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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF MISSOURI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of Union)
Electric Company d/b/a)
Ameren Missouri's Tariffs)
to Adjust Its Revenues)
for Electric Service,) File No. ER-2024-0319

Wednesday, January 22, 2025
6:00 p.m.

SAINT LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
5600 OAKLAND AVENUE
SAINT LOUIS, MO 63110

VOLUME IV

JOHN CLARK, PRESIDING
REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

MAIDA J. COLEMAN,
JASON R. HOLSMAN,
GLEN KOLKMEYER,
JOHN MITCHELL,
COMMISSIONERS

Reported by:
Colin Wallis (via WebEx)

* * * * *

(Starting time of the hearing: 07:31 p.m.)

REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Let's go on the record. Good evening. It is January 22nd of 2025, and the current time is 7:31 p.m.

Now, the question and answer portion of the program for this rate case has just ended. If you had questions about this case, I hope you were able to get those answered. If you still have questions after the hearing, and you haven't been able to get those answered, I would ask that you contact the company, the Commission Staff or the Office of the Public Counsel with your inquiries. We're going to start the public comment portion.

Now, the Missouri Public Service Commission has set aside this time now for a local public hearing in file number: ER-2024-0319, which is a general rate case captioned as: In the Matter of Union Electric doing business as Ameren Missouri's Tariffs to Adjust Its Revenues for Electric Service.

My name is John Clark. I'm the Regulatory Law Judge overseeing this hearing this evening, and I'm presiding over the case. Now, the

1 Missouri Public Service Commission regulates
2 the rate charged by investor-owned utility
3 companies in Missouri to insure those rates are
4 just and reasonable. The Commission also
5 regulates the quality of service and the safety
6 of operations of investor-owned utilities in
7 Missouri. The Commission is made up of five
8 commissioners, the chair of the commissioners,
9 Kayla Hahn, and commissioners Maida Coleman to
10 my left, Jason Holsman to my right and to my
11 far left, Glen Kolkmeier. Also, Commission
12 John Mitchell, Chair Hahn and Commission
13 Mitchell are not here live this evening, but
14 they are listening online via WebEx.
15 Additionally, this is being recorded by a court
16 reporter who is taking down everything that is
17 said for the commissioners to review later if
18 they want to as well.

19 Now, the Commissioners are appointed by a
20 governor to a fixed term, and they're confirmed
21 by the Senate. The Commissioners employ a
22 staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,
23 financial analysts and other specialists in the
24 field of utility regulation. Commissioner
25 Coleman, would you like make to any opening

1 remarks?

2 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Sure, thank you,
3 Judge. Good evening, everyone. As the Judge
4 noted, I am Maida Coleman. I really appreciate
5 the fact that you have taken the time to come
6 out tonight. We look forward to these
7 local public hearings, because it gives us an
8 opportunity to get information on the record
9 about the opinions of the customers of the
10 utilities that we regulate. We know that
11 utility issues are important to each and every
12 one of you. We know you are -- you take this
13 topic seriously or you wouldn't be here, so we
14 thank you and want you to know no one decision
15 has been made about this case. We look forward
16 to the information that you give us so that we
17 are able to make a decision that has taken into
18 consideration all of your testimony and the
19 other evidence that we receive. Thank you
20 again for being here tonight. Thank you,
21 Judge.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
23 Commissioner Coleman. As the commissioner
24 said, the commissioners are not going to be
25 able to answer your questions tonight, neither

1 will I, and the reason for that is because the
2 case has not been decided yet. There still has
3 yet to be an evidentiary hearing in this case,
4 and the commissioners can't hear anything
5 that's not in the records, so neither them nor
6 myself were present during the Q&A portion of
7 this.

8 This is our chance to hear from the
9 public. So, this is our chance to hear how you
10 think and feel about this rate increase request
11 by Ameren Missouri. After this, after
12 the public hearings, we will possibly arrive at
13 an evidentiary hearing, and at the evidentiary
14 hearing, the Commission will hear evidence from
15 all the parties in regard to the rate case.
16 There are a lot people here tonight, and there
17 are a lot of people that are going to want to
18 make comments, and we want to try and get as
19 many comments from as many people as possible.
20 I have 38 people signed up right now. However,
21 I am going to -- I'm sorry, 40 people signed up
22 as of right now. However, I'm going to do a
23 hard stop at 10:00 o'clock because we need to
24 relinquish the room and the Commissioners have
25 a packed date tomorrow with an agenda, as well

1 as another presentation. So, I'm going to
2 limit everybody to three minutes. I will let
3 you know when three minutes is up, and I'm
4 going to ask that you quickly complete your
5 thought so that we get can many as people in as
6 possible to speak.

7 Also, you will see certain themes emerge.
8 People will say some of the same concerns over
9 and over again. To allow everybody to speak,
10 if you -- if somebody has already expressed a
11 concern that you want to express, you might
12 just get up and let the Commission know, hey,
13 this other person said that this was very
14 difficult for people on a fixed income, I would
15 also like to point that I'm on a fix income and
16 share those concerns. And that way we can also
17 speed along the time so that everybody can get
18 a chance to comment.

19 I'm going to call the names in the order
20 that they appear on the sheet and if you come
21 up to the microphone, I'm going to ask you to
22 state and to spell your name for the court
23 record, and then I will swear you in and you
24 can offer your comments to the Commission. All
25 right? Thank you all for being here this

1 evening. And the first name I have -- I'm
2 sorry, the commissioner is reminding me I have
3 forgotten to take entries of appearance, so I
4 will do that now for the record. Starting
5 with Ameren Missouri.

6 MR. HOLTHAUS: Bill Holthaus for Ameren
7 Missouri.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
9 Ameren Missouri. For the Commission Staff?

10 MR. PRINGLE: Travis Pringle on behalf of
11 Staff.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: On behalf of
13 the Office of the Public Counsel.

14 MS. VANGERPEN: Lindsay VanGerpen on
15 behalf of the OPC.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Are there any
17 intervenors present? Mr. Coffman.

18 MR. COFFMAN: Appearing on behalf of the
19 Consumers Council of Missouri, I'm John
20 Coffman.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
22 Consumers Council. After you've given your
23 comments, if you can hang out at the microphone
24 for just a heartbeat. If I have a question for
25 you, I'll ask at that time. If the

1 commissioners have a question for you, they
2 will it ask at any time they like, and if the
3 attorneys have a question, they will get my
4 attention and I will allow them to ask that
5 question. So, with that in mind, I'm going to
6 call the first name on list. If I butcher a
7 name, please let me know and I apologize in
8 advance. Justin Idleburg. Mr. Idleburg, will
9 you please state and spell your name for the
10 record.

11 MR. IDLEBURG: My name is Justin
12 J-u-s-t-i-n, last name, Idleburg.
13 I-d-l-e-b-u-r-g.

14 (Justin Idleburg sworn.)

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Please go
16 ahead.

17 MR. IDLEBURG: My name is Justin Idleburg,
18 and I'm the executive director of Cabanne
19 District Development Corporation, an
20 organization deeply committed to advocating for
21 equitable solutions for family, seniors and our
22 most vulnerable communities across Missouri.
23 Today, I'm here to address Ameren Missouri
24 proposed rate increase from 14 cents per
25 kilowatt hour to 16 cents per kilowatt. We

1 understand the context for the rate design
2 change. The power system is changing at a pace
3 that the industry has not experienced for
4 decades. We may even say since the 1904
5 World's Fair where electricity was shown and
6 proven to the world it can be used indoors. In
7 saying that, we want to acknowledge that even
8 though the proposed increase that Ameren
9 Missouri remains three percent lesser than the
10 national average of 19 percent kilowatt, we
11 appreciate your efforts to maintain rates that
12 are competitively affordable. However, we also
13 must recognize that for many low income
14 households, seniors and disabled individuals,
15 even small increases in energy costs have
16 significant impacts on their quality of life,
17 and that's why many of those St. Louis
18 communities and rural communities are part of
19 the Justice 40 initiative, and its data stated
20 that the majority of the City of St. Louis
21 suffers from a range of 99 percent to 90
22 percent energy burden on households.

23 At the Cabanne Development Corporation, we
24 recently surveyed over 2,000 households in
25 neighborhoods such as the West End, Academy

1 Sherman and Hamilton Heights. A staggering
2 86 percent of the respondents, particularly
3 mothers, elders, reported that the energy cost
4 repeatedly represented their highest monthly
5 expense often surpassing housing and food
6 costs. For these families, these rate
7 increases posed a serious affordability
8 challenge.

9 We are here today to propose that Ameren
10 Missouri and the Public Service Commission
11 consider an energy access plan, and one of our
12 first things is establishing a rate-making
13 objective. Second, and one of my favorites,
14 how we can create a virtual power plant
15 initiative. For those that do not know what
16 that is, it's developed programs that aggregate
17 and distribute energy resorts such as
18 residential solar panels and battery-stored
19 systems to function collectively as a virtual
20 power plant. Participants can receive
21 compensation contributing to the grid's
22 stability. The benefit empowers customers to
23 actively participate in energy markets,
24 potentially reducing their bills and enhancing
25 grid resilience that you all talk about, that

1 we've learned about tonight.

2 And one of those nice things, we would
3 like to expand net metering, as well as also
4 offer energy credits and revenue to homeowners
5 to help offset the cost of energy bills and
6 also to help you all with your grid expansion
7 as we are going into this energy transition.
8 And, last, but not at least, how we co-create
9 this collectively with our stakeholders that
10 are here today and other parts of rural and
11 urban Missouri? I thank you. I have nothing
12 else to say. I appreciate you all for
13 listening to me.

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
15 very much, Mr. Idleburg. Your comments
16 wherefores were concise and they were direct
17 and on point. Thank you.

18 MR. IDLEBURG: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: I'm sorry,
20 Mr. Idleburg, would you tell me again the name
21 of the organization that you're the executive
22 director of?

23 MR. IDLEBURG: Cabanne District,
24 C-a-b-a-n-n-e. We got our name from the
25 founder, Jean-Pierre Cabanne.

1 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Okay, you said
2 Cabanne. Okay, Cabanne District, what?

3 MR. IDLEBURG: Community Development
4 Corporation.

5 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: CDC, okay, thank
6 you.

7 MR. IDLEBURG: Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: I wrote it down
9 wrong.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Diane Perry.
11 And Ms. Perry, would you state and spell your
12 name for the record?

13 MS. PERRY: Diane is spelled D-i-a-n-e.
14 My last name is P, as in Paul, e-r-r-y.

15 (Diane Perry sworn.)

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Please go
17 ahead.

18 MS. PERRY: I'm with one of the oldest
19 block organizations, the St. Louis County
20 NAACP. I'm on the executive committee, but I'm
21 not speaking from them at this time. I'm
22 speaking as a senior citizen. I'm retired, and
23 a true St. Louis Countyian. I was born in
24 Clayton and raised in Webster Groves. I feel
25 sorry -- I went to Washington back in '72, and

1 I saw a layout to move all the blacks out of
2 North St. Louis County -- I mean, North City,
3 to North St. Louis County. I was kind of
4 shocked. We thought we had moved up.

5 We had nice homes. Just like they have in
6 Webster. But in 2008, the car dealers moved
7 out of this city. A lot of us who bought them
8 homes couldn't afford them, but the real estate
9 people let us rent from them. Okay, you got to
10 pay rent. You lost your job. You got these
11 high utilities. Boy, that's a lot, isn't it?
12 That's back in 2008. Can you believe we going
13 back if you raise these utility bills now?
14 That's crazy, and don't misunderstand me, I
15 hope there aren't no droppers in here. We
16 can't afford right now.

17 This country is in a mess. Not just our
18 utilities, everything. And some young person
19 said something that I was going to say, we hope
20 it ain't a political thing. We really do.
21 It's kind of strange it's happening now when we
22 just got a new, you know what, because I don't
23 want to stay. I just know I'm a senior
24 citizen, five grandkids, one great one. And
25 they were fortunate to have parents to push

1 them and go to college. But we can't do all
2 that if we have to pay high utility bills.
3 Can't afford it. And, plus, we spoiled this
4 generation. They don't know how to hustle, to
5 suffer this. But they don't know to get out
6 and do. So, I wish you all would kind of
7 reconsider bringing up these bills right now.
8 That's all this old lady got to say.

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Perry,
10 thank you very much for your comments. Julia
11 Allen. Ms. Allen, will you please state and
12 spell your name for the record.

13 MS. ALLEN: J-u-l-i-a, capital A, l-l-e-n.
14 (Julia Allen sworn.)

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: What would
16 you like to tell the Commission this evening?

17 MS. ALLEN: More or less, I want to make
18 just a statement. I'm not trying to offend
19 anybody or any programs that are out there that
20 are helping people. I believe the rate
21 increase, number one, is too high. I think
22 that I'm a graduate from the John Warren Brown
23 School of Social Work, so I consider myself
24 middle class. I've also worked in -- for the
25 Community Action Agency in the City of St.

1 Louis and the county, and I've also worked for
2 the City of St. Louis in the St. Louis Area
3 Agency, so I'm familiar with a lot of programs
4 that are out in the community.

5 However, what the -- the thing that I
6 believe is this: the one percent of the
7 population, they don't have to worry about
8 utility bills. Those people who are below or
9 at poverty level, our tax dollars pay for those
10 along with the Ameren. However, the middle
11 class, we are getting the brunt of everything.
12 Every rate increase, it doesn't matter if it is
13 for food, medicine, housing. We are being
14 burdened with all of these increases. And like
15 I said, I consider myself middle class.
16 However, a 17 dollar increase is just too much.

