

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

In the Matter of the Rate Increase Requests of)
the Regulated Water and Sewer Utilities Owned)
and Operated by Ozark International, Inc.)

Case No. WR-2015-0192

STAFF’S RESPONSE TO ORDER DIRECTING FILING

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission and for its *Order Directing Filing*, states as follows:

1. This matter began with seven small company rate request cases filed by six separate entities, each of which is a public utility that provides regulated water service and, in some cases, regulated sewer service to the public.¹ The entities are: Bilyeu Ridge Water Company, Midland Water Company, Moore Bend Water Utility, LLC, Riverfork Water Company, Inc., Taney County Water, LLC, and Valley Woods Utility, LLC.

2. Each of these entities is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ozark International, Inc. Ozark’s president is Hollis H. “Bert” Brower, Jr., and Hollis H. “Bert” Brower, Jr., controls, manages and operates each of them, as well as Ozark International.

3. On March 3, 2015, the Commission consolidated all of these cases into the present case upon Staff’s motion.

4. On September 8, 2015, Staff notified the Commission that Staff and the Company had reached a resolution of these cases as reflected by a Disposition Agreement filed that day. The Office of the Public Counsel (“OPC”), although a participant in the negotiations that resulted in the settlement, did not join in it. The

¹ Although several of these utilities provide sewer services, only one of them is seeking a sewer service rate increase.

Disposition Agreement reflects a total water and sewer revenue increase of \$51,373 on an annual basis.

5. On October 14, 2015, OPC requested that the Commission convene two local public hearings to afford opportunities for Ozark International's customers to be heard concerning the proposed rate increase, one at Nixa, Missouri, and the other at Forsyth, Missouri.

6. On October 16, 2015, the Commission granted OPC's request and, on October 22, 2015, directed the parties to file proposed dates for the local public hearings.

7. On October 29, OPC filed its recommendation proposing that the local public hearings be held during the week of November 16-20, 2015.

8. Staff states that Mondays and Wednesdays are not convenient for it and, further, that Mr. Brower would prefer that the hearings be held on Thursday.

WHEREFORE, Staff prays that the Commission will set the aforesaid local public hearings on Thursday, November 19, 2015, and not on Monday, November 16, 2015, or Wednesday, November 18, 2015; and grant such other and further relief as is just in the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kevin A. Thompson

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

In certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been served electronically, or by hand delivery, or by First Class United States Mail, postage prepaid, to each of the parties herein or to their attorneys of record, all according to the Service List maintained for these cases by the Secretary of the Missouri Public Service Commission, on this 29th day of October, 2015.

/s/ Kevin A. Thompson