#### **Public Version**

Exhibit:

Issues: Estimated Up-front and Ongoing

Financing Costs; Special Purpose

Entity

Witness: Jason Humphrey Type of Exhibit: Direct Testimony
Sponsoring Party: Evergy Missouri West
Case No. EF-2022-0155

Date Testimony Prepared: March 11, 2022

#### MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**CASE NO:** 

EF-2022-0155

**DIRECT TESTIMONY** 

**OF** 

**JASON HUMPHREY** 

ON BEHALF OF

**EVERGY MISSOURI WEST** 

Kansas City, Missouri March 2022

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#### **DIRECT TESTIMONY**

#### **OF**

#### **JASON HUMPHREY**

#### Case No. EF-2022-0155

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1 Q: Please state your name and business address. 2 A: My name is Jason Humphrey. My business address is 818 S. Kansas Ave. Topeka, KS 3 66612. 4 By whom and in what capacity are you employed? Q: 5 A: I am employed by Evergy Kansas Central, Inc. and serve as Senior Director of Renewables 6 and Assistant Treasurer for Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Kansas Metro ("Evergy 7 Kansas Metro"), Evergy Kansas Central, Inc. and Evergy South, Inc., collectively d/b/a as 8 Evergy Kansas Central ("Evergy Kansas Central"), Evergy Metro, Inc. d/b/a as Evergy 9 Missouri Metro ("Evergy Missouri Metro"), and Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy 10 Missouri West. These are the operating utilities of Evergy, Inc. ("Evergy"). 11 Q: On whose behalf are you testifying? 12 **A:** I am testifying on behalf of Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West 13 ("Evergy Missouri West", or "EMW" or "Company") in support of the approval of the 14 Company's Application for a Financing Order authorizing the financing of Qualified Extraordinary Costs through an issuance of Securitized Utility Tariff Bonds

("Securitization Bonds").1

#### 3 Q: What are your responsibilities?

A:

A: My responsibilities include all cash management and corporate finance functions of Evergy
 and its related companies. In addition, I am responsible for development of Renewable
 Energy assets for Evergy's operating utilities.

#### 7 Q: Please describe your education, experience and employment history.

I graduated Manga Cum Laude from the Kansas State University in May 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering with a Nuclear Engineering option. I also received a Master of Business Administration degree with Honors from Baker University in May 2017. I joined Evergy Kansas Central as a Power Plant Engineer in June 2008, was later named Supervisor, Electrical Maintenance in March 2011; and Plant Manager, Emporia Energy Center in May 2012. In May of 2013 I was named Director of Natural Gas Fired Generation and director of Evergy Kansas Central's natural gas fired powerplant operations. I later served as Director of Performance Excellence in August of 2015 and became Director of Integration Success upon the formation of Evergy in June of 2018. In May of 2020 I was named Senior Director, Finance and in December of 2020 I was named Assistant Treasurer. In September of 2021, Senior Director of Renewables was added to my responsibilities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Capitalized terms such as Financing Order, Qualified Extraordinary Costs, and Securitized Utility Tariff Bonds are defined in Section 393.1700.1, Mo. Rev. Stat. (2016), as amended.

1 Q: Ha	ve you	previously	testified	in a	proceeding	at	the	Missouri	Public	Service
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- 2 Commission ("Commission" or "PSC") or before any other utility regulatory agency?
- 3 A: Yes. I have provided testimony in support of Nuclear Decommissioning Trust costs and
- 4 investment requirements in both Kansas and Missouri.
- 5 Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?
- 6 A: The purpose of my testimony is to: (i) provide an estimate of financing costs, both up-front
- 7 and ongoing; and (ii) provide explanation on the formation of the Special Purpose Entity
- 8 ("SPE") and why it is an important part of the securitization financing structure.
- 9 Q: Are you sponsoring any exhibits to your direct testimony?
- 10 A: Yes. I am sponsoring:
- Schedule JOH-1 Estimated Up-Front and Ongoing Financing Costs
- This schedule was prepared under my direction and control, and to the best of my
- knowledge all factual matters contained therein are true and accurate.
- 14 II. UP-FRONT FINANCING COSTS AND ONGOING FINANCING COSTS
- 15 A. UP-FRONT FINANCING COSTS
- 16 Q: Please provide a description of the up-front financing costs that will be financed
- with the proceeds of the Securitization Bonds.
- 18 A: Up-front financing costs, which will be financed from the proceeds of the Securitization
- Bonds, include the fees and expenses to obtain the Financing Order, as well as the fees and
- 20 expenses associated with the structuring, marketing and issuance of each series of
- 21 Securitization Bonds, including: external legal fees, structuring advisory fees and
- expenses, underwriting fees (including underwriters' counsel) and original issue discount,
- rating agency and trustee fees (including trustee's counsel), accounting and auditing fees,