17 I've testified at these hearings before
18 where Ameren and -- it was Laclede Gas when I
19 was testifying, they asked for rate increases.
20 I know that, you know, they need -- probably
21 need a rate increase just because of the cost
22 of -- cost of doing business, and plus with
23 Covid, Covid has made everything so much
24 higher. However, I just think 7 to \$17 is too
25 much, or what was it, 15, point, something

1 percent. You might as well say its 16 percent.
2 I realize even testifying then, that the Public
3 Service Commission looked at it, but they did
4 give them the total amount of the raises they
5 asked for. They gave them a lower amount. And
6 I'm just asking you guys, when you're doing
7 these kind of things, making these kinds of
8 decisions, please think about the middle class.
9 There are no programs out there to help the
10 middle class.

11 We qualify a dollar, two dollars, \$15
12 dollars, a \$100 and over. The only program
13 that I know that will help a person like me is
14 the Metropolitan Sewer District because of
15 their income levels. And, like I said, there
16 are no programs out there for middle income
17 people. And we're being hit just as hard as
18 those people who are below the poverty level,
19 so we have to make a choice as to whether, you
20 know, I'm going to feed my kids, I'm going to
21 buy medicine.

22 And I'll give you an example, this year,
23 I'm on Medicare, okay. And it seemed every
24 year I've been working in fact, you get a raise
25 and guess what's the first thing that goes up?

1 It's your healthcare insurance. Even as a
2 working people. But I'm just saying, with the
3 utility companies, I understand you all have to
4 do business. The rate is, you know, the cost
5 of doing business. 17 percent is just too
6 much, thank you.

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
8 very much for your comments. Sheila Steed.
9 Ms. Steed, would you state your spell and your
10 name for the record?

11 MS. STEED: Sheila Steed, S-h-e-i-l-a,
12 S-t-e-e-d as in David.

13 (Sheila Steed sworn.)

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, go
15 ahead.

16 MS. STEED: Okay, this is the first time
17 for me to come to one of these meetings. I am
18 glad I came. I will reiterate I'm a senior on
19 a fixed income. I retired in 2019. And
20 everything seemed to be doing okay. To defer
21 cost, one of my cousins lived with me in order
22 for us, because we're both senior citizens, and
23 that will help with the cost of us living. I
24 own the home, and the thing is that with this
25 increase that's putting an extra burden. I've

1 already had an increase with Ameren -- with,
2 I'm sorry, Spire. In October, it went up \$30.
3 And I understand increases but I don't
4 understand a hop, skip and a jump. That's what
5 it felt like that I had to start paying. And I
6 try to do some of my part -- I'm a senior
7 citizen, so I don't do where I subsidize my
8 utilities, okay? If I get up at 3:00 o'clock
9 in the morning, I want to make sure I can use
10 my computer when I want to, okay, so doing that
11 is not sufficient for me. I want to be able to
12 use my utilities when I want to. The Medicare
13 is going up as everybody has said, and then
14 when they enacted that \$2,000 limit, then the
15 medicine started costing more. So, it's like a
16 ying and yang, okay? And everything else has
17 been going up, and I do have to admit the only
18 utility that has helped is Metropolitan Sewer.
19 They have a program just for disability people
20 and for senior citizens, okay?

21 And it does help because they -- for
22 seniors, I believe, they cut their bill in half
23 for them. And then think about it. If I get
24 sick, the older I get, the more apt I'm going
25 to get sick, those trips to the hospital.

1 There are medical bills. There are more drugs.
2 Then think about it, me being a homeowner,
3 things -- that house, I have been in that house
4 since 1981. Of course things are going to
5 start breaking. The house was built in 1920.
6 So, even the mortar wants to leave, okay.

7 So, you have to consider -- we have to pay
8 those costs as well, you know. And if they in
9 some way Ameren can feel that they can create a
10 plan that is for senior citizens, because like
11 you all know, we're on a fixed income. We
12 don't get raises like everyone else, okay. We
13 get a raise and then Medicare says, no, bring
14 that over here to us, okay?

15 So, my thing is that I understand you guys
16 have to have an increase, and I'll go along
17 with that, but to jump like Spire did, where
18 they jumped my bill to 30 more dollars, that's
19 a lot. And I do budget. And I'm paying over
20 one hundred dollars on budget with Ameren, you
21 know. So, it would benefit us if the increase
22 wasn't as high. I go along with everybody
23 having to get their part of pie. I just want a
24 third of that pie, okay. It would actually be
25 a third of that slice if that could be

1 arranged, thank you.

2 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
3 your comments, Ms. Steed. Ben Martin.

4 Mr. Martin, if you could state and spell your
5 name for the record?

6 MR. MARTIN: Ben Martin, B-e-n,
7 M-a-r-t-i-n.

8 (Ben Martin sworn.)

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
10 would you like to tell the Commission today?

11 MR. MARTIN: My name is Ben Martin. I'm a
12 public school high school science teacher here.
13 And this rate increase -- I'm going to urge you
14 not to let it happen at all. It's going to
15 affect us all. Not just in our electrical
16 bills, but at the grocery store, too, because
17 the grocery is going to charge more for their
18 electricity, and they're going to pass that
19 down to us consumers. So, this is a rate that
20 will increase everything that I buy. I'm a
21 father of two trying to raise a family on a
22 teacher's salary, and as some people had said,
23 this is going to hurt the middle class. Any
24 rate increase is going to hurt the middle
25 class.

1 They had a rate increase just a couple
2 years ago. So, we're going to be here two
3 years from now and asking for another rate
4 increase? What did they do with the money we
5 gave them last time? So, please, don't allow
6 any more rate increase. During the question
7 and answer session, as a science teacher, I
8 live near Labadie. And I asked them, is any of
9 this money going to help protect the
10 environment of what's being polluted out in
11 Labadie, because it's been recorded in
12 newspapers that the Labadie Power Plant is the
13 third worst polluter of coal power plants in
14 our country. And they're saying that in
15 none -- none of the money is going to help put
16 a scrubber on top of that plant so that my kids
17 don't have to breathe in that air. They also
18 said that none of that money is going to remove
19 the coal ash ponds that sits in Labadie that
20 sits on top of my water table.

21 So, they're asking for a large sum of
22 money but they're doing nothing with it. And
23 then the last comment I have to make is that,
24 you know, a lot of people in the question and
25 answer period talked about the compensation

1 that their executives make, and Ameren answered
2 back that, look, they really don't make that
3 much because it's all being compensated by
4 shareholders. But if we pass this rate
5 increase, their shares will increase,
6 therefore, those people who have shares they
7 will have more income. So, yes, so those
8 executives are being compensated by stock are
9 going to see a lot more money because of this
10 rate increase because their stock value is
11 going to go up. So, it's a sly way to say what
12 Ameren tried to pull there, that they're not
13 going to make more money off of this. So,
14 please don't let this happen. You are going to
15 affect middle class families. I urge you to
16 not let any rate increase happen. Thank you.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
18 your comments, Mr. Martin. Jenn DeRose.

19 MR. MARTIN: Thank you. Hi, it's me,
20 again, Jenn DeRose, J-e-n-n, D-e-R-o-s-e. I
21 promise I have different things to say than I
22 said this morning.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, that's
24 fine. I am going to ask you to keep it brief
25 so others can speak, though.

1 MS. DEROSE: Absolutely, that's the main
2 reason for why we're all here.

3 (Jenn DeRose sworn.)

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

5 MS. DEROSE: The first thing I would like
6 to say is I hope that the turn out tonight
7 demonstrates the need for these sorts of
8 hearings in the City of St. Louis, ideally
9 accessible by public transportation. I think
10 the turnout here was incredible, especially
11 compared to the hearing I went to earlier in
12 St. Charles, so I just thank you for allowing
13 that hearing to happen. I think it's
14 important. Let's have more of them. So, we're
15 not here all night.

16 So, my main concern is this will
17 disproportionately impact poor people who are
18 already struggling with extremely high energy
19 burden, and a lot of people have already talked
20 about that, so I'll skip it. But the gentleman
21 before me who I have not met has talked about
22 Labadie, and I am going to talk about Labadie,
23 because the reason I bring it up is the
24 externalities -- the negative externalities
25 that Ameren creates through its coal use of the

1 second deadliest coal plant in the country has
2 health impacts that cost money to consumers.
3 St. Louis has terrible ozone quality. It has
4 terrible air quality. St. Louis County has
5 terrible air quality. St. Charles County has
6 terrible air quality. That has financial
7 consequences for households.

8 So that -- that is not something that
9 you've considered in the past, and I understand
10 there is certain limits to what you can do, but
11 I would encourage in the future, I would love
12 to see, public health being considered by the
13 Commission when it comes to these rate
14 increases and also with prior ones. Labadie
15 has had the distinction of being the second
16 highest CO2 emitter in the country for four
17 years in a row. There were a lot of articles
18 about it a few months ago. And during the
19 summer heat wave of 2023, Barnes-Jewish saw an
20 increase from 210 to 240 daily patients to 230
21 to 270 daily patients. And with climate
22 change, this is just going to get worse and
23 worse and worse and worse. There are public
24 health costs to allowing Ameren to make money
25 off of us with public coal or with coal.

1 They should be betting on renewable
2 resources so customers don't have to shell out
3 for fuel costs and then pay for asthma
4 treatment, but that's not what's been
5 happening -- happening so far.

6 And, again, I spoke a lot earlier today,
7 so I will spare you but I do thank you for
8 being here. It's really moving that you showed
9 up this morning and are here again today. I
10 appreciate it, and I hope you'll consider those
11 who are most in need of assistance, and I hope
12 you give them grace because we're dying out
13 here, all right? Thank you very much.

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
15 Ms. DeRose. Mahala Pittman. And would you
16 state and spell your name for the record?

17 MS. PITTMAN: Sure, my name is Mahala
18 Pittman, M-a-h-a-l-a, P-i-t-t-m-a-n.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry I
20 mispronounced your name.

21 MS. PITTMAN: That's all right I'm used to
22 it.

23 (Mahala Pittman sworn.)

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Please go
25 ahead.

1 MS. PITTMAN: Hi, my name is Mahala, and I
2 am the regional field organizer for the Sierra
3 Club. I am grateful for the opportunity to
4 speak at today's public hearing and would like
5 to thank the PSC for holding public hearings
6 which are necessary for the communities that
7 you serve. I work for the Sierra Club, but I
8 am here as an individual to tell you about the
9 powerful opportunity I had to create a deep
10 canvassing campaign speaking to impacted
11 community members in energy burdened
12 neighborhoods.

13 So, in grass roots organizing, deep
14 canvassing is a powerful tactic. We are going
15 door to door. We are on the ground speaking to
16 people in marginalized communities. So, we use
17 a script centered around a 0 to 10 question,
18 and in our script, the question is on a scale
19 of 0 to 10, 0 being powerless, how much power
20 do you feel you have as an individual to have a
21 say on the decisions that Ameren makes that
22 impact your communities?

23 So, in sixth months of canvassing, June
24 through November, we saw an average pre-rating
25 of 2 to 3. So, what does that tell us? That

1 tells us that people who are experiencing high
2 levels of energy burden feel completely
3 powerless against monopoly utilities.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Is that to 2
5 to 3 percent of those --

6 MS. PITTMAN: No, the pre-rating from 0 to
7 10 is a 2 to 3. So, 0 being powerless like --
8 that pre-rating is --

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, so this
10 is based upon your polling between 1 and 10,
11 this is --

12 MS. PITTMAN: Uh-huh.

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, thank
14 you.

15 MS. PITTMAN: Yeah, the average was -- it
16 was like came out a 2.33 something. 2 to 3.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. I
18 was trying to follow the number.

19 MS. PITTMAN: Yeah, absolutely. So, after
20 speaking with so many people experiencing
21 energy burden, I can tell you that what I'm
22 hearing from the public is that the little
23 power do they feel, comes from within their
24 sphere of control, which means taking
25 unrealistic means to keep their energy down. I

1 heard many, many stories in my time on the
2 doors, such as people abandoning their HVAC
3 systems in heat waves, unplugging major
4 appliances such as refrigerators and hoping
5 that it does not comprise their household's
6 food supply overnight, buying battery powered
7 pushlights and putting them all over their
8 homes so they do not have to turn their lights
9 on at nighttime. In cold months, leaving the
10 oven open and on or to resort to space heaters,
11 which we know are fire hazards.

12 Raising energy rates would only increase
13 the dangerous lengths St. Louis families have
14 to resort to in order to keep the lights on.
15 Houses in St. Louis are around 100 years old on
16 average, and landlords have minimal incentives
17 to improve the energy inefficient of their
18 buildings as they are not the ones who pay the
19 energy bills.

20 Tenants are not able to make many
21 improvements to weatherize their units, and
22 that leaves renters with very little ability to
23 manage their energy consumption. Energy
24 burdened families resort to drastic measures,
25 including not using air conditioning in high

1 heat, which can be deadly. These families
2 should not be sacrificed for shareholder
3 profits.

4 Energy burdened communities are suffering.
5 **A rise in rates, especially ahead of the heat**
6 **waves we have come to expect in July and August**
7 **will be detrimental and even dangerous for**
8 **residents. Please do not allow Ameren to raise**
9 **rates on vulnerable populations. Thank you.**

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
11 your comments. Kathryn Pedia. Kathryn Pedia.
12 Elyse Schaeffer. And, Ms. Schaeffer, would you
13 state and spell your name for the record?

