

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 ) File No. ER-2024-0319  
Tariffs to Adjust Its Revenues )  
for Electric Service )

Thursday, January 23, 2025  
1:25 p.m. - 2:25 p.m.

Governor Office Building  
200 Madison Street, Room 310  
Jefferson City, MO 65101  
and WebEx

VOLUME 5

JOHN CLARK, Presiding  
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KAYLA HAHN, Chair  
MAIDA J. COLEMAN,  
JASON R. HOLSMAN, (Via WebEx)  
GLEN KOLKMEYER,  
JOHN MITCHELL,  
COMMISSIONERS

Stenographically Reported By:  
Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

Job No. 179674

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I N D E X

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1 The following proceedings began at 1:25 p.m.:

2 JUDGE CLARK: Okay. It's now 1:25. Please  
3 find your seats. Let's go on the record. Good  
4 afternoon. It's January 23rd of 2025, and the current  
5 time is 1:25 p.m. You just finished the question and  
6 answer portion of the local public hearing. If you had  
7 questions about this rate case, I hope you were able to  
8 get those questions answered. If you were unable to get  
9 those questions answered, or you had additional  
10 questions, I would ask you to contact the Commission  
11 Staff, the Company, or the Office of the Public Counsel  
12 with your questions about this rate case.

13 Now, we're going to start now the formal  
14 comment part of the local public hearing, which is an  
15 opportunity for you to provide comments to the  
16 Commission on Ameren's requested rate increase.

17 Now, the Missouri Public Service Commission  
18 has set aside this time for a local hearing in File No.  
19 ER-2024-0319, a general rate case which is captioned as  
20 In the Matter of Union Electric Company d/b/a Ameren  
21 Missouri's Tariffs to Adjust Its Revenues for Electric  
22 Service.

23 My name is John Clark. I'm the Regulatory Law  
24 Judge overseeing this local public hearing today, and  
25 I'll be presiding over this case.

1           The Missouri Public Service Commission  
2 regulates the rates charged by investor-owned utility  
3 companies in Missouri to ensure that those rates are  
4 just and reasonable. The Commission also regulates the  
5 quality of service and the safety of operations of  
6 investor-owned utilities.

7           The Commission is made up of five  
8 Commissioners some of which are here with me today. To  
9 my immediate right is the Chair of the Commission, Kayla  
10 Hahn. To my far right is Commissioner Glen Kolkmeyer,  
11 and to my left is Commissioner John Mitchell.  
12 Participating via WebEx today, so he will be able to  
13 hear comments, is Commissioner Jason Holsman.

14           The Commissioners are appointed by the  
15 Governor to fixed terms and are confirmed by the Senate.  
16 The Commissioners employ a staff of engineers,  
17 accountants, attorneys, financial analysts and other  
18 specialists in the areas of utility regulation.

19           Chair Hahn, would you like to make any opening  
20 remarks?

21           CHAIR HAHN: Yes, thank you. Thank you,  
22 Judge. Good afternoon. Thank you all so much for being  
23 here as part of this rate case process. This is not the  
24 first and not the last local public hearing. And we've  
25 had some local public hearings already. But this one is

1 located here in Jefferson City to try to meet the needs  
2 of those that live around here. If for whatever reason  
3 you don't get all of your comments in today, there are  
4 also other opportunities including online comment  
5 sessions, but we're so thankful that you came today and  
6 gave up time on your Thursday afternoon. We know that  
7 you could be doing any number of things. Undoubtedly  
8 your comments and feedback will help inform our decision  
9 and help us make a better decision because of it. So  
10 with that, just thank you for being here and we look  
11 forward to hearing from you.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Chair Hahn. I also  
13 missed a Commissioner. To my immediate left is  
14 Commissioner Maida Coleman. I apologize for that,  
15 Commissioner Coleman.

16 At this time, since this is a formal local  
17 public hearing, I'm going to ask for entries of  
18 appearance for the attorneys for the various parties  
19 starting with Ameren Missouri.

20 MS. TATRO: Wendy Tatro, 1901 Chouteau Avenue,  
21 St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ameren Missouri. On  
23 behalf of the Commission Staff.

24 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Judge. Mark Johnson  
25 appearing on behalf of the Staff of the Missouri Public

1 Service Commission. The court reporter has my business  
2 address.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Staff. On behalf of  
4 the Office of the Public Counsel.

5 MS. VanGERPEN: Lindsay VanGerpen on behalf of  
6 the Office of the Public Counsel, and our business  
7 address is 200 Madison Street, Jefferson City.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Public Counsel. And  
9 I haven't seen any but are there any intervenors  
10 present? I see and hear none.

11 Now, for those who would like to provide  
12 comments today, I'm going to call the names as they were  
13 signed up on the list to testify. When I call your  
14 name, please come up to the podium to offer your  
15 comments. Now, there's a lot of people here today.  
16 These hearings have been very well attended. Because of  
17 that, I'm going to limit the time people speak to  
18 approximately three minutes. So when we get to around  
19 the three-minute mark, I'll let you know and you can  
20 complete your thought.

21 Also, after you've offered your comments,  
22 please remain at the podium for just a second. Myself,  
23 the Commissioners or the attorneys present may have a  
24 question for you or two. I'm also going to ask, there  
25 are a lot of people speaking, I know that utility rate

1 increases have a large emotional impact for people. I  
2 know people feel very emotional about their utility  
3 rates. I'm going to ask as you come up to speak that  
4 they're going to be some diverse opinions here, please  
5 respect the opinions of everybody who is speaking and  
6 treat others as you yourself would like to be treated.

7 Now, the Commission is not going to be able to  
8 answer any of your questions today. That's because this  
9 is an ongoing case. There's not been an evidentiary  
10 hearing and they're confined to what is in the record.  
11 As I said before, if you have questions, please speak to  
12 representatives of the Company, the Commission Staff or  
13 the Office of the Public Counsel.

14 With that in mind, I'm going to call the first  
15 name on my list. If I butcher your name, please let me  
16 know. Bryan Struebig.

