

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

In the Matter of the Request of The)	
Empire District Electric Company d/b/a)	<u>File No. ER-2024-0261</u>
Liberty for Authority to File Tariffs)	Tracking No. JE-2025-0069
Increasing Rates for Electric Service)	
Provided to Customers In its Missouri)	
Service Area)	

STAFF RESPONSE TO LIBERTY’S TEST YEAR AND UPDATE PERIOD PROPOSAL

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission, by and through counsel, and, as directed by the Commission’s *Order* of November 8, 2024, states as follows in response to the Company’s proposed test year:

1. On November 6, 2024, The Empire District Electric Company’s d/b/a Liberty (“Liberty” or “Company”) filed proposed tariff sheets designed to implement a general rate increase for retail electric service provided in its Missouri territories.

2. In its November 8, 2024, *Order Giving Notice, Setting a Deadline to Intervene, Setting a Deadline to Respond to the Test Year, and Setting a Procedural Conference* (“Order”), the Commission ordered stated that any party wishing to respond to Liberty’s proposed test year shall do so no later than December 5, 2024.

3. As stated in the Commission’s Order, “Liberty proposes a test year of the twelve months ending September 30, 2023, and further proposes the test year be updated through September 30, 2024. The Company is not requesting a true-up process.”

4. Staff does not oppose Liberty’s requested test year of the twelve months ending September 30, 2023; however, Staff notes that this test year is very stale.

5. That being said, Staff has concerns with regard to the quality of billing determinant data provided by Liberty; specifically, for the proposed update period. Staff has experienced

issues with regard to the quality of this data in two recent Liberty affiliate rate cases.¹ Further, according to Liberty,² the Company adopted a new billing system in April 2024. Staff believes the new system has accuracy issues at the moment. Depending on the severity of the issue, Staff may not have data of sufficient quality to update its case through September 30, 2024.

6. Staff is in the process of obtaining billing determinant data necessary to calculate Liberty's test year revenues, and is concerned that if the Liberty is unable to deliver updated billing information, Staff may not have enough data to deliver a thorough recommendation. If Staff is unable to obtain sufficient billing determinant data for the update period, Staff will be forced to utilize only test year data for its case.

7. Staff currently needs the following additional billing determinant data for the test year:³

- a. Missouri Jurisdictional System Loss Study;
- b. Monthly kWh opt out for all applicable rate schedules;
- c. Transformer ownership and metering adjustments;
- d. Customer count of non-AMI data recorders;
- e. Monthly net metering kWh; and
- f. Monthly solar availability and subscribed blocks.

8. The Parties are scheduled to file a Joint Procedural Schedule on December 13, 2024.⁴ Should the Commission order an update period as proposed by Liberty, Staff recommends that the Commission also order Liberty to provide its complete update to the

¹ Case No. WR-2024-0104, In the Matter of the Request of Liberty Utilities (Missouri Water) LLC d/b/a Liberty for Authority to Implement a General Rate Increase for Water and Wastewater Service Provided in its Missouri Service Areas, and Case No. GR-2024-0106, In the Matter of the Request of Liberty Utilities (Midstates Natural Gas) Corp. d/b/a Liberty to Implement a General Rate Increase for Natural Gas Service in the Missouri Service Areas of the Company.

² Direct Testimony of Timothy N. Wilson

³ Staff currently has outstanding Data Requests requesting most of this information.

⁴ Notice of Order Issued During Procedural Conference issued on December 2, 2024

parties no later than December 19, 2024.⁵ This will help ensure that Staff, and the other parties, have sufficient time to remedy any issues with regard to update period data provided by Liberty.

WHEREFORE, Staff respectfully submits this Staff Response to Liberty's Test Year and Update Period Proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Eric Vandergriff

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed or hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all parties and/or counsel of record on this 9th day of December 2025.

/s/ Eric Vandergriff

⁵ The update period data, regarding billing determinants, should include: a. Excel file "Test Year Billing Determinants" for the update period as provided by Company witness, Tim Lyons. b. Workpapers updated through September 2024. c. Monthly rate schedule of manual adjustments for the 12 months ending September 2024 be broken down by each billing determinant including block and by season. d. Monthly billing determinants for customers who switched rates during the update period. e. All update data for the test year listed in paragraph 7. of this pleading.