

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office
in Jefferson City on the 9th day
of November, 2016.

In the Matter of Laclede Gas Company's)	<u>File No. GT-2017-0123</u>
Tariff to Revise Natural Gas Rate Schedules)	Tariff No. YG-2017-0060

ORDER REJECTING TARIFF

Issue Date: November 9, 2016

Effective Date: November 19, 2016

On October 25, 2016¹, Laclede Gas Company ("Laclede") filed a tariff sheet proposed to become effective November 24. Contemporaneously therewith, Laclede filed a Motion for Expedited Treatment, asking the Commission to approve the tariff no later than November 4.

Laclede states that the tariff sheet would revive a Low-Income Energy Affordability Program ("Program"). Laclede states that the Program would help customers maintain or restore their utility service during the upcoming winter heating season, and especially during November.

To do so, the Program would reallocate up to \$400,000 of Laclede's existing Low-Income Program budget to help eligible customers who would otherwise have to pay 80% of their arrearages to restore or maintain service. Instead of paying the full 80%, eligible customers would receive a bill credit equal to 30% of their arrearages, provided that a payment by them and/or a pledge by a participating Community Action Agency equaled

¹ Calendar references are to 2016.

50% of their arrearages. The amount of the credit would not exceed \$400 per customer or \$800 for a registered elderly or disabled customer.

The Staff of the Commission (“Staff”) filed its Recommendation on October 28. Staff recommends and requests that the Commission deny Laclede Gas Company’s (“Laclede”) motion for expedited treatment and reject the tariff sheet

Staff states that Laclede significantly deviates from the funding terms previously approved by the Commission in a manner that may substantively impact the provision of its other low-income programs. Further, Staff argues that Laclede’s proposal reduces benefits to elderly, disabled, and low-income customers by 20% compared to previous disbursement levels. Laclede has provided no documentation to substantiate or justify these deviations from prior Commission authorization and renewals. Finally, by failing to address this concern at an earlier date, Laclede prevents Staff and the Commission from conducting an investigation to accumulate evidence to consider the proposal’s impact on Laclede’s existing low-income programs.

The Commission has reviewed the proposed tariff sheet and Staff’s recommendation. The Commission shares Staff’s concerns, and finds that the proposed tariff sheet should be rejected.²

² The Commission notes that the Program was created in File No. GR-2010-0171, and allowed a budget not to exceed \$150,000, with disbursement limits of \$1,000 for elderly or disabled customers and \$500 for low-income customers. Staff stated that had Laclede proposed these program parameters for this file, Staff would not have objected. Should Laclede file a subsequent tariff adhering to these parameters for the Program, the Commission would consider approving such a request.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The proposed tariff sheet filed on October 25, 2016, by Laclede Gas Company, and assigned Tracking Number YG-2017-0060 and bearing an effective date of November 24, 2016, is rejected. The tariff sheet rejected is:

P.S.C. MO. No. 5 Consolidated
Fifth Revised Sheet No. R-56,
CANCELLING Fourth Revised Sheet No. R-56

2. The Motion for Expedited Treatment is denied as moot.
3. This order shall become effective on November 19, 2016.



BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Morris L. Woodruff".

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Hall, Chm., Stoll, and Coleman, CC., concur;
Kenney and Rupp, CC., dissent.

Pridgin, Deputy Chief Regulatory Law Judge

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 9th day of November 2016.




Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

November 9, 2016

File/Case No. GT-2017-0123

**Missouri Public Service
Commission**

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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).

Sincerely,



**Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary**

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.