17 Mr. Struebig, would you state and spell your  
18 name for the record?

19 MR. STRUEBIG: Bryan Struebig, B-r-y-a-n  
20 S-t-r-u-e-b-i-g.

21 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. Just so everybody  
22 knows, I have a court reporter here who is taking down  
23 everything that's said. It's going to be in a  
24 transcript so the Commission and myself can review it  
25 whenever we want to. And Mr. Struebig, would you raise



1 your right hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or  
2 affirm that the comments you're about to give at this  
3 local public hearing are the truth?

4 MR. STRUEBIG: I do.

5 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the  
6 Commission today?

7 MR. STRUEBIG: Hello. My name is Bryan  
8 Struebig. I'm from Eldon, Missouri. I'm an Ameren  
9 customer. I'm also a stockholder. I am also a tax  
10 accountant. I am deeply concerned about the proposed  
11 rate increase by Ameren.

12 My first point is about the impact on  
13 customers with fixed income many of whom are my clients.  
14 After the rate increase in 2013, another hike so soon  
15 imposes a significant burden particularly on those that  
16 are least able to afford it as their other costs have  
17 also increased.

18 This is in addition to the peak and off-peak  
19 pricing with new meters that confuse many customers. As  
20 a renter, I not only rent my abode, but I also rent my  
21 office space for my tax accounting business. Both  
22 buildings are well over 20 years old and are not very  
23 energy efficient. While the landlords do not have any  
24 problems increasing rents, they are very remiss in  
25 making any energy efficient improvements to the building

1 as the burden of paying the electric bill does not fall  
2 on them but on me. You can only replace so many light  
3 bulbs and energy efficient appliances to cut back on  
4 usage. Life and business must go on.

5           Secondly, with Ameren's substantial profits, I  
6 question the necessity of this rate increase. The  
7 financial incentives provided by the Inflation Reduction  
8 Act should ease the cost of green energy projects that  
9 they are saying that they are going to use this money  
10 for lessening the need to pass these expenses on to  
11 customers.

12           In looking at their third-quarter results  
13 furnished to the public and to investors like myself,  
14 the Company showed a very healthy profit so far all the  
15 way through the third quarter of \$979 million. In the  
16 past nine months, Ameren has paid out \$535 million in  
17 dividends. In fact, the Company in the last reporting  
18 year of 2023, showed a net profit of \$1.13 billion.  
19 Now, that is a .07 increase from 2022.

20           In addition to all the profits, Ameren is  
21 looking -- that Ameren is looking at in Missouri, there  
22 is current pending Missouri legislation to eliminate the  
23 corporate tax rates here for them as well, which it had  
24 substantial amounts of profit for them also in the  
25 future.

1           Now, I've read the future guidance that shows  
2 the increase in investment is for green technology, as  
3 well as shutting down fossil fuel energy production such  
4 as coal plants. I commend Ameren on this endeavor as do  
5 my children and my grandchildren. I know that there is  
6 capital expense to this transition, but the lower upkeep  
7 and lower labor costs of maintenance will offset these  
8 costs. This is in addition to the generous tax credits  
9 available to Ameren through the Inflation Reduction Act  
10 and other local initiatives that have been passed.

11           As for the mitigation of the Rush Island  
12 Energy Center, that burden should fall on us as  
13 shareholders. If we were not at fault, insurance would  
14 have covered this. It is our responsibility as  
15 stakeholders in the Company to clean up the mess that we  
16 were at fault for.

17           Lastly, I urge Ameren to be transparent on how  
18 it plans to use these profits and tax incentives to  
19 benefit its customers, not just me as a shareholder. We  
20 need clarity on this to ensure that the rate increase  
21 are truly their last resort. Thank you.

22           JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Struebig. Very  
23 well said. I appreciate your comments.

24           MR. STRUEBIG: Thank you.

25           JUDGE CLARK: Any questions? I have no

1 questions. You may be seated.

2 MR. STRUEBIG: Thank you.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Susan Gibson. Ms. Gibson, would  
4 you state and spell your name for the record?

5 MS. GIBSON: S-u-s-a-n G-i-b-s-o-n.

6 JUDGE CLARK: And would you raise your right  
7 hand to be sworn. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that  
8 the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
9 today are the truth?

10 MS. GIBSON: I do.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: What would you like to tell  
12 the Commission?

13 MS. GIBSON: Ameren knew the improvements  
14 they're asking to pay for would be necessary. Even  
15 though they have a healthy profit margin, they have  
16 raised rates faster than inflation and paid dividends  
17 year round to investors. According to KSDK News in St.  
18 Louis, Public Service Commission data showed that Ameren  
19 cut off electricity for 20,083 accounts in October of  
20 2022. People already cannot afford their rates.

21 Ameren is essentially asking for a tax on us  
22 to pay their investors. Ameren Missouri has been  
23 ordered by a federal court to spend more than \$61  
24 million to offset its past clean air violations. Their  
25 Rush Island Energy Center operated for years in

1 violation of the Clean Air Act. That was a choice. It  
2 illustrates that Ameren is reckless, irresponsible and  
3 lawless. Ameren recently shut down Rush Island rather  
4 than install pollution controls to bring it into  
5 compliance with clean air standards.

6 Further, I am insulted and incensed that the  
7 police have been called for this meeting as if the  
8 people have mal intent. I object. This concludes my  
9 testimony.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your comments. I  
11 will say that the police presence that we have today is  
12 not to intimidate. I hope that nobody thinks that  
13 that's the purpose of it. That's not why we have it.  
14 We have, in fact, there's been some chatter that would  
15 amount to a threat. So that's why we have extra  
16 security here today. It's certainly not to intimidate  
17 or prevent anyone from talking. We're here to receive  
18 your comments. We want to receive your comments whether  
19 they're positive or not. Thank you for your comments,  
20 Ms. Gibson. Joshua Dunne.

21 Mr. Dunne, would you state and spell your name  
22 for the court record?

23 MR. DUNNE: Joshua Dunne, J-o-s-h-u-a, and  
24 Dunne, D-u-n-n-e.

25 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm

1 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
2 are the truth?

