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Missouri Public
Service Commission

February 16, 2017

Daniel Y. Hall, Chairman, and Members
Missouri Public Service Commission
200 Madison Street, PO Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0360

Re: File No. AX-2017-0128

Dear Chairman Hall and Commissioners:

I am sorry that I cannot be with you personally today to object to the proposed changes to the *Ex Parte* and Extra-record Communications rules as submitted to the Missouri Secretary of State on November 28, 2016. I have asked Consumers Council of Missouri to see that our comments are entered into the record at today's public comment session.

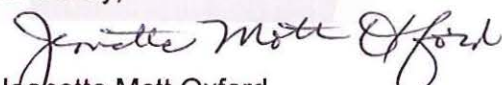
Empower Missouri, founded in 1901, advocates for the well-being of all Missourians through civic leadership, education, and research. We focus especially on access to basic human needs and basic fairness, and we find that public policy about utilities invariably takes us into both of our mission goals. Many Missourians do not have affordable access to utility service, even though working, and certainly year after year we see investor owned monopoly companies pay millions of dollars to lobbying firms in an effort to further stack the deck in their favor. Without a strong and transparent Public Service Commission and a committed, efficient Office of Public Counsel (OPC), there will be no fairness for these Missouri households with low incomes.

That is why the proposed change to rules concerns us. There should always be advance notice of secret communications between commissioners and representatives of entities that the PSC is charged to regulate. How can the public trust the ratemaking process if those who stand to profit are able to have secret meetings with the regulators of an industry?

Private communications between commissioners and utility representatives are not forbidden by the current rule. Instead parties to PSC cases and the general public are made aware of one-sided communications. The OPC can then safeguard the interest of consumers.

We are also disturbed that public hearings were not scheduled around the state regarding the proposed changes to rules. We ask that the PSC give notice and convene such hearings, and we also ask you not to change rules that secure transparency and fair play.

Sincerely,


Jeanette Mott Oxford

ccom Exhibit No. 2
Date 2-16-17 Reporter KF
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