE	ROE
	Effective	ROE	Year	MPS	L&P	Combined
ER-2007-0004	5/31/2007	10.25%	2008	3.83%	4.24%	3.80%
ER-2009-0090	9/1/2009	Settlement	2009	4.75%	0.34%	3.86%
			2010	8.30%	4.25%	7.44%
ER-2010-0356	6/25/2011	10.00%	2011	8.54%	5.60%	7.85%
			2012	9.37%	10.04%	9.53%
ER-2012-0175	1/26/2013	9.70%	2013	9.76%	11.31%	10.15%
			2014	9.56%	8.26%	9.24%
			2015	8.37%	6.59%	7.92%
			2016	7.77%	5.85%	7.29%
ER-2016-0156	2/22/2017	9.5-9.75%	2017			8.27%1
ER-2018-0146	12/6/2018	Settlement	2018			$7.98\%^{1}$

¹By Order effective October 8, 2016, the Commission accepted the consolidation of MPS and L&P rate districts into a common GMO-wide rate structure. The consolidation went into effect the same time as rates on February 22, 2017.

Although there have been brief periods when GMO's actual earnings have exceeded its Commission-authorized ROE, those instances are the exception to the general rule over the presented period that GMO's earnings have fallen well short of its Commission-authorized ROE.

- Q: In requesting that the Commission impose an AAO in connection with the Sibley retirement, do you believe OPC and MECG have taken into consideration the fact that, historically, GMO's actual earnings levels have fallen well short of its Commission-authorized ROE?
- 13 A: No. In my opinion both OPC and MECG ignore this fact.
- Q: Setting aside GMO's historical earnings shortfalls relative to its Commissionauthorized ROE, is there any reasonable basis to believe that GMO's earnings levels will become excessive before GMO's next general rate proceeding?
- 17 A: Not in my opinion.

First, a significant impact on earnings can come from the normal variability in revenues from the revenue levels that were set in past rate cases. This occurs as a result of a variety of factors that are largely beyond GMO's control, such as weather that is cooler or warmer than normal, economic conditions generally in GMO's service territory and the financial condition of specific GMO customers. There is no assurance that the revenue levels assumed to prevail in GMO's rate case will actually be achieved.

Secondly, another impact on earnings can come from cost increases that GMO may experience over time since cost levels used to set rates in the last rate case. While GMO expects to achieve savings over time, due to both the merger with Westar Energy, Inc. and the Sibley retirement, costs will increase in other areas over time and I do not see any reasonable basis to believe that GMO's achieved earnings will become excessive before GMO's next general rate proceeding which will be filed between early January 2020 and early January 2021.

- Have OPC and MECG demonstrated that GMO's earnings levels are currently excessive or are likely to become excessive before GMO files its next general rate case?
- 17 A: No and they have made no attempt to do so.

Q:

- Q: Does the level of earnings of an electric utility, whether below or above its authorized return on equity, support the imposition of an AAO under USoA General Instruction 7 and the criteria that has historically been applied by the Commission in approving AAO deferral requests?
- A: No. As GMO witness Darrin Ives discusses in his rebuttal testimony further, the
 Commission has consistently applied the standard that events to qualify for AAO deferral

costs must be extraordinary, unusual and unique, and not recurring for their costs to quality for AAO deferral. This is not the case for the Sibley retirement. The retirement of Sibley was anticipated and communicated well in advance of the retirement date and was known by the Commission and parties to this proceeding. Also, as discussed by GMO witness Christopher Rogers in his rebuttal testimony, fossil fuel-fired generating units' retirements are ordinary and typical of the norm for electric utilities and have been increasing in frequency over the past ten years. This is analogous to the Commission's July 30, 2014 Report and Order at page 10 in Case No. EU-2014-0077, where in the Commission stated: "The increase in transmission costs was anticipated and is indeed the norm for all electric utility members of SPP. Therefore, the transmission costs are not extraordinary." 13

It is clear to me from this statement, as well as more recent decisions, that the Commission will expect to deal with such rising or declining costs in such situations, or more directly to the question, excessive or insufficient earnings by the utility, in a general rate proceeding. The general rate proceeding will consider all relevant factors unlike this complaint which seeks an AAO for a specific event that is not the result of extraordinary, unusual or non-recurring activity to the exclusion of other countervailing factors.