14 MS. SCHAEFFER: Elyse Schaeffer.
15 E-l-y-s-e, last name, Schaeffer,
16 S-c-h-a-e-f-f-e-r.

17 (Elyse Schaeffer sworn.)

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

19 MS. SCHAEFFER: Thank you so much for
20 being with us in person tonight, commissioners.
21 My name is Elyse Schaeffer, and I am testifying
22 on behalf of Missouri Coalition for the
23 Environment this evening. I have already
24 submitted written testimony electronically, so
25 you have access to the sources I make in

1 statements today, the sources I reference in
2 statements I'm making. Missouri Coalition for
3 the Environment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan
4 advocacy organization that seeks to empower
5 Missourians to protect their environment and
6 their health.

7 Ameren's proposed rate increase must not
8 be granted by the company who continues to
9 poison our air, water and well being. Instead
10 of investing clean, reliable, cost effective
11 renewal energy, Ameren continues to operate
12 harmful coal plants and build expensive,
13 unreliable methane or natural gas plants, both
14 detriment to the environment and health of all
15 Missourians. Ameren should not be allowed to
16 charge a single dollar more from rate payers
17 until their one billion dollar annual revenue
18 has been used to create a power grid that emits
19 zero green house gases. Ameren executives
20 should not be allowed to continue to profit
21 from harming our citizens, our air and our
22 water.

23 Solar power, wind power and, importantly
24 and unmentioned as of yet tonight, utility
25 scale battery storage units would allow the

1 company to provide cheaper energy without
2 harming Missourians health. For these reasons,
3 I urge the Public Service Commission to vote no
4 on this rate increase. Now is the time to
5 aggressively pursue renewable energy
6 infrastructure. Solar and wind are among the
7 cheapest and most reliable energy sources on
8 the market today. Moreover, solar panel has
9 shown a reliable decrease in cost for both
10 utilities and for rate payers.

11 These costs could be further lowered if
12 Ameren incorporates battery storage into if
13 their grid, and if the company applied for the
14 US Department of Energy's Energy Infrastructure
15 Reinvestment Program. Ameren is leaving
16 millions of dollars from the federal government
17 on the table while asking everyday Missourians
18 to pay for a necessary utility. Is it not as
19 if rate payers are hesitant about renewal
20 energy either. 98 customers expressed interest
21 in phase 2 of Ameren's current Renewable
22 Solutions Program though the company only
23 subscribed eight customers with that service.

24 MCE feels strongly that expanding cost
25 saving renewable energy infrastructure while

1 maximizing public dollars should be a
2 prerequisite for Ameren to increase costs for
3 consumers, and yet Ameren's most recently
4 approved infrastructure project was a methane
5 gas plant or a natural gas plant as the company
6 refers to it. Methane gas is a finite resource
7 and a fossil fuel and has extremely volatile
8 pricing, is unreliable to point of being deadly
9 in extreme cold, and its emission trap over 82
10 and a half times more heat than carbon dioxide.

11 Meanwhile, the company also continues to
12 operate the Labadie Coal Plant, my colleagues
13 at the Sierra Club have already mentioned how
14 harmful this is, and how it continues to warm
15 the planet and harm our health. Last year was
16 the hottest year on record in human history.
17 It was closely beat out by the last hottest
18 year on record, 2023.

19 In my lifetime, the City of St. Louis will
20 be experiencing over 50 days per summer that
21 are over 100 degrees. And at least one day
22 that reaches 125 degrees. You may not know
23 that heat is already the deadliest weather
24 event in the country. Increasing temperatures
25 will make this worse. It is your

1 responsibility as members of the PSC to ensure
2 that Missourians receive safe utilities. This
3 is clear from the first sentence in your
4 mission statement. Unless the PSC takes action
5 now to require more responsible energy
6 production from Ameren, more people will die.
7 This is not an exaggeration. Heat deaths are
8 predicted to rise by 370 percent in just the
9 next 25 years.

10 Rate payers should not be asked to pay a
11 premium for Ameren to harm our health and the
12 environment in which we live, work and
13 recreate. Others have already covered
14 comprehensively high executive compensation
15 that must be addressed. And, in conclusion,
16 Missouri Coalition for the Environment
17 respectfully urges the PSC to vote no on this
18 rate increase in order to hold Ameren
19 accountable to their rate payers by only
20 allowing an increase in rates if there is an
21 investment in a more secure energy future.
22 Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer
23 any followup questions you have.

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
25 your comments, Ms. Schaeffer. Michael Berg.

1 MR. BERG: My name is Michael Berg,
2 M-i-c-h-a-e-l, B-e-r-g. I live in St. Louis.
3 I'll keep my comments brief. I do not think
4 Ameren -- oh, I got to --

5 (Michael Berg sworn.)

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

7 MR. BERG: Yes, I do not believe Ameren
8 deserves anywhere close to the level of profit
9 they're asking for from their investments,
10 because I'm looking at the situation, looking
11 at this massive fines, 61 million dollars for
12 Rush Island. The refusal for years and years
13 to put modern pollution controls on the Labadie
14 plants that issued the toxics in St. Charles.
15 We should have it so that there's some sort of
16 cost on the executives and the shareholders and
17 not put the burden on -- so much of the burden
18 on the rate payers. So, I do not deserve (sic)
19 this level of rate increases is deserved.
20 That's all.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
22 your comments, Mr. Berg. Ben Molina. Mr.
23 Molina, would you state and spell your name for
24 the record?

25 MR. MOLINA: Yes, Ben Molina, B-e-n,

1 M-o-l-i-n-a.

2 (Ben Molina sworn.)

3 MR. MOLINA: Good evening, my name is Ben
4 Molina, and I am chair of Hispanic Leaders
5 Group. We are an advocacy and civic
6 organization advocating for the Latino
7 community here in the St. Louis region.

8 When the news of this proposed rate
9 increase came out, many in the Hispanic and
10 Latino communities shared their concerns, not
11 just for themselves but for their families an
12 also for their neighbors and the people they
13 serve. This is the primary reason I'm here
14 today, because that community is not likely to
15 come out to these type of hearings. However,
16 these higher electricity bills would have a
17 heavier burden for families who are already
18 struggling to make ends meet, and while I'm
19 here to speak on behalf of the Hispanic
20 community, I know this issue affects all
21 communities in our region because the rising
22 cost of living is something everybody is
23 feeling right now.

24 For many Latino and Hispanic families
25 paying for electricity takes up a bigger share

1 of their income compared to other groups. A
2 rate increase like this would only make it
3 harder for families who are stretched thin. On
4 top of that, our community is especially
5 vulnerable during extreme weather. Like what
6 we've seen here in the last couple of weeks.
7 Winters in St. Louis are brutal and so are
8 summers.

9 In those situations, having reliable
10 electricity for heating and cooling isn't just
11 a convenience, it's a necessity for staying
12 safe. Families are already having to choose
13 between keeping their homes safe or for paying
14 for other essentials like food or medical.
15 Increasing rates will only make this worse.

16 Earlier, I asked about language access
17 because there's also the issue of language
18 barriers. Many of the programs that are
19 supposed to help families with energy costs are
20 not accessible to those who don't speak English
21 fluently, and often these are the folks that
22 need the most. So without information and
23 support in their language, these programs have
24 a limited ability to help because folks can't
25 access them, putting them further into the hole

1 when the rates increase.

2 We understand that that Ameren is making
3 investments in infrastructure and renewable
4 energy, but those improvements shouldn't come
5 at the cost of the most vulnerable members of
6 our community. So, I urge Ameren to find other
7 ways to address this issue, solutions that
8 don't put an even heavier burden on those who
9 can't afford it. Thank you.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
11 Mr. Molina. I apologize if I butcher your
12 name. Ryan Schallert. And, again, I apologize
13 if I butchered your name.

14 MR. SCHALLERT: Hi, I'm Ryan Schallert,
15 St. Louis city resident.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Would you
17 spell your name for the record, please?

18 MR. SCHALLERT: Yeah, S-c-h-a-l-l-e-r-t.

19 (Ryan Schallert sworn.)

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, go
21 right ahead.

22 MR. SCHALLERT: Okay, thank you for the
23 opportunity to speak. As I said, my name is
24 Ryan Schallert. Everyone testifying here
25 today, obviously, opposes this rate increase

1 and have already made great points, so I'll try
2 to keep this short and sweet. I understand
3 both Ameren's operating costs and
4 infrastructure investments have been
5 increasing. Inflation has both affected
6 businesses and individuals alike. The
7 Consumers Council of Missouri reported over the
8 past three years Ameren's residential customers
9 have experienced significant increases in their
10 bills, outpacing both national inflation and
11 local wages in the same period. Additionally,
12 the Staff, the Commission Staff, who has
13 conducted studies and research regarding the
14 issue has recommended 10 percent lower increase
15 than the figure that Ameren has presented, so I
16 thank you for your efforts to regulate and keep
17 rate increases in check to protect Missouri
18 citizens and just want to encourage you to
19 think carefully about testimony that you hear
20 today and the data that has been presented.
21 Thank you.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
23 your comments. Rajiv Ravulapti. Sorry.

24 MR. RAVULAPATI: Thank you.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: If you would

1 state and spell your name for the record.

2 MR. RAVULAPATI: Yeah, my name is Rajiv
3 Ravulapati. My first name is spelled
4 R-a-j-i-v. Ravulapati is spelled
5 R-a-v-u-l-a-p-a-t-i.

6 (Rajiv Ravulapati sworn.)

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go right
8 ahead.

9 MR. RAVULAPATI: I'm speaking today as a
10 private citizen. I live here in the City of
11 St. Louis right over here in the Hill. I will
12 keep my points -- I echo the similar comments.
13 My comments in general is to not approve this
14 rate increase, but the harsh reality is, a rate
15 increase is going to happen. How much is --
16 how much of it is going to happen, I don't
17 know, but we as consumers are going to have to
18 swallow it. And every two years, we swallow
19 more and more and more. And there was a lot of
20 questions earlier directed at the utility. I
21 have a couple of comments and questions really
22 more so focused at the Commission and its
23 staff.

24 Your mission statement says you want to
25 provide reliable utility service that is just,

1 reasonable and affordable. Do any of us in
2 this room feel like the American life is
3 affordable anymore? These rates -- I'm lucky.
4 I make a six figure salary and I can afford
5 these kind of things. And I do believe we
6 should have service upgrades and infrastructure
7 upgrades when they are warranted. But if this
8 rate increase is going to happen, there are
9 options for as a consumer that we can try and
10 do to offset some of those costs. We can do
11 demand-side management solutions, have
12 emergency efficiency measures.

13 And I will actually give credit to the
14 utility where they actually wanted to keep --
15 there was a filing on -- the MEEIA filing on
16 Missouri Energy Efficiency Investment Act to
17 keep our state-run utility energy efficiency
18 programs. Ameren actually wanted to keep them,
19 but the Commission voted to remove them, so
20 there is not going to be utility incentive
21 programs for us residential consumers for both
22 commercial or residential. Just low income
23 eligible through 2025. So, our options to even
24 make our home energy efficiency to offset these
25 increase rates, they're eliminated.

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And I hate to
2 interject here. I'm not sure you're correct on
3 that. I did not oversee the Ameren MEEIA case.

4 MR. RAVULAPATI: I'm just going one of the
5 intervenors, what they have provided the
6 context for me. Two, I'd be curious just to
7 learn more detail, more transparency, on how
8 exhaustive the PSC put the investor-owned
9 utilities to showcase how exhaustive your
10 process is to ensure you've gone through every
11 option possible to not warrant a rate increase.
12 I know the utility has stated that they're
13 continuing to look at Inflation Reduction Act
14 opportunities, but we have a new president in
15 place. Two days ago, one of his first
16 executive orders was to halt any further
17 disbursement from the Inflation Reduction Act,
18 as well as the bipartisan Infrastructure Act
19 for the next 90 days, both pending awards as
20 well as currently funded contracted projects.
21 And those effect both utilities, policy makers,
22 community-based organizations were seeking that
23 money. It's a delay tactic, but, also, I think
24 there's going to be a concerted effort to claw
25 that money back, which is concerning.

1 So, that is generally my three main points
2 that I wanted to hit. I know this rate
3 increase is going to happen, but I do -- I do
4 urge the Commission to think a bit about how
5 exhaustive you're going to put the utility
6 through in order to prove these kind of rate
7 increases. But you're -- we're going to hit
8 with -- we're going to be hit with a rate
9 increase; that's just the reality; but it's
10 hard to keep swallowing this every two years.
11 Thank you.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
13 very much for your comments. Can you hold on
14 just a second, Mr. Ravulapati. One of the
15 attorneys has a question for you.

16 MR. PRINGLE: Not necessarily a question,
17 just wanted to give the case number for the
18 commission order on MEEIA for your own review.

19 MR. RAVULAPATI: I've got it.

20 MR. PRINGLE: You do have it. The
21 EO-2023-0316?

22 MR. RAVULAPATI: Yeah, thank you.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
24 Mr. Pringle. Joan Hubbard. Ms. Hubbard would
25 you state and spell your name for the record?

1 MS. HUBBARD: Joan Hubbard, J-o-a-n,
2 H-u-b-b-a-r-d.

3 (Joan Hubbard sworn.)

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Please go
5 ahead.