3 MR. DUNNE: I so affirm.

4 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell us  
5 today?

6 MR. DUNNE: As I said, my name is Joshua  
7 Dunne, and I am the Chairman of the Cole County  
8 Democratic Central Committee. The reason why we are  
9 here is because in our mission statement it says that  
10 the Cole County Democrats will work tirelessly with  
11 integrity to protect the rights and freedoms of Cole  
12 County and Missouri residents in order to build an  
13 inclusive, vibrant community that promotes justice,  
14 health and prosperity for all. This is about the  
15 prosperity and health of our citizens.

16 The Cole County Democratic Central Committee  
17 is deeply concerned about the proposed rate increase by  
18 Ameren, the impact this will have on customers that are  
19 on fixed incomes especially with the increase in food  
20 cost and medicine cost coming with caps being removed on  
21 prescription drugs for Medicare and Medicaid  
22 participants by the Trump administration.

23 Ameren rates just increased in 2023, and doing  
24 another significant rate hike this soon will put undue  
25 financial burden on the communities and families that

1 are least able to afford it. There are already limited  
2 housing options in Jefferson City and in Cole County and  
3 many homes are not energy efficient. This will cause  
4 the undue burden on homeowners, renters and small  
5 businesses. Having basic electricity is a necessity for  
6 us to live our lives, feed our kids and run our  
7 businesses.

8           The proposed rate hike will harm not only the  
9 people of Cole County but every county in Missouri where  
10 Ameren provides a service leaving millions of people  
11 with tough choices to make and struggling to make sure  
12 that their checks make it to the end of the month. In  
13 2023, Ameren has a net profit of \$1.13 billion. That is  
14 an increase from 2022. And from the public  
15 third-quarter results, the 2024 profits will see more  
16 net profits over a billion dollars.

17           In just the past nine months, Ameren has paid  
18 over \$5 million in dividends to stockholders. With  
19 numbers like that, it's hard to ask people on fixed  
20 incomes and small businesses to pay more for the utility  
21 service.

22           While we commend Ameren's proposed investment  
23 in greener technology and are aware of the expense that  
24 comes with the transition away from coal plants, the  
25 lower upkeep and maintenance costs will offset some of

1 those costs.

2 In addition, the Biden administration's  
3 Inflation Reduction Act provides generous tax credits  
4 for investment in renewable technology. This will help  
5 offset the costs into the changeover even more.

6 The Cole County Democratic Central Committee  
7 urges Ameren to be transparent in how this increase  
8 costs will actually benefit their customers and not just  
9 their largest shareholders. Rate increases on small  
10 business in Missouri on fixed incomes should be the very  
11 last resort. We cannot and will not endorse a scheme  
12 for Ameren to use profits to pay shareholders and then  
13 cry poor when there's work to be done.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your comments,  
15 Mr. Dunne.

16 MR. DUNNE: Thank you.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Tara Hallmark. I apologize.  
18 Would you please state and spell your name for the  
19 record?

20 MS. HALLMARK: My name is Tara Hallmark,  
21 T-a-r-a H-a-l-l-m-a-r-k.

22 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
23 that the comments you're about to give the Commission  
24 are the truth?

25 MS. HALLMARK: I do.



1 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

2 MS. HALLMARK: Thank you. I'm very nervous  
3 and it is scary, because I know that you all have a lot  
4 of responsibility and thank you for being here. Please  
5 be a little forgiving because I'm just a regular Army  
6 wife. And I work for FEMA as a responder as my husband  
7 went across the country. So I know you all are really  
8 smart and able to do stuff that can affect a lot of  
9 people. And it is scary to have the police here for an  
10 electric company wanting money.

11 But I hope that you will listen to what I have  
12 to say even though it's not polished and smart, but it's  
13 just regular conversation that some of the veterans who  
14 are hooked up have no choice in Missouri but to use the  
15 same folks that bring in the hydroelectric at Bagnell  
16 Dam; that dump water from Callaway; that dirty our areas  
17 from Rush. And I know that a lot of the money and  
18 requests that they're asking for have a lot of really  
19 detailed processes that are absolutely designed to be  
20 way above somebody like me who most folks are too busy.  
21 They just want to be able to turn on their lights.

22 I've got to remind you all that I know you all  
23 have a big responsibility and maybe not understanding  
24 what it's like to be the union person that is being  
25 asked to work yet get not as much money and pay a higher

1 bill. I think that is definitely what has happened for  
2 a while, at least since the news showed that there was  
3 quite a bit of disgruntledness.

4 That's our neighbors that are having problems  
5 with the electric company that we all have no choice or  
6 power company we have no choice for. They can say  
7 something because they're going to work. The veterans  
8 cannot. I've been a military wife my entire adult life,  
9 and working for FEMA I've seen stuff across the way and  
10 it doesn't have to be this way. There is no competition  
11 and they have been -- Ameren has been around for  
12 hundreds of years.

13 That grid that they keep saying that we have  
14 to pay for has been paid for by everybody before us.  
15 And they received so much money from the news during  
16 COVID and after COVID and they had all these really  
17 great programs for people but they had hiring freezes.  
18 And then they increased rates. And all I see is that  
19 they're not very good with the way that they're handling  
20 their processes, that they have to pay their stock folks  
21 a certain amount but wait for their maintenance and  
22 other compliances and environmental concerns to get  
23 through decades of courts in order to keep paying the  
24 people that have so much money while the rest of us are  
25 having no choice.

1           So when you sit there and you have to hang  
2 your hat on something, I can only ask you to please  
3 remember that they have never had to suffer by a pay cut  
4 or job freeze or layoff, and it is very important for  
5 them to go ahead and maybe even give you a chance to  
6 show your muscle again to this organization that is part  
7 of Missouri.