IV. PLANT RETIREMENTS, INCLUDING GENERATING PLANT RETIREMENTS, OCCUR FOR GMO ON A REGULAR BASIS.

20 Q: How are plant retirements recorded on GMO's books?

A:

Plant retirements recorded on GMO's books follow the USoA accounting rules for mass asset accounting by removing the original gross cost amount from both plant in service account 101 and accumulated depreciation reserve account 108. The entry that is booked

¹³ See Report and Order, p. 10, Case No. EU-2014-0077 (July 30, 2014).

is a credit to account 101 which removes the original gross cost amount from plant in service, and a debit to account 108 which reduces the accumulated depreciation reserve in a like original gross cost amount. After this entry is recorded, the resulting net plant (plant in service less accumulated depreciation) is identical as before the entry is recorded.

- 6 Q: To your knowledge, does GMO record retirements on its books in a manner that is 7 consistent with the practices of other electric utilities?
- 8 A: Yes, based on my experience and guidance provided by the USoA, this is the practice employed by GMO and used consistently across the electric utility industry.
- 10 Q: Does GMO record plant retirements on a regular basis?

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- 12 Yes, like all other utilities in its normal operations, GMO retires plant, including 12 generating plant, on a regular basis and thus makes the associated accounting entries on a 13 regular basis as well. For the five-year period from October 2013 through September 14 2018, GMO retired approximately \$90 million of generating plant.
- 15 Q: As a general matter, how do plant retirements affect depreciation expense and the earnings of a utility?
 - A: As I have described previously, when plant retirements occur the original cost of the asset retired is credited and removed from plant in service. When looking at this in isolation, depreciation expense stops being recorded for the asset although the cost of this asset is included in rates. This isolated picture would increase earnings. Yet, the impact of depreciation expense associated with the Sibley generating station was specifically addressed in the 2018 rate case. As I discussed previously the Commission's Order Approving 2018 Rate Case Stipulations requires GMO to record a regulatory liability to

1		capture the amount of depreciation expense for Sibley that was included in rates. In
2		essence therefore, Sibley continues to be depreciated in a manner consistent with the
3		depreciation expense amounts that are included in rates. As such, the earnings of the
4		Company are not currently being impacted by the depreciation effects of the retired
5		Sibley assets.
6 7 8	V.	THE REGULATORY ASSET RECORDED BY GMO TO COMPLY WITH GAAP ACCOUNTING REQUIREMENTS DOES NOT SUPPORT COMMISSION IMPOSITION OF AN AAO IN CONNECTION WITH SIBLEY'S RETIREMENT.
9	Q:	OPC witness Schallenberg testifies that GMO has recorded a regulatory asset in
10		connection with Sibley's retirement. ¹⁴ How do you respond?
11	A:	Mr. Schallenberg misconstrues the regulatory asset recorded by GMO in connection with
12		Sibley's retirement, which was made to comply with GAAP requirements, as being a
13		regulatory asset recorded pursuant to Commission authorization under the requirements

16 Q: Please explain, in general terms, the difference between GAAP requirements and requirements of the USoA.

of the USoA. This section of Mr. Schallenberg's direct testimony¹⁵ is misleading and

A: Accounting requirements under GAAP govern the preparation of financial statements filed with the SEC while accounting requirements under the USoA apply to regulatory utility accounting and retail ratemaking, as overseen by this Commission. Numerous differences exist between GAAP accounting and accounting under the USoA and, consequently, utilities like GMO typically maintain a set of GAAP books of account and a set of FERC books of account based on the USoA. GMO lists examples of these

should be disregarded.