6 MS. HUBBARD: I'm here tonight speaking on
7 behalf of the League of Women Voters, among
8 with three of my members. So, there are four
9 of us here tonight. We are -- the League
10 supports energy policies that reduce energy
11 growth rates, emphasizing energy conservation
12 and encourage the use of renewable resources.
13 The League also supports rate-setting policies
14 for utilities with assistance for low income
15 individuals when energy policies bear unduly on
16 the poor.

17 We appreciate the opportunity to come in
18 at this public hearing on Ameren's rate
19 increase of roughly \$17 per month for those
20 using 1,100 kilowatt hours of usage. Ameren
21 has recently had a series of rate increases.
22 In addition, Public Service Commission has just
23 approved two fuel adjustment clauses, both
24 ER-2024-0205 and EQ-2024-0277, and the
25 renewable energy standard rate increase

1 mechanism resulting in additional costs for
2 residential customers.

3 The accumulation of additional rate
4 increases will increase the energy burden for
5 people who are already the most vulnerable, the
6 low income, fixed income and minority
7 communities. Ameren profits have seen
8 increased earnings that is reflected in their
9 infrastructure investments and the new electric
10 service rates. The League would urge the PSC,
11 the Public Service Commission, to consider the
12 increased energy burden and help their lower
13 income customers to control their costs. We
14 ask that you embrace renewables and become more
15 efficient, and we ask that you review the
16 timing of projects to reduce the need for this
17 increase. Thank you for your time.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
19 Dana Gray.

20 MS. GRAY: Hello.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
22 state your spell and name for the record?

23 MS. GRAY: Dana, D-a-n-a. Gray, G-r-a-y.

24 (Dana Gray sworn.)

25 MS. GRAY: I'm Dana Gray, and I live here

1 in the City of St. Louis, and I am the
2 community development outreach coordinator for
3 Tower Grove Community Development Corporation.
4 We're an affordable housing provider in the
5 city. We provide real estate and other
6 services to the community to help stabilize the
7 area. I have submitted comments online through
8 the EFIS system. They were comments that were
9 shared by our community members' concerns about
10 the rate increase as proposed, and all of them
11 were sharing their concerns about how were they
12 going to meet their household budget, because
13 of most community members are between 50 to 80
14 percent of the area median income, so they are
15 on very tight budgets.

16 And you all will be able to read those, so
17 I'm not going to recite what they have shared,
18 but I also wanted to also bring up what Ravij
19 had commented on about the MEEIA, and I'm
20 wondering if the Commission will reconsider
21 supporting the utility's energy efficiency
22 programs going forward if the federal
23 government does renege on the IRA and BIL
24 programs that are supporting energy efficiency
25 improvements. I hope you'll give that

1 consideration.

2 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: As I
3 indicated earlier, the Commission can't answer
4 questions this evening.

5 MS. GRAY: Yes, sir, thank you.

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
7 Bear with me just a moment. Ms. Oxford.

8 MS. OXFORD: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Jeanette, your
10 handwriting is getting bad.

11 MS. OXFORD: Oh, I'm sorry. Arthritis.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I had a hard
13 time reading it. Commissioner Coleman helped
14 me. Thank you very much.

15 MS. OXFORD: I remember that I was after
16 Dana so I boosted myself up.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Would you
18 state your name for the record?

19 MS. OXFORD: It's Jeanette,
20 J-e-a-n-e-t-t-e, Mott, M-o-t-t, Oxford,
21 O-x-f-o-r-d. Better known by the nickname JMO
22 by about half the people in the room.

23 (Jeanette Mott Oxford sworn.)

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay.

25 MS. OXFORD: Well, like many people who

1 have spoken before, I'm also a senior citizen
2 who receives Social Security, so I got my
3 letter in December telling me I had a 2.5
4 increase in my Social Security check. I also
5 got a 4.5 percent increase, I believe, from
6 MOSERS for my state retirement check as a
7 retired legislator. And I was very grateful
8 for that, but 2.5 percent or 4.5 percent, a
9 nearly 16 percent increase in my electric bill,
10 that's just a whole lot higher, and I think
11 it's really important that you all have come
12 here tonight to play your essential role as
13 folks that evaluate what's a fair rate for an
14 investor-owned monopoly utility company to
15 charge us.

16 So thank you very much for coming out and
17 hearing the public on this matter. It's really
18 important that -- that we do have laws in
19 Missouri that can help hold down the rates, as
20 Mr. Woods mentioned earlier, that we do better
21 than some states, and I think that's because
22 you all have been playing an oversight role;
23 and the companies have to justify why they're
24 raising the rates so much. Because I do have
25 more than one source of retirement income, it's

1 an inconvenience for me if my rates went up
2 this much, but it really is desperate for a lot
3 of other people.

4 And I'd like to share especially someone
5 who couldn't be here tonight, a 69-year-old
6 woman in Souldard, who has disability who is a
7 member of my church, a friend of our church,
8 who makes less than \$900 a month on SSI, and
9 she asked me to tell you, her name is Mary C.
10 O'Connell, she asked me to tell you she cannot
11 afford a 16 percent raise in her utility bills.

12 I often deliver donations to Isaiah 58
13 Ministries, a food pantry on South Grand. I
14 share resources with Winter Outreach, Blessings
15 In a Bag and Joint Neighborhood Ministry to
16 help unhoused neighbors, and I know how often
17 high utility bills take a person from that
18 point where they're just precarious about their
19 housing security to becoming unhoused. Often
20 finding low rent means your utility bills are
21 going to be high, because low rent almost
22 always means no insulation, no weather
23 stripping, no energy efficient furnace.

24 So, there are many, many people who cannot
25 afford this kind of rate increase. How many?

1 The Who Pays? Report from the Institute on
2 Taxation and Economic Policy says that one out
3 of five of Missouri's non-elderly households
4 has an annual earnings of less than \$20,900
5 annually with an annual -- an average for that
6 group of \$12,100. So, there's just a lot of
7 folks that can't afford this.

8 You might say, well, Ameren doesn't serve
9 the whole state, but the Ameren area has some
10 of the highest poverty rate counties in this
11 state, and you can see that on the poverty
12 report published by the Missouri Community
13 Action -- I'd like to share this in writing,
14 you know, hand it in to you all to go onto the
15 record, because it cites the websites, and I
16 would appreciate being able to do that.

17 I'd also like to share a brief remark from
18 Reverend Deacon Barbara Click of the Trinity
19 Food Ministry. She was ill, and had planned to
20 be here tonight and share this with you, and
21 she asked that I share her comments that the
22 majority of people that share there at Trinity
23 are ideally called the working poor, meaning
24 that they work but wages are so low that they
25 remain under the poverty rate. And many of our

1 community members live on fixed wages. Many
2 people live in houses that are in need of
3 repairs. I personally know a great many people
4 who suffer through high humidity and high
5 temperatures with their air conditioning shut
6 off, because they cannot afford the current
7 usage rate to increase that rate to above
8 15 percent would be even more onerous.

9 People come to the pantry for food,
10 because too often they must make a choice
11 between food and rent or food and utilities. I
12 know others who had their electricity cut off
13 for nonpayment. Imagine them now in this
14 deadly weather. In 2023, the poverty rate in
15 St. Louis, Missouri was 19.8 percent, eleven
16 and half times higher than the State of
17 Missouri, where on average, it's 12 percent.

18 No one likes price hikes, however, it's
19 not a matter of liking or disliking. That with
20 19.8 poverty rate here, it's a matter of being
21 able to maintain basic human needs that keep us
22 alive and striving. So, I'd also like to share
23 Reverend Deacon Click's letter to go into your
24 record, if that's all right.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, if you

1 want to bring those up here, I would be happy
2 to.

3 MS. OXFORD: Okay, thank you.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: If you could
5 give them to Forrest there, he can bring them
6 up.

7 MS. OXFORD: Thank you very much.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And I'm going
9 to designate your first one with your name at
10 the top as Commission Exhibit 1 for the
11 purposes of this hearing. And for the purposes
12 of this hearing, I'm going to submit your
13 letter from Reverend Click as Exhibit 2, so
14 Commission Exhibit 1 and 2 are part of this
15 local public hearing record. And thank you for
16 your comments. Jack Johnson. Mr. Johnson,
17 would you state and spell your name for the
18 record?

19 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, Jack Johnson. J-a-c-k.
20 Last name, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

21 (Jack Johnson sworn.)

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Please go
23 ahead.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Great, thank you. First I
25 want thank you all for being here. Thank you

1 for the work that you do. I do want to make
2 these statements, not just on my behalf. As a
3 personal person, I can actually afford, but I
4 work within the community, through my
5 fraternity and through other neighborhood
6 organizations and we work with people who
7 cannot afford this. One of the main purposes
8 is that when we do go forth and try to help
9 people with their services, we try to look at
10 resolutions.

11 One of the points I do want to bring out
12 is that Ameren is a top rated company, Fortune
13 500 company, privately owned, in which, the two
14 gentlemen kept stating, is not about the
15 shareholders. Yet, in their recommendation,
16 the ROE is speaking about the shareholders
17 wanting 9.7 percent. So, it's about the
18 shareholder. It is about capital. One of the
19 other statements that I do want to go on record
20 is stating that there really is no
21 justification for this rate hike. As others
22 have stated, in the last two to three years we
23 have had to increase -- they increased our rate
24 but there has not been any changes. There's no
25 justification. They did not send us anything

1 about where they're going to use this rate hike
2 money to benefit us, you know, as utility
3 customers.

4 The third point I want to make is, to go
5 on the record, as a business owner, I look
6 within my business to change my infrastructure
7 before I decide to raise my rates. Has Ameren
8 UE done that? Especially, when you have a CEO
9 that gets more than 9 million dollars. 2
10 million salary, where is the other 45 million
11 in bonuses and things of that nature? How we
12 can start there before you start rate hiking?
13 People cannot afford this. So, also, for the
14 record, I want to state that one of the major
15 changes with this rate hike is this we are in
16 the economy that is suffering at this point in
17 time. So, as a business, take that into
18 consideration which are customers as well as
19 the ones who are going to be future customers,
20 you need to take that into consideration,
21 because not only as everyone else has stated,
22 and I want to go on the record, when you raise
23 these hikes, rate hike, you not only affect
24 that resident, you affect the businesses; you
25 affect the economy; you affect their children;

1 you affect businesses like me.

2 So, I do implore that the Commission
3 really take into consideration is this a need?
4 If there is not a need for this rate hike, it
5 shouldn't happen. Thank you very much for your
6 time.

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
8 Mr. Johnson for your comments. Nick Miller.

9 MR. MILLER: Hello, Nick Miller, N-i-c-k,
10 M-i-l-l-e-r.

11 (Nick Miller sworn.)

12 MR. MILLER: A lot of people have already
13 said what all of us are thinking. Nobody wants
14 this rate increase. Nobody. I wish you guys
15 could have been heard earlier because there
16 were twice as many people here, and I think
17 most of them thought that they were giving you
18 guys information, so I just want to put on
19 record that there were a lot more people here
20 that thought they were talking to you guys.
21 So, me personally, I work in the film industry.
22 I work in LA and New York, and I make LA and
23 New York rates, so I do well. My wife works at
24 Merrill Lynch, we do good.

25 It's still hard for us. It's hard for

1 everyone. Everyone right now is having
2 problems. We don't want you guys to increase
3 these rates. A lot of people before were
4 talking about the CEO making 8 million, 9
5 million, whatever, and they justified it by
6 saying he's smart. Somebody else mentioned
7 that they're putting advertising at the Blue
8 games and things like that. How smart is it
9 that Ameren is spending money on advertising
10 when I have no choice? It's not like Coke and
11 Pepsi, I get to pick one. It's only Ameren.
12 That's my only choice. Why are you spending
13 money on advertising? That's just not very
14 smart. Maybe we need to spend less money and
15 not do a rate increase. Thank you.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
17 Elysia Russell.

18 MS. RUSSELL: Hello.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
20 state and spell your name for the record?

21 MS. RUSSELL: Uh, yes. My name is Elysia
22 Russell, E-l-y-s-i-a R-u-s-s-e-l-l.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
24 would you like to tell the Commission this
25 evening?

1 MS. RUSSELL: Yes. Good evening, my name
2 is Elysia Russell, sustainability director for
3 the City of St. Louis. First, I'd like to
4 thank the commissioners for your time this
5 evening. It came to my attention that the St.
6 Louis City was not originally one of the
7 locations for an in-person hearing, so I
8 appreciate the Commission scheduling
9 flexibility as I know you all are very busy,
10 and as much are aware, the St. Louis region
11 makes a majority of Ameren customer base and
12 will be impacted by this proposed rate
13 increase. So, the city residents must have the
14 opportunity to participate in the fullest
15 extent, and I appreciate everyone's comments
16 earlier.

17 While I understand that rate increases are
18 necessary from time to time as cost of
19 operations increase and new technology must be
20 implemented, increased electric rates can
21 increase the energy burden of a household that
22 is already struggling to pay bills and maintain
23 comfortable temperatures inside. Over half of
24 St. Louis City households are occupied by
25 renters, yet renters have the least control

1 over their energy burden. They're not in
2 charge of upgrading HVAC systems or completing
3 other building envelope improvements but
4 they're the ones paying the electric bill.
5 With most of the city housing stock predate the
6 1940s, significant HVAC and weatherization
7 improvements must be done overtime to insure
8 that buildings operate efficiently. High
9 energy bills have a cascading affect when we at
10 look at compounding the affects of high energy
11 burden with other environmental impacts,
12 such as extreme weather like we recently
13 experienced.