8           Ameren is woven into our laws, to our  
9 regulations. They have freebies and benefits. They get  
10 a whole bunch of great stuff from the state of Missouri,  
11 because they grew up with us. Now they're the only ones  
12 and they're kind of muscling around saying to the old  
13 folks hey, you don't have a choice. If you want to  
14 watch TV, if you want your Bpap to work or if you want  
15 to hook up at night after your service or after for real  
16 emergency response, because I kind of come from fire  
17 marshals and stuff. So I want you to remember those  
18 folks. And I know you all have a lot of responsibility  
19 and you have a lot of fancy talk and a lot of double  
20 talk, but the only thing that really matters right now  
21 for the people who can't be here is the fact that their  
22 pocketbooks are going to be less after decades of paying  
23 for the same service when the board maybe should get a  
24 recommendation to take a pay cut and show in a quarter  
25 how committed they are to our state.

1           Please remember that. I know it's hard and  
2 you have a lot of responsibility. And I know for sure  
3 the next cold storm, the next winter storm, the next  
4 time anything bad happens, because it happens every  
5 year, the assurances from the Social Security the  
6 veterans pay, all of that money that has already been  
7 paid in for the infrastructure builds up has already  
8 been paid for and if it fails again like it has in the  
9 past, remember me saying they are not really doing a  
10 good job.

11           Maybe they need to show the kind of evaluation  
12 and work that is required just like they require their  
13 employees. The employees go through an interview. If  
14 there's a problem, they have a period of showing that  
15 they are committed to doing well. Maybe it's time now.  
16 Why don't you go ahead, stretch your muscles a little  
17 bit and put them on the block, have them come back and  
18 say you know what, you have proven yourself to invest  
19 back into Missouri and back into the people who you are  
20 charging this for. We should not be cleaning up messes  
21 that my uncles and aunts and family and neighbors have  
22 already paid for. They've gotten a lot of money from  
23 grants and before that, fiber optics and broadband. So  
24 they've done just fine. I'd like them to go ahead and  
25 step up and understand what a lot of the folks that are

1 now at home counting their pennies will have to go  
2 through and maybe --

3 JUDGE CLARK: Ms. Hallmark, if you'll finish  
4 your thought, you're over three minutes.

5 MS. HALLMARK: Thank you so much for  
6 everything that you all do. I'm so impressed. I always  
7 wondered what it was like to be people like you. Let's  
8 show the folks at home, the kids, how so much power can  
9 help just for the regular folks, and this way it's also  
10 going to empower you all to keep Ameren to remember  
11 their place. It's a partnership. Let's make it that  
12 way, force it. Thank you.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Hallmark. We're  
14 delighted you're here. We're delighted that you're all  
15 here. This is our opportunity to hear from the public.  
16 We'll hear from the Company and the other parties at the  
17 evidentiary hearing, but this is our first and real  
18 opportunity to hear from you. That was very well said.  
19 And I apologize, Commissioner Coleman has a question for  
20 you.

21 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Not a question but a  
22 comment, Ms. Hallmark. Thank you for thinking that  
23 we're more than just regular folks. But I think that if  
24 you haven't done it with a name like Hallmark, you might  
25 want to check your genealogy charts and see how regular

1 you are. We appreciate you being here.

2 JUDGE CLARK: And if I had to take away one  
3 thing from your message, I was going to ask you about  
4 this but you've sat down, would it be correct to say  
5 that kind of the gist point that I took away from this  
6 was that you believe Ameren should fix the  
7 infrastructure first and worry about dividends later?

8 MS. HALLMARK: I think they need to show that  
9 they are just as committed by taking cuts and fixing  
10 what they should have fixed and stop that trend.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Hallmark.  
12 Frederick Newell. Is there a Frederick?

13 MR. NEWELL: Hello. F-r-e-d-e-r-i-c-k  
14 N-e-w-e-l-l.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
16 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
17 are the truth?

18 MR. NEWELL: I do.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Go ahead.

20 MR. NEWELL: I want to start by saying I think  
21 that the Commission made a mistake back in October in  
22 basically forcing Ameren to stop doing their energy  
23 efficiency programs. That also spread to Kansas City  
24 for Evergy.

25 I live at the Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri.

1 I'm an Ameren customer, a happy Ameren custody I'd like  
2 to add. They've always been fine to do business with.  
3 And my employment is in the HVAC business. When these  
4 programs are changed, it essentially lowers the entry  
5 level equipment for everybody in our two largest cities.

6 So starting January 1st this year, there's no  
7 way to get a rebate from Ameren or Evergy, and obviously  
8 we're concerned about Ameren here today. That is  
9 damning for a lot of reasons, especially when you pair  
10 it with a possible rate increase. If you've got a rate  
11 increase, and part of the reason the rate increase is  
12 being proposed is because they want to increase energy  
13 efficiency programs and solar, wind and all of that, if  
14 you've got more people than you had before buying lower  
15 efficiency equipment because there's no incentive to buy  
16 higher efficiency equipment, it's really a double edge  
17 sword. So people are going to be paying higher rates  
18 and they're putting less efficient equipment in their  
19 house which allows fewer people to fit on the failing  
20 grid we have now.

21 So my question for the Commission would be  
22 work with Ameren, work with Evergy to find out a way to  
23 continue these programs or don't complain three years  
24 from now when they need another increase, because we  
25 sell a thousand systems a month out of our wholesale

1 distributor in Chesterfield, Missouri. Last year 800 of  
2 them would have been 15 SEER efficiency or higher. I  
3 fear that this year it will be flip flopped. People  
4 make decisions based on rebates and efficiency programs,  
5 and Ameren is a trusted name that mail comes to your  
6 mailbox every month, explains those rebate programs. If  
7 they don't have a rebate, they're not going to explain  
8 to anybody that pays these rates that there are programs  
9 to make their homes more efficient.

10 So I do think the ball was dropped. Can  
11 Ameren possibly continue these programs in a different  
12 way? I sure hope so. My request would be of Ameren if  
13 you're going to increase rates 15.77 percent, there must  
14 be enough money in that increase to allow these rebate  
15 programs to continue so the average Missourian has the  
16 option to have a more efficient system. That's all.

