BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

GC-2006-0390

In the matter of

USW Local 11-6,

and

Laclede Gas Company,

Respondent

Complainant

AFFIDAVIT OF MARY HALL

STATE OF MISSOURI)) ss COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS)

Mary Hall, of lawful age, on her oath states: that she has participated in the preparation of the following Direct Testimony in question and answer form, consisting of 4 pages of Direct Testimony to be presented in the above case, that the answers in the following Direct Testimony were given by her; that she has knowledge of the matters set forth in such answers; and that such matters are true to the best of her knowledge and belief.

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day of // 1/ ... 2006. Subscribed and sworn to before me this

otarv

" NOTARY SEAL " Patricia J. Bozada , Notary Public St. Louis City, State of Missouri My Commission Expires 3/20/2009 Commission Number 05519482

My commission expires

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

MARY HALL

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF USW 11-6

LACLEDE GAS COMPANY

CASE NO. GC-2006-0390

Please state your name and address.

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2 My name is Mary Hall and my address is ** Α. 3 Q. What is your experience with AMR devices? 4 In June of 2005, installers arrived at my residence. The installers did not come to А. my door, but I was alerted to their presence because my dogs noticed them. I 5 asked them what they were doing and they said they were going to install a new 6 7 meter. I told them I had not had any problems with the meter. However, they said that everyone was getting a new meter, so I let them commence with the 8 9 installation. The installers consisted of a team of four or five men wearing 10 plainclothes. I personally observed them install the device. The installers seemed 11 very disorganized. After watching Leisa Zigman's report on AMR devices in the 12 summer of 2006, I learned that what the installers had actually done was install an 13 AMR device. 14 Did the installation of the AMR device affect your gas service? Q.

A. The gas bills were not remarkable until December of 2005. For this month, I was
billed \$231.59. A true and accurate copy of the December 2005 bill is attached

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and incorporated here as Exhibit 1. This was the highest gas bill I had ever received. The bill was especially excessive given that I live alone and keep my thermostat at 62.

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Q. What did you do with this information?

I called Laclede and complained about the bill. The customer service 5 A. representative said that the \$231.59 bill was in line with my previous usage and 6 that she would send me a printout of my previous gas bills. After the printout did 7 not arrive for several weeks, I called Laclede and spoke with another 8 9 representative. He informed me not to pay the bill, and he enrolled me in the Budget Billing program. In that program, Laclede estimates your gas usage and 10 divides it by twelve. He told me to pay \$130 and the remainder will be budgeted 11 over the next months in three month cycles. 12

13 Q. Did you speak with anyone else about your billing issue?

A. In January or February of 2006, I contacted the Missouri Public Service
Commission about my billing problem. I found their address online. I received a
response on April 13, 2006. A true and accurate copy of the PSC letter is attached
and incorporated here as Exhibit 2. The response said that they had contacted
Laclede, which informed them that nothing was wrong with my billing. Because
the PSC only seemed to ask Laclede if my billing was correct, which I had
already done numerous times, I did not find their response to be satisfactory.

21 Q. Did enrolling in the Budget Billing Program resolve your billing complaints?

A. No. For the next three months, I was billed \$105.50 as the representative had
explained. True and accurate copies of the January, February, and March 2006

bills are attached and incorporated here as Exhibits 3, 4, and 5, respectively. 1 However, after this period the bills remained much higher than in years past. I received \$80.00 bills for April, May, June, and July of 2006. True and accurate copies of the April, May, June, and July 2006 bills are attached and incorporated here as Exhibits 6, 7, 8, and 9 respectively. I found that these \$80.00 bills were excessive for the summer months. My usage for these summer months was 6 significantly less in 2005. A true and accurate copy of the Laclede Gas Company 7 Statement of Bills & Payments from December of 2004 to January of 2006 is 8 attached and incorporated here as Exhibit 10. 9

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Did you continue with the Budget Billing program? **Q**.

In August of 2006, I cancelled my enrollment in Budget Billing and 11 A. No. requested that Laclede recalibrate my meter. I was dissatisfied with the high 12 summer bills and the fact that the Budget Billing bills did not show the actual gas 13 usage. While I was given a \$50 credit upon cancelling Budget Billing, I was 14 informed that Laclede does not recalibrate meters. Instead, they offered to send a 15 16 meter reader out to confirm my bill.

Why did you request that your meter be recalibrated? 17 0.

- I had spoken with Leisa Zigman of Channel 5 News. I saw her report in June or 18 A. July and eventually called her about my billing issue. She suggested that I have 19 20 my meter recalibrated.
- Was your meter manually read as scheduled? 21 Q.
- Yes. A Laclede employee named Kevin Stuart arrived and read my meter. 22 A.
- 23 Has your billing issue been resolved? Q.

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1 A. No.

Q. Are you an employee or member of USW Local 11-6, or to your knowledge
are you related by blood or marriage to any USW Local 11-6 officer or
business representative?

5 A. No.

- 6 Q. Does this conclude your direct testimony?
- 7 A. Yes.