14 Other areas -- often areas with high
15 energy burden, meaning they're paying more than
16 ten percent of their annual income just on
17 these energy bills, also have higher rates of
18 asthma, high urban heat temperatures, more heat
19 related illnesses and more inequities that cost
20 someone to choose between running their
21 air-conditioner if they have one or paying
22 their medical bills. As someone who grew up in
23 a household that experienced the struggle of
24 paying energy bills, I understand firsthand the
25 feeling and the lasting impact these difficult

1 choices have on families. For example, some
2 residents may huddle all together in one room
3 with the window unit during the heat waves of
4 summer just to cool off or go to even more
5 extreme measures that are very dangerous just
6 to prevent their electric bill from skyrocketing.

7 In addition to financial stress, residents
8 may dread going home because school or work is
9 much more tolerable than environment.

10 Residents will be forced to make difficult
11 decisions such as paying their electric bill or
12 buying groceries for their families. The list
13 goes on and on, and the cascading effects are
14 detrimental. This can lead residents to become
15 trapped in generational poverty, lead to
16 evictions and eventually become unhoused.
17 Ameren has already asked for a rate increase in
18 the past two years. Asking for another
19 increase is excessive. The city of St. Louis
20 is open to working with the PSC to identify
21 ways to remove barriers. To make true
22 community solar and storage more accessible in
23 our region, so it's no longer a premium service
24 for the wealthy.

25 Based on our regional transmission area,

1 we are in a prime area to receive optimal
2 sunlight to power homes and business through
3 solar. We've seen great things Ameren has been
4 able to do in Missouri regarding solar power,
5 we must do the same here in Missouri. Reliable
6 energy means renewal energy, so thank you for
7 your time.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
9 your comments, Ms. Russell. Legal Services of
10 Eastern Missouri.

11 MS. LEONARD: Hello, my name is Abbie
12 Leonard, A-b-b-i-e, L-e-o-n-a-r-d.

13 (Abbie Leonard sworn.)

14 MS. LEONARD: So, hello, my name is Abbie
15 Leonard. I'm a social worker at Legal Services
16 of Eastern Missouri and a St. Louis City
17 resident. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri,
18 LSEM, is a nonprofit legal aid organization
19 that has offered free legal services to low
20 income Missourians for over 60 years. We
21 advocate with and for clients that are most
22 often unrepresented by many of the
23 infrastructure systems that are in place to
24 benefit us all.

25 As utility companies, such as Ameren, are

1 trying to upgrade technology and move toward
2 more sustainable resources, consumers bear the
3 brunt of the cost while the company continues
4 to reap profits. Ameren has filed for a rate
5 increase with the PSC three times in 38 months
6 including this case resulting in substantial
7 upward adjustments to electric rates for its
8 customers like others have spoken about.

9 The proposed rate increase perpetuates a
10 cycle in urban, rural and low income
11 communities, as well as communities of color
12 disproportionately pay for most of the changes
13 to the infrastructure systems, while affluent
14 communities benefit from these improvements.
15 Because of this disparity, the proposed rate
16 increase will result in higher costs for low
17 income Missourians and increased environmental,
18 social and economic harm to clients that LSEM
19 serves.

20 We have seen no significant decrease in
21 the number of clients and perspective clients
22 struggling to afford utilities, despite
23 exhaustive efforts to connect them with
24 available assistance programs. The stark
25 reality is that these programs are failing to

1 provide meaningful relief. Since the last rate
2 increase, LSEM has directly represented 1,375
3 households facing housing insecurity, while
4 nearly 5,500 additional callers, desperate for
5 health, could not be served. Nearly all of
6 these households reported an inability to keep
7 up with their utility bills highlighting a
8 systematic failure. And this is just the tip
9 of the iceberg. Clients across all of our
10 programs grapple with the same unaffordable
11 burden underscoring the urgent need for Ameren
12 to implement effective solutions, rather than
13 relying on inaccessible assistance programs
14 that leave thousands without relief.

15 We insist that access to power is a
16 necessity, and that electricity is a
17 fundamental human right. Denying the Ameren
18 rate increased request will sustain the health,
19 livelihoods and futures of low income
20 Missourians and communities of color. LCEM
21 urges the Commission to reject the request for
22 an electricity rate increase, thereby
23 encouraging increase access to a resource such
24 as power. Thank you for listening.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,

1 Ms. Leonard. Joe Burkitt. Mr. Burkitt, would
2 you state your name for the record?

3 MR. BURKITT: Sure, Joe, J-o-e, Burkitt,
4 B-u-r-k-i-t-t.

5 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry,
6 how do you pronounce it, Burkitt?

7 MR. BURKITT: Burkitt.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

9 (Joe Burkitt sworn.)

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
11 would you like to tell the Commission this
12 evening?

13 MR. BURKITT: First, thank you for the
14 opportunity to speak about Ameren Missouri's
15 proposed rate hike. What I'd like to do is
16 propose alternates that do not burden the
17 working class families, and then address the
18 financial health and spending priorities of
19 Ameren as reflected in their recent financial
20 discloses. Ameren can balance its financial
21 goals without raising rates by capping executive
22 bonuses and align compensation with public
23 utility Missouri to serve communities
24 affordably, reallocating unnecessary
25 expenditures from areas like luxury fleet

1 vehicles to customer-focused investments.
2 Reevaluating capital projects to prioritize
3 essential infrastructure needs over less
4 critical expenses. A lot of people touched on
5 these numbers, so I'm just going to go over
6 them very quickly.

7 Ameren reported a net income of
8 975,000,000 for 2004 (sic) continuing its trend
9 of strong financial performance. Let's see
10 what else, their top executives earned
11 exorbitant salaries and bonuses. The CEO alone
12 made over 8 million, we've already talked about
13 this.

14 Ameren prioritizes rewarding executives
15 and investors while asking customers to pay
16 more for essential services, redirecting even a
17 portion of these funds to offset operational
18 costs would mitigate the need for rate
19 increases. While Ameren cites increased
20 infrastructure investments as the reason for
21 their earnings growth, their spending choices
22 raise concerns. I don't know if anybody has
23 seen down at the Ameren headquarters, the
24 security vehicles, they are Ford Mustangs EVS.
25 While I understand that that may align with

1 sustainability goals, that's far from
2 necessary. They're much more affordable EVS
3 cars out there. Ford Mustangs for security,
4 that's ridiculous, right?

5 Their operating expenses alone included
6 525 million for other operations and
7 maintenance, I say that in quotes, in Q3 2024
8 alone. That could be scrutinized for savings.
9 Ameren increased its capital expenditures by
10 over 450 million year over year and area ripe
11 for careful review to cut not critical
12 projects. Ameren claims to focus on
13 affordability while increasing dividends and
14 expanding capital projects that benefit
15 shareholders more than rate payers. These
16 contradictions highlight an opportunity to find
17 efficiencies and savings without relying on
18 increased rates that disproportionately affect
19 working families.

20 I also learned some new information about
21 the Public Service Commission tonight that
22 makes me wonder who you are working for? I
23 know you can't answer questions, but just
24 something to think about. You only want to cut
25 40 million of the 400 and what, 460 million?

1 How out of touch are you with how it is to work
2 and live in the real world? I urge the Public
3 Service Commission to carefully review Ameren
4 financial practices and consider alternative
5 solutions that do not place undue financial
6 burdens on Missouri residents. Thank you for
7 your time.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
9 your comments. Joe Bonzillo. Is there any Joe
10 whose last name begins with a B? I'm sorry.
11 Yes.

12 MR. BURKITT: Sorry --

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'm having a
14 hard time reading your name, what's your name,
15 sir?

16 MR. PONZILLO: Joe Ponzillo,
17 P-o-n-z-i-l-l-o. Sorry about the handwriting,
18 fell out a window.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Spell that
20 one more time please.

21 MR. PONZILLO: P, like Paul, O, like
22 Oscar, N, like Nancy, Z, like Zebra, i-l-l-o.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay. Again,
24 I apologize.

25 (Joe Ponzillo sworn.)

1 MR. PONZILLO: Tonight after leaving this
2 meeting, I will be going to a shelter,
3 specifically the Ferguson Warming Shelter in
4 St. Stephen Church. I do that on top of my
5 9:00 to 5:00 job during the winter. I've been
6 doing similar work with a variety of groups for
7 about five years now, including groups like
8 Winter Outreach St. Louis, Pot Bangers, A Red
9 Circle. Specifically, with respect to one of
10 my colleagues in the audience, he'll be
11 testifying later, his name is Chris, we worked
12 on a utility assistance program. I did it as a
13 volunteer. When I did that, I encountered
14 individuals who were at risk of becoming
15 unhoused as a result of burdensome utility
16 payments, some numbering in thousands. The
17 funds were insufficient in some cases, and I do
18 not know the outcome of what happened.

19 In my experience of having done unhoused
20 outreach, I've encountered individuals who
21 lived in warehouses that have been infested
22 with rats. If you want pictures, I am more
23 than willing to show them to you. Later on,
24 those individuals in those same warehouses in
25 single degree weather had to choose between

1 staying in a warehouse where the only source of
2 heat was an oil drum with the -- fueled by the
3 remnants of a pallet that I broke with I had in
4 my car or being separated from their service
5 dog and possibly either having their service
6 dog die or having them all die due to
7 insufficient heating.

8 When I spoke earlier, I was talking with
9 somebody who had previously justified Ameren's
10 executive receiving 9 million dollars per year.
11 I think that the sheer lack of priorities is
12 almost criminal in terms of justifying such
13 outrageous salaries while there are individuals
14 who are paying their utilities to a company
15 while they're at a risk to become homeless.
16 While I've done this type of work, I've seen
17 people die. I've seen people die due to
18 exposure.

19 When the temporary homeless encampment
20 that was just north of the Edward Jones Dome, I
21 forget the name of the building but it has the
22 giant Vess bottle out front, it's by 170. When
23 that one was shut down in 2021, the next
24 morning I found an individual who went by the
25 name "Big Dog", I didn't know his actual name,

1 people don't share them that much, dead about
2 600 feet from the Ameristar Casino in --
3 between the vista of abandoned buildings. One
4 of them -- I believe actually two of them had
5 burned down but that was after finding his
6 body. I do not have faith that the Commission
7 will protect the interests of the people of the
8 city and of the state and of -- if families do
9 not go unhoused, especially in weather like
10 this, and, frankly, I have lost faith in the
11 American political and economic system
12 entirely.

13 If you have any questions, feel free but
14 I'm going to head out and go to said shelter at
15 St. Stephens in Ferguson and do an overnight
16 there and then tomorrow, I will wake up and do
17 an eight hour workday. So have a good night.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
19 very much for your comments. Brina and Allen
20 Lyles. Are the Lyles here? Chris Sudwick.

21 MR. SUDLICK: Hi, that's Christopher
22 Sudlick. C-h-r-i-s-t-o-p-h-e-r, S-u-d-l-i-c-k.

23 (Christopher Sudlick sworn.)

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

25 MR. SUDLICK: So, earlier tonight, Ameren

1 came in and they told a story. They told them
2 a story about them being a corporation.
3 They're just doing their level best to provide
4 us reliable electricity at the lowest rates
5 possible. But that's not the only story they
6 tell, and everybody here believed it and
7 responded to that story in their comments.
8 There's -- the other story they tell, however,
9 is to their shareholders. And I have in my
10 hand, the shareholders report from 2023, the
11 latest up on their website, and it doesn't tell
12 the story of a company that is struggling or
13 that's just barely doing what's necessary to
14 keep rates down and to keep delivering reliable
15 power.

16 What they say instead is from 2013 to 2023
17 their core earnings per diluted share went from
18 \$2.08 apiece to \$4.41, a 121 percent increase.
19 They also say from 2013 to 2023, the dividends
20 per share went from \$1.60 to \$2.52, most of
21 that since 2021 in the past three years. A
22 massive and accelerating increase of
23 58 percent. And then from this final draft
24 from the second page of the shareholder's
25 report, they have listed the total shareholder

1 return, and to be helpful, they've listed it
2 right next to the S&P 500 total shareholder
3 return over that same period, from 2013 to
4 2023. The S&P 500, the free market capitalism,
5 had a return of 135 percent.

6 Ameren, a public utility and a monopoly,
7 that should be regulated to prevent any such
8 massive gains off of the public, had a return
9 of 173 percent. Almost 40 percent higher than
10 S&P 500.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And I
12 apologize, would you say what the S&P number
13 was again.

14 MR. SUDLICK: 135 percent.

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.

16 MR. SUDLICK: So, what this shows us is a
17 corporation making massive profits and massive
18 returns and then turning around and lying to
19 the people of the city and telling them they
20 are doing their best to deliver affordable
21 power, when what they're doing instead is doing
22 their best to deliver enormous returns to
23 already incredibly rich people. We've heard
24 testimony tonight from poor and struggling
25 people. Today, the Post Dispatch had an

1 article that 171,000 people in the St. Louis
2 area are behind on their rates, are at risk of
3 having their power shut off. What we're
4 talking about with this rate increase is mass
5 social murder, is the execution and the
6 criminal attack on the working people of this
7 city, on the retired, on the seniors, on the
8 elders and disabled in order to give greedy
9 parasites and cannibals unlimited free money,
10 so they can feed off the hard working people of
11 this state.

