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Missouri West

Case No.: EO-2023-0276/0277

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MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: EO-2023-0276/0277

SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

JOHN J. REED

ON BEHALF OF

EVERGY MISSOURI METRO and EVERGY MISSOURI WEST

Kansas City, Missouri

January 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	.1
II.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	.2
	RESPONSE TO STAFF WITNESSES MATROGIANNIS AND FORTSON	
	RESPONSE TO OPC WITNESS LENA MANTLE	
	CONCLUSION	

SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

JOHN J. REED

CASE NO. ER-2023-0276/0277

1	I.	INTRODUCTION		
2	Q:	Please state your name, business address, by whom you are employed and in what		
3		capacity.		
4	A:	My name is John J. Reed. My business address is 293 Boston Post Road West, Suite 500,		
5		Marlborough, Massachusetts 01752. I am Chairman of Concentric Energy Advisors, Inc.		
6		("Concentric").		
7	Q:	Have you previously filed direct and rebuttal testimony in these dockets?		
8	A:	Yes.		
9	Q:	On whose behalf are you testifying in this proceeding?		
10	A:	I am testifying on behalf of Evergy Missouri Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri Metro		
11		("EMM") and Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West ("EMW")		
12		(collectively, "Evergy" or the "Company").		
13	Q:	What is the purpose of your surrebuttal testimony in this proceeding?		
14	A:	The purpose of my surrebuttal testimony is to respond to the rebuttal testimony filed by:		
15		■ Commission Staff ("Staff") witnesses Brooke Mastrogiannis and Brad		
16		Fortson regarding their assertions that the Company was imprudent when it		
17		"chose to do nothing" about the Power Purchase Agreements ("PPAs") in		
18		question in Staff's Eleventh Prudence Review Report. I also respond to		

Staff's new position that Staff's disallowance is based on a going forward
set of losses under the PPAs in question.

The Office of the Public Counsel ("OPC") witness Lena Mantle regarding her assertion that the Company is imprudently relying on the SPP market, and what in her opinion constitutes the principles of prudence and an appropriate disallowance.

My surrebuttal testimony addresses these issues from a regulatory policy perspective based on my extensive experience performing prudence reviews for utilities, customers of utilities, and regulators over a more than 35-year period. I am not an attorney, and I am not offering a legal opinion.

II. <u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>

A:

Q: Please summarize your response to Staff and OPC.

The rebuttal testimony offered by these parties has provided several helpful clarifications and modifications to their previous positions in this case. We know now that there are two entirely separate positions being offered by Staff and OPC.

First, Staff has now stated several times that it is not challenging the prudence of Evergy having entered into the wind PPAs that Staff is challenging in this case. It has stated that its only challenge is to the prudence of how Evergy has managed or administered the contracts as they have become more costly relative to resources being offered currently in the SPP energy market. This means that the Commission can likely now move past all of the commentary offered by Staff, and answered by Evergy's witnesses, regarding the reasonableness of these contracts when they were entered into, and what the expectations were at that time. In short, the prudence of the contracts at the time they were entered into

is now effectively unchallenged. Staff now states that it wants all of the costs for these contracts, above what can be recovered through energy-only pricing in the SPP market, disallowed in the recent FAC period and in all future FAC periods. This is justified, in Staff's position, based on its assertion that Evergy should have done something to mitigate "the substantial ratepayer harm going forward, and the decision to do nothing, based on the information we know today, is imprudent." As I will discuss in this testimony, Staff improperly offers no view regarding what should have been done by Evergy, and creates a proposed disallowance that reflects the wildly unrealistic assumption that the minimally prudent action would have been to achieve a complete reformation of the PPAs to reflect energy-only prices that are a fraction of what the contracts call for, at no cost to customers for such a dramatic reformation of the PPAs. Staff's position puts the foundation of using prudence to assess cost recovery on shifting sands and would send a strong message to the utilities in this jurisdiction that cost recovery for prudently-incurred costs is no longer a matter of principle. Mr. Ives addresses the implications of this dangerous path in his surrebuttal testimony.