17 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Newell.

18 MR. NEWELL: You bet.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Shawn Dunahoe (phonetic  
20 spelling.) Shawn Dunahoe. Larry Behrens.

21 MR. BEHRENS: Good afternoon. My name is  
22 Larry, or Lawrence Behrens, L-a-r-r-y B-e-h-r-e-n-s.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
24 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
25 are the truth?



1 MR. BEHRENS: I do.

2 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the  
3 Commission today, Mr. Behrens?

4 MR. BEHRENS: Thank you, Madam Chairman,  
5 Members of the Commission. It's a privilege to be here.  
6 I am a ratepayer here in Cole County. I'll just be  
7 upfront. I should have said this in the question  
8 session, but I also want to give thanks to Ameren.  
9 Myself, my entire family is addicted to hot water and  
10 lights and they make that happen. So I don't mean that  
11 jokingly. I really do appreciate it. It doesn't just  
12 happen by accident. So thank you for that.

13 That said, I am concerned about the capital  
14 investments Ameren has made recently and also what they  
15 would propose to do with this rate increase should it  
16 come to pass. What we see from their own reports to the  
17 state in trying to meet their renewable portfolio  
18 standard is that they have brought on solar farms that  
19 they by their own discussion today in the meeting are  
20 happy if they are working at 25 percent capacity.

21 I don't know what government entity would be  
22 happy with 25 percent capacity. After this, I'm going  
23 to go buy a pizza. I'm going to pay full price for it.  
24 I don't want 25 percent of a pizza. Asking for a rate  
25 increase while arguing that solar is the cheaper option

1 is a round peg that I am unable to square.

2 I moved to this state about three years ago  
3 with my family. One of the reasons is the affordability  
4 of this state. You do not know how good you have it in  
5 Missouri. I moved from a state that went down the wind  
6 and solar route, and their energy bills have increased  
7 60 percent in five years. And that is on the backs of  
8 working families.

9 So to see that this is happening here is  
10 highly discouraging. I will be the first to admit I'm  
11 not against profits. I try to make a profit with my  
12 family budget every day. But that said, when we look at  
13 this rate increase, especially coming on the quick  
14 succession of other rate increases for capital  
15 investments that are going to operate in some cases, the  
16 Delmar (phonetic spelling) Renewable Energy Center  
17 operates at 5.7 percent capacity. What type of energy  
18 infrastructure are we happy with that operates to 5 to  
19 25 percent capacity and why would we pay a premium price  
20 for it? I would argue that we need not do that.

21 Before I go into the next part, it was  
22 discussed today that previous rate increases are usually  
23 negotiated. So Ameren comes with in this case 15.7  
24 percent and then perhaps a commission, not necessarily  
25 this commission, a commission would take it down to 9

1 percent and declare victory. Speaking for myself  
2 personally, the only appropriate negotiating number for  
3 this is zero percent increase for our bills. It is not  
4 a high ball offer meant to be negotiated down backdoors  
5 so that families can continue paying more.

6 And by the way, if this rate increase is  
7 really for what they describe as renewable energy, is  
8 there any type of discussion that says those products  
9 that we use to capture this energy must be made in the  
10 United States? I would argue that that is not the case  
11 because most of these products are made overseas.  
12 American manufacturing does not make these products.

13 And so we're asked for a rate increase that is  
14 putting potential Missourians out of a job for a natural  
15 gas plant that would have a smaller footprint, put  
16 people to work and be more affordable, I understand it  
17 doesn't have the federal subsidies, for foreign made  
18 components that have a much larger footprint, we're  
19 talking tens of thousands of acres of farmland in  
20 Missouri.

21 I don't think anybody would make that deal,  
22 and more importantly I think anybody running for office,  
23 if I were running for office which I am not, if I were  
24 to say I'm running for office and I'm going to have a 15  
25 percent tax increase, that is what we're expected to

1 foot the bill here for today.

2 I would urge the Commission to go against this  
3 and make sure that it is not a negotiable number and  
4 declare victory with something less than 15 percent. I  
5 think you've heard today people are reaching across the  
6 political aisle to say that number should be zero.  
7 Thank you, members of the Commission.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
9 comments. Lindsey Phoenix.

10 MS. PHOENIX: Madam court reporter, I'm  
11 Lindsey Phoenix, L-i-n-d-s-e-y P-h-o-e-n-i-x.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
13 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
14 are the truth?

15 MS. PHOENIX: I so affirm.

16 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the  
17 Commission today?

18 MS. PHOENIX: My name is Lindsey Phoenix, and  
19 I am a 41 year old local attorney who makes a modest  
20 living for the state of Missouri. My spouse is a former  
21 law enforcement officer and is now a public school  
22 teacher, and we have two elementary age children at  
23 home. I've been a trial attorney for the last 13 years,  
24 and I make my living speaking in front of people and I  
25 knew that my voice would shake today.

1 I want to make sure everyone here knows that  
2 it's not because I'm nervous, it's because I'm angry.  
3 In the last 48 hours, we have witnessed the intentional  
4 dismantling of every ounce of progress made in the  
5 United States in the last 75 years. And if I have to  
6 sit back and watch these billionaires set fire to the  
7 country that I love, I would sure appreciate at least  
8 being able to do it in a warm home.

9 Ameren's profits are up a lot. We all know  
10 that. There is no need for a rate increase. Ameren  
11 wants to take more from the public to pad the pockets of  
12 its C-suite, and they are willing to hurt the public  
13 more and more in order to do it. We see through this  
14 disgusting cash grab for the pure greed that it is.

15 The gentleman from Ameren during the Q&A so  
16 delicately dodged some important questions. So I want  
17 to make sure that the record reflects what he was trying  
18 so hard not to say.