12 I implore you to not approve this rate
13 increase, but I know you're going to anyways,
14 so what I want to do is implore everybody else
15 in this room to start attending events. Go to
16 the DSA; go to the PSL; go to the Sunrise
17 Movement. Organize against these corrupt and
18 absolutely unsaveable person who are going to
19 screw and kill more of our neighbors and more
20 of the citizens of this state for the profits
21 of people like him. And some of them. That's
22 all I have to say.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: That 171,000
24 number, you said that was in today's Post
25 Dispatch; is that correct?

1 MR. SUDLICK: It might have been
2 yesterday. I saw the article today.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: But it was in
4 the last two day?

5 MR. SUDLICK: Yes.

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE SEYER: Okay. Thank
7 you, Mr. Sudlick for you comments --

8 MR. SUDLICK: Would you like the sheets?

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'd love
10 them. Would you like to make these a hearing
11 exhibit? There's five pages. I'm going to put
12 together as a single exhibit for purposes of
13 this -- this will be Commission Exhibit 3 and
14 will be attached to the transcript. Garrett
15 Finazzo. I apologize if I'm mistaking an R for
16 an N or vice versa.

17 MR. FINAZZO: Garrett Finazzo.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
19 Mr. Finazzo. And would you spell your name for
20 the record?

21 MR. FINAZZO: G-a-r-r-e-t-t,
22 F-i-n-a-z-z-o.

23 (Garrett Finazzo sworn.)

24 MR. FINAZZO: Like many other people, I
25 want to thank you all for being here for these

1 hearings. I know that you guys at the Public
2 Service Commission genuinely do care what
3 people think, and how these rate increases
4 affect regular folks. I know that because of
5 your actions in 2023, Ameren was seeking a 30
6 -- I think a 13 percent rate hike. You guys
7 listened to people and only came back with
8 6 percent. That was fantastic. I also know
9 from the actions of our state legislature and
10 governors, past and present, that our state
11 government cares a lot more about the welfare
12 of businesses than regular people. And as some
13 of the people here who have testified already,
14 this is going to affect a lot of small business
15 owners. 15 percent increase hits them a lot
16 harder than it hits a lot of us, because their
17 costs, their energy costs, are a lot higher. I
18 am not a small business owner like Jack Johnson
19 was.

20 I am an organizer for Metropolitan
21 Congregations United. We represent more than
22 30 congregations around the greater St. Louis
23 area, and we partner with more than 20 others.
24 This is going to hit religious institutions as
25 well, which I know our state government also

1 cares about. I can't talk about the finances
2 for a lot of our member congregations, but I
3 can talk about my own, which is Gethsemane
4 Lutheran Church, the one on Hampton. There's
5 three. Only so many church names to go around,
6 you know. I'm on church council at Gethsemane.
7 We talk about finances all the time, just
8 approved our next year's budget. We
9 consistently run a deficit. We have a
10 relatively small congregation with limited
11 finances, and they care a lot about keeping the
12 church going. But it's still tough for us and
13 for a lot of religious communities.

14 If this rate increase goes through, it's
15 going to increase our yearly deficit this year
16 by 75 percent. That's a big hit for a church
17 like ours that is struggling to get by. So, I
18 just wanted to remind you all that in addition
19 to the regular people this is going to affect,
20 who I know that you care about, and the
21 business owners who I know our government cares
22 about, this is going to affect many other
23 religious institutions and nonprofits that are
24 trying to run on the limited finances. Thank
25 you.

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
2 your comments. I appreciate them. Chris
3 Willcox. Chris Willcox. Mr. Wilcox will you
4 spell your name for the record?

5 MR. WILLCOX: Yes, C-h-r-i-s,
6 W-i-l-l-c-o-x.

7 (Chris Willcox sworn.)

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: What would
9 you like to tell us this evening?

10 MR. WILLCOX: Good evening, my name is
11 Chris Willcox. I live in Downtown West
12 Neighborhood in St. Louis City.

13 Ameren is asking for a third rate increase
14 in almost as many years. For the third time,
15 in this community we are showing up in large
16 numbers to tell them we still can't afford it.
17 Because of the last two increases, Ameren's
18 rates have risen above national inflation and
19 local wages. I'd like to assure Ameren's
20 representatives here that we are not stupid.
21 We are not going to pretend that 2017 wasn't a
22 completely different world than we live in now.
23 **A few things have happened between then and**
24 **2025. We know how much harder it has been for**
25 **everyone on the margins. In most cases,**

1 leases -- for most leases, utility shutoffs are
2 cause for eviction. Homelessness went up
3 18 percent over the last year, which was itself
4 an all-time high. People who were sleeping on
5 the streets last night had to endure
6 single-digit temperatures.

7 Just one month ago, St. Louis released the
8 first set of rental assistance since 2023 and
9 held an organized event to help people to
10 apply. I want to think many who are in
11 attendance today and who volunteered for it.
12 With two weeks notice, we had over 20 people
13 come in one day for help at the Julia Davis
14 Library. The whole program was closed after
15 less than three weeks because the money went
16 that quick. Many of these who came -- many of
17 those who came in were also behind on utility
18 bills because they were using what little money
19 they had to balance overdue rent and utilities
20 with what little they have left.

21 It needs to be said that Ameren is a
22 monopoly that had at least a billion dollars in
23 profit last year. Mr. Martin Lyons, Junior,
24 their chief executive, took home between 9
25 billion (sic) dollars between salary, bonuses

1 and stock for 2024 selling a service people
2 need to live in the 21st century.

3 Every penny of profit is pure waste. The
4 only reason we don't pay for what it costs to
5 provide service is because the state guarantees
6 them a rate of profit so they can have a little
7 extra money for shareholders, executives and
8 pointless middle men. Every cent of profit is
9 from our rates and the debt they can leverage
10 based on the rates we will pay in the future.
11 Ameren exists to take our money and lie heap
12 (sic) a public subsidy they can expect because
13 we know people cannot afford it. The proper
14 rate of return on equity for a public service
15 that we have a basic need to fund is zero. I
16 recommend the Ameren employees take a good,
17 long look in the mirror tonight after -- after
18 doing this for the third time. Really look and
19 ask yourself, is this what you wanted to be
20 doing with your life? Do you really want to
21 come here next time and help a few more people
22 sleep on the streets so Ameren can make another
23 six billion dollars of profit, can make another
24 billion dollars of profit next year. Is it
25 worth it? Than you.

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
2 your comments, Mr. Willcox. David Flavin.

3 MR. FLAVIN: David Flavin. D-a-v-i-d. F,
4 as in Frank, l-a-v, as in Victor, i-n.

5 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry. I
6 missed the L in your name.

7 (David Flavin sworn.)

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, go
9 ahead.

10 MR. FLAVIN: Yeah, I wanted to -- I'm also
11 a senior citizen and once this is approved, if
12 you approved any rate increase for Ameren, so
13 gas is going to come here, you're going to see
14 sewer come here wanting rate increases also.
15 We're on fixed incomes. It's going to be
16 harder and for harder for people to make ends
17 meet, okay? One of things, too, Ameren just
18 built a brand new building on Creve Coeur Mill
19 Road, and they opened it last year. And then
20 my other question come backs to is the
21 infrastructure money. Biden signed into law
22 infrastructure money. Missouri got their cut.
23 Ameren should have got their cut, too. What
24 happened to all that money they got, okay?
25 For solar power in that -- in the housing,

1 it takes a year to get something through Ameren
2 to get solar power in your house. They
3 don't -- and I know right now there's a lady
4 that's at 14 months trying to get solar power
5 in her house. Why it is taking so long,
6 because they can turn around and change plans
7 and everything else on the fly to do whatever
8 they want to do. You almost have to force them
9 by threatening to sue them to get something
10 done. So, thank you very much.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
12 Mr. Flavin. Sharon Elliott.

13 MS. ELLIOTT: Hi, I'm Sharon Elliott,
14 S-h-a-r-o-n, E-l-l-i-o-t-t.

15 (Sharon Elliott sworn.)

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

17 MS. ELLIOTT: Yes, thank you for the
18 opportunity to speak. I'm speaking as a
19 private citizen who shares many of the same
20 concerns that others have shared, so I'll keep
21 it brief. I live in the Third Ward of
22 University City, which is north of Olive, and
23 the lower income folks in U City live up there.
24 And the poverty rate in that area, according to
25 the latest American Community Survey, is

1 14.5 percent. People live below the poverty
2 line. And the state's poverty line, I think,
3 is at 12.8 percent right now, so it's even
4 worse than the state.

5 The last figure I could find in the Third
6 Ward, the per capital income, is 26,900. So
7 this increase, you know, will be very hard, and
8 a lot of seniors also live in the Third Ward,
9 who are on fixed incomes. So, I'm concerned
10 about my neighbors. I'm concerned about
11 anybody that I've heard about tonight. I'm
12 also concerned about our health, because I just
13 think that the PSC should require Ameren to
14 make the transition to cheaper, safer renewable
15 energy sources before asking rate payers for
16 any more money. The Labadie Coal Fire Plant is
17 among the highest polluters in the country that
18 is spewing sulfur dioxides, carbon dioxides, it
19 affects the air quality in the St. Louis area,
20 and the small particles coming from the plant
21 worsen lung, heart and neurological conditions.

22 The American Lung Association gave St.
23 Louis City a D grade for particle pollution in
24 2024, and a lot of that that has to do what's
25 coming from the Labadie plant. And the coal

1 ash ponds are polluting the area's drinking
2 water, despite the gentleman from Ameren UE,
3 and Ameren UE says that the EPA and DNR said
4 there is no threat from the coal ponds. Well,
5 there is. And I just -- he also stated earlier
6 they're not planning to spend 1.6 billion for
7 scrubbers on the Labadie Plant. No coal ash
8 pond abatement is planned, yet, they're asking
9 for more money.

10 So, you know, people can't heat their
11 homes, and we're getting sick. So, my hope is,
12 I respectfully hope that the PSC will not
13 approve this rate increase and thanks for the
14 chance to speak. Thank you.

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
16 Myisha Johnson. Would you state and your spell
17 narks.

18 MS. JOHNSON: Myisha, M-y-i-s-h-a,
19 Johnson, J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

20 (Myisha Johnson sworn.)

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, go
22 ahead.

23 MS. JOHNSON: Last week I submitted 25
24 comments from residents that work with me at
25 Metropolitan Congregations United. They are

1 community members, and also Ameren customers.
2 They stated that if you raise their rents -- I
3 mean, their utilities, it would be hard for
4 them to pay their rents. It's already hard for
5 them to make the ends meet with the income that
6 they're making. Yes, we raised minimum wage,
7 but it's not livable wage. Lot of people in
8 here repeated the same thing, that utilities
9 could contribute to the unhoused community; but
10 let's be real. How does it affect the children
11 that are in school? The children that are
12 school age that are in subitized housing that
13 are on Section that have some type of
14 programming that is paying for their housing
15 and their parents are having to work double
16 jobs, they're missing time with their children
17 and the development of their children, but also
18 sleeping on someone's couch or floor.

19 If they're doing that, they're not
20 considered homeless or unhoused, because they
21 have somewhere to lay their head, but they are
22 not wanted there. So, if we are unable to
23 contribute to the needs that we have, then what
24 are we doing? We're not adding. We're not
25 contributing. We're taking away from what

1 could contribute to a great thriving community
2 for a young child to grow up in.

3 We know that a lot of children experience
4 homeless. They say that the average number is
5 like 27 percent. It's more than that. It's
6 more than that after I have conversations with
7 my community members and with congregation
8 members. It's sickening, and as they said in
9 many comments before me, people are dying.

10 When I help with the homeless, with the
11 unhoused community last year, we needed diapers
12 and Enfamil. So, remember the children as you
13 think about the rate hike, as you think about
14 the salary increases, as you think about your
15 programming, remember the children that are at
16 risk. Thank you.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
18 Ms. Johnson. Sarah Watkins. Would you state
19 and spell your name for the record?

20 MS. WATKINS: Sarah Watkins, S-a-r-a-h,
21 best way to spell it, W-a-t-k-i-n-s.

22 (Sarah Watkins sworn.)

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: What would
24 you like to tell the Commission this evening?

25 MS. WATKINS: Good evening, commissioners.

1 My name is Sarah Watkins. I'm a resident of
2 St. Louis City. I also am the lead field
3 organizer for Tenants Transforming Greater St.
4 Louis. We are a black-led renter-led
5 organization. We support renters holding their
6 landlords accountable. I do want to uplift
7 some of comments that folks have made earlier
8 about renters. But before I do that, I want to
9 say that I am here to strongly oppose Ameren
10 Missouri's proposed rate hike, which impact
11 renters and working families the hardest.

12 While Ameren likes to remind us that
13 Missouri has some of the lowest utility rates
14 in the country, let me be clear, low is not low
15 enough when families are already struggling to
16 pay their bills. For many of us, even a small
17 increase in utility costs mean falling behind
18 on rent, skipping meals or going without basic
19 necessities.

20 Like folks have said before, St. Louis
21 City is 56 percent made up of renters, and we
22 often hear that all our rent is some of the
23 cheapest in the nation, but make it make sense
24 when people going -- being evicted for
25 nonpayment, for not having enough money to pay

1 their bills. They're choosing between rent,
2 utilities, medicine, food. \$18 a month might
3 not sound a lot if you have a six-figure salary
4 or if you make \$9 million a year, but \$18 to
5 low income, fixed income, working class people
6 is diapers, food, gas, bills. Sorry. It's
7 more than -- it's a lot.