Laclede Gas Company ST. LOUIS, NO 63171 FIRST-CLASS MAIL U.S. POSTAGE PAID POST CARD RATE PERMIT NO. 735 PRESORTED 0.00 BATE RG ACCT NO: 539270-002-98 IDEPOSIT AMOUNT AVERAGE GAS COST REEMBERM 201 141 69 DEGREE DAYS 1071 BILL DETAIL 78.17 AUSAGE X BTU FACTOR PRIOR -GAS BALANCE PREVIOUS PRESENT THERMS 78.17 PAYMENT THANK YOU READING READING 217.69 CHARGE FOR DAS SVC 11-30-05 TO 01-03-06 156.4 1.036 潮影 ヨシゴト 3333 5182 13:290 CRESTWODD TAX d, i 231.59 ACCOUNT BALANCE AMOUNT WE APPRECIATE YOUR 2005 PROMPT PAYMENT RECORD SESTIMATED 逊 231.59 CURRENT CHARGES HELP SOMEONE IN NEED GIVE TO DOLLAR HELP. CHECK A RED BOX TO ADD A DONATION TO EACH MONTH'S GAS BILL AMOUNT DUE 🔉 \$231.59 PAYMENT DUE BY 201-18-06 DELTNOUENT AFTER 01-27-06 (1997) 1997 RETURN THIS STUE TO: LACLEDE GAS COMPANY, DRAWER 2, ST. LOUIS, NO 63171 AMOUNT DUE \$23 PAYMENT DUE BY 01-18-05 DELINQUENT AFTER 01-27-05 AMOUNT PAID \$231.59 Մեստեսենենունենունենունենունեւնում Dollar Help - Check One! MARY HALL \$5 \$2 \$1 #12-05 1105 53927000280000231596 13526 EXHIBIT -STATE LEGA

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Commissioners JEFF DAVIS Chairman CONNIE MURRAY STEYE GAW

ROBERT M. CLAYTON III LINWARD "LIN" APPLING POST OFFICE BOX 360 .EFFERSON CITY MISSOURI 65102 573-751-3234 573-751-1847 (Fax Number) http://www.psc.mo.gov

Missouri Public Service Commission

WESS A. HENDERSON Executive Director

DANA K. JOYCE Director, Administration and Regulatory Policy

ROBERT SCHALLENBERG Director, Utility Services

WARREN WOOD Director, Utility Operations

COLLEEN M. DALE Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

> KEVIN A. THOMPSON General Counsel

April 13, 2006

Ms. Mary Hall

Dear Ms. Hall:

This letter is in response to the informal complaint you filed with the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission) regarding account number 539270-002-8 with Laclede Gas Company (Laclede). I contacted Laclede regarding this account and received the following information.

According to Laclede's records, the bill in question was based on an estimated meter reading for service from November 30, 2005 to January 3, 2006, for 151 CCFs, \$231.59. On January 9, 2006, you contacted Laclede regarding the bill and the account was set up on the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) Rian with an initial payment of \$130.00. The budget has been calculated at \$105.50 per month. On January 13, 2006, Laclede obtained a special meter reading of x3369. On February 6, 2006, Laclede issued a bill for service from January 3, 2006 to February 1, 2006, 98 CCFs, \$147.31. On February 25, 2006, Laclede obtained a special meter reading of x3523. On March 8, 2006, Laclede issued a bill for service from February 1, 2006 to March 3, 2006, 108 CCfs, \$157.93.

According to the historical usage at this location, it appears that the average usage is inline; however, the increase in the cost appears to be due to the high cost of wholesale natural gas prices. The Missouri Public Service Commission does not have jurisdiction over the producers of natural gas nor the interstate pipeline companies that transport the gas to the Local Distribution Companies (LDC), such as Laclede. Congress deregulated natural gas over a decade a go. Now prices are determined in a n open, competition-based market.



Ms. Mary Hall April 13, 2006 Page 2 of 2

The wholesale cost of purchasing the natural gas from a supplier or marketer is unregulated and is passed on to the customer at the same price the LDC pays for the commodity. Natural gas is a traded commodity like gold or silver. Therefore, the price is determined by market conditions such as supply and demand.

Why are natural gas prices so high and volatile?

- Tight balance between supply and demand,
- Abnormally hot weather and increased natural gas usage for electric generation for air conditioning load,
- Impacts of increased summer demand on national storage levels,
- High dependence on domestic natural gas supplies that are proving difficult to increase and very limited ability to import natural gas from overseas,
- Higher crude oil prices,
- Geopolitical tension, and
- Recent hurricanes in oil producing regions, and closure of some refineries.

I hope you find the aforementioned information helpful. Based on the information received and reviewed regarding this account, it does not appear that Laclede has billed you incorrectly. Thank you for contacting our office regarding this matter. If we can assist you further in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us again.

Sincerely,

Gerklage

Michelle Bocklage Cons⊔mer Services Specialist

Enclosure: Bill Comparison

Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century

Name: Mary Hall Address:

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Revenue Month	Dec-04	 Dec-05
Bill Amount	\$ 159.88	\$ 231.59
# of Days	34	34
CCf	133	151
Read Type	Reading	Estimate
Heating Degree Days	906	1071
Average Usage	0.1468	0.1410
Cost per Therm	\$ 0.81991	\$ 1.14169

Revenue Month	•	Jan-05		Jan-06
Bill Amount	\$	167.69	\$	147.31
# of Days		29		29
CCf		152		. 98
Read Type		Reading	С) = Extended Rdg
Heating Degree Days		951		658
Average Usage		0.1598		0.1489
Cost per Therm	\$	0.76272	\$	0.98454

Revenue Month		Feb-05	Feb-06
Bill Amount	\$	128.56	\$ 157.93
# of Days		30	30
CCf		118	98
Read Type		Reading	0 = Extended Rdg.
Heating Degree Days		744	855
Average Usage		0.1586	0.1146
Cost per Therm	\$ ·	0.67972	\$ 0.97860

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