19 Number one, the public has no choice in  
20 whether or not we are customers of Ameren. The  
21 competition mentioned in the rate increase letter does  
22 not exist. And number two, Ameren has asked for a rate  
23 increase approximately 12 times in recent history and  
24 has been denied exactly zero times. They said hey,  
25 we're following the law in making those requests. It is

1 what it is. But let's be honest, Ameren's lobbyists  
2 have been the puppet master in the construction of every  
3 single utility law and regulation that exists in the  
4 state of Missouri and now they dare to use these laws  
5 and regulations as a shield against the public blowback  
6 from their unbiased and unethical business practices.

7 A moment ago it was stated by the, I believe  
8 the auditor from the PSC, quote, the Commission can't  
9 manage the Company. Perhaps the Commission needs to be  
10 reminded that the Commission was created for and is  
11 funded by the taxpayers to act as a gatekeeper and  
12 protector of the public in situations like this.

13 So I ask you, why do rules apply to me that  
14 don't apply to them. If I do a piss poor job of  
15 managing my money, my bank is going to laugh at my face  
16 when I come and ask them for a loan. And it is time for  
17 you to laugh in their face.

18 Mr. Clark, you stated a moment ago in  
19 preparation for these statements that people are  
20 emotional about their utility rates. With all due  
21 respect, this is not just about our utility rates. This  
22 is about the constant attack on the American dream by  
23 those that we have trusted to uphold it. As a citizen,  
24 I did everything right. I worked hard in school. I  
25 went to law school. I followed the rules of society to

1 be a good neighbor. I've spent over 15 years in public  
2 service. I donate my time and my money to contribute to  
3 and volunteer for this community, and yet here I am  
4 spending my lunch hour and now my vacation pay begging a  
5 company to set their greed aside so that I can afford to  
6 keep my children warm in their beds at night. It's a  
7 disgusting failure of the system, and Ameren's greed and  
8 the apathy of the Commission is making it worse. I beg  
9 you, do better. Thank you.

10 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your comments, Ms.  
11 Phoenix. Randy Clarkson.

12 MR. CLARKSON: Hello. R-a-n-d-y  
13 C-l-a-r-k-s-o-n.

14 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Clarkson, do you solemnly  
15 swear or affirm that the comments you are about to offer  
16 to the Commission are the truth?

17 MR. CLARKSON: Yes.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

19 MR. CLARKSON: Thank you for this opportunity.  
20 At the end of the meeting here two years ago after the  
21 polar vortex caused so much damage, I'm sure some of you  
22 are aware of that, many of my friends suffered increases  
23 in their expenses due to insurance interestingly enough  
24 because many of the multi-level homes suffered frozen  
25 pipes and took as much as a year and a half in some

1 cases to rebuild. This was very devastating to some  
2 people. I'm not sure media, I didn't see much coverage  
3 of this in the media. This was very devastating to all  
4 of these people. I've learned here today -- By the way,  
5 thanks for the pre meeting. It was very informative. I  
6 don't remember something like that two years ago. That  
7 was very helpful. In fact, here today I've met someone  
8 with Ameren who has a program to help people that have a  
9 hard time paying their bill. But in this particular  
10 case, the difficulty came not only with a slight  
11 increase in power bill, dramatic increase in insurance  
12 costs associated with the power outage about two years  
13 ago, December 22 and 23 of 2023.

14           Also, I would like to say I think it's really  
15 vitally important. It's a difficult thing I know to  
16 balance. We have to have adequate energy for growth in  
17 the Ameren area. It's absolutely important. And  
18 somehow we have to have a balance to where people can  
19 afford their electric bill. I did environmental  
20 engineering my whole life. At this point in my life,  
21 one of the things I've learned is you don't keep a clean  
22 environment if you don't have a good economy. We don't  
23 have a good economy without adequate power. That's all  
24 the comments I have.

25           JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Clarkson. Janice



1 Lauer.

2 MS. LAUER: Hello. I just want to ask a  
3 procedural question. Is it possible for me to waive my  
4 testimony on account of it would be repetitive and  
5 therefore unnecessary considering the comments already  
6 said?

7 JUDGE CLARK: This is a public comment. If  
8 your public comment is that other people have addressed  
9 your issues, that is a fine comment to make.

10 MS. LAUER: Okay. Thank you.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you very much for letting  
12 us know. Charles Cantrell (phonetic spelling). Is  
13 there a Charles Cantrell? Vicki Schildmeyer. Ms.  
14 Schildmeyer, would you state and spell your name for the  
15 record?

16 MS. SCHILDMEYER: V-i-c-k-i  
17 S-c-h-i-l-d-m-e-y-e-r.

18 JUDGE CLARK: Did I pronounce your name right?

19 MS. SCHILDMEYER: That is close enough.

20 JUDGE CLARK: I apologize for any  
21 mispronunciation.

22 MS. SCHILDMEYER: No problem.

23 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
24 that the comments you're about to give to the Commission  
25 today are the truth?

1 MS. SCHILDMEYER: I do so affirm.

2 JUDGE CLARK: Go right ahead.

3 MS. SCHILDMEYER: I work with a church food  
4 pantry that's about two blocks from here. I also  
5 volunteer on Fridays at Common Ground Community  
6 Building, which is an ecumenical nonprofit for  
7 benevolence. The reason I came today is to talk about  
8 the impact on many people throughout this community when  
9 electric rates are increased at all, let alone 15  
10 percent.

11 At the food pantry last week, a young mom with  
12 a four year old came and she was trying to round up \$159  
13 to pay the payment plan deposit with Ameren. I had to  
14 refer her to Common Ground which provides utility  
15 assistance. However, because she had received utility  
16 assistance within the last 12 months, she was not  
17 eligible for any. And so what I had to do was either  
18 offer her some of my own funds, which I've already  
19 donated hundreds of dollars to Common Ground, or I have  
20 to give her some other resource.