8 The reality is that even these rates are
9 unaffordable for many. In October 2024 alone,
10 Ameren Missouri disconnected over 17,000
11 households due to nonpayment. Additionally,
12 over 233,000 households were behind on their
13 bills, with an average past due amount of
14 \$119.91. Ameren is a highly profitable
15 corporation that continues to pad its bottom
16 line, while leaving families in our community
17 to pick up the tab. For Ameren executives,
18 their bottom line is producing profits for
19 their shareholders, while exploiting their
20 customers who rely on energy for survival.

21 Ameren should focus on cutting waste and
22 investing long overdue energy efficiency and
23 renewable energy initiatives. This rate
24 increase is not just unjustified, it's an
25 attack on the financial stability of Missouri

1 households. I urge the Public Service -- the
2 Public Service Commission to reject this
3 unnecessary and harmful proposal. Thank you.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
5 Ms. Watkins. Linda Daily. Linda Daily.
6 Christy Lyon. Would you state and spell your
7 name for the record?

8 MS. LYON: Kristie Lyon, K-r-i-s-t-i-e,
9 L-y-o-n.

10 (Kristie Lyon sworn.)

11 MS. LYON: I want to say I appreciate your
12 being here. I understand this is probably not
13 fun for you, but I also am probably luckier
14 than a lot of people that I've been listening
15 tonight, because I am not unhoused. I am
16 struggling. It is between my utilities or food
17 or some times I paid my rent late. It's really
18 hard to do it all, especially when more and
19 more and more is always asked of you. And my
20 employer doesn't give me extra money when bills
21 go up. It's not like they say, you know, the
22 bills are so much higher now, so let me go
23 ahead and give you some more. They don't do
24 that. And I have a hard time asking, because I
25 feel like they should just offer it to me, as

1 opposed to me having to beg for that.

2 I clean houses and it's hard work and I'm
3 trying to get out of that. I got Bachelor's in
4 photography and I need one more stupid credit,
5 and that photography is just gone now and I'm
6 trying to figure things out and life is hard,
7 but I understand people have it worse. I'm
8 lucky. I get that. But it comes off like
9 corporations care about their bottom line, and
10 their yacht and their extra houses, and they
11 don't care about little people anymore.

12 That's -- that's the perception for all of it.
13 Goodwill makes something -- the CEO makes way
14 too much money. I stop giving to Goodwill.

15 You know, if I could stop, I probably
16 would. But, you know, I don't have any means
17 to do that anyhow. That's my story. Thanks.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
19 Tommy Jones. That would be correct. I
20 apologize that I'm horrible about reading
21 names.

22 MS. JONES: Hello, my name is Tonya Jones,
23 it's spelled T-o-n-y-a, J-o-n-e-s.

24 (Tonya Jones sworn.)

25 MS. JONES: So I am speaking from a person

1 that's from a permanent underclass. And I
2 always speak collectively, but I'm going to
3 personalize our pain a bit, because St. Louis,
4 I'm trying not to be in tears because I hear
5 other groups speak even from Tower Grove, which
6 is being gentrified. We are being gentrified
7 out of a country that we built. And I'm a
8 descendant of slaves and no one speaks for us.
9 I heard someone speaking for Latinos. I've
10 heard someone speaking for people of color and
11 minorities. Specifically, we have books like
12 the Broken Heart of America, the Color of Law,
13 which is Richard Rothstein's book, and even I
14 read a heavy book called Capital In The 21st
15 Century, and we are going to zero wealth.

16 Everything has a disparate impact on us as
17 an underclass. We have been priced out of
18 93 percent of all city districts. We have
19 dealt with economic terrorism. Terrorism. My
20 neighborhood that I grew up, Hamilton Heights,
21 which I heard someone mention, Hamilton Heights
22 looked like Afghanistan. Like bombs hit it.
23 You look from an aerial map, it looks just like
24 green lots because they have so much
25 disinvestment, that it looks like a bomb

1 shelter hit it, and there's two and three
2 houses on the block. We are losing 66 black
3 families a month. Professor Nas Skandova (ph.)
4 came to our Board of Alderman to heed the
5 warning of us hemorrhaging black families. And
6 the black family now is a women with her
7 dependent children because all our men have
8 been locked up and locked out from crime bills,
9 right?

10 When I was a little girl drugs flooded
11 into our community. I can tell you how many
12 stock pots it takes to take a bath when you
13 borrowing electricity from your neighbor with
14 an extension cord, and you're paying them
15 monthly to -- to have electricity. I can tell
16 you how many stock pots it takes to bathe.
17 That's how I grew up. Housing insecurity, and
18 that is half of our city. And let me explain
19 this to you, HELOC and all of those things, are
20 not a remedy for these public policy failures.
21 Half of our city lives in concentrated poverty.
22 We just came out of a pandemic where all of us,
23 I have trauma fatigue because we have the
24 losses. We have -- are the most evicted --
25 there's an eviction lab now. There's an

1 eviction lab, a ticker that tells you in every
2 area how many evictions, mostly
3 African-American women and their dependent
4 children.

5 This is an indictment on this country that
6 the people that built this country every
7 generation -- I just heard one of the seniors
8 testify to you that she lived in an area that's
9 now no longer black. We are displaced, erased,
10 replaced every generation, and it's happening
11 in our city. We lost 27,000 African-Americans.
12 We are no longer a 50/50 city, and the people
13 who are the most insecure utility-wise, at
14 least 48 to 50 percent are us. And that is an
15 indictment on this country.

16 We have the nerve to invite other
17 newcomers in that we would have to subitize on
18 our welfare state, and we haven't even been
19 made whole as a group. We are owed stuff. We
20 built this country, and every generation -- I
21 finally moved from Hamilton Heights to Richmond
22 Heights in high school. An area that was once
23 a black neighborhood that we were limited to,
24 now is a Menard's, is a Walmart, it was taken
25 by eminent domain, and the same thing is

1 happening to our city. Who has the capital?
2 They talk about landlords, I went to an Action
3 St. Louis meeting, and they were talking about
4 penalizing poor landlords that are in an areas
5 that are just as poor as their tenants that
6 can't get money to -- they can't get places to
7 appraise, and the only people who are buying
8 our city pay absolutely zero taxes. The burden
9 is all on us.

10 That is the big elite institutions who own
11 the 40 percent of our city. This is economic
12 terrorism. We are -- I have a free food share
13 and the people who are the most hungry are the
14 people they just said, who can't qualify for
15 all of these charity things that aren't a
16 remedy for public policy for us all. And this
17 increase after a pandemic, where people had no
18 job, didn't now how they were going to eat and
19 now the price gouging where no one wants to
20 take a break in their profits to give discounts
21 to people who are suffering, I mean, suffering
22 food insecurity, suffering houses insecurity,
23 and we, again, there is -- this is documented.
24 This is documented, and it's economic terrorism
25 on my group who built this country.

1 It's absolutely insane. Look around in
2 our city. Half of our city, the infamous
3 Delmar Divide lives in concentrated poverty,
4 and is getting pushed out of our city.

5 93 percent of -- the Guardian had an
6 argument -- article. 93 percent of all city
7 districts across this country, we've been
8 priced out of, and this is an indictment. We
9 cannot afford this. We, again, I am taking
10 food to people who work every day and cannot
11 afford eggs, and you guys are talking about
12 another increase.

13 I get a disconnection notice every month,
14 and I'm one of the lucky ones. So, this is --
15 this is a total disgrace that the Commission on
16 this -- in these economic times, when most
17 people never thought they would be here who are
18 hurting, are hurting. This is a definite --
19 you should be advocates for the people for this
20 populous issue. This is what happens to us is
21 going to spread to everyone else. So, I'm
22 sorry I'm emotional, but this is personal to
23 me, a person who moved every time the rent was
24 due, who went -- attended ten schools before
25 8th grade. My people are hurting, and nobody

1 cares. We just had a protest movement about us
2 being pillaged. Anything that we have.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I hate to cut
4 you off but I've let you go on for --

5 MS. JONES: But thank you.

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
7 very much for your comments. I appreciate
8 them. Last name Kim. I'm having a hard time
9 with simple names, so, yes, I probably had
10 problems with yours, I apologize.

11 MS. KIM: Yes, it's Kyeongbin Kim. It's
12 K-y-e-o-n-g-b-i-n for the first name. K-i-m,
13 Kim, for the last name.

14 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Would you repeat
15 it, please?

16 MS. KIM: The first name, the pronouns?

17 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: We have someone
18 that is recording, and they need to be --

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Our court
20 reporter has to be able to take your name down.

21 MS. JONES: K-y-e-o-n-g-b-i-n, Kim, K-i-m.

22 (Kyeongbin Kim sworn.)

23 MS. KIM: I have a few questions to him,
24 just yes or no questions. Can I ask him some
25 things?

1 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: This is a
2 public comment portion of the hearing. This is
3 not a question and answer. The Q&A came before
4 this, so I'm sorry, I'm not going to allow you
5 to ask questions of Ameren at this point.

6 MS. JONES: Okay, it's fine, too. So,
7 hello, I'm Kyeongbin Kim. I am the student of
8 this school, St. Louis Community College for
9 nursing, and I am also immigrant. I am very
10 concerned that Ameren brought -- certainly
11 failed policy for the Missouri. It is not just
12 a statement, but we already watched in 2021 in
13 Texas and Japan and many other countries like a
14 Britain. So, you know, it's just necessary for
15 living. Do you have any lamp on your house, in
16 your house. Do you have any? Are you living
17 in candles? Cool. But we are know that we
18 already have our lamps and our phones and
19 chargers and everything by the electricity,
20 which means Ameren is not just a private
21 company but required to provide the services
22 for the St. Louis area.

23 And he's kind of short on electric basic
24 economics. If people can buy any alternatives
25 or very difficult to change to others, that's

1 actually not a competition. So, they should
2 provide something that they deserve. And I --
3 I had a few research about Ameren, and
4 according to Forbes, since 2020, Ameren never
5 recorded a loss yearly, and Ameren recorded 1.1
6 million dollars in 2024. And Ameren asking
7 continuously to the Missouri that increasing
8 the price. Why should people pay more if their
9 profit is like a 1 billion dollars? Where the
10 money is going? Like I-64? Like -- on the
11 Blues, yeah, we provide Blues the resources to
12 athletes. They are just like 10 or 12 people.
13 Not the entire county or city.

14 Like, is there anything, any plans for the
15 increased salary for their workers? They don't
16 have any plan. Are you going to 70 percent --
17 17 percent increase your salary? Probably not.
18 If their workers cannot increase by 17 percent
19 of the rates, why people should pay more -- pay
20 17 percent more of the electric city bills?
21 And heat and cold exists, actually related
22 where the electricity bills, it shows by
23 Japan's case. Japan -- after Japan privatized
24 their electricity city company, their cold and
25 heat is just enormously increased, and they

1 canceled it until now.

2 If Ameren paid for all the medical fees
3 and medical stops to their patients and
4 hospitals and the medical workers, it could be
5 okay, but are they? We can't, you know, they
6 said they are a private company. We cannot
7 force them. And, individually, as an
8 immigrant, I don't have resources to survive or
9 handle the situation when bills get higher, and
10 I can't pay that. Like, I have to just rely on
11 generosity from some good people. If you have
12 to rely on good people's like generosity to
13 just survive, that is just wrong society.

14 I just watched that -- it's a little
15 personal but I watched that he, the
16 representative just smiling when people just
17 talk about dies, their families and friends. I
18 couldn't laugh. I couldn't even smiling,
19 because I know some people that just have to
20 choose -- it's not even a choose -- it's not a
21 choice. They just have death. That is one and
22 only choice that can choice if they cannot pay
23 the bill. And I know so many people that they
24 just have to die. So, please, 17 percent?
25 Even the minimum wage of misery doesn't raise

1 to 17 percent like in entire 10 years. So,
2 please take a consideration about this. Thank
3 you.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
5 your comments. Jackie Kinealy.

6 MS. KINEALY: That's Jackie, J-a-c-k-i-e,
7 Kinealy, K-i-n-e-a-l-y.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I'm sorry,
9 would you pronounce your last name again?

10 MS. KINEALY: Kinealy. Kinealy.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Kinealy.

12 MS. KINEALY: Yes.

13 (Jackie Kinealy sworn.)

14 MS. KINEALY: Thank you. My name is
15 Jackie Kinealy. I live in St. Louis City.
16 Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'll
17 keep my comments brief. It is past my bedtime,
18 personally. I'm fortunate enough that my
19 family would be able to afford this rate
20 increase, but sitting here listening to all the
21 questions and the testimony, I hope and trust
22 the Commission will carefully consider the
23 testimony of others, where people have to plan
24 for every single dollar of their monthly
25 budget. The reason I came here tonight is that

1 I'm a mom. My kids are one and a half and
2 three, and I worry every day what the world
3 will be like for them when they're my age if we
4 don't make the transition away from fossil
5 fuels quickly enough. You mentioned that if
6 someone else gets up here and makes a testimony
7 or says something that we agree with that that
8 we just can say that. Miss Elyse Schaeffer
9 representing the Missouri Coalition for the
10 Environment articulates time really powerfully
11 my own concerns, so if the record could show
12 just ditto on that. A big copy and paste.