information technology programing costs, SPE independent director and manager fees, servicer's set-up costs, printing and marketing expenses, stock exchange listing fees and compliance fees, filing and registration fees, and the costs of outside consultant(s) and counsel, if any, retained by the Commission or the Staff. Up-front financing costs include reimbursement to Evergy for amounts advanced for payment of such costs. These items are consistent with the definition of Financing Costs found in Section 393.1700.1(8)<sup>2</sup> of the Securitization Law enacted in Missouri in 2021.

## Q: Please provide an estimate and discussion of these up-front financing costs for each individual item expected to be in excess of \$50,000.

A:

Evergy Missouri West estimates the up-front financing costs associated with its recommended issuance of Securitization Bonds to be approximately \$6.6 million, based on the estimates developed through comparison to similar transactions. This detail is provided in Schedule JOH-1. The Company reviewed several asset recovery securitization filings made by other utilities and developed an estimate of up-front financing costs with the assistance of its co-advisors. These numbers are subject to change, as the costs are dependent on the timing of issuance, market conditions at the time of issuance, the outcome of requests for proposals for certain fees and other events outside the control of the Company, such as possible litigation, incremental legal fees resulting from protracted resolution of issues, possible review by the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") and rating agency fee changes and requirements.

#### Q: Please describe the estimated underwriting fees and expenses.

22 A: Underwriting fees and expenses (excluding underwriters' counsel fees) are shown in line

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> All citations are to the Revised Statutes of Missouri (2016), as amended.

5 of Schedule JOH-1 and represent the amount that the underwriters will receive for underwriting and selling the Securitization Bonds, assuming Evergy Missouri West issues the Securitization Bonds in the manner previously discussed. This estimated range of fees and expenses is consistent with those paid under recent, similar transactions.

#### How will underwriters' fees be determined?

A:

Q:

A:

Assuming EMW issues the Securitization Bonds in the manner that other similar utility securitization transactions have been issued since 2010, underwriting fees will be incurred for the services previously discussed. The final amount of underwriters' fees will be updated through the issuance advice letter ("IAL") procedure called for in Section 393.1700.2(3)(h), as described in the testimony of Company witnesses Ives and Lunde testimony, after the Securitization Bonds are priced. Underwriters' fees of 40 basis points of the principal amount of the Securitization Bonds are consistent with similar individual utility securitization transactions with comparable issuance sizes that have occurred in the market, based on the Company's review of a list of recent, comparable transactions. Because the level of underwriting fees is uncertain at this time, the actual costs will be updated through the issuance advice letter procedure. As previously discussed, Evergy will select underwriters with specific experience in the marketing of utility securitization issuances.

# Q: Please describe the servicer set-up fees (including information technology programming costs).

Section 393.1700.1(8)(c) of the Securitization Law includes information technology programming costs in the definition of financing costs for a Securitization Bond transaction. The Company intends this amount to recover the cost of information

technology systems modifications to bill, monitor, collect, and remit Securitized Utility Tariff Charges ("Charge" or "Charges"). The amount included in line 8 of Schedule JOH-1 represents the Company's current estimate of the costs of these information technology systems modifications. This amount will be updated through the IAL procedure.

