

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Establishment of a)	
Working Case for the Review and)	GW-2021-0272
Consideration of Amending the Commission's)	
Natural Gas Safety Rules)	

COMMENTS OF SPIRE MISSOURI, INC.

COMES NOW Spire Missouri Inc. (“Company” or “Spire”) by and through counsel and in response to the March 10, 2021 Order of the Missouri Public Service Commission (“Commission”) hereby files its comments as set forth below.

Procedural Background

1. On February 26, 2021, Staff of the Commission (“Staff”) filed a Motion to establish a Working Case with the purpose of updating the Commission’s gas safety rules to reflect rule changes from the U.S. Department of Transportation, to reconsider certain customer inspection requirements, and to include a requirement that operators make certain leak information publicly available. That filing included specific proposed rule changes incorporating updated federal law.
2. On March 10, 2021, the Commission issued an Order opening a Working Case to Consider Amending the Commission’s Natural Gas Safety Rules. This Order included an April 9 deadline for any stakeholder wishing to submit comments regarding the rule amendments being considered by Staff.
3. On March 19, 2021, Staff filed a Request for Additional Comments which specified specific information Staff is seeking from stakeholders. On March 22, 2021, the Commission an Order for Additional Comments establishing May 6, 2021 as the date for stakeholders to reply to that filing.

4. In response to the March 10 Order, Spire hereby submits its comments wherein it supports Staff's proposal, in part, and opposes Staff's proposal in part, as further explained below.

**Proposal to Amend Commission Rules
to Incorporate Federal Amendments**

5. The Company agrees that the Commission Rules should be amended to incorporate amendments to the federal law. The Company is bound to follow both state and federal law and benefits from them being identical where possible. It is also important that the Commission Rules be current with the federal laws to ensure the upmost safety of the Missouri gas customers and infrastructure. Additionally, these proposals will assist Spire in having access to federal funds from Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA).
6. The Company does not have any specific changes to make to those presented in Staff's recommended changes in Attachment A to their initial pleading.

**Proposal to Consider Amending 20 CSR 4240-40.030(12)(S)1.B
to allow residential customers to sign a statement of refusal of visual inspections**

7. Generally, the Company does not oppose Staff's proposal to amend the Rule to permit residential and small commercial customers who do not wish to have the visual inspection performed opt to sign a statement of refusal that would apply to a single instance of an operator physically turning on the flow of gas to that customer. As Staff highlighted, this option is available to large commercial and industrial customers under the current rule.
8. The Company reserves the right to provide additional comments in response to the Staff's Request for Comment on or before May 9, 2021, and looks forward to continued discussions with Staff and other stakeholders.

9. In regard to the temporary waiver of 20 CSR 4240-40.030(12)(S)1.B, in GE-2020-0297, Spire did not see negative consequences of this waiver, but also did not utilize this waiver.

**Proposal to Consider Requiring Gas Operators
to Make Information Regarding Leaks Publicly Available**

10. The Company applauds the Staff's diligence in following up from a public comment made in GX-2020-0112, which stated, "The public has a right to know where and how much harmful methane is being emitted by Spire. I strongly urge the Commission to require Missouri gas utilities to put maps of known leaks on their websites." However, Spire does not support Staff's proposal to require the state's gas utilities to make information regarding leaks publicly available.
11. The Commission has a duty to promote and safeguard the health and safety of the public. Section 386.310, RSMo (2016). The utilities have a statutory duty to provide safe and adequate gas service to its customers at just and reasonable rates. Section 393.130, RSMo (2016). Information relating to the security of a company's facilities is confidential. See 20 CSR 4240-2.135 (2)(A)(5).
12. Spire believes such a requirement would jeopardize the safety of the Missouri citizens because it would give access to highly confidential information about gas pipelines to the general public. There is no way to control what the public will do with that information, and the risk of an attack on the natural gas system is far too great if this information is made publicly available.
13. Currently, Spire, monitors its own state-wide system as part of its duty to provide safe and adequate service. Spire is aware of all the pertinent information when it determines what leaks need to take priority in any given moment. Pertinent information includes construction projects, meter change-outs, system checks, just to name a few. This spectrum

of information allows the Company to prioritize which leaks need to be addressed, what Spire resources are available and needed to respond to the situations, and which leaks are not imminently detrimental.

14. Providing limited, isolated information to the public does not serve the public interest. It has the potential to create a vacuum of incomplete information, that is likely to be oversimplified and could provide an erred perception that all leaks are equal. It also creates unjustified fear in the residents. If the public had access to this information and saw a leak in their neighborhood, there is the potential that they would get scared and worried about their family and friends and would call the Company and expect Spire to come out immediately to address their concern. Those calls could unjustifiably divert resources from the priority situations and put the system and its customers at real risk. Providing that information to the general public creates too much room for the public to misunderstand, over-react, and creates unwarranted concern for the residents of Missouri.
15. The security of the system, which includes information related to leaks, should remain confidential.
16. Spire will provide additional responses as ordered by the Commission on or before May 6, 2021, and looks forward to continued discussions with Staff and other stakeholders.

WHEREFORE, Spire Missouri Inc. asks the Commission to accept these Comments and for any other action the Commission deems appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Rachel L. Niemeier

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ATTORNEYS FOR SPIRE MISSOURI INC.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing document has been sent by electronic mail this 9th day of April, 2021 to the parties in this matter by hand-delivery, fax, electronic or regular mail.

/s/ Rachel L. Niemeier