13 To hear that Ameren is increasing our
14 rates without doing more to retire its coal
15 plants quickly, to invest more aggressively in
16 renewable energy or to access what I understand
17 is million of dollars in federal money
18 available to it to do such, seems just
19 ridiculous and irresponsible to me given where
20 we're at as a country and as a globe. So,
21 that's all I have. Thank you very much.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
23 This one says that they would like to testify
24 last. I don't really do that. I take you in
25 the order signed up, so if you would like to

1 speak, now's your opportunity. And that's --
2 is it Merle. Thank you, Mr. Merle.

3 MR. MERLE: John Howard Merle. J-o-h-n,
4 H-o-w-a-r-d, M-e-r-l-e.

5 (John Howard Merle sworn.)

6 MR. MERLE: Okay, just for the record,
7 we've have 5, 10, 20 -- 36 people of 36 people.
8 All of them, based on my assessment, have come
9 down against this rate increase. I understand
10 it. As I heard the situation many times
11 myself, all these people have articulated --
12 and thank you for those who have remained to
13 hear. I appreciate that. I wanted to go last
14 simply because I will be the only person in the
15 room tonight that is supporting Ameren UE in
16 their position, knowing full well, because I
17 have been down this road a few times before,
18 Ameren, I can't not remember in the past but
19 Ameren UE has never gotten what they asked for
20 100 percent.

21 Generally, there's negotiations between
22 the company, and there's negotiations between
23 the Commission, and they come to some sort of
24 an agreement or understanding. And, so, what's
25 on the paper and the board, it's a lot; there's

1 no doubt, but it doesn't generally end that
2 way. So, in full disclosure, I am not an
3 employee of Ameren. I am not a -- nobody in my
4 family is employed by the company, and I don't
5 work for anybody who's a vendor of the company.
6 So I think that needs to be said, because why
7 am I taking the position of supporting them?
8 Well, I happen to be a stockholder. Uh-oh.
9 Put the guns down, please.

10 Anyway, I bought Ameren stock around the
11 late to middle '70s, and I bought my first 100
12 shares based on three reasons. The first
13 reason was that at that time, and what I'm
14 about share is pretty much true today, at that
15 time, Ameren UE had the lowest cost electricity
16 of a publically-traded utility in the country.
17 So, wow, everybody else around us spends a lot
18 more money than we do. Okay. The second
19 reason that I went ahead and I wanted to invest
20 was that while they were highly regulated and
21 priced at the bottom of the market, they still
22 managed to produce a dividend. And for those
23 that don't know what a dividend -- a dividend
24 to a shareholder is a share of the profit that
25 a company makes.

1 So, they were at the bottom and still yet
2 still produced dividends which made an
3 attractive reason. And the third reason I
4 decided this was a good idea was because as
5 long I have lived, I have never met anybody who
6 goes home and flips the switch and the gas
7 lamps come on. We have electricity. We have
8 to have it, and things get relatively
9 interesting when you consider then back in the
10 1970s, if you had an interruption in your
11 service because of a storm or that sort of
12 thing, you were out for anywhere -- you could
13 be out for a very short period of time or you
14 could be out for a week. You probably lost
15 some sleep, because it was too hot,
16 air-conditioning wasn't working or you lost
17 sleep because it was too cold.

18 And, invariably, you probably would lose
19 the food in the refrigerator. So, that was in
20 the '70s. Here we are, 2025, okay?
21 Electricity has reached the level that is as
22 important as the air you breathe, the water you
23 drink or the food you eat. Electricity has to
24 be there, and if we don't have it after five or
25 six days, your elected officials are on the

1 phone to the Oval Office to say, we need an
2 emergency declaration because we got to have
3 power back now. And because of science and
4 innovation, we have really put ourselves into
5 even a bigger corner. Every -- almost every
6 other person who came to this mic tonight
7 carried with them a cell phone. There weren't
8 any around in the '70's. We actually had
9 telephones that had landlines. We had to go
10 and pick up the receiver and dial to talk to
11 people. Well, in an outage in that time
12 period, guess what? You could still make a
13 phone call independent.

14 Today, 2025, many people have gotten rid
15 of their phones and their landlines and they're
16 relying on what? Cell phones. Great. What
17 happens if you don't have some place to charge
18 that phone folks? How do you communicate?
19 There are a number of people today who own
20 electrically-driven cars, battery operated,
21 where you're going to charge it if you don't
22 have electricity? You have to have it. That's
23 all there is to it.

24 It's even more important now than it was
25 back in the '70s. I have invested -- I have

1 gotten those dividends, I have never taken any
2 of those dollars and put them in my pocket.
3 They all have been reinvested every year. And
4 now I have a lot of holdings. I paid taxes all
5 along the way. So, I have an interest in
6 seeing they get some considerations. Trust me,
7 folks, whatever it says printed that what
8 they're asking for, they're not going to get
9 it. They never do.

10 So, I thought it was important, because it
11 come out and say you need to understand some
12 things. You're living in a country where the
13 competition -- you're paying less than anybody
14 else in the country for the power you have to
15 have. It's not free. So, those are my reasons
16 for supporting the company. Those are reasons
17 why I bought the stock. I understand
18 everybody. I'm not here to disparage anything
19 that I've heard this evening, because it's all
20 real. I've been there myself. Thank you.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
22 Mr. Merle. Kristina Marian.

23 MS. MARIAN: Thank you. Can you guys hear
24 me?

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I can.

1 MS. MARIAN: Okay. Kristina Marian.

2 (Kristina Marian sworn.)

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, go
4 ahead.

5 MS. MARIAN: Thank you. Earlier, I
6 suggested to Ameren to look within their own
7 company, instead of asking the community for a
8 rate increase. To look within their own
9 company and see how much the CEOs are getting
10 paid and higher execs that are getting paid, to
11 maybe decrease them from millions maybe down to
12 thousands; and also to look within the
13 community to see, like, what companies may have
14 lights on during the day, like in their parking
15 lots, for example. There's parking lots with
16 lights on during the day that don't need to be
17 on.

18 Also, abandoned houses that don't have
19 their power shut off from the street to the
20 house can actually still use power, so to
21 double check those facilities as well. It may
22 not singularly help, but, like, obviously, you
23 know, if there's thousands of homes or hundreds
24 of homes that are abandoned that still have
25 power running, it could help decrease the cost

1 as well. So, I think first and foremost, that
2 would be really beneficial.

3 I do not agree with this increase. I do
4 not agree on an increase for mostly a
5 non-sustainable fragile power supply company
6 that obviously hurts us and the planet. As we
7 all know, pollution is real and it affects s
8 our health. We have the right to clean air and
9 water, but, yet, we pay for an increase in
10 medical bills. Maybe Ameren should pay us.
11 Also, I want to share that every one of us can
12 remember what it was like -- we talked about
13 the pollution and what we can do to change
14 that. Me, you, the community, but not what the
15 owners and executives of the actual power
16 plants can do for us and to help the
17 environment.

18 As pollution continues, the summers get
19 worse which will increase the need for, you
20 know, cool air, will increase the energy costs
21 for us. This is an endless cycle, and it will
22 continue to be an endless cycle. It's been
23 going on my whole 38 years of life and even
24 before then. When will this cycle stop?
25 Mother earth sustains everything and everyone

1 within and on her. Not Ameren. We are
2 standing on earth. This is made from earth.
3 Regardless of Ameren, if mother earth was not
4 here, we would be dead. Also, side note, some
5 home insurers do not cover the roof if you have
6 solar. Thank you.

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
8 your comments. Jeffrey Schaefer. Mr.
9 Schaefer, would you spell your name for the
10 record.

11 MR. SCHAEFER: Hi, thank you. Jeffrey
12 Schaefer, J-e-f-f-r-e-y, S-c-h-a-e-f-e-r.

13 (Jeffrey Schaefer sworn.)

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: What would
15 you like to tell us?

16 MR. SCHAEFER: Thank you. I am a happy
17 customer of Ameren. Thank you so much for
18 maintaining the grid. I hope it approves
19 wherever it needs. You guys are awesome.
20 Thank you to the Commission for being advocates
21 for the people. I think the people are our
22 greatest resource.

23 I'd like to speak from experience of a
24 former environmentalist, contractor, I've
25 worked on houses all my life. I studied solar

1 design and install or photovoltaic design and
2 install from SEI, and I expected that we would
3 have solar panels on houses everywhere. But,
4 now, I'm glad we don't. I am -- I've done a
5 180 on the solar thing. It wasn't -- it was
6 less than ten years as a contractor, I started
7 seeing leaks from going cheap on the install,
8 not putting the weather boot on where, you
9 know, the clamp is. But and that raises
10 insurance rates. That's just -- but
11 weatherization, my own home, I've saved more
12 than a third on my weather bills or my energy
13 bills. And I thought that people would be
14 doing that, you know, but they want it for
15 free, you know. You know, spend a few -- even
16 friends that are environmentalists, I see open
17 windows and big old cracks in the door, and
18 just I don't see people doing -- I've gotten
19 very frustrated.

20 One of my own -- my family members let me
21 do weatherization on their house, saved them
22 45 percent on their energy bills, gas,
23 electric. My electric bill in the summer is
24 very low. I don't run an air-conditioner. I
25 have a small fan. It's great. That works

1 great for me. So, I'm very frustrated about
2 that -- I read this book Energy-Energy
3 Evolution by Victor Schauberger (ph.). And
4 I've only read it once, and probably need to
5 read it at least five times, but he had many
6 designs. He called fire the lowest form of
7 electricity. The magic temperature range was
8 like 39.2 Fahrenheit. And he had water
9 implosion machines and the process of making --
10 turning water combustion -- making water
11 combustible. And I think recently Toyota came
12 out with a water-fueled car.

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Schaefer,
14 all new design innovations aside, do you have
15 comments about the rate increase that Ameren
16 has proposed?

17 MR. SCHAEFER: I would think that if you
18 would not do the solar and the wind, reinvest
19 in the other ways to make electricity. You --
20 I'm all for capitalism. Communism, no good.
21 For the environmentalists in the room, the
22 Bolsheviks lined up Communists -- and the
23 people in power and shot them. So, that's not
24 good. Enjoy your wages. Thank you. Thank
25 you. Run your company. I'm a great -- but I

1 don't think a rate increase is necessary.
2 Looks like they're making great money, and if
3 your -- I mean, Missouri is full of water. You
4 know, we turn water into electricity, why are
5 we digging up coal and running coal trains? I
6 just think there's a better way.

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
8 your comments. Alberto Batino (ph.). Alberto
9 Batino. That's the last name I have on my list
10 tonight of those people that signed up to
11 speak. I apologize. If you were unable to
12 comment tonight or if you didn't sign up, if
13 you have friends who would like to make
14 comments or if you get home and you realize
15 there was something you wanted to let the
16 Commission know and you weren't able to let
17 them know, you can still make comments in this
18 case by contacting the e-mail address
19 pscinfo@psc.mo.gov to put in comments that way
20 by contacting the Office of Public Counsel.
21 They've been very gracious about helping people
22 get comments to the Commission on cases. Or by
23 going to the PSC's web page, and you will see
24 links to leave comments on cases. If you do
25 that, you will need to know the case number for

1 this case, which I believe is ER-2025-0319.
2 2024-0319. Thank you, Mr. Pringle for
3 correcting me there.

4 Again, I'd like to thank everyone who took
5 the time to show up tonight and provide
6 comments. I know that utility rates can be a
7 quite emotional topic, so I appreciate
8 everybody coming to tell the Commission what
9 your thoughts are. This is our one chance to
10 hear from you. Commissioner Holsman, would you
11 like to make closing remarks?

12 COMMISSIONER HOLSMAN: Thank you. On
13 behalf of Chairwoman Hahn and the entire
14 commission, we do want to thank you for coming
15 out tonight. We heard from 40 individuals who
16 took their time to be here on a Wednesday night
17 until 10:00 o'clock in the evening to share
18 your opinions, and we know for every person
19 that had the bravery to stand up and tell us
20 how they feel, there are a lot of other people
21 who couldn't make it tonight that potentially
22 could share the same position that you have.

23 This is a process. This is the first step
24 in the process. We will also have evidentiary
25 hearings that will present the evidence by the

1 company and from staff. We will evaluate that,
2 and we make an ultimate decision. I would like
3 to say that, you know, this is the fifth year
4 that I've been doing this, and this was one of
5 the more robust hearings that we have. Over 40
6 folks took their time tonight, it's very cold
7 outside, you could do a lot of other things,
8 and I'll like to say that, you know, we also
9 know the passions do run high on both sides.
10 And, you know, the company is doing the best
11 that they can to provide you safe and reliable
12 power. We're doing the best that we can to
13 make to sure that power comes to you at a
14 reasonable, affordable cost, and hearing from
15 you helps us and helps them to formulate the
16 best possible path forward on behalf of the
17 people that they serve. So, I just wanted to
18 thank you for taking your time, and we do
19 appreciate it and have a great night and drive
20 home safely.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Very well
22 said, thank you very much. And we can go off
23 the record, and I will adjourn this hearing.

24 (Ending time of the hearing: 09:57 p.m.)
25

1 I, Colin Wallis, in and for the State of
2 Missouri do hereby certify that the witness
3 whose testimony appears in the foregoing
4 Examination Under Oath was duly sworn by me;
5 that the testimony of the said witness was
6 taken by me to the best of my ability and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction; that I am neither counsel for,
9 related to, nor employed by any of the parties
10 to the action in which this examination was
11 taken, and further that I am not relative or
12 employee of any attorney or counsel employed by
13 the parties thereto, nor financially or
14 otherwise interested in the outcome of the
15 action.

Colin Wallis

17 within and for the State of Missouri
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