#### Please describe and explain Evergy's proposed treatment of legal fees.

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Q:

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Legal fees are a function of the legal work necessary to issue the Securitization Bonds. External legal fees are based upon the review of similar transactions of similar size. This category line 4 of Schedule JOH-1 includes the fees and expenses of external counsel for Evergy and the SPE, the underwriters and the Company's co-advisors. Counsel will advise on the Securitization Bond transaction structure, including bankruptcy, regulatory and tax matters; issue various transaction opinions, including bankruptcy opinions; and draft most other documents related to the financing, including, among other tasks, the SEC registration statement, the property purchase and sale agreement, the indenture, the servicing agreement, the administration agreement, the SPE organizational documents, and any other necessary agreements. These estimated expenses are based on discussion with our internal legal counsel and estimates from external counsel. Evergy's advisor and underwriters' counsel also advise on the transaction structure, review all Securitization Bond transaction documents, and perform due diligence reviews of the transaction in connection with the underwriters' initial purchase of the Securitization Bond. The legal fees (over and above those incurred to date) will be affected by events between the date of the filing of the Petition and the date of Securitization Bond issuance, including the extent to which this proceeding is contested by intervenors, the scope of any appeals, the extent of any comments received during the SEC review, the requirements of underwriters,

trustees, rating agencies, regulators or the Commission's Advisor, if applicable, for any requested revisions to documents, the use of additional credit enhancements, and other factors that cannot be foreseen. Thus, the aggregate amount of legal fees and expenses to be financed will not be known until closing. However, these costs will be estimated to the best of the Company's ability and updated through the issuance advice letter process.

#### **Q:** Please describe rating agency fees.

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A:

In order to sell the Securitization Bonds at the most favorable interest rate reasonably achievable, the Securitization Bonds should be rated by a minimum of two of the three major rating agencies. Typically, a fee is required by each of the rating agencies to rate the Securitization Bonds. The fees charged by the rating agencies are subject to change at any time and are typically a function of the size and structure of the offering. The fees are typically calculated by applying a base rate charge to the initial principal balance, subject to a required minimum fee. Neither the Company nor the Commission has any effective control over the fees charged by the rating agencies, however, Evergy will use commercially reasonable means to negotiate the lowest possible rating agency fees. The amounts shown on line 15 of Schedule JOH-1 reflect an estimate of the rating agencies fees to be incurred for a transaction of the size contemplated by the Company. The combined fee is estimated at 13.25 basis points (or 0.1325 percent) on the principal amount of Securitization Bonds issued, payable to two rating agencies. This estimate assumes no additional fees charged for the issuance from the Special Purpose Entity. Accordingly, the possibility of a change due to either the size of the offering, or modification of the agencies' fee requirements must be taken into account in determining the level of rating agency fees, and any increase in these fees should be recoverable by Evergy Missouri West, pursuant to

1 the issuance advice letter procedure.

A:

process.

### Q: Please describe and explain Evergy's proposed treatment of the Commission Staff's financial advisor fee.

A: Staff may retain advisor(s) and the costs of these advisory services and its legal counsel, if
any, qualify as an up-front financing cost in this proceeding under Section
393.1700.1(8)(f). The total cost of the Staff's financial advisor and its legal counsel, if
any, is not within Evergy's control or influence and may not be known until closing. The
estimate on line 9 of Schedule JOH-1 will be updated through the issuance advice letter

#### Q: Please describe the fees of the structuring advisors to Evergy.

After conducting diligence discussions with Evergy's banking partners, Evergy selected Citi to act as its structuring advisor in connection with structuring the transaction(s) and providing related services in connection with this proceeding. Company witness Lunde served as Director in the Global ABS Financing and Securitization, at the time of the diligence information requests and was a key factor in Evergy's decision to select Citi as structuring advisor.

