

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

Marcia Eason,)	
)	
Complainant,)	
v.)	<u>File No. WC-2013-0010</u>
)	
Missouri-American Water Company,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission ("Staff"), by and through its undersigned counsel, and files its *Staff Recommendation* with the Missouri Public Service Commission ("Commission"), respectfully stating as follows:

1. On July 6, 2012, Marcia Eason ("Complainant") filed a Formal Complaint against Missouri-American Water Company (the "Company" or "MAWC").
2. On August 8, 2012, MAWC filed its *Answer and Affirmative Defenses*.
3. On August 13, 2012, the Commission issued an *Order Directing Staff Status Update* ("Order"), directing Staff to file a pleading no later than August 22, 2012, stating when Staff anticipates filing its recommendation.
4. On August 24, 2012, Staff filed *Staff's Status Report*, indicating that Staff would file its recommendation or status report on or before October 5, 2012.
5. The *Staff Recommendation* was prepared by Jerry Scheible, P.E., Utility Regulatory Engineer, and Lisa Kremer, Manager of the Engineering and Management Services Unit, is attached hereto and incorporated by reference herein as Appendix A to

this Recommendation. Commission Rule 4 CSR 240-2.070 states that Staff's report as to the cause of a complaint "shall not be made public unless released in accordance with sections 386.480¹, 392.210(2) or 393.140(3), RSMo, or during the course of the hearing involving the complaint." Therefore, *Staff's Memorandum* attached hereto as Appendix A, along with the accompanying attachments, is marked as highly confidential (HC).

6. Staff concludes that the accuracy of the two meters has been verified to be within specifications, and that the volume of water in question did indeed pass through Complainant's meter. While no indication of a leak was found, any leak on the customer's service line or internal plumbing is the customer's responsibility to investigate and repair.

7. Staff recommends that MAWC make a written compromise proposal to Ms. Eason, in which a one-time courtesy adjustment credit or partial refund is offered, and a payment plan is established for any remaining balance such resolution would be reasonable as a "good faith" gesture by MAWC.

8. Staff also recommends that Ms. Eason assume some responsibility in the issue and, if uncharacteristically high bills continue to be issued to Ms. Eason, on a going forward basis, she should provide documentation to MAWC that a leak or other contributing factor for high water usage has been repaired or rectified and that she has retained the services of a plumber or leak detection service to again investigate

¹ Section 386.480, RSMo, causes it to be a misdemeanor for information furnished to the Commission to be divulged to the public, with few exceptions.

Ms. Eason's service line and interior plumbing, prior to being eligible to any further relief.

9. Staff also investigated the Company's call escalation procedures and notes that the Company's behavior showed opportunities for improvement, the Company has taken action to make those improvements and recommends such a review continue.

WHEREFORE, Staff respectfully submits this *Staff Recommendation* to the Commission for consideration and any other relief it deems just.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ TANYA K. ALM

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile, or electronically mailed to all counsel of record this 5th day of October, 2012.

/S/ TANYA K. ALM