21 I told her phone all your friends and family  
22 and see if they can each give you 20 or 30 bucks. This  
23 is not the way to take care of people in our community.  
24 The other part of this whole problem on Fridays when I  
25 answer phone at Common Ground, we usually have at this

1 time of year 75 to 80 percent of our requests are for  
2 people seeking utility assistance. In the past we've  
3 had the LIHEAP program administered through CMCA,  
4 Central Missouri Community Action, to assist these  
5 people. These programs are being phased out. So more  
6 people either pay their rent or pay their utility bill.  
7 When they don't pay their rent, they're evicted. And I  
8 can tell you that I talked to a friend this morning  
9 signing up to take meals to Jefferson City Room at the  
10 Inn, which is one of our two homeless shelters, they  
11 turned away two nights ago six people. Do you know what  
12 the temperature was overnight when I woke up that  
13 morning? It was 2 below at 6:00 a.m. So overnight  
14 people are struggling to survive in temperatures below  
15 zero.

16 There's just too much homelessness that  
17 results when people have the pressure of high utility  
18 bills. Many of the people who have this pressure the  
19 most are living in substandard housing and as a result  
20 their utility bills are outrageous. That's all I wanted  
21 to do was let you know first hand people in this city  
22 suffer because of the current rates. A 15 percent  
23 increase is just onerous. Thank you.

24 JUDGE CLARK: Just to clarify. You said in  
25 your experience volunteering that 70 to 80 percent of

1 the requests received where you're at are for utility  
2 assistance; is that correct?

3 MS. SCHILDMEYER: This time of year, yes. I  
4 do want to clarify that I'm speaking for myself as a  
5 volunteer. I'm not speaking for Common Ground Community  
6 Building. I have no official capacity there. As a  
7 volunteer, I am the initial contact with that entity  
8 when I answer the phone there on Fridays. So I'm the  
9 volunteer receptionist and the first person a client or  
10 prospective client speaks with.

11 JUDGE CLARK: I was just asking from your  
12 experience. Thank you for that.

13 MS. SCHILDMEYER: Yes, indeed. It's very high  
14 percentage at this time of the year.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for your comments and  
16 thank you for letting us know. Denise Stepp (phonetic  
17 spelling). Denise Stepp. It's a very tough one. I'm  
18 sorry. I apologize. I'm having a difficult time  
19 reading this.

20 MR. STARR: Travis Starr (phonetic spelling).

21 JUDGE CLARK: Indeed it does.

22 MR. STARR: My apologies. I was nervous when  
23 I wrote my name down.

24 JUDGE CLARK: I understand. What's your name,  
25 sir?

1 MR. ORTIZ: It's Avel Ortiz. Do you want me  
2 to stand up here at the microphone?

3 JUDGE CLARK: Yes, please, come up to the  
4 microphone. You said Avel Ortiz?

5 MR. ORTIZ: Yes. That's A-v-e-l O-r-t-i-z.

6 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Ortiz. Do you  
7 solemnly swear or affirm that the comments you're about  
8 to offer to the Commission are the truth?

9 MR. ORTIZ: Yes.

10 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the  
11 Commission today?

12 MR. ORTIZ: First off, I would like to  
13 apologize. I know a lot of the people were upset about  
14 the police, and I may have caused, you know, a little  
15 bit of a ruckus earlier in the lobby and here now. I  
16 kind of had cops surrounding me. So to the people, I'm  
17 pretty sure that was my fault and I'm sorry. I didn't  
18 mean to do that.

19 I have listened and watched how people have  
20 spoken with you and interacted with you and I've learned  
21 a lot. So thank you for teaching me a lesson.

22 I would like to start by saying that as a  
23 person who works a job, if I wanted to own a company, if  
24 I wanted to start a company, I would have to use my own  
25 money to start the company and then when my company

1 started to make money I would have to use that money and  
2 continue to reinvest it into my company and into my  
3 people to make sure that my business can grow. What I  
4 see Ameren doing is that Ameren isn't taking their own  
5 profits. And I mean the profits of the owners, the  
6 people who at the end of the day get to walk away with  
7 the money in their bank account that they can spend  
8 freely. They don't use that money to build their  
9 business. They don't use that money to build their  
10 infrastructures. They don't use that money to build all  
11 these other things. They like to tax the people so that  
12 the people have to pay for the company to be able to  
13 build, because that's where they get all their profit  
14 from.

15 Yes, Ameren has a budget, but the budget is  
16 for the people. It's for their bills. It's not for  
17 them to reinvest. Their profits are not for them to  
18 reinvest into their own company. It's not often that  
19 they do that. That burden has been put on us, the  
20 people. And you guys keep saying that there's no  
21 competition. But when we hear about the people who have  
22 gas as a heating source, the new meters tell oh, they're  
23 using gas so now we can increase -- when they do use  
24 electricity, we can increase, oh, they're using solar  
25 panels. So they're not using us as much. So therefore

1 we can increase our profits because they're not relying  
2 on us any more. So people are like oh, if I go solar, I  
3 have to deal with the high electric cost because now I'm  
4 not using them as much. If I go gas, once again, I have  
5 to spend more money on the electric because I'm not  
6 using them as much. And everybody says there's no  
7 competition. There is the competition. That's why the  
8 competition can't succeed because you guys just keep  
9 raising the prices. And you're supposed to be for the  
10 people. And yet somehow you guys are profiting off of  
11 them wanting more from us. I don't know how. I don't  
12 know what kind of deals that are being made, but somehow  
13 you guys profit from it. We don't. And I think that's  
14 what I would like to say. Use your own money to build  
15 your company. Use your own money to build your company  
16 just like we have to use our own money to build our  
17 company. I'm not going to raise the prices on the  
18 customer. I'm going to get more customers. I'm going  
19 to have better facilities, because if energy gets more  
20 efficient, that means that they're doing less to produce  
21 it meaning that it should be cheaper for everyone.  
22 Right? If that's the whole point of electricity  
23 efficiency, we're so caught up in the past because we're  
24 doing electricity wrong. We're not really trying to  
25 produce efficient electricity.

1 JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Ortiz, you're at three  
2 minutes. If you could finish your thought.

3 MR. ORTIZ: Efficiency means closer to free  
4 than it does being paid for. So thank you.

5 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
6 comments, Mr. Ortiz.