We expect Citi to have the opportunity to continue as an underwriter until the Securitization Bonds are issued, but all structuring fees are expected to be earned upon commencement of the ratings process. The fees and related expenses to be paid to Citi have been agreed upon and reflect the required payments under the contract. These fees and related expenses are consistent with the amounts in recent transactions that have taken place in the market. However, it is not known with precision when Citi's services will end. Following issuance of the Financing Order, and assuming the Company pursues the

marketing and sale of the Securitization Bonds consistent with how similar utility securitization transactions of a similar nature have been offered to investors since 2010, the Company expects to name book-runners who will perform advisory services as part of the services normally performed by a book-running lead underwriter. For these services, it is expected that the book-runner(s) will not seek fees beyond those underwriting fees they would be paid in their capacity as book-runner(s) after they are engaged as book-runner(s). However, as previously stated, the exact timing of that appointment is not known. To the extent Citi's fees exceed the estimate, the Company will update this amount through the issuance advice letter process.

#### 10 Q: Please describe the auditor fees.

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- A: Auditor fees (line 6 of Schedule JOH-1) relate to the Company's independent auditor or other recognized accounting or consulting firm and include the costs of agreed-upon procedures related to the Securitization Bonds.
- 14 Q: Please describe the SEC registration fee.
- 15 A: The SEC has specific formulas for calculating registration fees based upon the initial
  16 principal amount. The current fee is \$92.70 per million dollars registered or 0.0092%.
  17 That fee structure, however, changes from time to time. The fees are mandatory for
  18 registered offerings, and Evergy has no control over such charges. The estimated amount
  19 on line 14 of Schedule JOH-1 will either increase or decrease proportionately as a result of
  20 any increase or decrease in the size of the Securitization Bond financing, and/or as a result
  21 of any change in the SEC registration fee structure.
- 22 Q: Please describe both up-front and ongoing financing costs of credit enhancements.
- 23 A: To ensure the Securitization Bonds are issued under the most advantageous terms, it may

be necessary to use various forms of credit enhancement or other mechanisms designed to improve the credit quality and marketability of the Securitization Bonds, including but not limited to overcollateralization accounts or letters of credit. It cannot be known until the Securitization Bonds are about to be issued whether the use of credit enhancements will reduce customer costs. Such mechanisms will be used only if they are cost justified (i.e., the savings exceed the costs). Because the need for any such credit enhancements or mechanisms, as well as their costs and benefits, will be determined based upon rating agency discussions and market conditions at the time the Securitization Bonds are priced, decisions to use them can only be made at or near the time of pricing. On my Schedule JOH-1, I have assumed no credit enhancements, other than the true-up mechanism and the Capital Subaccount, will be used, because, as Company witness Lunde discusses in his testimony, additional credit enhancements are not currently anticipated to be necessary to achieve "AAA" or equivalent credit ratings.

Q:

A:

How will the Company reconcile actual up-front financing costs with the estimates provided by Evergy Missouri West through the issuance advice letter procedure since the actual costs will not be known until after the Commission issues the Financing Order and the Securitization Bonds have been issued?

The proceeds of the Securitization Bond issuance will be used to pay (or reimburse the Company for) the actual up-front financing costs incurred. The issuance advice letter process, which will discuss the actual up-front financing costs, is addressed in the direct testimony of Company witnesses Ives and Lunde. If the actual up-front financing costs are below the amount appearing in the issuance advice letter filed with the Commission the excess amount shall be included in the first true-up adjustment. If the actual up-front

financing costs are in excess of the amount appearing in the issuance advice letter, then Evergy will have the right to collect such prudently incurred excess amounts through the establishment of a regulatory asset. This reconciliation process is in the direct testimony of Company witness Klote and is included in the proposed Financing Order appended to the direct testimony of Company witness Lunde.

#### **B.** ONGOING FINANCING COSTS

A:

Q: Please describe the estimated ongoing financing costs (excluding debt service) that
 will be recovered from the Charge.

In addition to debt service on the Securitization Bonds, there will be expenses that will be incurred throughout the life of the Securitization Bonds to support the ongoing operations of the SPE. These ongoing financing costs are estimated at approximately \$0.56 million annually for Evergy Missouri West in Schedule JOH-1, and includes servicing fees; return on the capital contribution; administration fees; accounting and auditing fees; regulatory fees; legal fees; rating agency surveillance fees; trustee fees; SPE independent director or manager fees; and other miscellaneous fees associated with the servicing of the Securitization Bonds. These ongoing cost items are considered Financing Costs under Section 393.1700.1(8)(b) and (c) of the Securitization Law.