OPC has now clarified in its rebuttal testimony that it is not challenging the wind PPAs that are the entire basis for Staff's proposed disallowance, but is instead proposing a disallowance that solely reflects what it considers to have been Evergy's imprudent resource planning and reliance on market-based purchases of energy, which OPC claims left EMW unreasonably exposed to price fluctuations and to market conditions. OPC is now fashioning its position around the necessity of having "insurance generation" in a resource portfolio and restating its long-held position that allowing SPP (or MISO) market

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¹ Mastrogiannis Rebuttal, p. 16.

forces to set the price for energy to be paid by customers is inherently unreasonable and imprudent. Ms. Mantle's views regarding the inappropriateness of relying on market-based energy are anything but new. These views have been heard by, and rejected by the Commission in past cases and the same result should be reached here.

5 III. RESPONSE TO STAFF WITNESSES MASTROGIANNIS AND FORTSON

6 Q: Please describe your understanding of Staff's new arguments.

Mr. Fortson and Ms. Mastrogiannis' testimony make clear that Staff's position now is that "Staff is only pursuing the imprudence of the Company choosing to do nothing about the substantial ratepayer harm going forward, and that decision to do nothing, based on the information we know today, is imprudent." Staff also states clearly now that it is not offering a view about what the Company should now do or should have done in the past that is different than the Company's actual performance. Staff states that "this is not Staff's responsibility." Staff acknowledges several times that it "understands that the PPA contracts the Company has signed into have nothing in terms of an early termination clause or renegotiation requirements" and that "Staff acknowledged and agrees that there are no provisions in the PPA contracts in terms of renegotiation." Staff further states that "Mr. Reed does not recommend the Company breach its contracts, and just to be clear, neither does Staff." Nonetheless, Staff's recommended disallowance equates to a "reformed" result where Evergy's customers would be paying no more than the SPP energy-only price as it is established hour-by-hour, which bears no relationship to the price established in the

² Mastrogiannis Rebuttal.

³ Id.

⁴ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 11.

⁵ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 18.

⁶ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 18.

PPAs. Staff simply declares that this should be the amount allowed in rates, without tying it in any way to a result that could have been or should have been achieved through "prudent" actions by Evergy. Staff also notes that the Company's Commission-approved FAC tariff sheets have allowed the flow through of these costs in the past, "However, regardless of that, Staff is recommending the Commission approve a ratepayer cost mitigation for the remainder of these four specific PPA contract terms, and all other PPAs going forward that are halfway through their contract life."

Q: What is your response?

A:

Staff's position, i.e., the adoption of a "ratepayer cost mitigation" approach to cost recovery is nothing short of the repudiation of the Commission's prudence standard for the recovery of costs. Staff is quite direct in its statement that it "is simply recommending Company shareholders equitably share in the PPA losses that ratepayers have consistently had to bear the large majority of." Notably, this position is not tied in any way to a position offered by Staff as to how this represents a reasonable opportunity to recover prudently-incurred costs. It is important to remember that Staff is not challenging that the PPAs were prudently entered into, and Staff states that it understands that the Company has no right to renegotiate or breach the PPAs. Staff asserts that the Company should still do something to achieve a better result for customers going forward, and Staff wants to build its view as to what represents a "better result" into rates. As discussed by Ms. Messamore in her surrebuttal testimony, the Company has actively managed these PPAs and has been able to achieve renegotiations that provide benefits to customers. Those benefits are already provided to customers through the FAC. But, that is not enough to satisfy Staff that the

⁷ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 16.

result is "equitable" enough. Again, Staff is very direct in its adoption of "equity" and "risk sharing," along with contrition on the part of the utility, as the standard for cost recovery that the Commission should use to supplant the prudence standard: "Staff's 'aspirational position' is simply that the Company acknowledge the harm it has inflicted upon its ratepayers and cover the costs for the second half of the contract terms since customers have covered the excessive costs of the first half of the contract terms." Again, this position has no reference to or grounding in the Commission's long-established prudence standard. The Commission has rejected "risk sharing" alternatives to the prudence standard in the past and it should do so in this case as well. 9

Q: Please respond to Staff's proposed quantification of the "remedy" (i.e., the recommended disallowance).

Staff's disallowance proposal amounts to nothing more than an aspirational position that is at odds with the facts. Staff's disallowance represents the entirety of the amount by which the PPAs' contract prices exceed the energy-only prices developed on an hourly basis in the SPP market. While Staff's basis for any disallowance being imposed is supposedly anchored in its conclusion that Evergy has been imprudent for "doing nothing" to achieve a result for customers that is better than the terms of the contracts (which are not being challenged for prudence), not even Staff can suggest that the result reflected in its counterfactual cost level would have any chance of ever being accepted by the contractual counterparties, especially without any compensation to the PPA developers. All Staff can

⁸ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 13.

