

Exhibit No.: _____
Issues: Customer Service
Witness: Hayley Sirmon
Type of Exhibit: Rebuttal Testimony
Sponsoring Party: Liberty Utilities
(Midstates Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty
Case No.: GR-2024-0106
Date Testimony Prepared: August 2024

**Before the Public Service Commission
of the State of Missouri**

Rebuttal Testimony

of

Hayley Sirmon

on behalf of

Liberty Utilities (Midstates Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty

August 22, 2024



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FOR THE REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF HAYLEY SIRMON
LIBERTY UTILITIES (MIDSTATES NATURAL GAS) CORP. D/B/A LIBERTY
BEFORE THE MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
CASE NO. GR-2024-0106

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 **Q. Please state your name and business address.**

3 A. My name is Hayley Sirmon. My business address is 602 South Joplin Ave., Joplin, MO
4 64801.

5 **Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

6 A. I am employed by Liberty Utilities Services Corp. (“LUSC”) as the Director, Customer
7 Experience - Central Region, which includes Liberty Utilities (Midstates Natural Gas)
8 Corp. d/b/a Liberty (“Liberty” or the “Company”).

9 **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying in this proceeding?**

10 A. I am testifying on behalf of Liberty.

11 **Q. Please describe your educational and professional background.**

12 A. I graduated from Missouri Southern State University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts
13 degree in History. I began my employment with Empire in February of 2012 as a
14 Contact Center Representative. I also worked as a Customer Service Representative in
15 the Credit and Collections department before returning to the Contact Center as the
16 Manager in March of 2015. I graduated from Missouri Southern State University in
17 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management. In January of 2022, I
18 was promoted to Senior Manager of Customer Service, and in July of 2022, I was
19 promoted to my current position of Director of Customer Experience for the Central
20 Region.

1 **Q. Have you previously testified before the Missouri Public Service Commission**
2 **(“MPSC” or “Commission”) or before any other utility regulatory agency?**

3 A. Yes, I have submitted testimony before this Commission (Case No. WR-2024-0104)
4 and the Arkansas Public Service Commission (Case No. 22-085-U).

5 **II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY**

6 **Q. What is the purpose of your rebuttal testimony?**

7 A. The purpose of my testimony is to address the customer service questions posed by
8 Staff witness Charles Tyrone Thomason regarding estimated bills, and the IVR and
9 Monthly Performance Reports.

10 **III. ESTIMATED BILLS**

11 **Q. What has led to an increase in estimated bills?**

12 A. If the number of an Encoder Receiver Transmitter (“ERT”) is not matched between
13 the billing system and handheld meter reader devices, then the billing system logic
14 triggers an estimated bill to be issued. An ERT mismatch issue was identified for 148
15 active accounts which resulted in estimated bills. The Company had also seen an
16 increase in orders to reread meters on vacant accounts where the meter did not show as
17 changed out in the new Customer Information System (“CIS”).

18 **Q. What is the Company doing to address the increase in estimated meters?**

19 A. Addressing both issues requires a manual correction process. The ERT mismatch issue
20 was resolved in March 2024. The billing team is currently working through the list to
21 manually correct the vacant accounts issue in the CIS, and as accounts are corrected,
22 the operations group is seeing decreases in estimations needed. The billing team
23 estimates that the manual correction of the vacant account issue will be complete by
24 November 2024.

1 **IV. IVR CHANGE & MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

2 **Q. What steps need to be taken in order to change Liberty Midstates' IVR to allow**
3 **customers to select the state from which they are calling and for the Company to**
4 **report state-specific metrics in its Monthly Performance Report?**

5 A. The Company has requested assistance from our phone vendor. A request was entered
6 on July 12, 2024 and asked that they submit the estimate of work and the cost associated
7 with adding new splits to the IVR for customers to choose from. The Company had a
8 working session with the vendor on July 29, 2024 to discuss what is needed and which
9 reporting will need to be state-specific in the future. The vendor proposed a plan and
10 submitted a cost estimate to the Company on August 19, 2024. Therefore, the Company
11 has not had the opportunity to fully evaluate the proposed plan and cost estimate.

12 **Q. Is the Company opposed to adding the additional options for Midstates customers**
13 **to select which state they are calling from?**

14 A. No, the Company is not opposed to this proposal and agrees that the ability to report
15 certain call metrics by state is beneficial; however, the solution will need to be
16 evaluated once we understand the work and cost of the changes.

17 **Q. Does this conclude your rebuttal testimony at this time?**

18 A. Yes.

VERIFICATION

I, Hayley Sirmon, under penalty of perjury, on this 22nd day of August, 2024, declare that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

/s/ Hayley Sirmon