

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

In the Matter of the Application of Evergy )  
Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri Metro and )  
Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy )  
Missouri West for Approval of COVID-19 )  
Related Customer Programs and Motion for )  
Expedited Treatment )

**File No. EO-2020-0383**

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**COMES NOW** Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission and for its Recommendation in this matter respectfully states as follows:

1. On May 22, 2020, Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri Metro and Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West (collectively, the Company) filed a verified Application for Approval of COVID-19 Related Programs and a Motion for Expedited Treatment (the Application). According to the Application the Company wishes to implement certain COVID-19 relief programs effective on June 1.

2. The programs address disconnection for non-payment of arrearages, the application of late fees, offers of extended payment plans, and forgiveness of arrearages. The Company acknowledges the proposed programs implicate preferential treatment issues per Section 393.130.3, RSMo. However, the Company alleges that because the provision of these incentives will provide significant benefits to both the Company and all of its customers, the incentive programs discussed in this Application are not *unduly* preferential.

3. The Company also states in its Application that the current Coronavirus ("COVID-19") pandemic is confronting the world and the United States with a variety of fundamental and even unprecedented health, economic and social challenges.

A number of governmental and private sector measures aimed at restricting travel, crowd sizes, the operation of schools, businesses, and churches as well as sporting and other events have been implemented in an effort to mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19. These measures have had severe economic consequences as unemployment rates have quickly risen to historic levels across the country.

4. Based on the consequences brought about by the recent and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Staff supports Commission approval of the programs set forth in the Company's Application.

5. In its Application the Company also mentions that it "intends to request that costs incurred in connection with the one- and four-month payment plan incentives will be included in the deferral of COVID-19 costs for which the Company has requested an accounting authority order in Case No. EO-2020-0293. The Company expects that request to be addressed by the parties and the Commission in Case No. EO-2020-0293.<sup>1</sup>" Whether Staff would support or oppose deferring those costs will be determined as part of Staff's review and evaluation in the current Evergy AAO docket, and should not be presumed by Staff's recommendation herein to approve the programs set forth in Evergy's Application.

6. Finally, the Company also requests a waiver/variance from the 60-day notice requirement of 20 CSR 4240-4.017. Under the circumstances presented by this case, Staff recommends granting such waiver/variance for good cause shown.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Evergy referred in the Application to Case No. EO-2020-0293, the correct case number appears to be Case No. EU-2020-0350.

**WHEREFORE**, Staff recommends the Commission issue an order approving the Company proceeding with the COVID-19 programs set forth in its Application beginning on June 1, 2020; granting a waiver/variance from the 60-day notice requirement of 20 CSR 4240-4.017; and for such further orders as the Commission deems just and proper in the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Jeffrey A. Keevil**

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Missouri Public Service Commission

### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, or transmitted by facsimile or electronic mail to counsel of record as reflected on the certified service list maintained by the Commission in its Electronic Filing Information System this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020.

**/s/ Jeffrey A. Keevil**