Report & Order, In the Matter of the Determination of In-Service Criteria for the Union Electric Company's Callaway Nuclear Plant and Callaway Rate Base and Related Issues. In the Matter of Union Electric Company of St. Louis, Missouri, for Authority to File Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric Service Provided to Customers in the Missouri Service Area of the Company, No. EO-85-17, 1985, p. 99.

offer as justification for its recommended counter-factual cost level is that Staff's thinks this is "equitable" and that it reflects an appropriate level "sharing." ¹⁰

Why does Staff recommend that the Company "share" in PPA costs that exceed SPP's energy-only prices?

Staff recommends that the Company and its shareholders essentially absorb, as a disallowance (i.e., "share in the losses" 11), the difference between historical energy prices and PPA prices for the PPAs in question. This is flawed in numerous ways. Ms. Messamore's testimony discusses the ways that Staff has not properly accounted for all attributes of the PPA projects in its disallowance. The methodology also has no basis in comparing the actual costs to those that would have been achievable through conduct by the Company that was within the range of prudent decision-making. This is completely disconnected from the Commission's established prudence standard.

Staff offers very little justification for the basis for or quantification of its disallowance. While Staff's witnesses often cite to equity, risk sharing, ratepayer harm, mitigating losses, and being "stuck" with the contracts, this approach is an entirely unprincipled application of deciding what costs should be recoverable based on how contracts turn out, years after they were entered into. Staff cites to its view that Evergy entered into these contracts in an attempt to "win" something, at ratepayer expense if the prices ended up being above the SPP energy-only prices. ¹² Nothing could be further from the truth. Evergy never had an opportunity to profit in any way from its contracting decisions and contract management regarding these PPAs. It entered into these PPAs as a

Q:

¹¹ Fortson Rebuttal, p. 5.

Fortson Rebuttal, p. 5.

Fortson Rebuttal, p. 4.

means of meeting its obligation to serve its customers, with the full expectation that its prudently-incurred costs would be recoverable, and that only its costs (without any element of profit or gain) would be recovered from customers.

Q: How do you respond to Staff's position that its disallowance calculation is based on "going forward" costs and that it is not inconsistent with the prudence standard?

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A:

Staff has introduced the argument that its recommended disallowances are based on future costs and do not rely on hindsight. This is beyond puzzling. The issue in this proceeding is the recovery of the costs covered by Staff's last FAC audit, which are all historic costs. Staff is recommending a disallowance of millions of dollars of those past costs, and is doing so based on SPP's energy-only prices as they were established in the hourly market years after the PPAs were entered into. Most importantly, Staff is blatantly using new information (as of 2023) to judge the prudence of actions (made ten years ago), and doing so claiming that this approach has been endorsed, if not required, by the Commission: "Staff interprets the Report and Order [in EO-2019-0067 regarding the Rock Creek and Osborn wind PPAs] language to say that prudency of long-term investments can only be determined once that investment has long-term data available." I urge the Commission to correct this misunderstanding by Staff. The Commission has made clear on multiple occasions that prudence is to be judged by what was known or reasonably knowable by the decisionmaker at the time the decisions were made. This is also the standard endorsed by the National Regulatory Research Institute and numerous other state and federal regulatory agencies. Staff is seeking to obliterate that long-standing approach to rate regulation. That attempt should be firmly rejected.

IV. RESPONSE TO OPC WITNESS LENA MANTLE

A:

A:

Q: Ms. Mantle argues that "both Ms. Messamore and Mr. Reed hold the same illogical
 belief that the only resource planning decisions pertinent to this case were decisions

4 made during the prudence period."¹³ How do you respond?

Nowhere do I say this. What I do say, is that the resource planning decisions pertinent to the arguments made by Staff and OPC are the decisions made when resources were acquired, either through long term PPA contracts or asset acquisitions. Once again, costs are not imprudent or prudent, decisions are. The basis for determining prudence is the evaluation of conditions at the time of the decision. It is not costs that are prudent, it is actions. OPC has made no meaningful evaluation of the decisions or decision-making process used by Evergy. OPC ought to have reviewed the decisions made for the resources that underlie the FAC charges applicable to the FAC review period, and determine the prudence of those decisions, on the basis of what was known and knowable at those points in time the decisions to commit to those resources were made (i.e. a decade ago).