7 MR. ORTIZ: Thank you. I've got to go.

8 JUDGE CLARK: Harold Font (phonetic spelling).  
9 Harold Font. Dallas Robertson.

10 MR. ROBERTSON: Hello.

11 JUDGE CLARK: Would you please state and spell  
12 your name for the record?

13 MR. ROBERTSON: D-a-l-l-a-s R-o-b-e-r-t-s-o-n,  
14 Dallas Robertson.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Do you solemnly swear or affirm  
16 that the comments you're about to offer to the  
17 Commission are the truth?

18 MR. ROBERTSON: I do.

19 JUDGE CLARK: Please go ahead.

20 MR. ROBERTSON: So I was born in Missouri.  
21 I'm a welfare kid. I know what it's like to have my  
22 electricity turned off. I know what it's like to put  
23 milk outside because my refrigerator doesn't run.

24 I don't make \$9 million a year. If anyone in  
25 this room does, congratulations, you make the same as



1 the CEO of Ameren. I don't think it's right to ask for  
2 a rate increase for Ameren when they continue to give  
3 increases to their CEO pay. I think there should be a  
4 cut somewhere else. We have obviously seen it's  
5 inefficient to do so.

6 Missouri is not an expensive state to live in.  
7 Apparently it is the sixth cheapest state to live in.  
8 About \$25 an hour, two parents, two kids to live here.  
9 So I think it's best we ask Ameren to cut costs before  
10 asking for a rate increase and corporate welfare. Thank  
11 you.

12 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
13 comments.

14 MR. ROBERTSON: Thank you.

15 JUDGE CLARK: Richard Allen. Mr. Allen, would  
16 you state and spell your name for the court reporter?

17 MR. ALLEN: Sure. It is Richard,  
18 R-i-c-h-a-r-d, Allen, A-l-l-e-n.

19 JUDGE CLARK: And do you solemnly swear or  
20 affirm that the comments you're about to give to the  
21 Commission are the truth?

22 MR. ALLEN: I do.

23 JUDGE CLARK: What would you like to tell the  
24 Commission today?

25 MR. ALLEN: All right. I would like to state

1 that I do agree with the comments of an earlier  
2 testifier, Joshua Dunne, who is chairman of the same  
3 committee that I'm a member of. So I'm not going to  
4 repeat his entire thing. I'm going to summarize it in  
5 the interest of saving time. I've got to put on my eyes  
6 to see it first.

7 All right. Ameren last had a rate increase --

8 JUDGE CLARK: If you have a cell phone, please  
9 silence it so we can hear Mr. Allen. I apologize. Go  
10 ahead.

11 MR. ALLEN: That's fine. The last rate  
12 increase for Ameren was just two years ago. They're  
13 asking for another increase now. But just as Mr. Dunne  
14 stated, we do not want to subsidize companies that use  
15 excess profits to pay their shareholders. And I could  
16 add in relation to the last speaker to their CEOs.

17 But anyway, it's not just this rate increase  
18 that I'm concerned about. What I am concerned about  
19 even more-so is bills that are in the Missouri  
20 legislature right now that would allow utilities to  
21 charge their customers for projected costs, costs that a  
22 company thinks they might incur and charge the customers  
23 up front. And instead of just having a rate increase  
24 every other year, which is really too frequent, we might  
25 end up with a rate increase request every year. That's

1 something I don't want to see. And that concludes my  
2 comments.

3 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Allen. I'm  
4 unaware of that legislation right now. Do you have a  
5 bill number for that?

6 MR. ALLEN: No, I do not have one. I read  
7 about it in the Missouri Independent.

8 JUDGE CLARK: I apologize. I've been told  
9 that we're aware of that.

10 MR. ALLEN: The bills at that time, it was  
11 before the session started. So they were pre-filed  
12 bills.

13 JUDGE CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Those are  
14 all the names that I had on my list of people who signed  
15 up to speak today at today's local public hearing. If  
16 there is anybody who was listening and who would like to  
17 offer comments but was unable to do so or was unable to  
18 sign up or now realize they would like to offer  
19 comments, I would like to open up at this time to allow  
20 those individuals to speak. Is there anybody who would  
21 like to offer comments to the Commission that didn't get  
22 an opportunity to sign up to? I see no one.

23 If you get home today and you realize that you  
24 had additional comments you wanted to make, you're  
25 talking to friends and they said oh, I couldn't go but I

1 would like to make comments to the Commission about this  
2 rate case, we have other ways for them to do so. If you  
3 have additional comments to make or somebody who wants  
4 to make comments, they can contact the email address  
5 psc, which is Public Service Commission, so  
6 pscinfo@psc.mo.gov to leave your comments or by  
7 contacting the Office of the Public Counsel to my left  
8 here, they've been very gracious about being sure that  
9 comments about cases get to the Commission, or by going  
10 to the PSC's web page and you'll see a link there to  
11 make comments. If you're going to make comments, you'll  
12 need to know the number, the case number for this rate  
13 case which is ER-2024-0319.

14 With that in mind, Commissioner Mitchell,  
15 would you like to make any closing remarks?

16 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Sure. My name is John  
17 Mitchell. On behalf of the entire Commission, I would  
18 like to thank you for coming out this afternoon and  
19 sharing your thoughts and opinions with us. This is the  
20 very first step in the rate process, and it's the first  
21 step because I think it's the most important step. It's  
22 important because this is the first time and really the  
23 only time that we get to hear from you and have the  
24 privilege of knowing what your thoughts and feelings on  
25 this matter are.

1                   We appreciate your honesty and courage in  
2 offering your comments because it helps us make the best  
3 decisions that we possibly can. So we thank you for  
4 being here and have a safe drive home.

5                   JUDGE CLARK: Thank you. With that, I will  
6 adjourn this local public hearing. We will go off the  
7 record. Thank you so much for your attendance and  
8 participation here today.

9                   (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 2:25  
10 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MISSOURI )  
COUNTY OF COLE )

I, Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing Public Service Commission Local Public Hearing and that the transcript, pages 1 through 45, is a true record of my stenographic notes.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 6th day of February, 2025.

Beverly Jean Bentch  
Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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