

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office in
Jefferson City on the 16th day of
December, 2009.

Office of Public Counsel's Petition for)
Promulgation of Rules Relating to Billing and)
Payment Standards for Residential Customers)

File No. AX-2010-0061

**ORDER GRANTING STAFF'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL TIME TO
INVESTIGATE AND FILE FURTHER REPORT**

Issue Date: December 16, 2009

Effective Date: December 16, 2009

On August 20, 2009, the Office of the Public Counsel filed a petition asking the Commission to promulgate rules to limit the ability of a utility to establish separate fees for bills and payment of bills, to place restrictions on the use of pay stations, and to increase the availability of customer service centers. The Commission heard the views of several organizations about Public Counsel's proposed rulemaking at its September 9 agenda meeting. Some of the speakers at the agenda meeting also described other problems, particularly problems posed by unauthorized pay agents. On October 2, the Commission directed its Staff to investigate the circumstances described by Public Counsel and the other speakers at the September 9 agenda meeting, and to provide the Commission with a report no later than November 30.

Staff filed its report on November 30. Staff indicates that it did not find problems with separate fees and payments of bills, or with the availability of utility customer service centers and advised the Commission to dismiss the portions of Public Counsel's petition that deal with those matters. However, Staff requests more time to investigate the issue of

payday lenders acting as unauthorized payment agents and asks that it be allowed until January 31, 2010, to file a supplemental report regarding that issue.

Commission rule 4 CSR 240-2.080(15) allows parties no more than ten days from the date of filing to respond to a pleading, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. More than ten days have passed since Staff filed its report and no party has responded to that report.

The Commission prefers to deal with Public Counsel's petition for rulemaking as a whole after Staff has filed its report on all aspects of that rulemaking. For that reason, the Commission will not act on Staff's recommendation to dismiss portions of that petition at this time. The Commission will allow Staff the additional time it requests to complete its investigation regarding payday lenders acting as unauthorized payment agents.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. Staff shall complete its investigation of the problems described in Public Counsel's Petition for Promulgation of Consumer Protection Rules Relating to Billing and Payment and, no later than January 30, 2010, file either a final report or a status report regarding the progress of its investigation.
2. This order shall become effective immediately upon issuance.

(S E A L)

Clayton, Chm., Davis, Jarrett, Gunn,
and Kenney, CC., concur.

Woodruff, Chief Regulatory Law Judge

BY THE COMMISSION



Steven C. Reed
Secretary