Certain of these ongoing financing costs, such as the administration fees and the amount of the servicing fee for Evergy Missouri West (as the initial servicers) may be determinable, either by reference to an established dollar amount or a percentage, on or before the issuance of any series of Securitization Bonds. Other ongoing financing costs will vary over the term of the Securitization Bonds.

#### Q: What are the estimated servicing fees and how will they be calculated?

In consideration for its servicing responsibilities, the servicer, which is expected to be Evergy Missouri West, will receive the periodic servicing fee (line 25 of Schedule JOH-1), which will be recovered through the Charges. To support the bankruptcy analysis necessary to achieve the highest credit rating, the servicing fees must be on arm's length terms and at market-based rates. Such servicing responsibilities will include, without limitation: (i) billing, monitoring, collecting and remitting Charges, (ii) reporting requirements imposed by the servicing agreement, (iii) implementing the true-up mechanism, (iv) procedures required to coordinate required audits related to the Company's role as servicer, (v) legal and accounting functions related to the servicing obligation, and (vi) communication with rating agencies.

The annual servicing fee to be paid by the SPE to Evergy Missouri West is currently estimated to be 0.05 percent of the original principal balance of the Securitization Bonds, payable on each Securitization Bond payment date. Alternatively, if the Company ceases to service the Securitization Bonds and a successor servicer is appointed, its servicer fee should be set at a level not to exceed 0.60 percent of such original balance unless a higher rate is approved by the Commission. To date, we are not aware of any utility securitization transactions where a successor servicer has had to be appointed. The servicing fees reflected appear to the Company to be consistent with the rates in other recent securitizations. Since the servicing fee is based on the estimated original principal balance, the final amount will be known only when the transaction is priced and will be updated through the issuance advice letter process.

#### Please describe return on invested capital.

Q:

A:

A:

When the Securitization Bonds are issued, Evergy proposes that it will make a capital

contribution to its respective SPE, which the SPE will deposit into the Capital Subaccount. The Securitization Bond proceeds will not be used to fund this capital contribution. As previously discussed, the amount of the capital contribution will be at least 0.50 percent of the original principal amount of the Securitization Bonds. The Capital Subaccount will serve as collateral to facilitate timely payment of principal of and interest on the Securitization Bonds. To the extent that the Capital Subaccount must be drawn upon to pay these amounts due to a shortfall in the Charge collections, it will be replenished to its original level through the true-up process. The funds in the Capital Subaccount will be invested in short-term high-quality investments and, if necessary, such funds (including investment earnings) will be used by the Indenture Trustee to pay the principal of and interest on the Securitization Bonds and the ongoing financing costs payable by the SPE. Evergy Missouri West requests to earn a rate of return on its invested capital equal to the weighted average cost of capital of the utility. Evergy requests that this return on invested capital be a component of ongoing financing costs, and accordingly, recovered through the Charges. This is consistent with sections 393.1700.1(8)(b) and 393.1700.2(3)(c)l of the Securitization Law. Company witness Klote discusses how this return amount will be adjusted from time to time as a result of changes authorized to the Company's cost of capital in future rate cases.

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## Q: Please describe the purpose of the administration fees that you identified and explain how they will be calculated.

A: The annual administration fees are set forth on line 26 of Schedule JOH-1 and are meant to cover expenses associated with administrative functions Evergy will be providing to the relevant SPE. These functions will include, among others, maintaining the general

accounting records, preparation of quarterly and annual financial statements, arranging for annual audits of each SPE's financial statements, preparing all required external financial filings, preparing any required income or other tax returns, and related support. None of the SPEs will have any employees, so the administrator will perform these functions for each SPE. These functions are separate from those of the servicer. Each SPE will also have an independent director or manager to oversee its operation, and he or she will receive a fee for their services and will be entitled to indemnification.

