

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the matter of The Empire District)
Electric Company for Authority to File)
Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric) **File No. ER-2014-0351**
Service Provided to Customers in the)
Company’s Missouri Service Area)

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING DATES**

COME NOW, the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission and on behalf of the parties submits the following comments and recommendation regarding dates for local public hearings in the above-captioned general rate case proceeding.

1. On November 13, 2014, the Commission issued its *Order Setting Deadline For Responses To Request For Scheduling Of Public Hearings* (“Order”) setting a date of no later than November 19, 2014 for responses to *Empire’s Request for Scheduling of Public Hearings* that initially requested dates of February 3 and 4, 2015.

2. Upon further consideration of the early February 3 and 4 dates, the Staff proposes that the local public hearing dates be set later in the month. Doing so would allow the Staff, Public Counsel and any other party sufficient time to file their class cost of service and rate design reports (due February 11) to better assess customer impacts prior to the public hearing dates. Accordingly, after discussing this matter with the parties, the Staff requests that the Commission set the (3) local public hearing dates as follows:

February 17: Joplin Local Public Hearings (2)

February 18: Reed Springs Local Public Hearing

In addition, the Technical Conference dates (originally set for February 17-19) would be re-set to February 19 – 20.

3. Staff counsel has consulted with counsel for the parties on this matter and is aware of no opposition to the above recommended dates.

WHEREFORE, the Staff prays the Commission accept its comments and recommendation regarding local public hearing dates as set forth here-in.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Robert S. Berlin

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all counsel of record this 19th day of November, 2014.

/s/ Robert S. Berlin