Q: What is Ms. Mantle alleging to be "imprudent"?

Ms. Mantle asserts that EMW does not have enough "insurance" generation and is therefore relying too much on bi-lateral purchases or SPP market purchases to cover customer needs. Ms. Mantle would have the Commission believe that Evergy's resource planning decisions no longer represent a "cost effective" strategy and are therefore imprudent. Ms. Mantle further argues that "decision making and the harm that arises from imprudent decision making rarely occurs at the same time...[if Reed and Messamore are to be believed] the Commission would be essentially creating a situation where the adequacy of a utility's

¹³ Mantle Rebuttal, p. 13.

resource planning could never be reviewed for prudence."¹⁴ I would respond that resource planning *decisions* can, and should, be reviewed on the basis of what was known and knowable at the time the decisions were made. It is concerning that Ms. Mantle is not willing to adopt this established approach.

Ms. Mantle argues that "The question is simply should Evergy West have procured insurance by acquiring generation that provides energy when its customers need it or play the market exposing customers to unnecessary volatility, risk, and cost?" How do you respond?

Ms. Mantle appears to be suggesting that rate based insurance generation is always the "more prudent" decision. However, this conclusion suggests that PPAs are never appropriate to enter into, and that resource planning decisions and processes are flawed unless they determine that a least cost resource is an "insurance" rate based asset. This completely undermines the goals of least cost resource planning, which evaluates the long run costs and revenues of different resource mixes under a variety of scenarios. Owning has proven too often be a money losing proposition, compared to just buying energy in the market, and the reverse can also be true. However, Evergy has an obligation to serve which requires the acquisition of resources to meet long term planning needs. One cannot reach a conclusion of imprudence based on a retrospective review of prices and whether the market provided sufficient revenues to fully cover costs.

Resource planning represents the Company's best estimate of potential future scenarios. Ms. Mantle has for some years now taken the position that a "prudent utility" will adopt a resource planning objective to be able to provide generation required by its

Q:

¹⁴ Mantle Rebuttal, p. 13.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 17.

customers every hour at a cost below market prices. That is an unreasonable and unobtainable objective for any utility operating in an organized market with an obligation to serve. It is not possible to perfectly procure resources for every possibility within the range of potential future scenarios, and essentially always "beat the market." Making a claim of imprudence because Evergy does not subscribe to this objective is simply unjust, unreasonable, and illogical. Ms. Mantle's views of what constitutes being a "prudent utility," as presented in her whitepaper on "Resource Planning of a Vertically Integrated Utility in the RTO World,"16 has formed the basis for her claims of utility imprudence in past Evergy and Empire District Electric cases, and those positions have not been adopted by the Commission. There is no basis for the Commission now adopting that perspective in this case, and to do so would be incompatible with the reality of operating in an organized power market such as the SPP, and with Evergy's obligation to serve its customers' needs, regardless of whether it is likely that the revenue from the market will or will not be sufficient to cover the resource's costs. Please see Ms. Messamore's testimony on this point.

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¹⁶ Mantle Direct, Exhibit LMM-D-3, p. 8.

Ms. Mantle recommends a disallowance of \$86.4 million. She also states, in rebuttal to your position, that this recommendation does not, and need not, reflect a range of what would have been reasonable for Evergy to have done it its resource plans. She further states that her use of an average cost of generation across EMM and EMW to set the allowable power cost for EMW is reasonable and can be used to reduce EMW's allowable power costs without adjusting or increasing EMM's power costs. What are your responses to these positions?

A:

Q:

Her first point is entirely inconsistent with the Commission's construct for conducting a prudence review. Her only explanation for this is that, in her opinion, the issue of securing or not securing "insurance generation" is a "zero/one range," meaning that you either do it or don't do it. This is, of course, not true in power supply planning any more than it is in buying any form of insurance. The level of hedging that a utility undertakes can cover a wide range of acceptable risk mitigation. Ms. Mantle's position appears to be that there should be no risk exposure for customers. That certainly is not the norm for integrated electric utilities across the nation. And, because there is a wide range of acceptable behavior when it comes to hedging electric power costs, it is very important to define an acceptable range and reflect that in any prudence review.

