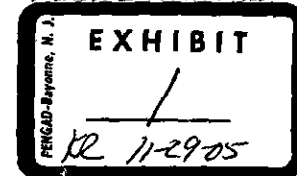


Raytown

Public Hearing



FILED⁴

DEC 19 2005

**Testimony of Sidney McCarther
Before the Missouri Public Service Commission
November 29, 2005**

Case Nos.

EO-2002-384

ER-2005-0436

HR-2005-0450

Missouri Public
Service Commission

Good evening to the commissioners of the Missouri Public Service Commission. I am Sidney McCarther, Aquila ratepayer. I am here to express my concern for the increase in electric rates by approximately 20%. As a retiree and head of my household, the proposed rate increase would amount to \$11.48 per month on an average 1000kw hour bill. Another \$11.48, or more if I use more electricity, is too hard of a hit on Kansas City area households and seniors.

Aquila has a history of making poor business decisions, including investments in Enron-type energy trading businesses. The cost of unregulated investments gone bad should not be the responsibility of electricity customers. Aquila has not justified such a large rate increase. The company is asking consumers to pay for expenses that should not be included in rates.

The South Harper plant debacle is another example of Aquila's mismanagement. The plant was built in a residential area without requesting a zoning change; the financing for the power plant was also approved prior to getting PSC approval.

Aquila has sold off most of these bad mistakes. However, the repercussions of these series of mistakes could be felt by consumers, if the PSC is not careful. The challenge is to make sure that consumers pay no more than they would if Aquila had acted as a prudent electric utility. For example, there are expenses like the over-sized building they now work in and the computer system they use which was built for unregulated businesses. Our electric bills should not include any costs of these expenses.

As if all of that is not enough, the proposed rate increase could be even higher, based on proposals by large industrial customers to shift electricity costs that they pay on to ordinary customers. Residential customers should not be subsidizing industrial customers.

Consumers are hurting too. The Public Service Commission must take a careful look at Aquila's request and then look again to make absolutely sure that we consumers are not paying for Aquila's mismanagement and investment mistakes. Consumers should only pay for expenses that are justified and relate to providing us service. The large industrial customers should not be allowed to push more costs over on us.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns as a ratepayer. I will be happy to answer any questions.