### 8 Q: Please describe the purpose of the other ongoing financing costs that you identified9 in more detail.

A:

The accounting and auditing fees (line 28 of Schedule JOH-1) are meant to represent costs for activities such as providing periodic reports to the trustee and reviewing/certifying SEC filings. These fees will be paid to Company's independent auditor or other recognized accounting firm.

Each SPE will incur periodic legal fees. The annual estimate for these expenses is shown on line 29 of Schedule JOH-1.

The rating agencies will assess ongoing fees associated with monitoring the credit rating of each Securitization Bond series (line 30 of Schedule JOH-1).

The Indenture Trustee will be responsible for and earn a fee (line 27 of Schedule JOH-1) for, among other things: (i) maintaining a record of investors; (ii) calculating and remitting interest and principal payments to investors; (iii) otherwise fulfilling its obligations under the indenture and other documents; and (iv) reporting as required by the Commission or any other regulatory body.

Other miscellaneous costs (line 34 of Schedule JOH-1) are any costs that may be incurred but that have not been specifically identified at this time. Such types of costs have been identified by other utility companies for similar transactions.

Q:

A:

A:

Other than the servicing fee and the administrative fee, it is difficult to predict the level of such costs to be incurred by the SPE over the term of the Securitization Bonds. It is virtually certain these fees will increase over the term, not only because service providers periodically increase their fees, but also because of inflation. Therefore, the Company believes there should be no cap on the ongoing financing costs. Moreover, each SPE must recover all of its ongoing financing costs in order to preserve bankruptcy remoteness of the SPE and to secure AAA or equivalent credit ratings on the Securitization Bonds.

### How will the Company reconcile its actual ongoing financing costs of the transaction with its estimated costs?

Because ongoing financing costs are recovered through the Charge, disparities will be resolved periodically through the true-up mechanism. The true-up mechanism is described in more detail in Company witness Klote's testimony.

# Q: Has the United States Treasury Department issued any guidance on accounting for securitization financing and related income taxes?

Yes. Revenue Procedure 2005-62 provides a safe harbor for public utility companies that, pursuant to specified cost recovery legislation, receive an irrevocable financing order permitting the utility to recover certain specified costs through a qualifying securitization. Under the revenue procedure, Evergy Missouri West will not recognize taxable income upon: 1) the receipt of the Financing Order; 2) the transfer of the Company's rights under the Financing Order to the wholly-owned SPE; or 3) the receipt of cash in exchange for the

- 1 issuance of the Securitization Bonds. Evergy will treat the Charge as gross income to
- 2 Evergy Missouri West recognized under the Company's usual method of accounting.
- 3 Q: Does the securitization financing Evergy is proposing meet the requirements of this
- 4 revenue procedure?
- 5 A: Yes.
- 6 Q: Does this conclude your testimony?
- 7 A: Yes.

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

In the Matter of the Application of Evergy Missouri West, Inc. d/b/a Evergy Missouri West for a Financing Order Authorizing the Financing of Extraordinary Storm Costs Through an Issuance of Securitized Utility Tariff Bonds.	) ) Case No. EF-2022-0155 ) )					
AFFIDAVIT OF JA	ASON HUMPHREY					
STATE OF MISSORUI ) ) ss COUNTY OF JACKSON )						
Jason Humphrey, being first duly sworn	on his oath, states:					
1. My name is Jason Humphrey an	nd I am employed by Evergy Metro, Inc. as Sr					
Director Renewable & Assistant Treasurer - Renewables Development.						
2. Attached hereto and made a part	hereof for all purposes is my Direct Testimony					
on behalf of Evergy Missouri West consisting of	of sixteen (16) 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 testimon	y to the questions therein propounded, including					
any attachments thereto, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and						
belief.  Jas	on Humphrey					
	March 2022.  Ath Curry Public					
My commission expires: $\frac{4/2u/wrs}{}$	ANTHONY R. WESTENKIRCHNER NOTARY PUBLIC - NOTARY SEAL					

#### Direct Testimony of Jason O. Humphrey Evergy Missouri West Before the Missouri Public Service Commission Case. No. EF-2022-0155

#### **Estimated Up Front and Ongoing Securitization Costs**