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¹⁴ Schallenberg Direct, p. 6, ll. 26-29.

differences, including plant to be retired which is the subject of GMO's Sibley regulatory asset in question, on page 123.1 of its 2018 FERC Form 1, "GMO classifies certain items in its accompanying Comparative Balance Sheet (primarily debt issuance costs, the components of accumulated deferred income taxes, non-legal cost of removal, plant to be retired, certain miscellaneous current and accrued liabilities, current regulatory assets and regulatory liabilities and current maturities of long-term debt) in a manner different that that required by GAAP."

8 Q: What GAAP requirements mandated the different presentation of Sibley unit 3 and common plant assets by GMO in connection with Sibley's retirement?

First, I would note that GAAP did not require Sibley units 1 and 2 to be presented on the balance sheet differently than how they are for FERC (i.e. within plant in service). For GAAP purposes only, Sibley unit 3 and common plant was removed from plant in service at the time the final retirement decision was made as required by the guidance in ASC-980-360-35-1. Entries to GMO's GAAP books removed Sibley 3 and common from plant in service and re-classified those facilities as plant to be retired as of June 30, 2017. This was caused by management's intent to retire Sibley by the end of 2018, as announced in a press release issued in June of 2017. Upon the actual retirement of Sibley in November 2018, the Sibley 3 and common plant presented within plant to be retired was then reclassified to a regulatory asset on GMO's GAAP books. It is important to note that this regulatory asset for Sibley unit 3 and common plant does not represent the recording of a new and incremental asset related to Sibley but instead, simply represents a change in balance sheet presentation pursuant to GAAP for amounts related to Sibley 3

A:

¹⁵ Schallenberg Direct, p. 5, 1. 3 through p. 9, 1. 5.

1		and common plant that were previously recorded within plant in service/plant to be
2		retired.
3	Q:	Did GMO record a similar regulatory asset on its FERC books kept in accordance
4		with the USoA when Sibley was retired?
5	A:	No. On a FERC basis, the relevant Sibley Unit 3 and common plant balances in accounts
6		101 and 108 were not re-classified to separate accounts and continued to be accounted for
7		as normal utility plant from a depreciation and retirement perspective until Sibley retired
8		in November 2018. Upon the retirement of Sibley Unit 3 and common plant, GMO
9		followed the accounting prescribed by the USoA and recorded the original book cost of
10		the assets as a credit to plant in service and a debit to the accumulated depreciation
11		reserve, as is done with all functional asset class retirements. To be clear, GMO has not
12		recorded a regulatory asset or liability on its FERC books in connection with the Sibley
13		retirement except for the depreciation expenses associated with the Sibley Plant as
14		prescribed in the GMO 2018 Rate Case Stipulation and Agreement discussed above.
15		GMO would not do so in the absence of an order from this Commission authorizing or
16		directing such accounting treatment.
17	Q:	What guidance must GMO follow for its FERC books kept in accordance with
18		USoA in determining the appropriateness of recording regulatory assets and
19		liabilities?
20	A:	In applying the USoA for the recording of regulatory assets, 18 CFR Definition 31 must

be followed. It states:

"Regulatory Assets and Liabilities are assets and liabilities that result from rate actions of regulatory agencies. Regulatory assets and liabilities arise from specific revenues, expenses, gains, or losses that would have been

included in net income determination in one period under the general

requirements of the Uniform System of Accounts but for it being probable:

Q:

A:

- A. That such items will be included in a different period(s) for purposes of developing the rates the utility is authorized to charge for its utility services; or
- B. In the case of regulatory liabilities, that refunds to customers, not provided for in other accounts, will be required.

As I, and GMO witness Darrin Ives describe throughout our rebuttal testimony in this case, this Commission has consistently followed the criteria as outlined in USoA General Instruction 7, Extraordinary Items, to evaluate the appropriateness of establishing a regulatory asset or liability. GMO has not requested and has not, nor been allowed to utilize deferred accounting under the USoA regarding any rate action from a regulatory agency in regard to the Sibley assets for which a GAAP regulatory asset was required to be established. Thus, no similar regulatory asset has been recorded under the USoA.

