

FEB 6 2017

Comments of Jacqueline Hutchinson, Board Chair, Missouri Consumers Council; Vice President of Operations for People's Community Action Corporation in St. Louis Missouri: Missouri Public Service Commission

My career has spanned for more than thirty years with Community Action Agencies in the state of Missouri. Over the years, I have provided testimony on behalf of low-income Missourians in almost every rate case in the St. Louis area.

I would like to oppose the 8% rate increase requested by Ameren Mo, and the \$4.89 "energy grid access fee". Such a large rate increase would create additional hardships for a vast majority of consumers and particularly low-income and fix income elderly. The "energy grid access fee" is in essence, a regressive tax increase that disproportionately affects those with the least ability to pay.

I ask that you consider the conditions that exist for a large segment of our population.

The demographic factors to consider are:

- **Missouri elderly and disabled residents received .2% increase, or \$2 in Social Security benefits this year. An 8% increase in utility cost, would dramatically increases the "heat or eat" decisions that our elderly residents are already making at an alarming rate with no improvement in site.**
- **The average wage increase in Missouri this past year was 3.1%, after seeing declines of 1.6% in 2013, and another .6% in 2014.**
- **Missouri's Overall Poverty Rate is 14.8%, while the Poverty rate in St. Louis remains higher at 28.8%, and 21% or 275,000 children in Missouri live in poverty. An 8% increase could have a devastating impact on those who are struggling to make ends meet, a family of three earning \$20,160 or \$1680 per month.**
- **Low-income households pay an average of 46% of their gross pay towards housing and energy costs. However, households at 50% of the Federal Poverty Guideline may pay up 54% of their income just on energy.**

LPH. St. Louis
 1.19.17 Exhibit No. 2
 Date 1.19.17 Reporter SZ
 File No. ER-2016-0179



My Recommendations:

1. An 8% rate increase should not be granted to Ameren Mo.
2. The Keeping Current Program be expanded, in agreement with the recommendation of the collaborative that has been meeting and has reached consensus on some improvements and expansion of the program.
3. The public service commission should consider adoption of a special low-income customer class and adopt a low-income rate.

These low-income rates are already in place in California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Texas, Massachusetts, Nevada and perhaps other states not listed.

According to a *National Study of Ratepayer-Funded Low-Income Energy Programs*, by David Carroll, Jacqueline Berger and Roger Colton, other states have acted to adopt affordability programs without specific legislative authorization. "When regulators desire to implement a low-income affordability program, sound and readily sustainable regulatory foundations exist, without explicit legislation action, upon which to base regulatory approval."

"Pennsylvania - Pennsylvania's commission found that it had the authority to order programs to stop the "wasteful" cycle of repeating service disconnections, reconnections, failed payment plans, and a return to the start of the cycle with another disconnection."

"Ohio - The Ohio commission found that it had authority under the state of "emergency" which it found to exist as a result of the tens of thousands of households that were losing their utility service due to the unaffordability of home energy."

"Indiana - Indiana utilities found authority to adopt their low-income programs under a statute providing for "alternative regulatory plans," which allow the utilities and the state commission to set aside all or parts of traditional regulation when to do so is in the public interest."

Public Comment

Re: Ameren Missouri electric rate case

Case No. ER-2016-0179

To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

This will effect my household
because I am disabled and it will
effect my set income monthly

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Ester Emerson

Service Address: 4315 W Maffitt

City, State, Zip: St. Louis MO 63113

Email: _____

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Case No. ER-2016-0179

To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

Some of us do not have money increase to rely on \$ in on a fix income which already makes it hard for me to pay my bill monthly... and when the summer month come I have to run my air constantly because of the heat. this will push poor people like me further in the hole.

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Retha Dilly

Service Address: 1302 Dillon

City, State, Zip: ST. LOUIS MO, 63104

Email: _____

Public Comment

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To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

Increase of any kind and no increase in income makes it harder to live especially those that are on fixed income.

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Saundra Walker

Service Address: 9317 Shirley Gardens

City, State, Zip: St. Louis MO

Email: SStevenson@~~st~~pcacstl.org

Public Comment

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Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

It would affect my Home i'm a single parent of four.

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Barbara Williams

Service Address: 4649 Leduc Ave Apt 1E

City, State, Zip: St. Louis MO 63115

Email: Barbara.Williams28@yahoo.com

Public Comment

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Case No. ER-2016-0179

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Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

Please NO!! Low income, children raising individuals have it hard enough. We already scarp for Food on occassions, go without alot of needed items, experience no utilities at least 1-2 a yr. When you live check to check or w/ no check your priority is housing & utilities. An increase will be disaterous to our everyday living.
Concerned Customer

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: K Shelton

Service Address: 2605^A N 14th

City, State, Zip: StL MO 63107

Email: KNSHELTON7@Gmail.com

Public Comment

Re: Ameren Missouri electric rate case

Case No. ER-2016-0179

To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

It will make a huge impact on my household as we live on a fixed income that does not change. If it wasn't for the assistance from Peoples & others we would never have gas or electric Thank you

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Mary Carter

Service Address: 3241 Iowa Ave

City, State, Zip: St. Louis Mo 63118

Email: N/A

Public Comment

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Case No. ER-2016-0179

To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

I can't afford to pay my household would be in threat monthly of disconnection, my bill is already \$200.00 and it's hard paying Ameren that much extra \$100.00. will impact my household in a very negative way we would be powerless for at least a month or two before I can pay the bill to get power restored.

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Tamitra Williams

Service Address: 8309 pennsylvania

City, State, Zip: St. Louis, MO 63111

Email: tamitrawilliams95@gmail.com

Public Comment

Re: Ameren Missouri electric rate case
Case No. ER-2016-0179

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Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

I don't agree!!!!

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Ruby Rice

Service Address: 6147 MINERVA Ave

City, State, Zip: St. Louis MO, 63133

Email: _____

Public Comment

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Case No. ER-2016-0179

To the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ameren Missouri has proposed rate increase of 8% for residential customers plus a new fixed \$4.89 monthly "energy grid access fee" which will result in an average annual household increase of \$99.00. This will have the following impact on my household:

Lots of people are on fixed incomes or just do not have the money because of other bills expenses and children i feel there should be a DECREASE!!! I DO NOT AGREE!!!

Thank you for taking my comments,

Name: Tonda Lawson

Service Address: 6468 Mall Pl

City, State, Zip: St. Louis mo, 63133

Email: lawsonladyhustler@gmail.com