Ms. Mantle's second position regarding the development of a proposed disallowance is clearly internally inconsistent. She states that "For years, Evergy has told the Commission in these filings that combining the resources of Evergy West and Evergy Metro is the least-cost and preferred plan for meeting the customer needs for both Evergy West and Evergy Metro. Therefore, a reasonable estimate of prudent FAC costs for Evergy West would be to combine the actual costs of the two utilities and then allocate those costs

based on the amount of energy required by the customers of the two utilities. This is how OPC calculated the imprudence amount of \$86,376,294." I will let Evergy explain through its Company witnesses how Ms. Mantle has mischaracterized Evergy's position regarding combined resource planning for its Missouri operations. However, there can be no doubt that if one develops a measure of what would be a "reasonable estimate of prudent FAC costs" for one of these companies based on the use of average costs spanning both companies, then that same estimate must be used to establish the prudent level of costs for the other company as well. Ms. Mantle's position hinges on the conclusion that the "average" production cost level is prudent and reasonable. That, of course, means that Ms. Mantle's position, reasonably applied to both sides of the equation, only results in a cost shift between EMM and EMW, not an overall disallowance. I will leave it to the Commission to decide if it wishes to engage in that manner of cost reallocation, but it should answer that question with the understanding that there is no basis for doing so based on any reasonable conclusion that either EMM or EMW has been imprudent in its power supply planning or procurement.

V. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

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A:

17 Q: Please summarize your conclusions.

Staff's rebuttal testimony ignores the well-established principles of prudence and relies exclusively on "how things turned out" to justify Staff's recommended disallowance for this FAC review period. Further, Staff does not properly calculate its recommended disallowance as it does not compare the outcomes under the contracts to what would have

¹⁷ Mantle Rebuttal, p. 19.

been the outcomes under an alternative set of prudent decisions, either now or at the time the contracts were signed.

Staff essentially seeks to replace the Commission's standard of prudence for costs being recoverable with one which adopts "risk sharing" as a new form of regulation. The regulatory principle relating to cost recovery has been clear for many decades—utilities are entitled to a reasonable opportunity to recover their prudently incurred costs, and a reasonable opportunity to earn a fair return on the assets that are the product of prudent investment.

Similarly, Ms. Mantle flatly ignores the well-established principles for performing a prudence review. Her position as to what would constitute prudent resource planning is misinformed at best and not at all within the mainstream of utility conduct. Ms. Mantle's testimony regarding what she alone considers prudent resource planning should be given no weight and OPC's recommended disallowances should be rejected. Missouri precedent on all of these points is fully aligned with the national mainstream and with the National Regulatory Research Institute standards. In order for a prudence disallowance to be warranted, a party would have to show that EMW's conduct was outside the range of what a reasonable utility would have done based on what was known or reasonably knowable at the time the decision was made. Neither OPC nor Staff attempt to make this showing.

Finally, these witnesses, having seen that some risks did not turn out as expected, seek to have prudently-incurred costs absorbed or "shared" by the utility's shareholders, which is simply another label for costs being disallowed. There is no basis for such an abrupt and inequitable change in direction for Missouri's regulatory framework being applied in this case.

- 1 Q: Does this conclude your surrebuttal testimony at this time?
- 2 A: Yes, it does.

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Fifth Prudence Review) of Costs Subject to the Commission-) Approved Fuel Adjustment Clause of) Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri) Metro)	Case No. EO-2023-0276					
In the Matter of the Eleventh Prudence) Review of Costs Subject to the) Commission-Approved Fuel Adjustment) Clause of Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a) Evergy Missouri West)	Case No. EO-2023-0277					
AFFIDAVIT OF JOHN J. REED						
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS)						
COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX) ss)					
John J. Reed, being first duly sworn on his oath, states: 1. My name is John J. Reed. I work in Marlborough, Massachusetts, and I am employed by Concentric Energy Advisors, Inc. as Chairman. 2. Attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes is my Surrebuttal Testimony on behalf of Evergy Missouri Metro and Evergy Missouri West consisting of fifteen (15) pages, having been prepared in written form for introduction into evidence in the above-captioned docket. 3. I have knowledge of the matters set forth therein. I hereby swear and affirm that my answers contained in the attached testimony to the questions therein propounded, including any attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.						
لقا	Reed January 2024. Public Public					