- In the final analysis, why should OPC witness Schallenberg's testimony regarding the regulatory asset that GMO was required by GAAP to record in connection with the Sibley retirement be disregarded?
 - Accounting entries made in compliance with GAAP requirements are not governed by the USoA which this Commission has adopted by rule for use in establishing retail rates in Missouri. As such, whether a regulatory asset has or has not been recorded on GMO's GAAP books is wholly irrelevant to the appropriateness of making use of deferral accounting in connection with a particular event under the USoA. Mr. Schallenberg's discussion of the GAAP- required regulatory asset has no bearing on the AAO request, is extraneous and irrelevant to OPC and MECG's request in this proceeding and is raised, in my opinion, only to mislead and confuse the Commission's examination of the issues. Therefore, his discussion in this area should be fully disregarded.

VI. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

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A: Because the descriptions of the AAO requested by OPC and MECG have been so inconsistent and vague, GMO has no basis to make accurate deferral accounting entries, even if such entries were appropriate.

The estimates placed by OPC witness Schallenberg and/or MECG witness Meyer on the magnitude of the deferral to be recorded pursuant to the AAO they seek are erroneous and overstated for a variety of reasons, including:

- Property tax levels are unlikely to fall by any material degree as a result of the Sibley retirement;
- The estimates of the undepreciated value of Sibley by OPC witness Schallenberg and MECG witness Meyer are erroneous and overstated;
- Sibley depreciation expense is already being deferred as a result of the Commission's Order Approving 2018 Rate Case Stipulations;
- Sibley labor costs were included in rates as part of a "black box" settlement of revenue requirement and, as such, no agreed-upon baseline exists to calculate future changes in such costs and the period used by Mr. Schallenberg does not consider significant changes addressed in the true-up process in the rate case;
- Only a small number of Sibley employees have voluntarily ended employment since the facility's retirement, while some remain at Sibley and many others have transferred to other departments;

14	Q:	Does this con	clude your testimony?
13			misleading, extraneous to the AAO request, and should be disregarded.
12			regulatory asset for ratemaking in connection with the Sibley retirement is
11		•	The suggestion by Mr. Schallenberg that GMO has already recorded a
10			deferral; and
9			GMO's FAC and there is no basis to subject such costs to additional
8			GMO's base rates are already subject to deferral under the operation of
7		•	Differences in future fuel costs from the level of fuel costs included in
6			O&M costs included in GMO's rates;
5			are already being deferred and he overstates the level of Sibley non-labor
4		•	Mr. Schallenberg ignores the fact that some Sibley non-labor O&M costs
3			line exists to calculate future changes in such costs;
2			box" settlement of revenue requirement and, as such, no agreed upon base
1		•	Sibley non-labor O&M costs were included in rates as part of a "black

A: Yes, it does.

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

The Office of the Public Counsel and Midwest Energy Consumers Group))
v.) Case No. EC-2019-0200
KCP&L Greater Missouri Operations Company)))
AFFIDAVIT OF RONALD A. K	LOTE
STATE OF MISSOURI)) ss COUNTY OF JACKSON)	
Ronald A. Klote, being first duly sworn on his oath, states:	
1. My name is Ronald A. Klote. I work in Kansas G	City, Missouri, and I am employed by
Kansas City Power & Light Company as Director, Regulatory Affa	irs.
2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all p	urposes is my Rebuttal Testimony on
behalf of KCP&L Greater Missouri Operations Company consisting	g of <u>thirty-one</u> (<u>31</u>) pages,
having been prepared in written form for introduction into evidence	e in the above-captioned docket.
3. I have knowledge of the matters set forth therein	a. I hereby swear and affirm that my
answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions	s therein propounded, including any
attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowled	dge, information and belief.
Ronald A. Klote	A Cle
Subscribed and sworn before me this 23 rd day of May 2019.	
Notary Public	white
My commission expires: $\frac{4/2\sqrt{202}}{}$	
	ANTHONY R WESTENKIRCHNER Notary Public, Notary Seal State of Missourl Platte County Commission # 17279952 My Commission Expires April 26, 2021